

THE COMMUNIST

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New Developments in the anti-revisionist movement

The 'Joint Committee of Communists' formed itself into the 'Communist Federation of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist)' late last year. A JCC Statement published in the Marxist (No 12) declared that "the main characteristic of the Marxist-Leninist Movement in Britain today is the existence of individual autonomous groups. The nature of these groups is determined by the fact that they are making serious attempts to integrate Marxist-Leninist theory with practice in the concrete working conditions of their own locality or industry." Here we meet two old friends: the "autonomy" question and the theory-practice question.

Apart from the "dogmatic" ICO/CWO, and ambitious opportunists like Birch who want to form sham 'Parties' by swallowing up little 'autonomous' kingdoms, it has been generally held to be virtuous to declare that you are merely an "autonomous" group integrating theory and practice in your own locality, and having no "national" ambitions. Life is a continuous hazard for such virtuous minnows, for some "national" shark is always trying to manoeuvre them into his maws. We fear that their plight has caused us to be amused rather than sympathetic, much as do the efforts of self-righteous virgins to avoid seduction. The existence of these self-righteous autonomous groups is far from being a necessity of working class politics. They exist because of the absence of working class politics, and their self-satisfied parochial 'Marxism' is a denial of working class politics. If they were making any real contribution to the development of working class politics their obsession with their virginity (sorry, "autonomy") would soon be forgotten.

The only justifiable grounds for the existence of 'independent' groups is that basic theoretical differences separate them. If they are separated because of such differences they should set about clarifying these differences in a workmenlike way and seeing if they can be resolved. And since truth is the reflection of objective reality, there are certainly no objective grounds why they should not be resolved. But this is not, and has never been, the approach of these groups. They are sealed in their self-satisfied autonomy. Trying to get a simple discussion meeting with them is like trying to negotiate a treaty of friendship with a hostile and xenophobic kingdom.

As for the notion of "integrating theory and practice" in your own postal district before a programme for the national situation exists: it is patently absurd. Without a programme there is nothing to integrate. If what is meant is that you should propagate the general truths of Marxism where the opportunity offers in the general course of living and working, it should be taken for granted that that is being done by every working class anti-revisionist. But it is absurd to see that as the function of a Communist organisation. In order to function organisationally as a Communist body at local level, all basic questions relating to the international and the national sphere must first be clarified. Adequate analysis at international and national level is a necessary precondition for Communist leadership at local level. "Integration" at local level presupposed that there is something to integrate. And when general confusion prevails in the Communist movement at national level, and when there is ever serious confusion at international level, what is gained by propagating this confusion at local level. If workers entering the movement are not shown the objective tasks of the movement, they are in fact being deceived and are heading for disillusion. But if they are shown the objective tasks, even though these be in the field of theory, they can develop politically by working at these tasks. That much has been demonstrated conclusively during the past four years by the ICO.

The CFGB (ML) has published two issues of a newspaper, Struggle. It is the most irrelevant publication that has so far emerged from the anti-revisionist movement in Britain.

The Ulster crisis of August 1969 was the most decisive test in practice of political lines since the emergence of the anti-revisionist movement in 1963. Here, in the British state, was the state power being challenged by the masses. The barricades were up, and for a time the struggle became a military one. At the peak of the struggle even the most gifted phrasemongers had to stop and be exposed. Sham socialism had nothing socialist to say. Phrasemongering about action had either to act or shut up, and did the latter. The only organisation that emerged from the crisis stronger than it went into it was the ICO. The revolutionary phrasemongers, both 'Maoist' and trotskyist, who had been ridiculing the 'armchair Marxism' of the ICO in the period when nothing much was happening, became irrelevant during the crisis. And even when the crisis was over, and it was once again safe to be a revolutionary Marxist, they were incapable even of describing accurately what happened. Mr. Reg Birch can consider this a reply to his reference in the Feb issue of The Worker to the "Roman Catholics of politics--faith not works", which we assume is a reference to the ICO. Whoever talks about the armchair Marxism of the ICO these days demonstrates conclusively that he himself was so far removed from the action as not ever to be able to see what was happening.

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"The Marxist" makes its contribution to the understanding of the Ulster crisis in issue No 12 (Autumn 1969). We are told that: "The church in Ireland was independent until Henry VIII compelled allegiance to Rome". In fact the Roman Church was imposed on Ireland a few centuries earlier, and Henry VIII tried to break the connection with Rome. This bit of history sets the general tone of the article.

