

The Week

OLAS speech

by Ken Coates

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS

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Volume 8 No. 7. August 17th 1967

VIETNAM

ESCALATION

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Volume 1, No. 1

VICTIM

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C O N T E N T S

Page	1	Editorial notes.	Page	2	Scarborough & Workers' control.
"	3	Industrial notes.	"	4	Political notes.
"	5	More political notes.	"	6	Glasgow housing.
"	7	Reston and Cuba.	"	8	Mexican witch-hunt.
"	9	U Thant discussion.	"	10	Vietnam military situation.
"	11	October 22nd demonstration.	"	12	O.L.A.S. conference.
"	13	Russell on Mexican witch-hunt	"	14	O.L.A.S. report back.

THE VIETNAM ESCALATION

The Americans, not noted for their accuracy, are, according to their own official statements, bombing targets within 10 or 15 miles of the Chinese border. With modern military techniques - and American pilots - this is virtually equivalent to bombing China itself. As a corollary to this, the bombing of Hanoi has been stepped and encompasses - again, according to official American sources - targets within 1 to 2 miles of city centre. Johnson's opponents in the United States have not been slow to point out what this means: "Escalating into Danger" is how the New York Times, of August 16 put it, in an editorial which savagely attacked Johnson's new adventure. Senator Mansfield termed the new bombing policy, in a statement on August 14, "dangerous and extremely stupid".

As yet, Wilson remains silent - although several newspapers on August 16 reported that the Government had called for a report of the new bombing - about this new escalation. Yet, we can say that never has the United States been so isolated as now. The central strategy of the movement in this country must be to bring maximum pressure to get Wilson to condemn American policy. We note that the British Council for Peace in Vietnam, the British Vietnam Committee, the British Peace Committee and a group of Labour M.P.s have responded to the situation. Despite the fact that there are important differences about the way to fight against the American war of aggression in Vietnam we are sure that all these organisations can get together on this question. An ideal unifying activity would be work in support of the new October 22nd demonstration ad hoc committee which has recently been formed.

CIVIL LIBERTIES UNDER ATTACK

Our editorial last week was most timely - scarcely had people opened their Week envelopes when they heard on the radio that Michael de Freitas had been arrested. This is not the only case: during this last week three supporters of pro-Chinese organisations in this country were charged with blocking the highway by selling their pamphlets at Speakers' Corner. They were remanded in custody for a week and one was sentenced to three months imprisonment. Both these attacks on civil liberties need exposing and countering. It is monstrous to charge black people because they express their feelings about the way they have been exploited by whites. It is monstrous to remand people in custody before they have been judged, (and it is perfectly clear that if the stupid bye-law forbidding sales inside Hyde Park were lifted there would be no blocking of the highway). There should be no hesitation on this question - some people are under the impression that to protest against the repression of a person or organisation is to underwrite their politics. This is most misconceived and sectarian point of view. Socialists should fight oppression, and the oppressor, in every case. We repeat: the charges against black nationalists are an attempt to intimidate the black community in this country and must be fought as such.

On the question of industrial democracy, resolutions to the labour party conference deserve some attention.

There is still some confusion about the distinction between workers participation and workers control. A resolution from the National Union of Public Employees, and one from the shopworkers (U.S.D.A.W.), both speak in terms of workers and trade unions participating in management. The N.U.P.E. resolution calls on the government to consult Trade Unions as to what changes are necessary to extend industrial democracy in the public services, but leaves open the question of what basic principles are involved in defending existing rights and effectively extending them.

If that is ambiguous, however, the U.S.D.A.W. resolution is rather naive. It reveals an unhealthy preoccupation with industry's need "to improve managerial practices, and the better use of resources", and then calls for trade union participation in management. "It believes that with the extension of participation by trade unions and workers in management, the best use of resources, and increased production, upon which major improvements in social security and other measures depend, will be accelerated". No recognition is given to any basic conflicts of interest between management and worker, much less of the necessity that workers elect their representatives directly and be able at all times to effectively call them to account, nor of the need to define the areas of supervision and control. Such an approach of course might have rather drastic effects in some of the quieter recesses of trade union orthodoxy.

On a more positive note both Epping and Chertsey C.L.P.s opt decisively for control, and the Chertsey resolution emphasises the need for election and accountability; in addition it deplores the idea of compensation, and makes sharp attack on the Government's plans for the Steel industry.

