

The Week

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS
Volume 9 No. 3 January 17th 1968

6^D

PIT
CLOSURES
SPEEDED
UP

the price
of capitalist
policies

71 Onslow Gardens, London N.10. Subscription: £2 per annum & pro rata

119

CLOSURES

SPEEDED

UP

THE WEGM

A NEWS SERVICE FOR SOCIETY
Volume 3 No. 2 Spring 1968

the price

of capitalist

policies

CONTENTS

Page	1	Editorial.	Page	2	Workers' control campaign.
"	3	Political notes.	"	4	U.S. investment in Britain.
"	5	Book news.	"	6	Boycott Dow Chemicals!
"	7	Pit closures speeded.	"	8	Industrial notes.
"	9	Pattern of anti-Labour swing	10	South East Asia escalation.	
"	11	VSC NOTES.	"	12	Uses of education.

THE PRICE OF CAPITALIST POLICIES

Wilson has wielded his axe against the poor and the sick. This man who talks of bringing about a technological revolution now postpones the raising of the school-leaving age. This greasy politician who tried to claim that the social purpose of the incomes policy was to protect the lower paid now imposes a poll-tax on the sick. The abolition of free milk in schools is a nasty piece of meanness which will only have the effect of hitting the poor and large families. This present Government is revolting and sickening: it has now broken every single promise it made when elected and seems determined to impose policies which will destroy the Labour Party.

But no one can believe that this Government, which includes many who only a few years ago led Aldermaston marches, has done all this out of spite or because it is composed of "bad men." No, the explanation lies elsewhere and the lesson of the degeneration of this Government has wide implications.

The attack on the poor is the inevitable consequence of capitalist policies. Once having rejected the socialist option, Mr. Wilson and his colleagues had no choice but to tread their present path. In a chronically decaying imperialist country, the scope for traditional social democratic reforms is very small. To affirm this principle is not just a question of being wise after the event: this lesson must be learnt if we are to break the present political impasse. Last week's Tribune programme, which was to have been the alternative to Wilson's cuts, was, in essence, a call for an alternative capitalist economic strategy. Again, many sections of the left have argued that the main thing is to cut defence expenditure, then the way would be open for a more generous domestic policy. In the event, things have turned out differently: we have cuts in defence expenditure and cuts in social services. Many on the left are in utter confusion, for example, those who threatened to resign or vote against the Government but who now say that they cannot because the Government has ended the "East of Suez" policy.

The left must elaborate a socialist alternative to Wilson's policies. It must seek to link the issues which are exercising the minds of the workers today with demands which encroach on capitalist power. But such a programme will be entirely abstract unless it is linked with struggle: struggle against the policies of Mr. Wilson and his Cabinet. The hope for such a struggle and such a programme must pivot on the trade union movement. The struggle coming from militant responses to the latest savage attacks on living standards. The programme can be elaborated at the union conferences which will start at Easter and culminate at the TUC in September, a month prior to the Labour Party conference. We should all work hard to insert socialist demands into these debates and seek to mobilise the maximum opposition to the latest attacks on the living standards of the people.

Judging from letters and other communications we have received, the Nottingham workers' control conference (to be held on March 30/31 - see last week's issue for full details) is evoking strong interest. We are told by one shop steward in Ruislip that his committee is thinking of organising a coach to go up. We have heard from supporters of The Week in various parts of the country that they are going to organise delegations to the conference. A preliminary estimate puts the number going from London at about 30 - this is not counting a good number of TGWU delegates who will go straight from their branches. All this is very good but more needs to be done. The main point in involving broad sections of the trade union leadership in the campaign is to ensure wider and wider sections of union members become interested. It is vital that at every stage of the campaign that fresh people are brought in.

The Week hopes that every reader will energetically and enthusiastically campaign to get people to the conference from their trade union branches, Labour Parties, Young Socialist branches, Communist Party organisations, etc. They should explain the relevance of workers' control as an immediate demand in relation to present-day struggle. They should seek to demonstrate that a fight against redundancy in a factory, with a call for trade union control of hiring and firing, can be turned into a struggle for workers' control. A struggle against particular aspects of the incomes policy can merge into a workers' control demand: a notable example being the demand to open the books when employers claim that they are unable to afford wage demands. This injection of workers' control demands into every day struggles makes it possible to raise socialist consciousness.

