



THE WEE

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A MESSAGE FROM BERTRAND RUSSELL

"The wholesale slaughter of the Vietnamese, both in the south and the north of their country, is intolerable. The United States is systematically destroying a whole people by the use of napalm, chemicals, fragmentation bombs, gas, the destruction of their crops, the poisoning of their water, the levelling of their hamlets, the torture of their patriots and the bombing of their hospitals. By any conventional standards of international conduct, President Johnson is guilty of war crimes.

In the face of this barbarity, the response of the British public has been utterly inadequate. The Vietnamese people desperately need a political movement in the West such as is growing in the United States itself. It must make known the full horror of the war, support the Vietnamese demand for honouring the Geneva agreements and work for an end to American aggression in South-East Asia.

For these reasons, I am sponsoring a national conference, the details of which will appear below. It deserves the widest support."

BERTRAND RUSSELL

VIETNAM SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN is holding a conference in London on June 4th and 5th, 1966. It is the creation in Britain of a movement of support for the demands of the Vietnamese in their struggle against the war. Attendance by individuals and delegates of all parties is welcomed. Please write for further information

VIETNAM SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN, 8 Roland Gardens,

For more information on the campaign appear in **THE WEEK**, the weekly news analysis, 54 Park Road, Lenton, Nottingham.

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WILSON'S VICTORY

So. Mr. Wilson now has a majority of nearly 100. The actual event turned out to be about half-way between what most pollsters predicted and what we expected. The left is pleased with this victory, and so it should be. Who, on the left, could fail to feel satisfaction at the demise of so many leading Tory M.P.s? But more important, there has now been a decisive shift in the political situation in this country. There is no political excuse for (a) Mr. Wilson refusing to carry out those parts of the 1964 Labour Party Election Manifesto which had some anti-capitalist significance: steel nationalisation and the "nationalisation of growing points of the economy"; and (b) for the left of the Labour Party to hold back, in the slightest, in the struggle for a fully fledged socialist policy.

THE MARCH

If any reader of our paper has not made up his or her mind about going on the Easter March we urge them to make it up immediately. Coming just after the election it could hardly be more timely. It must be turned into a great demonstration warning Mr. Wilson and his team that cannot get away with their previous policies. To do this adequately it requires two things: lots of people, and militant and consistent slogans. There is nothing to be gained by putting forward confused, wishy-washy slogans in the hope that they will attract more people. Confusion and hesitation in the past paved the way for people like Anthony Greenwood to go over to the right wing. Those who acquiesced in the watering down of slogans, etc., are as much to blame as those who took this watering-down to its logical conclusion. We will be supporting the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign on the march, we hope all our readers will help the campaign on the march. The Vietnam Solidarity Campaign will be distributing 10,000 leaflets containing a message from Bertrand Russell, and will be selling N.L.F. flags. This will require a great deal of help. Please assist.

VIETNAM: THE LAST PRETENCE GONE: It is not necessary for The Week to argue that in Vietnam the Americans are engaged in propping up a hated, completely dictatorial regime. This has been done adequately by the press in the last few days. But something flows from this exposure: what is a Labour Government doing backing the Americans in this filthy business? The press is also reporting more U.S. pressure for British troops to go to Vietnam. Do we really seem that stupid? British policy in relation to Vietnam should be reversed immediately and brother Johnson told where he gets off.

A VIETNIK MANIFESTO

by Ken Coates

Those people who wish to defend, within the Labour Party, the view that British Labour owes a debt of solidarity to the Vietnamese people, in their struggles against American invasion, might like to use the following sketch for a speech which my friends and I have compiled.

'The foreign policy of the USA is to destroy communism. This is a policy which does two things. First it says that all nationalist movements in Asia are Moscow-inspired, Kremlin-financed, part of a great Russian plot. It fails completely to understand what is happening in Asia, the revolution which is taking place over large parts of the earth's surface, which ... springs from the natural needs and indigenous demands of the people ... the resistance movement ... reflects needs which are national and local.' (1)

'It would be quite contrary to the whole history of that part of the world to assume that the Indo-Chinese want to become satellites of the Chinese ... Ho Chi Minh might have been Prime Minister in a part of Indo-China - Vietnam - just as some people with whom we have disagreed in the past are now Prime Ministers in the British Commonwealth ... colonialism belongs to a past age. It undoubtedly does in Asia.' (2)