It is clear that although some C.L.P.s are often more advanced in their thinking than many Trade Union leaderships, the movement as a whole has still much to learn about the subject of industrial democracy. Many resolutions on specific industries simply refer to "nationalisation" or "planning" without ever raising the issue of democracy in any form.

Those who advocate workers control should not pass by the opportunity to advance the campaign which is presented by the Scarborough conference, when it is planned to reconvene the National conference on workers control which met in Coventry in June.

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"PARTICIPATION OR CONTROL"

by Ken Coates and Tony Topham, 1/9 post paid

A new pamphlet on Workers Control of vital relevance to the 1967 Party Conference

Militant Action Against Roberts-Arundel.

Last weekend the Stockport and District Trades Council decided on a new course of action against the American-owned Roberts-Arundel textile factory. The factory has been picketed since last November and a campaign has been carried out to 'black' the firm. John Tocher, district secretary of the AEU, said that a week of concentrated action has been planned to start on August Bank Holiday. Deputations will be sent to M.P.'s, the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Labour and the American Embassy. "We want the embassy people to know how strong the feelings are among trade unionists about the continuation of this dispute, which has gone on since last November," he said.

The week will culminate in a half-day general strike in the Stockport area. Twenty trade unions are planning to bring work in the town to a standstill. There will be a mass demonstration throughout the town and at the factory. The unions are also trying to prevent the firm from exhibiting at the Basle textile exhibition next month. The International Metal Workers' Federation is being approached to prevent machinery from Roberts-Arundel being shown at the exhibition.

'No Co-operation' Move by Power Workers.

Union leaders of 155,000 manual workers in the electricity supply industry have notified the Electricity Council that their members will not co-operate in improved methods of working and other productivity schemes till a settlement is reached on current pay negotiations. They would continue to work those schemes already introduced but would not help with investigations into new schemes or with their implementation. Les Cannon, president of the ETU, has accused the employers of "abdicating responsibility" in bringing in the Prices and Incomes Board. The PIB is being used as a delaying factor, he claimed. The major issue is whether a 3 per cent or 5 per cent rise should be paid immediately for productivity already achieved and for various forms of co-operation (on which there is also disagreement) in the future. According to the Electricity Council future productivity improvements should not be rewarded till they have been in force for a year. This one-sided interpretation of productivity agreements, which also includes the proposition that where employees do not accept new methods their individual basic rate could be removed at one week's notice, is clearly unacceptable to any union concerned with its members interests.

Research into "Wages Drift"

The Social Science Research Council is making a grant of £18,000 to the Centre for Business Research at Manchester Business School for research into the problem of "wages drift". The seven-man investigating team will be led by Professor Tom Lupton, professor of Industrial Sociology at the school. His brief is "to examine the influences which cause earnings to drift upwards away from negotiated levels without a corresponding increase in productivity". The research team will make on the spot enquiries at a large number of firms since Professor Lupton is convinced that plant bargaining is an important factor in wages drift.

American Involvement in the Congo

No other nation, not even Belgium, is as deeply involved in the Congo as the United States. American involvement goes back to 1960 when American influence on President Kasavubu was instrumental in getting the Soviet and Czech Embassies evicted. This American commitment has remained and over the years both the embassy and the CIA have taken a hand in shaping events. Embassy officials are in almost constant touch with President Mobutu and key cabinet ministers. What has happened in a sense is that the U.S. and Belgium divide the role that a former colonial power normally plays alone in its former colonies. The Belgians supply the teachers, technical workers, planters and businessmen. But it is the U.S. rather than the Belgian government, which provides the strategic support, advice and political influence and the biggest part of financial aid.

American financial assistance averages \$50 million annually. It is used for imports of industrial machinery, trucks, chemicals and textiles for an economy which is kept running mainly by the Belgian business community. On the official level, this division of labour between American "strategic supply" and Belgian "presence" has been working well. But American and Belgian interests have basic differences and their priorities are not the same. The Belgians need a Congo that is viable in their own terms. They could not stay in a completely "Congolized" Congo. The minimum American objective, on the other hand, is to prevent the Congo from disintegrating into militantly nationalist factions. This would affect the rest of the continent. At present, the American position is extremely strong but there are potential weaknesses. As the other Western powers reduce their commitments to the Congo, American involvement becomes relatively greater and deeper. Secondly, the American position became more brittle and vulnerable when General Mobutu moved into the presidency. He has always had American support, but from 1960 to November 1965 he was the power-behind-the-power ready to move in if necessary. Now Mobutu is in power himself, and there is no visible alternative or successor to fall back on.