There is a wealth of material on the question of workers control - of particular importance is the pamphlet Participation or Control by Tony Topham and Ken Coates, who, together with Walter Kendal, Richard Fletcher, Councillor Bill Meade and Peter Smith, are the convenors of the conference. Books and pamphlets on workers' control can be obtained from Pioneer Book Service or from the organisers of the conference (write Mrs. Margeret Price, 54, Park Rd. Lenton, Nottingham).

FRANK COUSINS ON THE CUTS

from an industrial correspondent

Frank Cousins hinted, on Tuesday, January 16th, after hearing details of the Government's cuts, that his union would be taking a tougher line on wages. He said: "I shall not be prepared to accept any worsening of the standard of living of my members, particularly as these cuts are concentrated on the social services." Mr. Cousins views are known to be shared by other trade union leaders but George Woodcock, general secretary of the TUC, said on the same day that there was no point in protesting. He went on to say that he disliked the introduction of prescription charges and the deferment of the raising of the school-leaving age. He added that there was nothing in the Prime Minister's statement which made it necessary for the TUC to change its views that the general level of wages and salaries could safely rise by between 3½ and 4 per cent. during the 12 months after next July.

A newly published study submitted to the Royal Commission on Trade Unions by Dr. McCarthy, research director for the Royal Commission, states that "...if effective control is to be exerted over total wages bill in the interests of incomes policy it will be necessary to discover a way of taking action at the level of the firm as well as at the level of national bargaining. So far incomes policy has been effective mainly through influence exerted at national level."

There seems to be a strong hint here in Dr. McCarthy's remarks in favour of local machinery to give guidance in local bargaining. The basis of his remarks is his view that there will be increasing emphasis in future on local bargaining, leading to more Wage Drift (the disparity between local and national wage levels). In other words the practice of workers obtaining rises over and above national rates as a result of better organisation is likely to come under renewed attack. If Dr. McCarthy's views are at all typical of the Royal Commission, this can only be seen as a warning of a new stage in the attack on the organisations and living standards of the working class.

THE "MORNING STAR" CRITICISES THE WRITERS' TRIAL by Dave Windsor

Last Saturday's Morning Star contained an editorial commenting upon the recent writers' trial in the Soviet Union, which resulted in vicious sentences being passed upon three Soviet writers and a girl who typed for them. The paper did not express an opinion on the heroic action of Maxim Litvinov's grandson and the wife of Yuli Daniel in issuing a manifesto denouncing the trial. It did, however, express very considerable disquiet at the way the trial had been conducted. "Neither friends nor enemies of the Soviet Union in Britain know what went on in the courtroom," the paper said. "This is in contrast with some other Soviet trials in the past few years," it added. Going on to contrast the trial with that of Greville Wynne and Gerald Brooke, it went on "The result of the way in which it has been handled is that enemies of the Soviet Union have been able to make capital out of it and cast doubt on Soviet justice." It concluded: (Progressive people)... "cannot avoid expressing concern when the handling of a trial such as this one gives such opportunities to the enemies of the Soviet Union to create confusion and misunderstanding."

Although the criticism is guarded and always posed from the point of view that the Russian authorities are acting in an ill-judged manner, the comparison of the Greville Wynne and Gerald Brooke trials with this latest one has a clear hint of a doubt about the charges of collaboration with NTS, etc. Why else would the Russians have a public trial of a self-confessed spy and a private one for people who proclaimed their innocence on this score? On Tuesday of this week, the Morning Star published several letters commenting upon the editorial. Raymond Williams and Maurice Dobb were in full support of the editorial but most of the other letters were sharply critical, however James Harvey drew attention to the similarities with the trials of the thirties. On Wednesday another letter supported the editorial but said that it did not go far enough; two other writers opposed the editorial. It is clear that the Soviet Government's action in trying to intimidate the growing struggle for freedom of expression in the Soviet Union has created fresh problems for the "pro-Moscow" Communist Parties. Together with events in Czechoslovakia, this trial is going to make life very difficult for John Gollan and co. over the next few months.