'We all know it is true that Ho Chi Minh leads the real national movement in Indo-China. Do not let us be hypocritical about it. It is time to tell the ... Americans that they are fighting an unjust war in Indo-China ... Ho Chi Minh and his rebels are not Communists by nature, but by compulsion. They are driven to be Communists in order to get national liberation.' (3)

'If we accept the Chinese revolution we must accept the Indo-Chinese revolution, and tell our friends not to waste millions of dollars in preserving a few square miles round Saigon.' (4)

'Everyone here knows, at least every miner, railwayman and agricultural worker knows, that if he were in China he would be a Communist peasant.' (5)

'Against the background of world poverty and the surging discontent which it is producing among more than half the peoples of the world, the Western nations have so far produced no policy to match the magnitude of events ... Discontent and the revolt or revolution which it brings in its train, are as natural as the Revolt of Englishmen in the seventeenth century against the claims of Charles I ... It is born of the same spirit which inspired the Chartists and the early socialist movement in Britain. It will not be put down.' (6)

'The responsibility for saying that the issue in Indo-China must be settled by force rests upon those who maintain an Imperialist Government in Indo-China.' (7)

'America's record in the recognition of unpopular Governments in the East is so bad that she tends to bring discredit on any Government that she recognises.' (8)

'Of course.' (9)

'There are liberal Americans who are anxious to see Indo-China ... liberated from what they call old-fashioned colonialism. We cannot talk to those Americans when, at the same time, we approach Washington with the begging-bowl held out, because money talks louder than words. I am grieved and shamed when I hear that the contribution which our country can make to international affairs is lost because of the clatter of the dollars into the begging-bowl.' (10)
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PROTEST AGAINST AID BY BRITAIN FOR THE AMERICAN WAR IN VIETNAM from A.R.Karim.

The U.K. office of the Malayan People's Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee has issued the following Press Statement:-

"The decision to allow officially-organised groups of United States troops from Vietnam on a large scale to spend "rest and recreation" leave in Malaya, is a major step towards extending the U.S. war in Vietnam to Malaya and other parts of Asia. Tunku Abdul Rahman's puppet government has already paved the way for their entry by making it an offence to publish any activity of these troops. This decision is the direct result of the British imperialist co-operation with the U.S. in its plans to drag British imperialism into still deeper involvement in the U.S. aggression in Vietnam. The territory of Malaya is already used by British imperialism as a forwarding-centre for British arms for the U.S. forces in Vietnam, and as a training-base for "jungle warfare" under the U.S. - British material assistance arrangement on Vietnam and Laos. Now the U.S. is stepping-up its efforts to get a military foothold in Malaya, and the British Labour Government, no doubt eager to lay its hands on some of the U.S. Dollars these troops will spend in Malaya to help it through its deep economic crises, has willingly bartered yet again the lives and territory of Malaya.

The British Government which negotiated this deal is thus directly responsible for further jeopardising the lives, the country and the resources of the Malayan people. The fact that both the Abdul Rahman and Lee Kuan Yew regimes acquiesced in this deal confirms again their role as agents of imperialism and enemies of the people.

The Malayan People's Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee is confident that all Malaysians will unite to resist this latest threat to their lives and their homeland. We are confident also that all Afro-Asian-Latin American peoples will intensify their solidarity action in support of the heroic people of Vietnam in their resistance against U.S. aggression, and in support of one another's national liberation struggles."

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Vietnik Manifesto - continued.

'You can get into pawn, but don't then talk of an independent foreign policy.' (11)

I ought to name my colleagues in the team which drew up this declaration of faith. They are:

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|----------------------|---|
| (1) Barbara Castle | (2) Clement Attlee |
| (3) Richard Crossman | (4) Richard Crossman |
| (5) Aneurin Bevan | (6) Aneurin Bevan, Harold Wilson,
and John Freeman |
| (7) Michael Foot | (8) Woodrow Wyatt |
| (9) Ken Coates | (10) Jennie Lee |
| (11) Harold Wilson. | |

Of course, it is understood that this particular faith is rather more in intended for declaration than practice, and most of my colleagues would prefer to wait until they rejoin the Opposition before they declare it again.