Survey of Negro Unemployment.

Preliminary results of a survey, based on responses to a two-page questionnaire sent to every employer with more than 100 employees, show that in nine major American cities the Negro unemployment rate is as much as five times as high as for whites. In Atlanta, for example, the overall rate is 2.6 per cent., but for negroes it is 15.5 per cent. In San Francisco the figures are 4.3 and 12.0 per cent., and in Cleveland 3.1 and 15.5 per cent. Even more illuminating is the breakdown of types of work done. In each case, the proportion of Negroes doing white collar jobs is minimal, with most of those so classified to be found in junior clerical and shopworker positions. Overwhelmingly, Negroes work as labourers or factory machine minders or messengers. In Cleveland Negroes, who make up 13 per cent of the population occupy only 3.2 per cent. of the white collar jobs and 5 per cent of craftsmen's jobs. This is not necessarily a reflection of racial discrimination since in many cases Negroes do not have the necessary skills or education for the better jobs. Discrimination, however is blatantly apparent in education. A report by the Civil Rights Commission says America has "educated a whole generation of children in schools that are inferior and who have had no connection with White society."

L'HUMANITE DEMANDS "OPEN THE BOOKS!" from our Paris correspondent

As an answer to President de Gaulle's new offensive for "participation" by French workers in the designs of neo-capitalist management, the French Communist Party has quite properly denounced the resignation of trade union powers, and raised the call, "Open the Books!"

Commenting on this, the well-known left wing journalist, Michel Bosquet, writes in Nouvelle Observateur that it is interesting to see the call of the advanced sector of English trade unionism being taken up by L'Humanite. For rather a long time now this position has been advocated as a counter to the reactionary incomes policy of the Wilson Administration, precisely by The Week, Union Voice, the New Left and its allies. So far, we have not received the support, which could, on this issue, be powerful, of the Morning Star.

May it now be hoped that the good example of the French party on this matter will be quickly followed on the other side of the Channel? Such a move by the comrades of the British Communist Party would be a big step forward to left unity on the basis of an aggressive socialist strategy, which would be welcomed by the unions.

DEMOCRACY IN THE LABOUR PARTY by Geoff Coggan

No doubt readers of The Week will have read in Tribune of the initiative on Labour Party Democracy taken by the Sheffield Trades & Labour Council. The Council hopes that enough support will be forthcoming from CLPs and affiliated trade unions to enable a steering committee to meet at Scarborough during this year's Party Conference. Constitutional amendments to the Party Rules are not admissible this year, but the Council rightly feels that the groundwork needs to be prepared now if any seriously thought out amendments are to stand a chance of acceptance at the 1968 Rules Revision Conference.

However, this timely initiative should not divert those concerned at the lack of democracy within the Party from striving to rectify those cases of injustice which are outstanding now. As Tribune points out in its preamble to the article, "Conference this year must, at some stage, consider what the NEC will say about the wrongly expelled and now reinstated Nottingham members." The fact that the members now have their Party rights fully restored does not close the issue. What Conference will want to know is why it took a High Court Writ to force the NEC into conceding the very same arguments which the members had patiently and privately placed before it months earlier, when the injustice could have been rectified without embarrassing publicity and without the £300 legal expenses which the NEC was obliged to pay in settlement.

The same tortuous course is now being followed by the Ken Coates case. Since his unconstitutional expulsion in 1965, Ken Coates has patiently exhausted every avenue of appeal against the decision and the farcical procedures at the NEC Tribunal which confirmed it - the same Tribunal procedures employed against the now reinstated members. Now he, too, has to seek redress from the courts; and once again the NEC appears to be gambling that the financial realities of a High Court action will force withdrawal.

Many of us are determined that there must be no such financial impediment to natural justice, and a Defence Fund is shortly to be launched by prominent members of the labour movement. The Week will carry details in a future issue.

