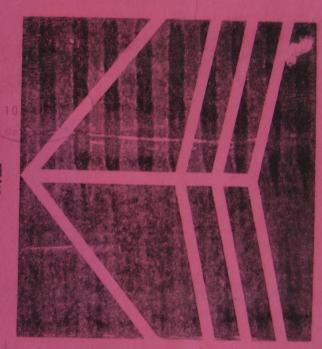
INTERNATIONAL 6

MARCH-APRIL 1969

A REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST MAGAZINE

LEFT ACTION CONFERENCE

A TURNING-POINT FOR THE LEFT ?



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THE CONFERENCE OF LEFT ACTION: A TURNING POINT FOR THE LEFT?

The Conference for Left Action is undoubtedly a meeting unique in the history of the Australian Labor Movement. There have been many conferences of different types in the past, but in the vast majority of cases the stress has been on that vague 'broadness' which has meant unity on the lowest common denominator often a series of meaningless platitudes. In more recent times there have been effective conferences, but largely ones around specific problems working out the basis for a genuine united front in action.

The conference of Left Action is. however, more ambitious. It is frankly a conference of the Left, consciously limiting itself to those qho regard themselves as socialist and for radical change.

The agenda will allow some serious exchange of views on the nature of present Australian capitalism and on the means to change it. But it is not intended as a 'talk-feast' as the very title implies. Yet the action that flows from the conference may be limited in the immediate period, and be much more significent in providing further means for confication of basic questions before any really significant action can be adopted.

SELF-, MANAGEMENT AT CENTRE OF PREOCCUPATIONS

We believe that the question of self-management will be at the centre of most of the preoccupations of the Conference. No really viable policy can be worked out in any sphere of internal Australian politics unless

it recognises the changes that have occurred in Australian capitaliam and the Australian working class in the past decades. These changes can be summed up as the satisifaction of a great deal of the traditional demands of the bulk of the working class which dated from the Depression, and the emergence of new demands and needs which were hitherto submerged in the search to satisfy elementary human needs (food, clothing, housing etc. .) These new demands and needs of the masses result from their increasing alienation and lack of power in controlling almost any aspect of their working and living environment. It is nameless bureaucracies which decide the vast majority of questions vital to the everyday life of the masses.

This does not mean that traditional struggles around wages, etc. do not occur. On the contrary just because they are traditional, they are often used to express a deeper discontent among the masses -- a discontent arising from alienation and powerlessness. That means that

militants must seek on all occasions to take traditional struggles beyond traditional forms (the limited strike, stopwork meetings) and develop new demands during traditional struggles which will express the new needs of the masses.

It is precisely because the traditional form of struggle is easily contained and dealt with, that the traditional union leaderships will turn to them when pressure from the base and the militants becomes too great. Traditional forms of action can often serve to contain militancy and discontent, while ending often in disillusion when they fail to give even limited results.

What are the new forms of struggle that can be adopted and link up by their very nature with the new needs of the masses ? A strategy of active occupations rather than the walkout strike seems to us to be the most suitable form. Active , because what is really to be aimed at is a working example of self-management on the level of the job, school or factory. It is not therefore a question of a passive sit-down but, through a series of meetings, to work out in detail a way in which, at least for a short but demonstrative period, the workers can operate and manage the work-place themselves.

This is not as far-fetched as it may sound to those conditioned to traditional forms of action. The railway workers , for example, during their recent strike , could have quite conceivably and without such action appearing radically different, or way-out revolutionary, occupied the railways and organised free transport services for the public , managed by the railway workers themselves (or alternatively, collect the fares to be disposed of in some wey) -- thus not alienating the mass of the commuting workers and

at the same time setting an example. Such action, by the very nature of Industry and its inter-connections, could not have lasted any length of time, unless such a move spread. In any case, even an example over a few days would have been of value. Even if traditional leadership, and the conditioned reflexes of older workers would have had such suggestions rejected, self-management as an alternative form of action and goal would have been planted in the minds of the most militant unionists. What is needed in all industries is a campaign to make self-management understood first by the militants and second by the masses as a whole.

TOWARDS A CONFERENCE ON SELF-MANAGEMENT AND WORKERS CON YROL.

Self-management and workers control must be spelt out in terms of particular industries and become a transitional policy of struggle for socialism in each industry.. In Britain, the workers control movement has held a series of annual conferences over the past years and has in a series of industries drawn up programmes for workers control. While, in our opinion, these programmes are open to criticism simply because they are for workers control and leave out self - management (1) , and therefore have reformist overtones, the material produced is worthy of serious study, and emulation.

In Australia, virtually no groundwork has been done on self-management and workers control as applied to different industries. If the Left Action Conference, after discussing the whole question, could make serious preparations for such a conference (1) See my article in April-May 1969 AUSTRALIAN LEFT REVIEW on this. this year, then the Left Action itself would have been worthwhile.

Self-management does not simply apply to industry, but applies asw well to the whole of economic, cultural and social life. For that reason, a concept of self-management as a globaconcept means that it can be applied to universities and schools. It also has application to the struggles against bureaucratic decisions affecting living amenities. The best example of this is the struggle in Balmain against the chemical tank farm and the container wharves, whose installation was made by bureaucratic decision, disregarding the living conditions of the people in .t .e Balmain area. Such questions formerly looked upon with disdain on the Left, under the optic of self-management , become powerful means of mass mobilisation against the all-powerful State bureaucracy.

THE POLITICAL PARTIES OF THE WORKING CLASS AND THE NEED FOR A MASS REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST PARTY

After the question of self-management as applied to all spheres of life, the Conference will have to pay serious consideration to the different parties and organisations of the Lefta and of the working class, and their relevance to socialism in Australia. The Conference must try to avoid here a repetition of old shibboleths mouthed over the past forty years. Let us try to get down to essentials.

Why has the ALP the mass following still of the working class? Are there signs of a drift in allegiance among the young workers away from the ALP, and if so, why aren't they voting for the CPA? Why has the CPA vote fallen in past elections from even small votes before? Why, despite its industrial strength has the CPA failed to build any mass audience politically? Is it best to boycott the elections and simply concentrate by mass actions on exposing the farce of the parliamentary system?