I speak to you today from Hanoi as one American to another. Like you I love my country and like you I believe in justice and human freedom. Brothers- you know what kind of war we are fighting against the people of Vietnam. It is barbaric. It is an aggressive war of conquest that all of us hate and few of us understand. When we fought for our own independence and freedom, no-one had to tell us what it was about or draft us to make us fight. And we didn't have to go 10,000 miles. We fought in our revolutionary war against foreign troops, mercenaries and Benedict Arnold. We had only pitch-forks and muskets and we hid in forests and fields. We were rag-tag and the occupiers were the strongest army of that day. We were hungry and poor. We fought them house by house and farm by farm. That war was our war of liberation. They said we were terrorists. We, Americans, in our own towns and villages! And they, the colonial occupier, they were the ones calling us rebels and rabble...

Who came thousands of miles over the sea to kill and destroy? The British did it to us and we are doing it to the Vietnamese. Who shows that heroism, that love of country, that deep belief in freedom and justice which is more powerful than any weapon ever made? We did in 1776; the people of Vietnam do today. We are fighting the same war against them that the Nazis did against the people and for the same reasons. Let me quote from the New York Times of Feb.12th,1950: "Indo-China is a prize worth a large gamble. In the North are exportable tin, tungsten, manganese, coal, lumber and rice; rubber, tea, pepper and hides. Even before World War II Indo-China yielded dividends estimated at 300 million dollars per year." Eisenhower said in 1953: "If Indo-China goes, the tin and tungsten we so greatly value would cease coming. We are after the cheapest way to prevent the occurrence of something terrible- the loss of our ability to get what we want from the riches of the Indo-Chinese territory and from south-East Asia."....

So we are the cannon-fodder. We are the ones they deceive into killing Vietnamese, attacking, occupying, using gas and chemicals, bombing their schools and hospitals- all this horror to protect the empire of our rich men. They own 60% of the world's resources. That's the real and only reason we pour out 60 billion dollars on arms. That's why we occupy countries everywhere and keep over 3,000 bases on other people's soil and invade every country which tries to free itself as we did in 1776. We invade Vietnam, Dominican Republic, Congo and set up our stooges everywhere. The men who sit in the Pentagon and push the buttons- they're the ones who sit on the boards of directors and sign those military contracts- for themselves. They send us out here as company cops to protect their stolen property...

I've travelled all through North Vietnam while the bombs were falling. Let me tell you this. We're bombing every hospital and sanatorium, every school, every church. I've seen the people who were strafed running out of hospitals, the old-age homes, on crutches. Red Cross flags were flying on the buildings. We are using lazy-dogs which slice-up kids in villages from one end of the country to another. We're using poisons. We are using gas and that gas is poison and we know it. It kills our own soldiers even when they wear gas masks. And we're using chemiclas which kill people as well as destroy their food. And those tin-pot Hitlers in Saigon have put millions of people in concentration-camps under our orders.

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"... Labour was a party that preached sweeping nationalisation- 30 years ago... Nationalisation was then seen as the sovereign remedy for a fundamental economic sickness. Today, with the worst social evils of 30 years ago overcome in a mixed economy, Poverty is seen in a remediable social accident. Clause Four or no Clause Four, Labour's leadership plainly believes in a mixed economy... People well to the Left of Mr. Wilson have become aware that the good society is not produced by universal state-ownership on the Iron Curtain model, and that both efficiency and freedom are better safeguarded in a socially-guided but fragmented economy, complete with a large and vigorous private sector. The fact that steel is to be subjected to some form of public-ownership does not put in question Labour's rejection of large-scale nationalisation. Steel is the only industry due to be treated in this way. The explicit and particular commitment in this case has made difficult any alternative policy. Labour's economic plans are not in any way geared to more nationalisation; they are directed towards increased production on the basis of the continued existence of a large private sector... though profits may be squeezed temporarily by taxation and government price policy, they must and will, over a longer period, increase significantly even if not proportionately to increased production. Share values will continue to reflect assets and earning power- even after a 40% Corporation Tax and a Capital Gains Tax which, at 30%, can hardly be described as confiscatory...

"... a Government that takes responsibility for guiding private industry towards socially useful ends makes business enterprise more reputable and hence more durable. The successful business man will increasingly be seen as a valued executant of public policy rather than as a self-seeking adventurer... No individual or economic group works well in an atmosphere of public disapproval, and Labour leaders should understand that businessmen, too, have their susceptibilities; they are entitled to good repute as well as reasonable profit.