"A PROFILE OF GLASGOW HOUSING"

from a Glasgow reader

A report prepared for Glasgow Corporation by a team from the University headed by Professor J. B. Cullingworth provides extremely useful statistical ammunition for those of us who urge that a profound change in priorities is necessary on the part of the government if it is to tackle the social problems of our society. 'A Profile of Glasgow Housing in 1965' is to be published by the University shortly.

In summary, the bald facts brought out are these:

38% of our dwellings lack a fixed bath or shower - 22% are without an internal water closet - 41% do not have a hot water supply to bath, wash hand basin and sink. Yet using the corporation's criteria of unfitness only 6% are adjudged to have a life of less than 5 years; 20% are expected to last from 5-14 years and a further 17% from 15-29 years. Of this latter group, in which some inhabitants of this city are expected to live until 1990, $\frac{3}{4}$ lack a hot water supply at 3 points, $\frac{2}{3}$ have no bath and $\frac{1}{5}$ are without an internal water closet.

But worse is to come. Only $\frac{3}{4}$ of those having a life of less than 5 years are actually expected to be demolished within this period - so that a continual process of falling behind is clearly envisaged in the rate of demolition.

As we would expect, the houses with the best amenities are owned by the corporation. The overwhelming majority of the $\frac{2}{5}$ ths of our population who rent these houses enjoy the three major amenities. At the other extreme, in the privately rented sector only 27% of dwellings have a fixed bath; 57% an internal W.C. and 28% hot water at three points. Owner-occupied property in which roughly $\frac{1}{5}$ th reside occupies an intermediate position.

Some sacred cows of the Tories about the alleged comfortable position of council tenants are demolished. On average owner-occupiers have considerably higher household incomes (£20.10s) than either council tenants (£17) or private tenants (£14.10s). Taking per capita income owner-occupiers come out at £6.5s, private tenants at £5 and council tenants at £4 (the difference in the two sets of statistics is accounted for by the larger average number of children in households in council houses). On my calculation the difference in average wages more than made up for the rather larger outgoings of those buying their own homes, (not to mention the tax relief and the eventual financial benefit of acquiring a saleable asset). Further the increases in council rents in November 1965 and September 1967 taken together put roughly 63% on the average rent. To hear some of our Tory councillors talk a Jaguar stands outside the door of every corporation house - the reality is found in the statistics which show that only 16% of council tenants have the use of a car - compared with 34% of the Scottish population.

This Report along with the Stationery Office's recent publication 'Scotland's Older Houses' provides the statistical facts to back up what all of us who live in this city know to be the miserable reality. But it also provides, along with the many other reports now appearing on the deficiencies of our social services, a scathing indictment of a Labour Government which has scarcely scratched the surface of such problems. From the Labour Movement of this city, above all others, there should surely be an urgent demand that this government turn its attention and its money away from propping up the crumbling fabric of imperialism in Hong Kong, Aden, Singapore and a dozen other places and towards providing decent living conditions for our population.

'The Revolution has made quite a difference in Havana. It is still quite beautiful; a Mediterranean city with a touch of Miami beach; the houses cream coloured and pastel yellow, pink and blue. But most of the rich merchants and middle-class doctors and other professional men have gone.

'Castro has got rid of the worst of the Havana slums and has built a vast new city of workers' apartments. He has closed the Havana Country Club, once the social and sporting centre of the Cuban rich, and built a spectacular modern art institute and various other schools on the premises. Outside Havana on the road to Santiago de Cuba, it is a different world. Although life is still very poor in these parts, it is much better than it was a decade ago'.

These comments on the state of the Cuban revolution were not made by someone committed to the ideas of the Cuban revolution, but by Mr. James Reston, the well known American newspaper reporter and Associate Editor of the New York Times, writing in the Sunday Times. Mr. Reston could hardly be described as a friend of the Cuban revolution yet he is undoubtedly impressed by the achievements of eight years of Fidel's revolutionary leadership.

Of the mansions that now remain in the capital after the flight of the merchants and other middle-class professional people, and opponents of the revolution, some have been taken over by diplomatic officials and Soviet technicians. 'The others', reports Reston, 'have been assigned to more than 100,000 scholarship students, from 8 to 22 years of age'. The vast expanding education system is only one of the achievements of the Cuban's that Reston points to.