Quote: "When James Craig declared fifty years ago 'We will create a Protestant people', he knew very well what he meant". If he had said such a thing, it's hard to guess what he might have meant. In fact, what he said was, "a Protestant state for a Protestant people." The "Protestant people" was an existing product of history, and if it had not existed James Craig could not have created it--and since he was a very level-headed politician it is unlikely that he would have wasted his time trying.

On the sectarian division in the working class: "The Unionist Party had devised a scheme whereby they would ruthlessly exploit workers, both Protestant and Catholic, but give to the Protestant a minute advantage over Catholics in employment and social benefits, thus ensuring that Protestant workers would, in the main, adhere to the Unionist Party in fear of losing their position of advantage". And they "continue bribing Protestant workers and so maintaining at least an important part of their main base". It is remarkable that this kind of thing should pass for Marxist analysis in any circumstances. That it comes after the ICO clarification is only explicable in terms of the hermetically sealed "autonomism" that is so general. We are asked to believe that throughout a prolonged revolutionary period the Protestant workers became active agents of imperialism because they had been "minutely" bribed by the imperialists. And at the same time as he was being "minutely" bribed, he was also being "ruthlessly exploited" by the same class. If that was so, the Protestant worker would indeed be a remarkably obtuse animal.

The ICO explanation is that there was no simple conflict between the Irish nation and imperialism, with the protestant workers won over to imperialism through the imperceptible bribing of the Shankill Road labour aristocrats. There was a national division within Ireland itself resulting from the uneven development of capitalism combined with cultural differences, and the behaviour of the Protestant workers is to be explained mainly in terms of this internal national contradiction.

"The Marxist" informs us that, "Whilst the Civil Rights struggle is not of itself a revolutionary one, in Ulster, pushed to a decisive conclusion, it cannot fail to have revolutionary consequences". In fact the substance of the Civil Rights movement was a demand by the Catholic bourgeoisie for local control of areas where there is a Catholic majority, and for general bourgeois democratic rights for Catholics. Only if the Unionist Party was prepared to fight to the death

against these demands (which they are not) would there be any possibility of "revolutionary consequences".

The Marxist says: "A few years ago progressive comrades in Ireland held the opinion that the precipitation of a crisis in Ulster would immediately result in massive support coming from the Republic, possibly in co-operation with the Republican bourgeoisie; if necessary over their heads." The ICO certainly never held such an opinion. "The Marxist" continues that, because of the way matters actually developed, "It is possible that sections of the left in Ireland have become disorganised and disoriented." Whatever may be the case with the abstract and unspecified "left", the August crisis had the effect of confirming that the ICO orientation was correct, and of strengthening it organisationally. But we would suggest that the Marxist itself has entirely lost its bearings.

O U T S H O R T L Y :

CWO Pamphlet No 5: The National
Question in
Britain.

CWO Pamphlet No 6: Trades Unions &
Productivity: A
Communist
Analysis...by
Les Cannon.
(with CWO Introduction).

The Next Communist will include: Czechoslovakia.

Politics of the ETU
Trials.

More on 'the bourgeois working class'

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The following letter has been received from the Finsbury Communist Association:

"The Communist, No 24...states that a member of this group holds the view that the British working class is a 'bourgeois working class' 'whose objective interest is imperialist.' No member of our group holds this view and we should be pleased to learn the source of any quotation which supports the CWO assertion."

What the FCA has been saying during the past few years, we don't know since it refuses to sell its publications to us; and they appear to be available by subscription only. But as stated in its main theoretical publication, "Class and Party in Britain" (1966) the FCA position is that the British working class is, in the literal sense, a bourgeois working class. Their colleagues, Evans and Hoffman, though they are freer with their use of the actual term, have recently claimed that they only use it in a figurative sense. But, though the FCA prefer to use other terms, their description of the British working class, makes it bourgeois in the literal sense. The bourgeoisie lives by exploiting the working class. It lives on surplus value, the exploited labour of the working class. The FCA pamphlet maintains that the British workers "Receive their subsistence wages out of the values produced in Britain, and the extra bit out of the surplus value created by the colonial or neo-colonial worker. This extra chunk of surplus value is given by the capitalist class to the working class...to keep the workers sweet, and ensure that they continue to support imperialism." (p. 84). This means that the British workers and capitalists are in alliance to exploit the colonial and neo-colonial workers, and they share the surplus-value between them. Which means that the British working class has an objective class interest in maintaining the imperialist system. It is not merely by implication that the FCA holds this position. It approvingly quotes Ernest Bevin's statement that the British working class interest is imperialist. And as late as last year, Kenna declared at an Albanian Society meeting that "on a world scale," the British working class as a whole is a labour aristocracy. If the British working class as a whole is a labour aristocracy deriving part of its income from imperialist exploitation, then it obviously has a material interest in maintaining that system of exploitation.