"For their part, businessmen should show less sensitivity and more sense. It is time they realised that a ringing political slogan is often used as a sop to party diehards or as an anaesthetic while doctrinal surgery is being carried out... For 18 months, when he was vulnerable to pressure from any small group on his Left, Mr. Wilson showed no sign of departing from his moderate courses or of softening his forthright exposition of them. The deterrent to rebellion with a big majority, as with a small one is the danger of defeating the Government. Mr. Wilson is no more vulnerable now than he was after October '64. He has no more reason to swerve from his chosen path of moderation than he had then."

BROADCAST OVER HANOI RADIO, cont'd

They torture and mutilate every patriot they can get their hands on. Washington is making us war criminals. Like the SS. The difference between them and us is not noticeable to the people of Vietnam... The brass-hats and the money-boys at home have made us their victims... We have as much right to our country as those in Washington who have stolen it and who make our name stink all over the world. Let Johnson and McNamara come here in their underwear and fight their own battle if they want to. But we must go home..

The above speech has had to be shortened. The original is printed in the Vietnam Solidarity Bulletin, available from Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, 8, Roland Gdns., London. S.W.7.

ENCOURAGING START FOR CAMBRIDGE C.S.E. from Ian Taylor

The inaugural meeting of the Cambridge branch of the C.S.E. attracted 23 people despite having to compete with the Labour's candidate's meeting at the same time. Representatives from the N.U.R., U.S.D.A.W., A.S.W., the local Labour Party, Y.C.L. and N.A.L.S.O. participated in a lively discussion around the topic "Incomes Policy and the Attack on the Trade Unions" led by Ivor Jordan of the A.S.W. and Bob Rowthorn of the Department of Economics in the University. It was agreed to follow up this meeting with one on the left's counter-attack on the Incomes Policy, and a committee spanning the town and University was formed to organise further activities.

EAST LONDON C.S.E. IN ACTION

by John Strauther

Since the inaugural meeting of the East London CSE on February 20 considerable activity has taken place, though it has not been possible to convene another meeting, and the steering committee has met once.

Islington This area was chosen as a priority for CSE activity because of the active tenants' movement and acute social and political problems there. Since the inaugural meeting the convenor and other members and supporters have been in close touch with the tenants' movement, CARD and others. A new executive has been elected by the Islington Tenants and Residents Association including CSE members and supporters, and has taken the initiative in calling a meeting which established a co-ordinating committee of private and council tenants, CARD members and, it is hoped, trade unions. This body has sponsored a meeting with parliamentary candidates in Islington.

Trade unions and incomes policy A conference on this topic for trade unions is being organised by Bob Rowthorne for the end of April. Provisionally, it is intended to hold three sessions with the following speakers:

1. Economic crisis; John Hughes, John Palmer.
2. The law and the shop steward; Jack Jones, Jack Dash, Geoff. Carlsson.
3. Incomes distribution; Bob Rowthorn, Henry Collins, Bill Rogers.

Further details will be circulated to members and organisations later.

Trade union and immigrant workers Is the subject of a conference called by the East London Citizens Council at Toynbee Hall on Saturday, April 23 from 9.30 - 1.30. Speakers include union officials and shop stewards involved in the recent strike of Indian workers at Woolf's Rubber works, Southall.

CENTRE FOR SOCIALIST EDUCATION 1966 SUMMER SCHOOL

This will be held from 10th to 17th September
at Woodlands Holiday Camp, Sevenoaks, Kent.

Topics will include: The Present Crisis, Marxism in the Modern World, Incomes Policy, The Role of the Labour Party and Socialist Strategy.

Speakers will include: Ralph Miliband, Ken Coates, Ernie Roberts, Perry Anderson, Robin Blackburn, Peter Sedgwick, Geoff. Carlsson.

Fee £10 per person for full week. Initial deposits of £2 to:

Ken Tarbuck, 53, Warwick Rd., Stratford, London E. 15.

The annual conference of the National Association of Labour Student Organisations was held this year at Wortley Hall, near Sheffield, from March 28th to April 1st. This unfortunately clashed with the General Election, since it was impossible, for financial reasons, to postpone it, so all 70 delegates went into Sheffield Heeley constituency on polling day and helped to win the seat for Labour with one of the largest swings in the country.