In agriculture; 'Before the revolution, the workers here spent four months in the privately-owned cane fields. Since the land-reform programme, a large number of peasants have their own land, and many more are working on state farms.. 'A vast programme of land reclamation is beginning. Castro has invested heavily in modern earth moving machinery. He has bought \$35 million worth of heavy bulldozers from the French. This year he plans to have 142 bulldozers in the reclamation project; next year 250 bulldozers plus another 250 caterpillar tractors'. This programme under the direction of the Cuban army plans to clear every cultivatable acre of land in Cuba by the first quarter of 1969.

And in housing; 'We were driven to a new housing development, a collection of prefabricated four storey cement buildings with bright blue, orange and yellow porches.

'The Russians had provided the machinery for the building, but this was nothing like the bleak geometrical apartment blocks around Moscow. It was designed by a Cuban architect who obviously had a little poetry and sunshine in his soul'.

How tragic that Reston misses the sunshine and poetry of the revolution as a whole.

'Castro is building a new Cuba. He is creating a new consciousness among the Cuban people. He has liberated the women, and inspired the young', but this is, 'an education of hate and violence', says Reston. The vast expansion in education is likely to develop into, 'a nasty little militaristic sparta'. Can it really be true that the liberation of the Cuban people since the revolution, and its considerable economic and cultural achievements are all signs of tyranny and despotism to come. No; the violence of the Cuban revolution that Reston talks about is the violence of the oppressed against the oppressors - the violence of the liberation forces of 'Our America' against Imperialism - the violence of the people against their exploiters.

13 IMPRISONED WITHOUT TRIAL IN NEW MEXICAN WITCH-HUNT based on 'World Outlook' report

Thirteen members of 'various tendencies' of the left were arrested in Mexico in the middle of July and are being held in prison without trial by the Mexican Government accused of plotting to overthrow the government and install a 'popular socialist type' regime. The total of charges amounted to: "conspiracy, inciting rebellion, damaging property with an explosion with damage or danger to things, that could have caused grave danger to people, criminal association, and with respect to Silvestre Enrique Mertinez and Daniel Camejo Guancho they are charged in addition with the violation of Paragraph lll of article 95 of the Mexican Population laws, which provides prison penalties for illicit activities in the country by foreigners".

The evidence offered for proof of such a 'plot' was twelve tons of literature seized in a raid on the pro-Maoist bookstore, El Primer Paso (The First Step), in Mexico City, consisting in the main of books and magazines printed in Peking, including Mao Tse-Tung's famous little red book of quotations, Lenin's 'State and Revolution' and Marx's 'Communist Manifesto'. Both Cuba and the Soviet Union were brought into the case. Martinez, a Salvadorean, was said to have 'fought in Cuba with Fidel Castro'. He was further said to have travelled in, a Soviet made Moskvich automobile No. 330 LK'. Further "startling" evidence was the revelation that two films had been found at the lodgings of Daniel Camejo Guancho, one of the accused. The two films were on Vietnam and Venezuela, one the 'Time of the Locust' by Peter Gessner and the other 'FALN' a reportage on conditions in Venezuela and the guerilla struggle of the National Liberation Front of Venezuela. Both films have been shown many times in the United States, and 'FALN' has been shown recently in Britain at the OLAS solidarity meeting. Both films have been shown publicly in Mexico. Two showings were given at the auditorium, 'Justo Sierre' at the University of Mexico and another at the National School of Architecture on July 2nd.

One indication of the reason for the present witch-hunt is given in the Mexico City English-language newspaper The News. 'A high government spokesman called the group (of Alleged plotters)' not really very important, as far as being a danger to the stability of the country. But it is one more indication that we are alert to such attempts, and no one is pulling the wool over our eyes. Government spokesmen denied that the arrests and timing of the announcements were part of a public relations gesture for other Latin American countries. These nations complain that Mexico's insistence on maintaining diplomatic relations with Cuba gives the Cuban regime a base from which to direct subversive movements in other Latin American countries. However the discovery of the 'plot' was highly opportune in relation to the campaign being waged by the State Department against Cuba. It came on the eve of the Latin American Solidarity Conference in Havana.