While these questions have been discussed before, we must remember the new context in which the debate is taking place.

A similar debate is taking place in the Australian Section of the Fourth International and in the Revolutionary Socialist Alliance, because we believe these questions are all vital to the future of the Left. The next issue of INTERNATIONAL will deal with this problem at length.

It is clear however that both the CPA and the ALP Left are in a state of deep movement, both ideologically and organisationally.

CAIRNS RESIGNATION FROM VICTORIAN STATE EXECUTIVE POINTS TO CRISIS IN A.L.P. LEFT

The tra dormation of Dr. JF Cairns into a Wilsonian figure on the ALP Left has been a notable movement over the past few years and one which deserves a study in itself, as there are many who still seem to have illusions in this man. Those who recall Wilson's fighting words in the early Sixties, around such issues as South Africa, wage freeze, etc., and now look at his sorry acts have a prefigurement of the future of Jim Cairns if, as is now quite likely, he becomes the figure to rally the ALP after a near-

The Victorian ALP E ecutive, with all the criticisms that it is possible to make against it, contain men who obtain their inspiration from Marxism, and who show some daring in their struggle against the rightist swing of the Whitlams and Cairns in parliamentary office. They have made it quite clear to the Whitlams and Cairns that if they force them out of the ALP or are able to rally sufficient forces even internally, they will be willing to form a Left Labor Part y outside, with a strong organisation and a membership of several thousands, able to challenge the Whitlamite Party at the polls and take a sizeable vote away from them.

It is the duty of the Left as a whole to come to the support of the Victorian ALP Executive in the present challenge it faces and to remove all equivocation and hesitation born from illusions in Cairns.

The formation of a Left Socialist Party in Australia would certainly follow any expulsion of the Victorian State Executive and would put the whole struggle of the Left in a new perspective. Yet the aim must be the removal of the Whitlams as a antisocialist force.

THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE

While the development in the Victorian ALP should be kept in mind, as it can have a vital bearing or he evolution of the Left as a mass force and can bring in new forces not directly concerned with the Left Action Conference, the evolution. of the Communist Party is of great importance, as it groups in its ranks. the majority of socialist militants, at least those over 35.

The CPA is in the process of cutting the umbilical cord with the Soviet bureaucracy. In fact, that has already occurred at the level of leadership, and is certainly so among the widest layers of the youth. The process of making such an agonising break is now reaching down among the older Party members.

A vital debate is now taking place about the nature of the causes of stalinism. It is true to say that most antistalinists in the CPA now accept the concept of a bureaucracy, without perhaps going very deeply into all its implications.

It is disappointing to read Eric Aarons (DISCUSSION, March 1969, p. 24) stating: .. 'DG (Tribune, Sept. 25) claims that the real reason for the intervention and a multitude of other things is the desire of the bureaucratic caste to defend its privileges and powers ... In my opinion this is a crude application to a complex situation of a sort of 'economic determinism'; it is a travesty of analysis which obscures rather than helping to reveal the truth. Its acceptance only means swapping one set of blinkers for another. "

The obscurantism lies not with DG. No doubt a similar thing could be said about capitalism. It is a simplification to say that there are two conflicting classes in this country -- the working class and the capitalist class, and if one remained content with that generalisation, then one would be in a sense being rather crude. Yet that simplification is necessary for any real understanding of our society and its potential for change. We can then go ahead and modify that conclusions, examine intermediary layers, look at the new

sharacteristics of both classes, examine the complexity of modern society, et But none of that would invalidate the truth of the concept of two conflicting classes.

Similarly, in the Soviet Union, the bald statement of fact , that a privileged bureaucracy exists in the country and controls the State apparatus and the CPSU and guides the policy of the Soviet Union essentially in its own interests . does not go in any depth into the true nature of this bureaucracy, of its dual nature (2), nor into the complexity of its composant layers , to the differentiating tendencies within it, to its relations with other Workers States bureaucracies.

But you cannot understand all the complexity of the Soviet Union unless you accept the existence of the bureaucracy concerned with its own preservation.

It is true, too, that there is no detailed and complex marxist analysis of the present structure and nature of the Soviet bureaucracy . The achievement of Leon Trotsky in the Thirties in making such an analysis in REVOLUTION BETRAYED has not been matched. But sufficient information is clear to indicate his basic conclusion on the existence of a privileged bureaucratic caste remains well founded.

The "economic determinism" remains essentially with Eric Aarons, for he attempts to jump from the economic base which gave rise to Stalinism in large part (low economic and cultural level, exhaustion after the War, etc. .) and jump immediate to the political and even personal manifestations of stalinism , ignoring the social class and castes that have arisen as a result of these economic conditions. It would be like trying to explain Nixon's actions in the USA by referring directly to the economic conditions of capitalism and ignoring the existence of the capitalist class as the decisive force which interprets what Nixon does. (Such a mistake of course is the common error of US liberals.)

All this may seem academic and without much point. But because the CPA has been a stalinist party over the past thirty years, identified with all the crimes of stalinism, and tainted with stalinist opportunism and sectarianism, it must profoundly reject stalinism and adopt a fully revolutionary socialist position on the Soviet Union. Anything less can only lead to apologetics for stali nism in one form or another, or, on the other hand, the total rejection of the remaining achievements of the October Revolution which even Stalin was unable to wipe out,

A revolutionary socialist position on the USSR means a unconditional defence and support for the remaining conquests of the October Revolution (abolition of capitalism, planned and nationalised economy, etc.,), and uncompromising opposition to all the anti-socialist acts of the bureaucratic capte which seized power under Stalin, and still maintains it. But it also implies an understanding of the dual nature of the Soviet bun aucracy which can still defend in its own bureaucratic way the social base of the USSR.

Absolute clarity and forthrightness on the nature of Stalinism and the USSR is a condition sine qua non for the rehabilitation of the CPA in the minds of the working class and for it to be able to play a political role .

The Left Action Conference will be a means for militants of the 12.3.69 on dual nature of bureaucracy. CPA. revolutionary socialist workers and students, and independent socialists and the ALP Left (or some elements of it) to get together and discuss the way in which the "deStalinisation" of the CPA will be able to help the construction of a revolutionary socialist party which could speak with confidence to the masses, with a forthright position on the USSR and with a revolutionary policy based on self-management in all spheres of social, economic and cultural life.