Perhaps the most important of all policy debates at the conference centred around attempts to amend NALSO's position on industrial policy. These were defeated, and the conference overwhelmingly reasserted NALSO's opposition to incomes policy and anti-Trades Union legislation. On other major political issues NALSO once again expressed opposition to the Government's immigration policy and declared its complete support for the Vietnamese National Liberation Front and the people of Vietnam in their struggle for freedom against the American occupation. Ho Chi Minh was once again re-elected as an honorary Vice-President.

The conference also opposed the expulsion of Ken Coates from the Labour Party, and the refusal of the NEC to endorse John Palmer and Constance Lever as Parliamentary candidates. It was disappointing that there was little that was new said in these debates, and no real attempt to carry forward negative positions of opposition to government and party leadership actions into more positive alternative programs. The most interesting debates were on international economic policy, where the conference discussed the kind of programs around which international co-operation might be possible; about underdeveloped countries where the roles of legal or illegal, revolutionary or social democratic parties were discussed, and about student affairs.

It is, perhaps, inevitable that debate in a student organisation should be largely static since each year there is a new influx of students into the universities, and the same old arguments have to be fought through again. For NALSO the most important thing is to find organisational ways of strengthening the left in universities. This was highlighted by the record of NALSO membership, which had remained static at about 6,500 for two years, despite a rapid increase in the number of university students. Since the previous increases in membership had been concentrated in the years of CND activity, 1959-61, and the collapse of the Tory government 1963-64, the obvious conclusion is that NALSO activity is tending to react passively to outside circumstances rather than generating any dynamic of its own. (NALSO is not the only section of the left of which this is true.)

The problem for NALSO is to find ways of overcoming the tendency of students to concentrate on purely theoretical discussion inside their own university, that is to say to find a role for NALSO as a national organisation. The conference outlined two main directions of action, thus taking a step forward. The first was in student affairs where recent events in the National Union of Students (the ISC debate, increased politicisation) and in individual universities (the Glasgow and Cambridge discipline scandals etc.) offer opportunities for political action directly related to students' own life-situations. NALSO will hold a school on the experience of UNEF (French) and other radical student movements abroad, and will hold meetings and issue posters on the conflict as it develops. The other projected line of action was in the CSE. A working paper was accepted urging that CSE offer scope for students to use their opportunities and special skills in research in ways directly useful to the labour movement and to involve themselves in the movement. The conference instructed the executive to affiliate NALSO to CSE and to co-operate fully with it. As a first step NALSO will not hold its usual summer school this year, but will join in the CSE summer school.

"The less we see of my practising brethren in industrial relations" said Professor K.W. Wedderburn, holder of the Sir Ernest Cassell Chair of Commercial Law at the University of London, "the better it is for trade unions, the workers they represent and industrial relations." I can only touch on a few points of the talk on "The Trade Unions and the Law" that Professor Wedderburn gave to some 150 London Branch officers and stewards at the beginning of February. One point that recurred throughout the talk was that it is essential to keep the law out of collective bargaining, that industrial peace and work cannot be imposed by injunction. During the last 50 years, the trade unions have not been very concerned about the law, because there has been, more or less, agreement that it was the job of the parties in industry to get on with the job of negotiating and, if necessary, fight it out.

Up to the end of the 19th century, decisions of the Courts were based solely on criminal law and were, therefore, a barrier to trade union organisation and to industrial relations. The trade unions at the time being solely an industrial movement, demanded the protection of Parliament. This was first partially given in the Act of 1875 and a little more substantially in the Trades Dispute Act of 1906....During the inter-war period, the understanding that it was better to keep the law out of collective bargaining was accepted by the employers...At the present time, Agreements cannot be enforced in a Court of Law. In some countries there is law enforcement, but this does not necessarily mean that less working hours are lost as a result of strikes. The tradition of this country in industrial relations is for autonomous collective bargaining, except for the compulsory arbitration during the war.

Judges are now finding new types of offences and penalties...The amendment of the Trades Union Act in 1965 appears to have eliminated the civil conspiracy or tort to break the contract of employment in a trade dispute which threatened the unions through the *Rookes v. Barnard* decision of the House of Lords. However, it does not give protection from actions such as the *Stratford v. Lindley* case, which is based on a case in 1779, when a sea captain threatened to fire a cannon to prevent goods being unloaded from another ship. This is based on a wrongful act which causes damage. In the *Stratford v. Lindley* case, what the courts have said is that the threat of a breach of contract is as illegal as firing a cannon to procure a breach of commercial contract.....