No date has been set for the trial of the defendants, who are held in the Preventive prison of the Federal District. No bail can be obtained for them since the penalties involved in the alleged violations of the law, should they be proved, exceed five years in prison. The frame up was so raw, however, that the Judge felt compelled to modify one of the charges. He threw out the charges of conspiracy against nine of the defendants, leaving only Adrian Campos Diaz an illiterate peasant charged with this crime. Confessions brought as evidence by the prosecution were renounced by the defendants as having been extracted under torture. Peter Camejo, the brother of Daniel Camejo, one of the accused reported that his brother was filthy when he saw him in prison. The prisoners were given little food and did not have cots or mattresses and were forced to sleep on the concrete floors.

Protests from Britain should be sent to: The Mexican Ambassador, Senor Lic. Don Eduardo Suárez, Mexican Embassy, 48, Belgrave Square, London, S.W.1.

U THANT AND THE LEFT : TWO COMMENTS

(1) FROM ALAN KINCHIN

Although I agree with Alan Rooney that U Thant's speech at Greensboro, North Carolina, lacked socialist content, I cannot agree with him that it did not help the anti-imperialist cause. If the criteria to be adopted is "socialist content" then one could presumably argue with equal force that the verdict of the Stockholm Session of the International War Crimes Tribunal did not help the anti-imperialist cause.

The importance of U Thant's speech lies simply in his description of the Vietnamese struggle as "a war of national independence". This description is accurate, for while the Vietnamese struggle arose from socio-economic factors, with the intervention of vast foreign armies the emphasis changed to a struggle for national liberation. The national liberation of Vietnam is a prerequisite of the success of the Vietnamese revolution. U Thant recognises at least the primary aim of the Vietnamese people and his analysis is a direct contradiction of the case put forward by the vast propoganda machines of the United States and its puppets. In this respect alone I would submit he has made an important contribution to the anti-imperialist cause.

Like Alan Rooney I never expected any socialist content in U Thant's speech, but unlike him I'm appreciative of further ammunition to use against United States imperialism.

(2) FROM KATY RINTOUL

The usefulness of U Thant's much-discussed speech at Greenboro' lies in its realism; he was speaking to American quakers and not to readers of "The Week". The emphasis in Nationalism rather than Communism was, I believe, put forward as a reason for ending the Vietnam war, one that his audience could accept as convincing and use as a basis for propoganda against escalation. In theory, at any rate, the Government of the United States is not anti-nationalist and does not want to be thought so.

British Leftists are not quite as naive as Alan Rooney seems to expect and there is no question of our looking to U Thant for "leadership". The supposition is absurd - and a negative attitude to peaceful co-existence between the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. is equally unreasonable. Does Mr. Rooney really think that a third world war would bring socialism any nearer or lead to anything but senseless destruction?

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VIETNAM: U Thant or Solidarity?

What are the implications of U Thant's and other calls for negotiations to bring peace in Vietnam? What should be the demands of those opposed to the Vietnam war to achieve the common aim of peace and justice for Vietnam?

This new pamphlet is available from the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign at 9d a copy, p.p. Reduced rates for bulk. V.S.C., 49 Rivington St., E.C.2.

Despite all the American Government's propaganda about U.S. 'achievements' in Vietnam, a more truthful picture of the state of the war is coming through from certain American journalists.

The August 8th issue of the International Herald Tribune carried a long analysis of the war from their correspondent, R. W. Apple, Jr., who reported direct from Vietnam. His analysis showed that President Johnson's decision to ask for 45,000 to 50,000 more U.S. troops for Vietnam simply reflects the plight of the U.S. military effort, as does the intensification of bombing of Hanoi, Haiphong and areas nearer than ever to China. As he puts it: "in the opinion of most disinterested observers, the war is not going well. Victory is not close at hand. It may be beyond reach. It is clearly unlikely in the next year or even the next two years, and American officers talk somberly about fighting here for decades".

"The Official statements from Washington and Saigon seem optimistic, as they have been for almost five years". But Mr. Apple says that the word "stalemate" is a more accurate description of the military situation. He refers to the military and political difficulties of the U.S. policies in Vietnam:-

- 1) although the U.S. and their allies have killed thousands of N.L.F. and North Vietnamese troops in recent years, the U.S. "now confront the largest enemy force they have ever faced: 297,000 men, again by their own count".
- 2) despite U.S. air power, the N.L.F. and North Vietnamese are now using more sophisticated weapons and in greater numbers. "The enemy has progressed from captured rifles and skimpy supplies to rockets, artillery, heavy mortars," etc.
- 3) "because 1.2 million allied troops have been able to secure only a fraction of a country (South Vietnam) less than one and a half times the size of New York State, and whereas the allies are reaching the bottom of their ready manpower pool, the North Vietnamese have committed only one-fifth of their regular army".
- 4) "above all, because if the North Vietnamese and American troops were magically whisked away, the South Vietnamese regime would almost certainly crumble within months, so little have the root problems been touched".