The recent announcement by the Johnson Administration of the cut-back in overseas American investment, with its inevitable repercussions on the British economy, has again high-lighted the extent of U.S. ownership of British industry. According to the January 7th Sunday Telegraph, American capital, while it is yet far from majority control, is nevertheless concentrated almost exclusively in the growth sectors of the economy, i.e., an area which the left has consistently argued should be under public ownership.

The Telegraph article shows that American investment in Britain has trebled in the past ten years; and in the past seventeen years has jumped from 788 million dollars to 6,000 million dollars. Just as on the Continent, in Britain, the Sunday Telegraph notes, "probably three-quarters of U.S. capital has been sunk into six major industries - electronics, motors, computers, drugs, petroleum (now an important base for chemicals) and office machinery." The motor industry is 55% American owned, computers 45%, petroleum, tractors and agricultural machinery 40%, drugs 20% and instruments 15%. The article claims that "American controlled companies manufacture 10% of all British goods for consumption and export, and own an estimated 7% of total non-financial assets. But direct U.S. investment has been rising at a rate of 10% for 10 years and since American companies are in the growth areas they are expanding faster than the rest so that on current trends they could claim as much as a fifth of British industry in a decade's time."

We question whether or not it makes a great deal of difference if a boss is one nationality or another; we only know that whatever the nation of origin, capital itself is inhuman. Before being elected, the Labour Party leaders chose not to face this problem and instead talked vaguely about "encouraging" the growth sector - Wilson's so-called "science-based" industries. Now that sector couldn't be more vulnerable, and with the cut-back in American investment, it is threatened with stagnation. As the capitalist world faces crisis and American capital has to be controlled to protect the dollar the argument for social ownership of these industries is stronger than ever before.

NOTES ON BACKING BRITAIN

from Julian Atkinson

(1) Will Paynter, the General Secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, gave his views on the "Backing Britain Campaign" when speaking to a miners' rally at Chesterfield recently. He said: "I back Britain, but I back solutions which are socialist in character. I regard the working of overtime, whether free or paid for, in much the same way as I regard piece-work in industry - as a device by employers and management to hide inefficiency and bad organisation in industry. I am surprised when men like Harold Wilson, Ray Gunter with a very profound background in the Labour movement encourage developments of this kind."

(2) The Nottingham firm of Jersey-Kapwood tried to get in line with the Institute of Directors and get in on the Backing Britain bandwagon. The Management suggested that employees should be prepared to sacrifice a tea-break for the sake of the Queen, Country and Shareholder. They went the rounds asking the workers to join in the campaign but got little response. They then announced that it would be uneconomic if only the few patriots gave up their tea-break, so it became compulsory. However, not even the Union camouflage saved them. Tea-breaks remain sacrosanct and the shareholders will have to make their present Rolls last them a little longer.

FOR YOUR BOOKSHELF

The Modern Prince and other writings by Antonio Gramsci. 21/- plus 9d post.

Memoirs of a Revolutionary : 1901-1941 by Victor Serge. Translated by Peter Sedgwick. 12/6 plus 1/- post.

Aframerican Report by Stokely Carmichael. Text of a speech given at the University of California at Berkely; published by SNCC. 4/- plus 3d post.

Towards Black Liberation by Stokely Carmichael, 1966. Published by SNCC. 4/- plus 3d post.

Myths About Malcolm X - two views: Rev. Albert Cleage, George Breitman. 3/- plus 6d post.

The Autobiography of Malcolm X - 10/6 plus 9d post.

They Have Declared Me "A Man Without a Country." American born Joe Johnson's story of his prison experiences and his fight against deportation. 4/- plus 3d.

Rebel Irishwomen by R.M.Fox. A study of twelve remarkable women who gained full expression for their individuality in the National and Labour struggles. 5/- plus 6d post.