On the positive side of the law there is very little. The Factories Act deals to some degree with health, welfare and safety, but generally is not enforced. There is a need for laws on hours, equal pay, protection against arbitrary dismissal, the widening of the Trucks Acts to non-manual workers and other positive features of law. The position today is that the employers want all sorts of legal measures to prevent stoppages of work. The engineering employers are even proposing a system of financial penalties (not fines because this would involve imprisonment) which could be deducted from wages and follow workers from job to job. Far from bringing industrial peace, such legislation would bring about industrial 007. Incursion of legality into collective bargaining would very much weaken the workers' side in bargaining. While I could write much more, I am sure space would not be available. I am sure of one thing...everybody enjoyed and learned a lot in these two hours. The concluding remarks of Professor Wedderburn were: "Keep to the traditional position. Keep the law out of industrial relations."

*This article originally appeared in NUFTO Record, April, 1966.

IMPORTANT A.E.U. ELECTION

from a special correspondent

The Ballot for the A.E.U. Executive Council No. 7 place is now in progress. All A.E.U. branches in the following districts are taking part: Ashford, Brighton, Canterbury, Chatham, Chelmsford, Croydon, Dover, Enfield, Erith, Guildford, Hastings, Kingston, London North & South, Oxford, Ramsgate, Reading, Slough, Southall, Southend, South Essex, Tonbridge and Watford. The election is to replace Claude Berridge, who is retiring. There are 4 candidates, R. Birch, J.J. Walsh, J.R. Whyman and F.J. Wrangle. The last date for voting is on April 12 and many branches are holding the ballot on the last possible date due to the election.

Reg. Birch is the best known candidate but it is thought that it will go to a second ballot with Jack Whyman, a member of the Labour Party. Reg. Birch spoke recently, in his individual capacity, at the conference which established the shop stewards defence committee in London.

ENGINEERING VOICE

from a special correspondent

The Spring, 1966, edition of Engineering Voice is out. It has the same format as the other popular Voice papers with a good cartoon on the front. This cartoon is of special interest because although it is directed against Government interference in wages negotiations it is American. It has been reproduced from the journal of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America. The caption comments that American workers have the same problems as ourselves! The paper is concerned mostly with the incomes policy question and, indeed, its front page calls "on all engineering trade unionists to fight the proposed compulsory 'early warning' law..." There are also important articles on the question of union elections.

Engineering Voice is useful to anyone who wants some handy material for the incomes policy discussions: its centre spread on "Our Classless Society" brings together some very forcible facts and figures to prove just the opposite; and its back-page article which calls for the Prices and Incomes Board to look into the cost of the Royal family is first-rate. Although the paper has a widespread national distribution the editors are very anxious to extend their distribution and would be very pleased to be put in touch with any engineering workers. If you want any copies of the papers or can assist in getting it into the hands of engineering workers, please write to: F. Brammall, 38, Woodfield Gardens, New Malden, Surrey. It costs 9d, post paid, or 9/- for the next 12 issues. As part of their promotion drive the editors are offering to send, free on request, six copies for use in getting trade union branches, etc, interested in taking orders.

G.E.C. WORKERS STRIKE AGAINST COLOUR PREJUDICE

200 workers at the General Electric Company factory at Coventry went on strike last week, demanding the transfer of a man who they accuse of race prejudice. The strikers maintain that because of the attitude of the man towards his immigrant workmates there is likely to be trouble. Union officials are intervening and the latest report we have is that they want the workers to return whilst they discuss the question with the management. We hope to carry a fuller report of this splendid example of British workers' internationalism next week.

The call by the American anti-war movement for international days of protest on the weekend of the 25th-26th of March met with notable response in London, despite the country being in the midst of feverish last minute election activity. Most of the anti-war groups carried out some type of action.