The transformation of the CPA, its reconstitution and revitalisation, could be the a siest way to the formation of such a Party. But the integration of the mass of radicalised students and youth in the CPA would presuppose that it would have to change still quite radically on all the questions we have mentioned here. The Left Action Conference promises to be an important landmark in the history of the Australian Left and opens up tremendous possibilities for a new beginning.

DENIS FRENEY. Sydney, 29 March 1969.

SELF - MANAGEMENT AND WORKERS CONTROL...

This article, first published in SOUS LE DRAPEAU DU SOCIALISME, organ of the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency of the Fourth International and printed in Paris, takes up a question of importance for all socialists -- the relation between self-management and workers control. In doing so the author polemicises with Pierre Frank, a leader of the "United Secretariat" of the Fourth International, and Ernest Mandel, adso a leader of the "US". A publication by Mandel, Workers Under Neo-Capitalism, has been published by the Third World Bookshop and reflects some of the attitudes referred to herein, although no specific mention is made of that article.

Among the most important questions posed for the revolutionary vanguard in France during the May-June 1968 crisis were on the nature of the crisis and of the programme of the leadership.

How did the different tendencies calling themselves Trotskyist, and especially the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" respond to these questions?

There is a strange lack of clarity among supporters of this tendency on

these questions.

While Pierre Frank states that
"May 1968" will enter History as 'the
month in which the Socialist Revolution
began" (1) . Ernest Mandel in particular
uses the vaguest possible terms of
"revolutionary upsurge" and "crisis"
(2), and JCR leaders Daniel Bensaid and
Henri Weber speak of May "remaining"
simply "pre-revolutionary." (3)

They are not correct in trying to make the objectively revolutionary

nature of the May crisis with the real juncture of the crisis at all levels of society, dependent on the existence or not of a mass revolutionary leadership.

Such an analysis would throw out of focus the real relationship between what is basic -- that is, the objective situation -- and the subjective factor, which, while being very important, is decided in the final analysis by the dynamism of the objective situation.

The Revolution, for marxists, is not the result of 'leadership' but above all of the dialectic of the objective situation.

A genuinely socialist revolution can break out without the 'leadership'' in the form of a 'bolshevik party'' existing.

The victory of the revolution demands of course that a mass leadership be formed during the very process of the Revolution that has begun. That is, a leadership from the point of view of obtaining a mass base can only do so by creating it during the revolution and thanks to the revolution, and cannot exist outside the revolution.

That in turn means that the programme is decisive for the political vanguard to become, in the very process of the revolution that has begun, its actual political leadership.

The nature of this precise programme also expresses the degree of understanding of the vanguard at a given time of the situation and determines to a large extent its ability to get to grips with objective reality.

Consequently, to separate the "objective" from the "subjective", to thus minimise the dynamism of the objective situation, means to

actually limit the programme, and therefore as a whole to hinder precisely the formation of the necessary mass leadership and the forward march of the revolution.

Marxists understand that a revolution never begins on a very high level of political consciousness on the part of the masses.

When , however, the masæs launch into a general strike lasting weeks, starting from all types of immediate demands, there results in any present-day capitalist country an objectively revolutionary situation.

MORE THAN A GENERAL STRIKE IN FRANCE

In May-June in France there was not simply a strike, but a specific situation in which 10 million workers struck (by far the biggest in France's history) following a clearly revolutionary mobilisation of the mass of students. This student mass occupies in all advanced capitalist countries, a much greater place than previously.

Within a few days, the crisis encompassed all spheres of society while the regime was struck by a kind of paralysis and really, in fact vacated power.

To note the decomposition of the regime and the vacation of power, and to speak on the other hand of simply a "pre-revolutionary situation" in France, as do the JCR leaders mentioned above, is a way of underestimating the possibilities on the "subjective" level with which they are rightly preoccupied.

But let us now pass on to an examination of the question of the programms, which will help clarify the whole of the problem.

Pierre Frank in fact is the dearest in admitting that generally

speaking , the revolutionary minority was seriously handicapped by the lack of a transitional programme measuring up to the demands of the situation in May-June 1968.

Frank tends to approve the way the CFDT (and he should have added, the FSU) posed the need for workers to take part in the management of the emeryrises. (4)

But Pierre Frank then falls luto a trap when , after criticising certain ambiguous formulations of the CFDT on self-management, he adds to the confusion by speaking of "self-management in the universities, factories and elsewhere" as only being a force in a State freed from capitalism and with workers democracy.

Thus he also denies the value of self-management, including as a transitional slogan in a revolutionary period as that of May-June 1968, and does not include it in the outline of a transitional programme he advances for a workers government based on committees. In place of self-management he advocates "workers control", a preparatory stage to self-management.

Thus Pierre Frank, while clearly influenced by the enormous popularity the idea of self-management spontaneously received in May-June 1968, and while having clearly admitted the revolutionary nature of the situation, is for "workers control" over the economy and State, and not for direct workers management of both.

With Ernest Mandel, the reasoning is stranger, more tortuous, more embarrassed. For him the essential task in May-June should have been 'to succeed in the main factories of the country in havingnass occupation and democratic election of strike committees,

The task "was most certainly neither insurrection nor the seizure of power," "All those", advises Ernest Mandel,
"who believe socialism possible and
necessary, must act so that this occurs
'next time" '. A very restrained resolution, we must admit, but one which flows
consistently from Ernest Mandel's
appreciation of the objective situation.
Ernest Mandel also spoke of selfmanagement in May-June 1968 in
France. How does he account for the
success of this "new idea".

"As a general propaganda singan, there is nothing wrong with it", he admit

But immediately, as through habit, he begins to erect a series of protective barriers around self-management. First of all, an important terminological correction: replace "self-management of the enterprises" by "self-management by the workers."

Further, the latter "must be understood to include the democraticcentralist planning of investment and some further guarantees."

As if anyone ever proposed of leaving out of socialism based on self-management the indispensible planning of the economy! Even the Yugoslavs, whom Ernest Mandel never stops criticising. do not suggest it.