All the above items are available from Pioneer Book Service, 8 Toynbee Street, London E.1.

NUBE THREATENS TO CALL MORE STRIKES from a special correspondent

The National Union of Bank Employees will call more strikes next month if the clearing banks do not promise by February 3rd to establish national negotiating machinery for bank workers. There would be a three-day stoppage by NUBE members at Manchester, Sheffield, Bristol and Chesterfield and the union would then ask London members to decide by ballot whether they would strike at a later date.

These decisions were taken by the union's executive on Monday, January 15. The union then made formal notification of its intention to Mr. Ray Gunter, Minister of Labour. He will be meeting representatives of the NUBE, the Central Council of Bank Staffs Associations and nine of the 11 clearing banks. The other two clearing banks, Midland and Coutts, will not take part in the talks because they are opposed in principle to even discussing the establishment of national negotiating machinery.

The union is trying to put maximum pressure on these two banks to change their attitude but it is also angry with the other nine banks for going back on a pledge to hold a meeting to discuss the establishment of national machinery. The NUBE considers that the banks are hiding behind a decision taken by the staff associations to demand overtime pay on Saturday. The NUBE's general secretary said after the union executive's meeting that he did not care whether or not the staff associations were included in the national negotiating machinery. The union leadership is under considerable pressure from militant members to take decisive action which will lead to some progress in their long-standing wage claim.

ARCHITECTS CALL FOR BOYCOTT OF DOW

from a Scottish reader

A special leaflet has been produced by an organisation called Architects against the Vietnam War drawing attention to the many products which are produced by Dow Chemicals in addition to napalm. The text of the leaflet reads:

Dow Chemicals are a well-known U.S. company. They are well-known because they are high up the profits list of American firms and because these profits come from sales of napalm and other chemicals which are dropped on people in Vietnam. Throughout 1967, the anti-Vietnam War radicals in the United States have attempted to prevent this firm functioning, by calling on Dow's workers to strike; and themselves picketing this firm's gates and blocking supplies comingⁱⁿ and out of the factory. In some cases, when Dow Chemicals arrived on the U.S. University Campuses to recruit staff, they were mobbed by thousands of students who queued up for information but had no intention of seeking a post with the firm. Result! Dow deserts campus!

Dow Chemicals have a subsidiary in Britain: Dow Chemical Co. (UK), 105 Wigmore St., London W.1., with a factory in Kings Lynn. Among other products, they make building materials; Mainly polystyrene and polyurethane based. One of their best known products is ROOFMATE FR, an insulation board. Dow's stand at last year's Building Exhibition was picketed by the Stop It Committee, Americans living in Britain who are opposed to the Vietnam War. Last year, there were seven cases, known to us, of architects refusing to have anything to do with this firm. Dow, of course, weren't told the reason. The architects acted as individuals not for their firm. Lately several groups of architects have said they will boycott this firm should representatives call at their offices.

ACTION NOW

The time for all architects to repeat the action of their fellows, has come. DON'T LET DOW QUOTE FOR JOBS, DON'T NOMINATE THEM AS SUPPLIERS. DON'T SPECIFY THEIR MATERIALS. Make it as hot for them as they make it for Vietnamese peasants. PUT DOW AT THE TOP OF YOUR BLACKLIST.

WHY THIS ACTION?

We feel that action such as we are advocating is important, since it by-passes the built-in stabilisers in parliamentary democracy, which prevent 'constitutional' protest from being effective. Some of us say this from experience; having been involved with the ARCHITECTS CND GROUP, and having been on the COMMITTEE OF 100 sit-downs.

ARCHITECTS HAVE POWER. THEY SHOULD USE IT. THIS IS YOUR CHANCE. PASS THIS LEAFLET ROUND. MAKE SURE EVERY ARCHITECT IN BRITAIN KNOWS ABOUT DOW'S ROLE IN VIETNAM.

N.B. Any reader of The Week who would like copies of this leaflet, or who can suggest any architect to whom it should be sent, should write to: Architects Against the Vietnam War, 130, University Avenue, Glasgow W.2.