The "pacification" programme is making no progress and ties down many thousands of U.S. troops. Again, using government figures, the South Vietnamese regime controls only 1,944 hamlets out of a total of 12,537. "The rest are contested or, to some degree, controlled by the Viet Cong". The U.S. military are finding a lack of willingness to fight among the South Vietnam Government Army. "The best talent in the current generation has long since been lost: thousands of men who might be leading South Vietnamese troops in combat are serving with the North Vietnamese or the Viet Cong, heirs to the country's nationalist revolution against the French. Of all the government officers serving as lieutenant colonel or higher, only two fought on the side of the Viet Minh in the war against the French..."

MORE TROOPS WILL NOT HELP U.S. IN VIETNAM (Cont'd.)

"In their place stands a corps of young officers, often incompetent and more often corrupt. Weary of the war and cynical toward it, many work a four-and-a-half-day week, leaving their troops at noon Friday and departing to Can Tho or Da Nang or Saigon in search of diversion".

Mr. Apple contrasts them with the N.L.F. and North Vietnamese fighter:-
"the enemy continues to fight with tenacity, imagination and courage, and no one knows when he will stop".

About the forthcoming 'elections' in South Vietnam, Mr. Apple says:-
.. "the military's old habits persist; it would be unrealistic not to expect them to. At the generals' insistence, the only serious peace candidate, Au Truong Thanh, was ruled off the ballot...". "The remaining candidates - a collection of middle-aged and middle-class conservatives - seem to offer no real alternatives...".

"So the outlook, four weeks before election day, is for a ratification of the Thieu-Ky regime, with all that would mean: a 'legitimised' but essentially unchanged central government, continuation of heavy handed police tactics, the same generally corrupt officials in the provinces, the same dispirited army, more war".

When American journalists in Saigon can see this much, it re-enforces the N.L.F. and North Vietnamese statements on the war. As socialists we should follow these up by referring to the Hanoi weekly, Vietnam Courier as often as possible.*

[*Available via V.S.C.49 Rivington St. E.C.2]

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OCTOBER 21 - 22: INTERNATIONAL VIETNAM PROTEST.

As a result of the appeal from the National Mobilisation Committee demonstrations in support of the March on Washington have already been organised in Paris, Rome, Copenhagen, Canada, Edinburgh and London. Representatives from the Danish Vietnam Committee visited the office of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign a few days ago and we have agreed to exchange publicity material, posters etc. and, if possible, speakers. In Edinburgh the local branch of V.S.C. has received permission to hold a demonstration on Saturday, October 21. This has received the support of the B.C.P.V., Y.P.V., C.N.D., L.P.Y.S., the University Labour Club etc. Local demonstrations are also planned on the Saturday in Hull, Nottingham, Leeds and South Wales. The organisers of these meetings hope to send coaches to London for the Trafalgar Square rally on Sunday October 22.

In London the October 22 Vietnam Ad Hoc Committee has ordered thousands of two-colour, photographic posters, small stickers for fly-posting and publicity leaflets. These will be available in a few weeks and we will then be sending bulk supplies to organisations throughout the country.

This week's escalation of the bombing of North Vietnam, which has come at a time when even the Americans have admitted they are losing the war, must result in a corresponding escalation of protest. Next London Committee meeting, Tuesday August 22, 8pm. 49 Rivington St., E.C.2., Tel 739 6951.

I am happy to bring to this first Conference of OLAS the warm personal greetings of Bertrand Russell. In his 96th year, at a time when he has been strenuously concerned to find ways to mobilise world opinion against the unprecedented, sadistic aggression which the most powerful, brutal and irresponsible power in the world has unloosed on the brave people of Vietnam, Lord Russell has, at the same time, found himself increasingly preoccupied with the problems of Latin America.

I wish to concentrate upon one aspect of Lord Russell's deep concern for the sufferings of the peoples of Latin America, who swelter under the weight of fiercely authoritarian, irrational and arbitrary regimes. This aspect turns upon a personal experience of Lord Russell, which gives him the capacity to feel very deeply for the sufferings of the victims of oligarchic repression.