SELF-MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

The problem in a regime where self-management applies not only at the enterprise level, but progressively becomes the guiding principle at all levels and in all fields, is not to ensure the centralism of the Plan, but rather the truly democratic formulation and application of the plan, the self-management of the Plan in some degree by the producers and citizens.

Planning has sinned through bureaucratic centralisation up till now. This trend must be reversed and It understood that the necessary coordination on a national escale and the primacy of the interests of the social collectivity over every other indivitual element making up the collectivity, has tob be ensured by the democratic participation of the masses in the planning and administration of the State in transition.

It is not the "excesses" of salfmanagement which have caused the disadvantages in the Yugoslav system, but the still importate centralist and bureaucratic shackles that impede the full flowering of self-management at all levels and in all fields.

It is clear that in a geminely direct democracy, society would easily (more so than cases of bureauoratic centralism) all "execesses" of all types of particularism or any ami-social economic tendency.

WORKERS CONTROL AND SELF MANAGEMENT AS SLOGANS

In any case, for Ernest Mandel, "self-management" (even in his own limited definition) is only acceptable as a slogan in "pre-insurrectional situations in which the immediate overthrow of the capitalist regime is posed,"

"Self-management by the workers", he adds, "presupposes the overthrow of the power of capital in enterprises, in society and in its political power."

That was not, according to
Ernest Mandel, the situation in
France in May-June 1988, and as a
result he concludes that the correct
slogan was simply "workers control,"

"Workers control", he writes,
"is for the workers the exact equivalent
of what total 'contestation' was for
students,"

But the students, starting from total "contestation" have come to the

practice of self-management of the university.

For a few days at least, they in practice, abolished bourgeois power in the university and installed their own power.

The Sorbonne Commune was not simply "students control" over the university bourgeoiste, but the self-manging power of the students. During the days that that was possible for the students, it could have been also seen as possible in industries and public services occupied by their workers.

Occupation does not establish workers control over the virtually abolished power of Capital in these dormins, but it does pose the question of their self-management by the workers.

It is through this concrete "transitional" process that the revolutionary objective situation is transformed into a victorious revolution.

To say that the slogan that it most suitable is workers control , when the workers and students occupy industries, social services, universities and schools, rather than the slopen of self-management is clearly an abberation which in the best of cases sould be said to be a serious underestimation of the situation, There is no point in "controlling" the virtually absent and abolished "capitalist management", The task is to directly manage it. . . Once that step is taken, and the workers are at least managing the key sectors of the economy and society, the revolutionary situation takes automatically a gigantic step forward towards insurrection and seleurs of total power, That is the only valid dialectic in the transition

Ernest Mandel and his friends confuse the question to an extreme when they argue that self-management does not apply unless there is a rapid evolution to a seizure of total power.

While it is clear that self-management cannot exist for long with the State in the hands of Capital, it is also clear that the total seizure of power would be enormously eased by "self-management" of the occupied industries and services. To pass from a passive strike and occupation to direct management by the workers is to carry out the qualitative leap towards insurrection and the total seizure of power.

The slogan of "workers control" in that the restoration of capitalist power is simply speeded along, and therefore the imminent retreat of the movement.

"Duality of power" is not established by 'committees of workers control" which coexist with capitalist management and power, but by "self-mangement" bodies in a whole sector which opposes and remains outside what remains of capitalist power and management.

That is exactly what students and workers did in a number of factories and areas (although these experiences of self-management -- and not workers control -- by workers were limited in realtion to the more complete ones of the students.)

Bensaid and Henri Weber also propose "workers control committees" to give "class content" and surpass "simple physical occupation of the workplaces.

Reading their book . we are constantly aware of the confusion between "worker control", "self-management", and "duality of power" which arises among other things . from the fact that the idea of self-management arose everywhere, spontaneously, and that the most advanced achievements of the students and some workers occurred in the framework of self-management and not workers

control.

When these two JCR leaders criticise union leaders for not having "demanded the opening of the books in the occupied factories", their modesty and unreality is little short of amazing.

For it presupposes capitalist management, when the latter had been physically abolished, due to the strike and the occupation (sometimes including as well the imprisonment of the managers.

In subh a situation , there is no need to demand the opening of the such a situation means, among other things, books, since they are taken directly and self-management can operate directly.

> WORKERS CONTROL AND OPENING OF BOOKS VALID AFTER END OF STRIKE.

Only after the strike had ended, and work resumed could and should the workers demand opening of the books and "workers control", to thus help develop, despite the retreat that represents after the general strike, to bring about a future situation which would be favourable.

We do not speak of the retreat period which has begun, but of the revolutionary period when "all was possible. "

Let us hope that in the next inevitable crisis in France, there will be talk of 'duality of power' and committees starting from the viewpoint of "self-management", of the direct democratic management of the enterprises, social services, universities and school, in strike and under occupation, by the workers and students.

Let us hope too that a new situation will exist as far as the revolutionary leadership is concerned.

It is obvious that no single organis

will brable to act as the revolutionary leadership. From the beginning of the crisis a type of revolutionary council of representatives of all the revolution-

ary forces , including in the CPF and CGT must be formed.

But propaganda for the ideas must from now on be unceasing.

JULES MARAT, Paris, January 1969.

(1) QUATRIEME INTERNATIONALE (organ of "United Secretariat", FL.) (2) "Les Temps Modernes" -- August-September 1968.

(3) "May 1968: A General Rehearsal" (Editions Maspero)

(4) "In fact the workers are not only seeking an improvement in their immediate conditions . They do not want to be cogs in a machine which will be simply kept in better order than previously. They no longer want to be objects as they are in the capitalist economy. The leaders of the CGT through Seguy replied to these problems by calling 'self-management' 'a vague formula' on the 20th. May at Renault -- That is quite simply the reply of a bureaucrat for whom all power in the union, party, enterprise and country must be in the hands of an apparatus. The stalinist system has been and remains his model.

"But the time for stalinist systems -- which never had any marxist justification -- has long since past. It is impossible to manage society, the economy, the school and workers organisations etc. . without the democratic association of the producers, consumers, participants and members. It is the employers and bureaucrats who are proving increasingly super lous " -- May 1968 - First Phase of the French Socialist Revolution , by Pierre Frank, page 31. NB: CGT -CP -led Labour Federation; CFDT --formerly left Catholic, now linked with

PSU (Unified Socialist Party); JCR- Revolutionary Communist Youth.