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In Supplement No 1, 1966, the Finsbury Communist, under criticism from the MLOB, made this declaration: "Fundamentally", of course, the labour aristocracy are proletarians, though at present

I.S. and Yugoslavia

Introduction: It has become evident since the CPSU became revisionist in 1953, that it has increasingly borrowed from trotskyist theory. On the international division of labour, for instance, they have accepted Trotsky's idea of a deep-going division of labour, applying not just to a few fields which are mutually agreed, but also to basic parts of the economy. Deutscher, in the introduction to his book, "Stalin" complains that the Yugoslavs banned his book because they have borrowed so much from it, and they cannot afford to have this known in the country. The modern revisionists have also borrowed from trotskyism the idea that capitalism cannot be restored once the economic base has been established, save by outside intervention.

Both the revisionists and trotskyists are agreed in their defence of Yugoslavia. The only political tendency which has consistently and firmly opposed Yugoslav revisionism from its appearance has been the anti-revisionist movement.

Between East and West: Yugoslavia (by Andrew Sayers I.S.No.41) purports to analyse Yugoslav revisionism since the war. Shackled by their lack of theory and a liberalism which might even be described as dogmatic, it is hardly surprising to find the article a real hotch-potch of muddled thinking, which attempts to portray the Yugoslav revisionists as not that "bad". It is proposed here to take up only a few points the article raises.

The Yugoslavs' claim to honour is based on their "heroic" struggle against Stalin - the "baddest" of them all. In their neurosis about Stalin, International Socialism get themselves thoroughly mixed up about the course of events in Eastern Europe after the Second World War. For example, they promote the hoary old tale about Stalin imperialism seeking to create in Eastern Europe sources of raw material for the Great Russian Market, and preventing national industrial bases being built. Sayers quotes both Kardelj and Kidric approvingly (who had their own reasons for putting around this myth):

"Again Kidric had referred to the USSR when he had said:

'there was and still can be the opinion that Yugoslavia is an agrarian country and would remain such; and that it should deliver to industrially developed countries raw materials and food, and they sell to Yugoslavia finished industrial consumer goods' "(p.)

Sayers might just as well have quoted Gluckstein(alias Cliff) who said that the

"main reason for the Tito-Stalin conflict is the question of industrialisation and the accumulation of capital"...Yugoslavia's role as an "an agrarian country that it should deliver industrially developed countries raw materials and food, and they sell to Yugoslavia finished industrial consumer goods'." Stalin's Satellites

in Europe p.243).

Thus, the Yugoslav revisionists and the I.S. give out the view that the economic justification for the split with the international communist movement was the attempt of the USSR to impose an unequal, imperialist-type relationship on Yugoslavia (and the other East European countries, incidentally); and to exploit the Yugoslav economy forcing it to produce agricultural goods and raw materials. In this way the Yugoslav economy suffered as trading was carried on, on capitalist terms in Eastern Europe. (Capitalist international trade on the whole gives a sizeable advantage to producers of industrial goods against the producers of raw materials and light goods. Since the war this has become one of the main forms of imperialist exploitation.)

This argument suffers from one major flaw. It has no basis in fact in the Russia and E. Europe of 1948. If post-war trade between Russia and Eastern Europe is examined, it emerges that the Soviet Union exported more agricultural goods and raw materials than manufactured goods to Yugoslavia and E. Europe and that Yugoslavia and E. Europe exported more manufactured goods and raw materials to it. Sayers in his article on the Yugoslav situation does not mention this important fact.