PIT CLOSURES SPEEDED UP

from a mining correspondent

The halt in pit closures which Wilson announced at the start of last September, together with the effects of the White Paper, have led to a much faster rate of closure during the first three months of this year. By the end of March it is expected that 34 pits will be shut and altogether between 80 and 90 are scheduled by the National Coal Board to be closed this year. The Prime Minister's action, a move supposed to ease unemployment in mining areas during the first part of the winter, meant that the NCB virtually called a halt to closures for more than three months since it takes this time to notify the unions and the miners of pits that are under consideration for the axe.

It was widely believed that the real purpose of Wilson's announcement was to get the leaders of the National Union of Mineworkers to vote for the Government at the Labour Party conference. This move could have only been designed to kid rank and file miners because the leadership were well aware that the announcement was meaningless. Lawrence Daly, general secretary of the Scottish NUM, explained at the Scarborough CSE teach-in, held on the eve of the Labour Party conference, that some of the pits "saved" by this measure weren't even on the list for closing. There is no reason to believe that other members of the leadership of the NUM did not realise this.

Before shut-downs could be started again the White Paper, in the middle of November, reduced the industry's target levels. Closures therefore had to be speeded up compared with the past few years. These closures have only recently restarted. The backlog that has had to be caught up can be seen from the high figure for the first quarter; during the remaining quarters of this year the average will only be between 15 and 19. At the latest count there were 410 pits. By the end of this year the number should be down to around 320 to 330. Once again, the declining areas of Scotland, Northumberland, Durham and South Wales will have to bear the brunt of the policy.

Even the target figure of 80-90 this year is only provisional at the moment. Not all the closures have been discussed with the unions yet. It is usual for the NCB to hold these talks at least six months before any individual colliery is planned to be shut. There are no signs that anything really serious is being done to remedy the serious social and human effects of the closures (and the ending of pit communities). Lawrence Daly's exposure of the Wilson trick over pit closures has certainly been vindicated.

TGWU BRANCH HOLDS SUCCESSFUL MEETING ON DEVALUATION by a Northolt reader

Last week the Northolt 1/1564 branch of the TGWU held a successful meeting on devaluation. Thirty-odd workers from nearby factories attended to hear Keith Veness (an officer of the branch) give a $\frac{3}{4}$ -hour talk on this subject and he was followed by Reg. Taylor (convener of the nearby Walter Kidde factory and secretary of Ruislip CLP) who then spoke for $\frac{1}{2}$ -hour on the Labour Party and devaluation. Both speakers stressed that devaluation was an anti-working class measure which solved nothing. The meeting then opened up for discussion and every succeeding speaker (about a dozen in all) agreed with the idea of opposing devaluation and it was generally agreed that a fight must be waged against devaluation in the trade unions and constituency Labour Parties. The success of this meeting has led to another being called in a month's time - this time on the question of "Back Britain - a miserable fraud campaign."

CHANCE FOR TGWU TO DEMAND WORKERS' CONTROL from Labour Voice (January, 1968)

The state-owned Transport Holding Company is offering £35m. for British Electric Traction's interests in 24 provincial bus companies operating 11,300 buses. Included in the deal are such well-known lines as Midland Red, Ribble and Southdown. IN BET's accounts the bus interests are valued at £20m. Most of the companies are already jointly owned with Transport Holdings but there are a number of outstanding minority interests and these will be bought out also by Transport Holdings to give the state group an iron grip on the nation's bus services outside the municipalities, with 75% or so of the stage bus services. As The Times pointed out, BET appears to be quite happy about being taken over. After all the compensation terms are so generous:

"The market was quick to grasp the implications of the news that British Electric Traction may sell its bus interests to the Transport Holding Company. The shares were marked up 4s 6d. to 64s 6d. To BET its bus interests are like an old war wound, a disadvantage in which pride of achievement has come to out-weigh discomfort. Well-managed as the bus companies have been, they are already less profitable than BET's other interests, and even before Mrs. Castle's proposals for conurbation transport authorities their future was beginning to look uncertain, with demand falling steadily and labour in chronically short supply."