WHAT IS THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST ALLIANCE ?

The Revolutionary Socialist Alliance was formed in Sydney late in January this year. Other RSA's are being formed in almost all States. You can get full information about this new alliance from A. McLean, PO Box 13, Balm n.

INTERNATIONAL is printed and authorised by A. McLean, PO Box 13, Balmain, NSW-2041, Australia, for the Australian Section of the Fourth International (Revolutionary Marxist Tendency.) A number of the articles published in this issue of INTERNATIONAL are translated from SOUS LE DRAPEAU DU SOCIALISME 10 cite Lesnier, Clamart - 92-FRANCE, organ of the Revolutionary Marxist tendency.

THE WORLD IN REVOLUTION
-- NOTES ON WORLD STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

REVOLUTIONARY RESISTANCE ORGANISES

We publish below extracts from a document which forms the constitutive manifesto of 'the Revolutionary Youth Movement" in Czechoslovakia.

". Living in a social system in which the mode of capitalist production and relations of production have been suppressed, but which has not begun to build a democratic and socialist society, and guided by the idea of resistance to the abuses of communist ideals and by the idea that we have the right and duty to actively fight for the achievement of these ideals against all those who dishonour them and have abused them, we proclaim the formation of the Movement of Revolutionary Youth.

"We are convinced that the road of the Czechoslovak people towards socialism, as that of the peoples of the USSR and the People Democracies is through the destruction of the bureaucratic machine, the elimination of the bureaucracy as a social layer and the establishment of a system of self-management. The system of self-management Liust be established in all fiedls of social life : in the workplaces, where it must f rm the expression of the political and acc iomic power in the form of workers cou cils . This system of self-managemen /ill allow the creative active and init ... ive of each worker to be realised, and form the basis necessary for the scientific and technological revolution which will end underconsumption and the social inequalities which result from it. Self-management and its social and practical results on the international plane will result in the

suppression of the State and its institutions.

"The road our country travelled since January provided the basis for this revolutionary road. That was interrupted by the armies of the five member countries of the Warsaw Pact.

"In the light of the experiences during the fight for socialist democracy this year, and particularly those in August and November, we are convinced that it is the working class that will play a determinant role in this struggle. The students and youth will, however, have an important role to play. We conceive of this revolutionary road as a permanent revolutionary process, being able to affect the development oft the world revolution. We are also convinced:

1. that to passively await the "process of renewal" in the Soviet Union contradicts the duty of Man whose social task, according to Marx, is to change the world about him;

2. that to limit social activity simply to pressure on the leadership of the Party and State would be politically short-sighted. That would lead to total capitulation before the Soviet leadership in which the leadership of our Party and State have engaged since 26 August this year.

which confirms each day the fact that our conviction is well based.

"In all the struggles of November there was student-worker unity, something never b fore attained. All our efforts will tend to the consolidation o this unity through a democratic exchange of views. We shall therefore seek to widen and deepen the revolutionary awareness of the youth, students and workers, to maintain their ideological unity and unity in action, and to prepare ourselves for confrontation with reactionary forces. The experiences of the glorious days of August and the great battles of November will aid us to do this. We understand that it is difficult -- if not impossible -- to oppose the enormous military potential of the occupiers by forming an army of resistance. Enriched by forms of struggle based on passive resistance, we are convinced that in this struggle , the Czechoslovak people will not only remain unconquered , but will also deliver hard blows against the burgaucratic regimes in Poland, Hungary, in the GDR and in the USSR itself. This struggle could result in a political revolution in the whol bloc of socialist countries, grouping some 300 million persons, liberate peoples, and thus begin a new epoch in the construction of socialism. It will be accompanied by anti-imperialist revolutionary struggles in the western countries. This double process -in the East and the West -- in common with the revolutionary movement

in the Third World, will lead us to the World Revolution.

"We have weighed all the risks that our action involves. We have however, no other possibility. The alternative we are offered by the leaders of the pre-August period who remain at the head of the Party and the State and who maintain, at least partially, the visage they presented before, offers no way out. It involves a policy close to adventurism the tolead our country to a political, economic and moral debacle of increasing depth.

"In the struggle for the interests of the Czechoslovak people and working class, in the struggle against all the anti-socialist forces (the Soviet army, the capitulationist section of our political leadership, the rightist fraction of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, the fascistic tendencies, etc..) which unite us, we start from the viewpoint that their power and activity are are illegal from all moral and juridicial viewpoints.

"We believe that in our activity we must:

 form an organisational structure allowing confrontation of viewpoints and unity in action of students and young workers and employees;

2. action as much as possible in other youth organisations in political social and professional fields.;

 development of unity without a rigid organisational form with other youth in concrete political actions;

4. organisation of political discussion for a wide public;

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5. the spread and propagation by all possible means of all political information and opinions;

struggle in the Third World and the West and of the activity of the "extreme left" so as to establish contacts with those who

activity of potentially revolutionary forces in the USSR and in the so-called Peoples Democracies ;

support these struggles; 7. the study, in the same way, of the

8. to give any possible fractions in the Movement of Revolutionary Youth the right of fractional activity in the 6. the study of forms of anti-imperialist framework of the movement, this activity being able to be taken in common with other fractions in the Movement, or alone.

The Movement of Revolutionary Youth is open to all youth no matter what political group or party they belong too, providing that they agree with the principles in this Manifesto "

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DANGER OF CONTAGION

The marmal law imposed on Spain had as its main base the fear of a wing of the bourgeoisie and the regime that the student unrest in Madrid and Barcelona could spark off similar movements among the workers as those which occurred in France in May-June 1968, (writes a correspondent from Spain in SOUS LE DRAPEAU DU SOCIALISME).

The suspicious death of a student Ruano Casanova, led to a mass protest by some 1,500 Spanish personalities and sparked off militant student demonstrations. The panners could have been in the Parisian Latin Quarter : "No to the bourgeois university," Dictatorship of the Proletariat", "Against the violence of the Establishment, revolutionary violence", while portraits of Marx, Bakunin and "Che" were carried. And more dangerous still : young workers marching alongside their student comrades. and together launching attacks on the police centresi in Madrid and Barcelona.