On Saturday evening, the 26th, the Youth Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament organised a demonstration of over 1,000 which wound its way through the West End, chanting slogans against the war in Vietnam. Whilst 1,000 demonstrators in a city the size of London is not very significant in itself, nevertheless it has to be appreciated when one understands that the anti war movement in this country, despite the escalation of the war in Vietnam, has been at a low ebb in recent months. The march is the first sign of an upturn. At the end of the demonstration a segment of the marchers attempted to demonstrate in front of the American Embassy, but the police were well prepared and at times actually outnumbered the protesters.

At the meeting on Friday evening at the London Welsh Association Hall, sponsored by the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign in conjunction with the American protest actions, there took place one of the clearest expressions of criticism of Wilson's policy and the whole conception that pervades the anti war movement here, that negotiations should be a focal point of the English anti war movement's resistance to the war in Vietnam. The speakers were Robin Blackburn a leading participant in the publication, New Left Review; Raymond Williams, noted writer and author of 'Culture and Society' and 'The Long Revolution'; Ken Coates, of The Week and International Socialist Journal; Ralph Schoenman of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, who had recently returned from North Vietnam. The meeting was chaired by an American now living in London, author of the recent book, 'Free World Colossus.' Robin Blackburn, the opening speaker, related his experiences in Havana, where he attended the Tricontinental Conference as an invited observer for the Russell Foundation. He noted that the English press had virtually, in these closing days of the election campaign, eliminated all mention of Vietnam from its pages, almost in deference to Mr. Wilson. One would almost conclude that there was no war going on. 'Let's face it,' he said, 'there wasn't much being said about it in the election. But we should try to make it an election issue by raising it at election meetings. Blackburn said he had met many of the young National Liberation Front fighters at Havana and they explained the nature and ferocity of their struggle. 'the Conference' he said, 'was an example of the widespread resistance by the 'third World', against imperialism.' The picture related to him by the N.L.F. members was a general picture applicable to Latin America and Africa, a world wide phenomenon that brings forth a world wide response. He mentioned the resistance movements in many countries, who never received attention in the western press. He called for the socialist movements in the imperialist countries to adopt positions of solidarity.

In his concluding remarks, he reported to the meeting that the National Liberation Front fighters told him that the time might come in the future, when it would be necessary to send volunteers to Vietnam, even if only as a token gesture and in token numbers and that one of the things we might do in this country is to collect names in preparation for this.

Raymond Williams stated that for him it was significant that the meeting was taking place in the midst of an election. He said it was important to see the connection between the various struggles and their differing forms.

Continued over/

London Vietnam activity continued

Williams continued: "I'm glad I'm here tonight speaking from this platform and that tomorrow night I will be speaking at a Labour Party meeting, and you know how dull that can be." The main problem with intellectual thinking in the West, he went on, is that it does not see the historical necessity for revolution, and here is where they fail in Vietnam. There has been an institutionalising of brutality in the colonial world, he said, and a considerable lag in liberal understanding of that brutality. "There are four common positions on Vietnam in this country," he said, "not simply two; one for and one against the Americans. On the one side there were two positions, and on the left there are two basic positions. All on the American side: one, there, is the position of containing communism; and, two, there is the position that the strategy of containing communism is incorrect, but that the Americans are doing it at the wrong time and in the wrong place."

"He demonstrated the two positions on the left by relating his own experience in February, 1965, when he came down to London from Cambridge with a group of students after they had collected several thousand signatures on a position demanding negotiations. Then suddenly the Johnson line became the Wilson line! We were left looking silly - getting down to saying what kind of negotiations.....I now see the call for negotiations as a trick, while we didn't put forward the position as a trick, but out of the best instincts. ...We must go back to the argument about revolution and democracy. We in England tend to equate revolution with disaster, disorder, and we see it in process and we want to stop it." We must have a position, he said, of support for the revolution. "We must see that violence is built into the system." He quoted Tom Paine, who stated, when the rows of heads of the beheaded royalty in revolutionary France were pointed out to him: They are fighting with a violence they have learned from those that have oppressed them.