The East Yorkshire busmen went on strike against the company in November, 1966. They produced an excellent pamphlet "No Bus Today" which is very relevant to the present situation (1/6d from TGWU, George Street, Hull). The TGWU and company busmen should campaign for a new democratic bus industry to implement:

- (1) Higher wages. Company busmen should get the same as municipal busmen.
- (2) The Transport Holding Company is an undemocratic state board run by businessmen. It should be abolished and replaced by a democratic structure with strong representation from rank and file busmen. This will involve a campaign for workers' control.

SCOTTISH COUNCIL CRITICISES TRANSPORT BILL from a Scottish reader

Many organisations have criticised the Government's recently published Transport Bill because they say that Scottish industry will suffer through higher charges caused by the Bill's provisions. The latest protest has come from the Scottish Council (Development and Industry). The secretary of the Council's transport committee said in a statement on January 4:

"It is clear that little regard has been given to the Government's concept of regional development." The transport committee's main objection is to the special charge on the movement of "abnormal loads" which would range from 1s to as much as £15 a mile. It feels that the increase would bear particularly heavily on the more remote development areas, thus offsetting the benefits of the Regional Employment Premium and other development area measures, and also on companies engaged in heavy engineering.

One company, Bruce Peebles Industries, has submitted that its main products, transformers weighing from 93 to 109 tons, going by road from Edinburgh to various English destinations would cost the company an extra £710 to @£1,400 in transport costs, or increases of 51 to 68 per cent.

THE PATTERN OF THE SWING FROM LABOUR

based on Spectrum report
(Sunday Times 7/1/68)

It is not generally realised that the national opinion polls are conducted on a very small sample. Whilst this seems to produce fairly consistent results (allowing for some special factors, e.g. declared Labour voters are not so likely to vote as declared Tory voters, especially if the weather is bad), the figures produced cannot be readily broken down. Spectrum of the Sunday Times has drawn attention this week to an attempt to overcome this weakness. We believe that the results are extremely interesting and well worth quoting fully:

"By combining the figures of its three most recent surveys, National Opinion Polls have been able to produce a total sample of 5,254 and break it down according to sex, class, age and geographical region. the result is no comfort to Labour. Overall, the swing from Labour to Conservative since March 1966 is shown as 7.3 per cent. But this average conceals some startling variations. Men have reacted against the Government twice as violently as women: among them the swing has been 10 per cent., compared with 4.9 per cent. for women. The consequence is that, almost for the first time, Labour has nearly as much support from women as from men (39 per cent). In class terms, the largest swing has been among C2 voters - skilled manual workers and their families, (11 per cent.). The lowest swing (1.8 per cent.) has been by AB voters - managerial and professional. Put this way, the figures exaggerate the differences, as there were proportionately many fewer Labour AB voters. A truer indication is that whereas one in five of Labour C2 voters in 1966 is now a Conservative supporter, only one in eight of Labour AB voters has changed sides. Among age-groups by far the greatest swing (13.3 per cent) is among the 25-34 group - the young marrieds - previously Labour's best friends, but especially vulnerable to changes in the economic climate.

Geographically, the biggest swings have been in the North of England, while in the South Labour has held more of its ground. In political terms, the 14.4 per cent. in Yorkshire and Humberside is not as serious as it looks, as this region contains few marginal seats. But the 15.7 per cent. swing reported for the North-West is a much greater potential threat, as a high proportion of the Labour seats in Lancashire are marginal.

One interesting aspect is the different impact of nationalism in Wales and Scotland. The Welsh Nationalists are still very small beer, according to the N.O.P. with less than 4 per cent. of the voters - only a third of the support reported for the Liberals. But in Scotland they have, for the moment, succeeded in supplanting the Tories in second place - with 28.3 per cent. compared to 38.7 for Labour and 25.3 for the Conservatives. Despite Labour's by-election loss at Hamilton, these figures suggest - however tentatively - that the nationalists may be a greater threat to Mr. Heath than to Mr. Wilson."