Most arrests are among leftists and: liberals -- the CP has forthe moment been spared. Despite the martial law, 20,000 workers continued their 20-day long strike in Bilbao . This , and the solidarity movement developing with them, is a sign of the serious possibilities of a victorious resistance.

Martial law seems a preventative measure At the time of its imposition, except for the signs of student revolutionary activity, the regime seemed to have everything under control. Strikes were occurring, but were not very widespread.

There was some confusion in the Workers Commissions movement which had developed rapidly as a mass movemen in the factories, especially over what tactic to follow in the coming period . Th police had broken up several underground

Franco is 76 -- even the monarchists appear to have been plotting. The 'liberal swing "was aimed mainly at making entry into the Common Market easier. However, fear of "contagion" from France seemed stronger than even this desire.

The hopes of a strong , revolutionary resistance, are good.

ITALY

NEW LEFT WING IN C. P. I.

The French malady seems to be extending into Italy as well. In the factories, workers are forming rank-and-file groups which the big union organisations are forced to take into account to draw up demands and decide on forms

These groupings are inspired by the French revolutionary crisis.

The ideas of May are also apparent in the leaderships of the Italian Communist Party, as was shown at their Congress. The rhetoric of Longo and Amendola and others who try to escape the real problems through verbiage, was there again. But in addition there was apparent a new revolutionary left, which has been in existence for some time, but whose previous ambiguities now have had to face up to the experience of May. It is also going to push them further than they were willing to go before.

They have resumed the political offensive, although still timidly, and urge the Party to tactically and strategically base itself on the rank-and-file committees of action grouping workers and students, such as were formed in France last year.

All the leaders of this "New Left "were elected to the Central Committee once more, excepting the Mayor of Naples whom it seems was not as subtle as the others.

The revolutionary regroupments now taking place in Italy could have effects throughout all of Europe.

FRANCE

STUDENTS SEARCH FOR A POLICY

The student movement, without organisation, without perspectives, without programme is today in a critical situation : the first term has passed without struggle; the 37th, UNEF (French students union) Congress could not complete its work -- only political confusion has emerged and a greater suspicion than ever of the National Bureau led by PSU comrades...

The Committees of Action as very supple organs have largely replaced the UNEF as a mobiliser , but because they lack national organisation and programme the Action Committees have been in decline They must now brrak out of their isolation and build up a programme. The revolutionary students have lost contact with the "reformist" wing. To bring them into action, the UNEF must start from their reformist illusions and draw up a genuine transitional programme and must, to get an audience among trade unionists, practice a policy of united front with the trade unions.. (from SOUS LE DRAPEAU DU SOCIALISME,,)

BOOK REVIEW

"LEFTISM" -- REMEDY FOR THE SENILE DISEASE OF COMMUNISM

by Cohn-Bendit

(This review of the book by the Cohn-Bendit brothers was first published in SOUS LE DRAPEAU DU SOCIALISME, No. 47. The book has been recently published in English.)

Cohn-Bendit's book provides us with a first-hand account and analysis by one of the main 'actors' of "May Revolution". It deserves particular attention. That is difficult by the fact that it has been written in haste, and contains a number inaccuracies, even contradictions.

On the nature of the crisis, its basic causes, its launching and its incidental causes, Cohn-Bendit links up with the opinions expressed in SOUS LE DRAPEAU DU SOCIAL-ISME, or put forward orally in speeches in May-June.

Notably so on the point that the very nature of capitalist development, despite the rising living standard . would supply the basis for new revolutionary events.

Also on the fact that the progressive hierarchisation and pyramidisation (1) expressed in the growing robotisation of men, results in a "global contestation" by those who are the victims of this process.

And also on the view that students because of their role in society feel the new political and social context in a particularly sharp way, and therefore were cast in a new role in the struggle against capitalism.

The awareness of the colonial leaderships in organisations, did the rest, and the students became

the detonators of the May crisis in France. This last statement, which has now become commonplace is illustrated in Cohn-Bendit's book with precise data, showing how the minority of students fulfilled this role, first going from a criticism of the university to a criticism of society itself, and then a large part of the others.

Cohn-Bendit also recognises the limits of the student movement and we read nothing in his book that could warrant the condemnation that union and political bureaucrats directed at him : Cohn-Bendit never wrote nor said anywhere that the student movement must henceforth play the role of social revolutionary leadership in place of the working

On the contrary, when he examines the reasons for the gulf between the students' and workers' movemen Cohn-Bendit insists on the passing nature of the failings of the working class due to the multiplicity of structures and above all to the

policy of the unions and traditional political parties or even the 'grouplets". When he envisages studentworker liaison , which it must be understood did not really occur in May, he does not believe one must place itself under the theoretical or political leadership of the other . Rather, he sees the liaison in a dynamic way, where the students and the workers participate in the same struggle and even stresses that no movement would be able to conquer without the action of the workers. Which is simply obvious in any case. It is , however, true that he does not reaffirm in a sufficiently explicit way the decisive historic role of the working class.

The main reason Cohn-Bendit advances for the final failure of the movement in May is, quite correctly, the effect of the policy of the French Communist Party on the big battalions of the working class that the intervention of the young workers could never lead out of legalism to enter on the revolutionary road in a conscious way. Cohn-Bendit does not form one of those for whom the incapacity, the parliamentarianism and treason of the CPF dates only some months or to the death of Stalin. With a knowledge of the French workers movement, he shows, by analysing the three major crises in France since the beginning of the century (1936, 1946 and May 1968) how the CPF has each time turned its back on the demands of the revolutionary situation. We do not go along with the author , however, when he seeks to incriminate not only Stalinism, but also Leninism and Bolshevism as a whole, seeing Stalinism as only its natural prolongation.

We do not go along with the authors

when they consider the degeneration of the Communist Parties was fully present in the very principles of Leninism and Bolshevism.