In a sustained attack on the leadership's position on Vietnam, Ken Coates blitzed Wilson and company with the statements they had made on the war in Vietnam when they were in opposition. "Wilson talks deliberate lies," he said, quoting Hansard and Wilson's speech to the 1965 T.U.C. "Wilson lies in his teeth when he uses Nye Bevan to bolster his argument of support for the Americans. Bevan resigned from the shadow cabinet of the Labour Party in order to influence policy. The tradition of the left was that of support for the colonial revolution, and he quoted speeches by Bevan on the Chinese revolution and Russian revolution to illustrate his case. He quoted statements by members of the present Cabinet who had accused the Tories of supporting the Americans in Vietnam because of American support for Britain's financial set-up. He denounced those in the Cabinet who used the small majority to justify their acquiescence with Wilson's support for Johnson. Speaking of Greenwood, he said, "How many times we marched behind ^{him} on the Easter March, when he used to make all those wonderful statements against the bomb and against war?" In the Wilson Government, Greenwood has been in charge of a department which ordered the using of gas against students in Bahrain, and many other misdeeds in the colonial world.

A last minute speaker was Ralph Schoenman. He had come straight from his journey to Vietnam and the United States. When in Vietnam he had collected a great deal of documentary evidence of the criminal nature of the war in Vietnam which the Americans were waging. He had used this evidence in the defence of Dave Mitchell, in the U.S., who is refusing to be drafted on legal grounds under the Nuremburg statutes. These statutes define the American methods in Vietnam as illegal under international law, the present U.S. leadership were just as much war criminals as were the Nazis.

My differences with Tony Topham and Ken Tarbuck appear to concern (a) our immediate political priorities; (b) the relationship between "foreign" and "domestic" concerns; (c) the utility of "single-issue" campaigning.

I have never claimed that international issues are "prior" in any theoretical sense (anymore than I would claim that domestic issues are theoretically prior. I merely asserted that the international issues which confront us as socialists are more grave than at present on the home front. In view of the ever present threat of nuclear war, the attempts being made by the West to smash liberation movements, the deteriorating character of race relations throughout the world and the increasing immiseration of two-thirds of the world's population, I should have thought that this was a rather unexceptionable assertion. Admitting, of course, the very gross social evils still present within Britain, it nonetheless seems to me that socialists should address a good deal more energy and thought to these international problems than they are currently doing. Would Tony Topham and Ken Tarbuck care to deny that the Left at present is giving virtually no attention at all to the problem of nuclear weapons, the Cold War, the Third World, and that its challenges to the Right on such scandals as the independent nuclear deterrent, East of Suez policy, the arms bill, Vietnam, Aden and Rhodesia has been feeble in the extreme? Would they care to deny, in short, that the Left offers no alternative socialist foreign policy?

The foreign and domestic policies of any government are, of course, closely related both in the sense that very much the same political assumptions and concerns often underly policy-making in these respective spheres and in the sense that the consequences of action in the one sphere are felt in the other. Nonetheless foreign and domestic concerns are different concerns - foreign "affairs" is obviously about relations between states or sections of states and about the internal politics of other countries. Furthermore new factors are introduced in international issues which are not present (or are only felt very indirectly) in domestic politics. Thus the Americans are in Vietnam because of what they conceive to be a military threat to their attempt to "contain" Communism in Asia, because the liberation of South Vietnam would immeasurably weaken their political position throughout Asia, because the American nation is ideologically committed to a crusade against Communism in the name of "liberty", and so on. These motives cannot be deduced or derived from the internal politics of the U.S.A. Likewise socialists have to recognise that we have to confront the arguments for these foreign commitments in the terms they occur - we merely "fudge" these issues by talking about the needs of the capitalist economy, etc. We must also recognize that there is a distinct possibility (especially under a Labour government) of advances being made on the home front whilst foreign policy remains as reactionary as ever.

I am not indissolubly wedded to single-issue campaigning, but I certainly do not think it can be objected to because (a) it assumes the neutrality of the "state" - after all if we do not believe that we can influence the policies of non-socialist governments then it is difficult to see how any of the reforms of the last fifty years have been achieved; (b) there is a much better tactic "working for socialism" - unfortunately we are presented now with specific evils and cannot defer the fight against these until the remote time when we assume "state power". Single issue campaigning is a poor tactic if we are offered anything better. Personally I would be delighted to join a movement or party which had a broad socialist programme and was fighting for it. Unfortunately no such movement exists. As the only groups which really fight on the issues which worry me are non-party "liberal-minded idealistic" pressure groups like CND, CARD, BCPV, and the Radical Alliance they will continue to receive my support. Of course it would be wonderful if the "independent working class" was committed to these objectives as well. If it were then we would have a genuinely socialist labour movement and there would be no need of these pressure groups. But this is not so.