WIDENING ARENA OF AMERICAN AGGRESSION.

Two reports in last weekend's press highlight the extent to which the Americans' inability to make any progress in Vietnam has led to the extension of their military involvement in neighbouring countries. U.S. forces in South Vietnam have attacked villages across the Cambodian border for some considerable time. Under the pretext of chasing P.L.F. troops and taking advantage of disputed territory the U.S. military has attempted to conceal the extent of this action. Now, however, so complete is their lack of success in action against the Vietnamese peasantry that they are putting pressure on Prince Sihanouk to give formal permission for American raids inside Cambodian territory. Alternatively they would apparently settle for a strengthening of the International Control Commission so that the patrol work could be carried out for them. Chester Bowles, American Ambassador to India, is at present in Phnom Penh with an offer to supply helicopters and other equipment for use by the Commission. Britain and Russia are co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference that set up the I.C.C. in Cambodia. It has been ineffective for years, and Russian consent, open or tacit, is needed for the American proposal to revive and strengthen it. Harold Wilson will be visiting Moscow in just over a week's time and this will be his chance to play the part of roving U.S. Ambassador once again. The use of an unofficial envoy of this kind relieves the U.S. Government of any responsibility should Wilson be rebuffed and also allows Harold the opportunity to indulge in a little more of his "messenger of peace role."

Talk of "Vietcong sanctuaries" in Cambodia or Laos has taken much of the headlines away from the very real American "sanctuaries" in Thailand from which the majority of bombing raids on North Vietnam take place. To protect these bases the U.S. has now virtually taken over control of the Thai military forces. A brief report on the situation in Thailand appeared in last weekend's Sunday Times.

"Tough army units, specially trained by U.S. "green berets" military advisers, have now taken over command of the northern jungle provinces of Thailand from the police. General Prapas, Thailand's army commander, agrees with Prime Minister Thanom that the situation in North Eastern Thailand, subject to prolonged Communist subversion and now open fighting, is "very serious". The march of events in Thailand recalls and parallels the early events and lost opportunities in South Vietnam. U.S. military "advisers" have quietly taken over the training of anti-guerrilla forces while the Communists have sought to organise an underground Thai equivalent of the Vietcong. Military expenditure at the six bases from which American planes regularly bomb North Vietnam and the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos has been correlated with economic aid efforts in the neighbouring villages. One shudders at the likely reaction here to any weakening or wavering of the American stand in South Vietnam. No one can accuse the Thai Government of precipitance in its campaign to "democratise" the country and draft a new Constitution. Last month's municipal polls were the first elections in Thailand since the general election of 1957."

V.S.C. NOTES from David Robinson.

March 24th Demonstration. Over sixty people attended a meeting at Toynbee Hall last Thursday to form an Ad Hoc Committee for the mass demonstration planned for next March. After a lively discussion it was agreed that a rally should be held in Trafalgar Square on Sunday March 24th, to be followed by a march to the U.S. Embassy by a route to be determined by the committee. The demonstration is to be organised under the umbrella of the following slogans; "Solidarity with the Vietnamese People Against American Aggression," and "Vietnam - End British Complicity Now." The posters, leaflets and stickers will be ready in about ten days. We will be holding a committee meeting/work party every Thursday until March 24th at 7.30 p.m. This week and next it will be held at 49 Rivington St. From the beginning of next month these meetings and all other V.S.C. work will be moved to our new premises. Our new address will be published in The Week before our move. Organisations supporting the March 24th Vietnam Ad Hoc Committee include the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, Stop-It Committee, London Committee of 100, Australians and New Zealanders Against the War in Vietnam, Harringey C.P.V., Merton C.P.V., Romford C.L.P., Salford East C.L.P., Bromley L.P.Y.S., East Walthamstow L.P.Y.S., Romford L.P.Y.S., L.S.E. Socialist Society, Labour Worker, U.C.P.A., The Week, Socialist Leader, Rebel, Socialist Current, Humber-side Voice, Northolt Y.C.N.D., Richmond Y.C.N.D., C.A.S.T., Folksingers for Freedom in Vietnam etc.