The Communist International formed at the call of the Bolshevik Party at the time of Lenin and Trotsky was an instrument aimed at transforming social crises into revolutionary crises and organisation aimed at the world struggle against capitalism. From the time Stalin put forward the policy of socialism in one country , there was a basic rupture with the first years of the Russian Revolution . And when in France the possibility of a revoluttonary action presented itself in an objective way, the CPF had practically repudiated the principles on which the Third International had been founded.

WE MUST EXAMINE THE POLICY OF LENIN AND TROTSKY

It is necessary, however, to critically examine the policies of Lenin and Trotsky , no matter what different publications of the extreme left might say, for revolutionaries of our time.

Lenin and Trotsky gravely underestimated the danger of bureaucratisat ion that could arise from a too centralist and statist orientation. Under-estimation which resulted in first of all the reduction in the powers of Factory Committees, then their simple replacement by a nominated director from the central authority and all powerful (2) , the limits placed on freedom of expression for militants who were not members of the Bolshevik Party in the Soviets, which next as a fact of life became mere appendages to the Party; the

19.

suppression of fractions at the oth. Congress. This resulted in them wrongly judging the real nature of the Kronstadt revolt and particularly to take measures against the rebels, which, were, to say the least, regretable.

It must be remembered espite these criticisms, that the Bolshevik Party faced gigantic problems to solve: the productive forces in Russia were completely ruined by the civil war and the foreign intervention, the working class was atomised. Draconian measures were necessary and the temptation was great to use the efficiency of administrative measures - that was the trap into which Lenin and Trotsky fell.

But can Bolshevim stand condemned because of this? No. precisely because Bolshevism is not a coherent and systematic whole , as some would claim, with as its two basic principles, the following: 1. the theory of professional revolutionaries without whose intervention the revolutionary working class cannot attain revolutionary consciousness; 2. the construction of socialism by the nationalisation of the major means of production and exchange and the power of the Party.

The first 'principle' which has been generally made responsible by critics for the degeneration of Bolshevism has been singularly criticised by Lenin himself in the second preface to WHAT IS TO BE DONE?, five years after the first edition (3); in the meantime there was the first Russian Revolution (1905).

As for the second principle, all historicans have noted that the programme of the Bolshevik Party was much less "statist" than those of the parties of the Second International. It includes workers management and Lenin in a polemic with Kautsky defended the

concept of workers management as a against workers control. (4) , while it has been noted, rightly or wrongly, that certain almost libertarian concepts appear in STATE AND REVOLUTION.

What is really in dispute is not the "perversity" of bolshevism but rather Lenin and Trotsky in deviating in their political practice in relation to their initial concepts, Trotsky and Lenin however many times stressed the temporary nature of their measures and saw them as being necessary because of the backward state of Russia.

The exact opp osite for Stalin who saw the theory of the single party, the suppression of tendency rights and the ultracentralisation and dominance of the State as principles.

Lenin and Trotsky deviated from their own political concepts. But is not the anarchist movement itself also rich in such deviations?

ANARCHIST DEVIATIONS FROM_ THEIR IDEAL

The Spanish anarchists who during the Revolution took part in the Popular Front government which was strongly under the influence of the representatives of the bourgeoisie -did they not also deviate from anarchist principles ? And what of Bakunin and Kroptokin , the first who interyened during the Commune of Lyons (1871) in an absolutely dictatorial and authoritarian way , and the second who did not flinch from signing in a completely imperialist war (1915) a manifesto supporting the policy of the Entente Powers. They justified themselves by saying that they could not do otherwise, as did Lenin and Tro

The problem, in all cases, is to know if the justifications are acceptable. and if it is true after an analysis is made if there really was no choice. Could the Bolsheviks -- Lenin and Trotsky -- have done otherwise if Russia was to emerge from its backward state and develop into the industrial period. The question remains open and cannot be escaped by generalities about the self-determination of the masses; nevertheless it is possible to believe that the policy, the methods employed and the political practice involved very serious dangers for the socialist revolution, and that the Workers Opposition (1921) was at the time perhaps more correct in its judg-

The major factor in the degeneration of the Bolshevik Party was the backward state of Russia. Obviously this was not the only factor. From undeniable facts, Cohn-Bendit draws an erroneously interpreted theory on the nature of Bolshevism. Above all, when he extends his analysis to its final results, he more or less explicitly draws a parallel between the development of capitalist societies and the USSR. He pictures Bolshevism as a sort of appendage or instrument of the capitalist State. That leads him, after having justly denounced the degeneration of the CF, to wrongly consider the CPF and the CGT as perfectly integrated (along with other organisations as well) or in the process of being so in the present society. Consistent with this, Cohn-Bendit virtually puts all members and supporters of these organisations in the same category. The result is very negative for the organisation of the revolutionary struggle. It takes no account of and dismisses the rank-and-file workers and militants in

the CPF and the CGT.

Cohn-Bendit's book was written for the workers, students, peasants and professionals. It also draws a conclusion on the way the next revolutionary crisis must be prepared; its outcome must benefit from the Russian Revolution to the May Revolution.

The editors of ROUGE (5) propose, with some nuances, the reconstruction of the Bolshevik Party. Cohn-Bendits' book makes the opposite conclusion:

"... what we oppose is not the need to be organised, but the need for a revolutionary leadership, for the formation of a party." (p, 262)

This is repeated clearly in many of the statements made by Daniel Cohn-Bendit in May and June. Cohn-Ben Bendit wants an organisation of the masses, of popular organisations, but is categorically against a vanguard organisation. He condemned initiatives such as the provisional committee for a Revolutionary Movement. But Cohn-Bendit who does not want to be regarded as unrealistic and does not embellish the mass movements, admits that the workers have not reached clear revolutionary consciousness. He recomises then the existence of a vanguard as a fact, but considers it dangerous to organise it into fixed structures. How then, in what form, should this vanguard act? Cohn-Bendit here is vague and contradictory. To avoid having to ansver this question clearly and frankly, he takes up the old theory of the active minority, which in fact is only a way out, as Trotsky alreadty stated before 1914. In doing this , Cohn-Bendit relapses into concepts of classical anarchism and spontaneity. Even so, in several places his book gives an encouraging impression of really trying to come to grips

with this question in a new way. We shall return to this point later.