Very early in his life, Bertrand Russell became involved in the struggle to defend political prisoners. During the first world war, he himself was herded into prison because he opposed the general carnage, in which European nations slaughtered each others' youth in the interests only of small cliques of imperial promoters. Again, at the beginning of his tenth decade of life, Lord Russell entered a British prison, because of his resistance to the war preparations of the British Government. I tell you this to show you that Lord Russell knows prisons.

Today, his busy desk is littered with appeals from victims of tyranny all over the world. But from nowhere does he get so many appeals for help as from this continent, tortured beneath a cruel and conscience-less power which is unable to govern without the almost random use of repressive force. For Lord Russell, the political prisoners of Latin America are a symbol : they clearly portray the state of the institutions of the continent, in which noble men are incarcerated because of their nobility and humane concern. But at the same time, they are a symbol of the irrepressible yearning for freedom, which, everywhere in the continent, defies the prison walls and bars, and reaches out to inspire the young people, not with fear of repression, but with hope for the future.

From the years when he defended Sacco and Vanzetti, down to these days crowded with appeals for such prisoners as Americo Martin, Hugo Blanco, Guillermo Lora, Ricardo Gadea, Regis Debray, incarcerated for no better cause than that he wished to report the truth, for Hector Cordera... but it is impossible to begin to list the names, and perhaps unfair to try, because there are heroes of many countries and numerous political tendencies, who all share the common trait that they had consciences too large and hearts too generous to submit to brutality, however powerful it seemed: Russell has always felt that it is important to do everything possible to arouse public attention and support for such prisoners. Not only does the campaign to sustain and support the victims of oppression help the prisoners themselves: it also educates the people at large, who come very quickly to ask why good men suffer imprisonment and torture. Of course, we know of the immunity of the oligarchs to civilised protest: the cowardly murders they commit in the cells, like that of Fabricio Ojeda, bear all too frequent witness to that. But nonetheless, when we fight to support those who have

SPEECH TO O.L.A.S. (Cont'd.)

been taken captive, the people hear us, and the oligarchs grow ever lonelier in the world.

For these reasons I know that you will do everything you can to ensure that Lord Russell is informed of every case in every country of the continent, so that appropriate steps can be taken to organise support for these victims and public clamour against their oppressors, all over the world.

Let us defend each man and woman who suffers such repression: and let the oppressors of the people be aware that they are being watched, and that the peoples of the world will be informed of all their deeds.

It is a touching and a beautiful thing, the spirit of concern for freedom which dominates this conference. You have many things of great importance to do. I hope that a little time can be spared to consider this field of work.

August 1 (Year of Heroic Vietnam)

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STATEMENT BY BERTRAND RUSSELL ON MEXICAN PRISONERS

Mexico's enduring resistance to foreign domination is unique in the western hemisphere. The names of Padre Hidalgo, Benito Juarez, Emiliano Zapata and Lazaro Cardenas inspire profound feelings in all Latin Americans who aspire to national independence and the rectification of social injustice. With its long history of self-determination and civil liberty, Mexico should continue to set an example for all the Americans.

The recent arrest and imprisonment of Daniel Camejo Guanche and thirteen others seems to contravene Mexico's long established traditions. These men should not be persecuted for holding unorthodox political views. The charges brought against them should be examined scrupulously and impartially by an independent international commission. This commission should also investigate the defendants' countercharges of abusive treatment and the coercion of forced confessions. In the meantime all the defendants should have the elementary right to be set free on payment of a reasonable sum as bail.

In those countries where the United States exercises its hegemony, political dissent is seldom tolerated. Latin America has become a continent of political prisoners. Mexico should not betray its own best traditions by conforming to this grim pattern.

2nd August 1967

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A first hand
report from O.L.A.S.

Organisation of Latin American Solidarity

—by ken Coates

just returned from Havana

also a round-table discussion on:

REVOLUTION IN THE REVOLUTION

Armed struggle and political struggle in Latin-America.

by Regis Debray at present imprisoned in Bolivia

with MALCOLM CALDWELL, KEN COATES and SHAKUNTALA de MIRANDA.

friday August 25th. 7-30
mahatma gandhi hall