The Ad Hoc Committee is open to any other organisation supporting the general theme of the March 24th demonstration.

Vietnam Trade Union Conference.

The V.S.C. is calling a working conference of trade unionists to organise work in the trade union field to fight for a solidarity line. We intend to bring together a representative meeting of V.S.C. supporters who are active in the trade unions for this purpose. Because of the nearness of the March demonstration it is not intended that this should be a mass conference - that can come at a later stage. The most important task the working conference can consider is the preparation for intervention in the major trade union conferences which take place between Easter and August, and then at the T.U.C. This conference, which is sponsored by Hugh Scanlon, A.E.F.W.U., Ernie Roberts, A.E.F.W.U., Bill Jones, T.&G.W.U., Lawrence Daly, N.U.M., and Gordon Norris, N.U.S., will take place in London on March 3rd. Further information from Sabby Sagall c/o V.S.C.

Northern Universities Vietnam Conference.

A weekend conference is to be held in Sheffield on January 27-28th. It will be based on the Northern Universities and, although non-student organisations have been invited to attend, the emphasis will be on the student movement. A major part of the discussion will be on the future form of protest activity in the U.K. and we expect to raise considerable support for March 24th. Further information can be obtained from: Sheffield University Vietnam Action Group, 6 Victoria Rd., Sheffield 10.

A meeting on education which took place a few weeks ago in Washington must be seen as a grim warning to us of the possible consequences of attacks on the freedom of universities. The warning is a timely one, for talk of making the universities in Britain "accountable" to Parliament is in the air at the moment; it is certainly Government policy, and, as this news from America will confirm, the result of such accountability will be the stifling of the universities in their key role as a critical institution, and their total subordination to technological and utilitarian demands.

The meeting was called "Project Aristotle". The American Department of Defense summoned to it magnates of industry, top-ranking bureaucrats, and administrators from the field of education, and its significance lay in the explicit way in which three fields were shown to have shared goals - the fields of industry, government and education. At the conclave, the military establishment called upon the educational system to provide the manpower for current priorities defined by the military-industrial complex. The official sponsor of the Project was the National Security Industrial Association, which consists of companies that have defence contracts and whose stated goal is "national security". They insisted that they, the military-industrial complex, and not the educators, had the most innovative ideas in the field. One of those good ideas was the application of systems analysis to any educational situation. This means the implementation of a multi-step system in which end results are carefully measured against stated objectives. The initial objective, of course, is never searchingly examined.

a principal theme was the way in which educational technology emerges from military technology, for example, the navy's method for developing a better torpedo was shown to be applicable to areas relevant to the county superintendent of schools. The focus is on the techniques; the establishing of objectives and priorities is thus removed to a point outside the educational process itself. As Frank Rose, President of the University of Alabama, said, "The general purposes and aspirations of the educational institution should be the same as those of industry and government."

The Project did not overlook the international implications of standardised education. A topic for discussion was "International Considerations", the dominant theme being the need to train Americans to rule a de facto empire. This conference was a frightening one. We should bear it in mind when faced with the proposition, on the surface quite reasonable, that the universities in Britain should be accountable, for their expenditure to Parliament. For too long the left in this country has ^{paid} insufficient attention to the key field of education. This is a good issue upon which to make a start.

FLORIDA STUDENT LEADER SAYS U.S. IS DECAYING from Marjory Holt

A recent issue of Alligator, a paper published by students of Florida University, had an editorial, by Bob Moran, a regular columnist, entitled "The U.S. is decaying". The editorial starts: "I've been reading letters to Alligator and listening to your comments...concerning Vietnam...First, you talk to me about freedom...Are you blind?...Your insane President has changed his mind. You're not fighting for Vietnamese freedom anymore...North Vietnam is not going to invade the U.S. The problem in S.E. Asia is not stopping the spread of communism, but rather stopping the spread of Americanism..Wake up Your country is decaying and denying its own principles...."