ROUGE and Cohn-Bendit have not the past. They still speak the same way, as does ROUGE in the question of bringing Bolshevism up to date. What does that mean when nothing concrete is found in that paper on the question of doing just

In fact, both Cohn-Bendit and ROUGE despite their opposition to one another, both follow similar tracks of thought. That is, their main concern is critique of the Russian Revolution and the bureaucratic experience from a narrow angle concerning the successes and mistakes of Bolshevism. This is an anti-historic method. The problems of organisation are posed independently of the period and tasks to be resolved.

The analytical method which concludes that we only have to bring bolshevism up to date and the pther which concludes with a certain form of traditional anarchism are both basically false.

The Bolshevik Party degenerated (and there can be disagreement on the causes for this degeneration as we have shown above). But the Movement of the 22nd. March , presented as the prototype to gather forces together without a precise structure, although it played a role and moment in the May situation, is now rapidly entering the stage of completely disintegration. It has become completely sterile and the militants still in it very easily fall into all the traps of State power . As for the Committees of Action despite the political role Cohn-Bendit would still like us to believe they have, they are also in a state of collapse after the retreat of the movement. Unable to fix a line for intervention, the very coordination of their activity has become precarious.

Critical examination of the whole of the workers movement from the Paris Commune to the latest revolutionary

crisis in France must end with the need to organise and build the vanguard. But no "solution" taken from really succeeded in freeing themselves from the past can be transposed in the present : the solution of the crucial problem of the nature of the vanguard organisation must be based upon the following principles :

1.) Differences exist amongst the workers in revolutionary consciousness, differences which are the result of the affects of capitalist society on wage-earners ;

2.) an organisation of revolutionaries is indispensible, and must be in a certain way distinct from the mass organisations and movements. Recruitment should take place on the basis of common theoretical and strategic concepts, but with the right of tendency :

3.) the aim of this organisation is to put the workers into a situation where they will be able to fulfill their historic role.

NEW ROLE OF VANGUARD PARTY

This implies a very different role for the vanguard party or organisation to that it plays in the 'Peoples Democracies" (or even that it actually played in the first years of the Russian Revolution) where it in fact supplanted the workers in exercise of power. This substitution for the workers was both cause and effect of the political and ideological degeneration. Revolutionaries must be fully conscious of the deadly dangers of this substitution and that it is absolutely vital to take all possible precautions against it.

The vangaurd, as we have pointed out above, should be in a certain way distinct from the mass of the workers and at the same time it should not act in their place and place itself above

Put we must go further than this

double requisite, which may seem contradictory. We must seek inspiration in the words of the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO , ". Communists have no interests distinct from those of the proletariat as a whole .. " more than applications of Marxism.

The vanguard organisation must act ensentially for ideological reasons rather than practical or material ones. That involves, particularly after the overthrow of capitalist rule : the separation of the Party and the State , and peoples organisations . This concept was on the way to becoming a major guideline in Czechoslovakia particularly in the last period-

What will decide the role of the vanguard organisation, whatever its name, (although the name may not be unimportant) is less the criticism of past experiences , than the perspectives and tasks the revolutionaries must set themselves ; a transitional society based essentially on self- management.

On this decisive question we find ourselves in agreement with Cohn-Bendit who advances the slogan of self-management as one for revolutionary action and a model for socialism several times in his book. In brief it is there as a political line, even if these words are not actually written as "self-management".

Asociety based on self-management will not abolish all the contradictions. The conflicts that could arise around coordination of self-managed enterprises will not be solved spontaneously. The intervention of a vanguard will still be necessary to help the workers

For the moment, revolutionaries in forge and build a vanguard able to develop action against capitalism, maintain. , it, and participate in the formation of a revolutionary programme and ; develop its perspect-

The question of spontaneity is key to the whole debate. Spontaneity is not an eferral quantity. It is related to the society's history. traditions, structures and operation.

It is not absolute. Cohn-Bendit himself has to admit that although the slogan of self-management was advanced, it was not taken up by the whole of the workers of even by large sectors of them. A recognised leadership would have been necessary to foster initiatives and put it forward as a pattern.

It depends on the power of the State . Spontaneity in 1968 was probably superior to Russia in 1917. The Gaullist bonapartist State does not have the social base a parliamentary democracy has ;it is also weaker soically. That meant more revolutionary decision making centres could develop with great autonomy. The need for absolutely rigid centralisation has lessened with the evolution of society. But the need for a global political line remains and starting from that a certain centralisoverthrow of capitalism, it is something the workers cant dispense with. Only centralisation (not independent of the circumstances) allows the party to

Only on this condition could the organisation gain a rgenuinely revolutionary sense, needed to understand the aspiration of the workers, be in tune with their action, and open

R. MERLIN (to be continued)

- (1) To the polarisation between the prolitarians and the bourgeoisie is added a (1) To the polar isstical current the protein as a pyramidalisation, complex hierarchisation in modern societies described as pyramidalisation.
- (2) ci. Les Marxistes, morceaux choisis. Livre de Poche (Wright Mills, The
- (3) Therea are two prefaces to WHAT IS TO BE DONE? That of 1907 of which we speak is produced in the Seuil edition . . Lenin here places conditions on what he wrote in 1902..."... the main mistake of those who polemicise today against he wrote in 1902... the rimin indetelly isolate this work from this historical WHAT IS TO BE DONE? is to completely isolate this work from this historical situation in which it was written. "and further on ...". the meaning of these situation in which it was written. and to the work aimed at correcting words is clear: WHAT IS TO BE DONE? is a polemical work aimed at correcting the errors of 'economism', it is worng to examine it by isolating it from this
- (4) see footnote 2.
- (5) ROUGE a revolutionary fortnightly published in Paris.
- (6) There are often differences in stages exist between the party and the masses. The Farty usually maintains its positions and does not change them easily, and is not easily subject to the fluctuations of the masses who swing from left to right with great facility. The swing from apathy to revolutionary action among the masses in February 1917 put them far to the left of the Bolshevik Party , as Cohn-Bendit maliciously recalls Trotsky himself stated (see History of Russian Revolution). It was against the whole leadership of the Bolshevik Party that Lenin defended the April Theses. It was only due to his exceptional personality, that with the mass movement and the Party rank-and-file and Trotsky (who was a new member) that Lenin won out. But Cohn-Bendit

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