Deutscher, not exactly a Stalinist, states that Russia's own economic development was best served by developing the industries in the Eastern European countries. and that Stalin followed this path:

"The revolutionary method, ... consisted in the broadening of the base on which planned economy was to operate, in an economic link-up between Russia and the countries within her orbit. The gradual integration into the sphere of planned economy of several small and medium sized countries, most of which had been industrially more developed than Russia before the thirties, promised to quicken the tempo of Russia's as well as of their own reconstruction..." ("Stalin" p. 536).

And it must be admitted that while the East European economies made steady progress after the war (and up to their "reform") the Yugoslav economy has limped from crisis to crisis in spite of a total of \$1,200,000,000 dollars in economic aid from the West and a total of \$724,000,000 in military aid from the U.S. between 1948-1960. Cliff himself, in "Stalin's satellites in Europe" has to admit the fact that the relationship between Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union did not fit into the pattern of imperialist country and colony. The fact that Cliff puts both views forward in this book is another indication of the inability of trotskyism to make working class analysis. In the earlier part of his book Cliff admits that the Soviet Union had always followed the policy of all-round development of its territory, and cites Soviet development of Ukrainian industry as an example (p. 69-70). What he does not say is how Stalin could have engaged in this socialist policy of developing backward parts of the country and still have represented the capitalist interest in a situation where the capitalist approach would be to make the best use of scarce resources by investing them profitably and the profitable places for investment are first and foremost where the market is most concentrated.

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Cliff states that Russia's need to reduce the industrial gap between herself and other countries:

"will compel her to look upon the satellites as 'extension of the homeland', to try to develop them industrially, even if because of her poverty, bureaucratic mismanagement, and various other factors, she can do so only in a very unsatisfactory way. All the time she will of course reserve for herself the first fruits of their industrial development". (p.69-70).

The reader may well wonder how Cliff could have made the two statements in the same book. He will certainly see the fallacy in the statement that Russia with oceans of resources awaiting development within her frontiers should find it necessary to invest her precious and scarce resources overseas merely in order to reap some highly notional first fruits. The truth seems much more in accordance with the available facts: that Stalin aided the industrialisation of the socialist countries in order to further the cause of the international working class movement. And that he attempted to develop a separate market to the world market (seeing that a market was still necessary), where the economics of the E. European countries could be free from some of the imperialist pressures. Since Stalin's death many of his policies in this direction have been revised, particularly with regard to the world market. The revisionists in the USSR claim that the international division of labour is beneficial and that they wish to integrate themselves more fully into it and into the world market. In this respect they have drawn very close to the Yugoslavs who condemned Stalin for disreputation and hindering economic development in trying to develop a separate market from the imperialist world market! (See K.Iranovski, 1-11-'52. Review of International Affairs, Belgrade

International Socialism in common with other trotskyist groups find it convenient to describe Yugoslavia's expulsion from the Cominform as a national conflict arising from Stalin's economic exploitation of that country. The only 'proof' they have for this assertion are the statements of the Yugoslav leaders themselves, which are contradicted by the facts. The reason why the Yugoslavs went to such pains to 'establish' imperialism on the part of the Soviet Union is of course one that trotskyist liberalism could not stomach: the popularity of the Soviet revolution amongst the Yugoslav peasants and workers. Sayers states that on the basis of a national conflict with the Soviet Union the Yugoslav regime "was capable of rallying support especially in the countryside for its nationalist opposition to Stalin."

However, the opposite was the case. The Soviet Union was so popular amongst the Yugoslav people that the Titoite revisionists had to tread very carefully. They made the initial break on national grounds, and prevented issues from being discussed, whilst carefully building up a 'theory' of Soviet imperialism preventing them from industrialising. Most of the Yugoslav leaders joined in this campaign (the rest were silenced which increased in intensity as time went on. As Djilas said, it was necessary for the Yugoslavs to "analyse" the Soviet Union most, because it had been most loved there. (On New Roads to Socialism 1950). The cult of Tito's personal-

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ity (which had been built up consciously), together with the political capital of the Titoites' war time record was pitted against popular appreciation of the Soviet anti-fascist effort and social system. After the Yugoslav revisionists won, they stopped any pretence of industrialising and integrated themselves with the world market. They are now exporting their agricultural surpluses, their raw materials, their unemployed surplus labour, their light manufactured goods and promoting themselves as a tourist spot - in other words, they have reverted to their status as a neo-colony.

Sayers claims that Yugoslav industrial development, because of the weakness of the Yugoslav economy, could only occur through allowing foreign investment in the economy. This is fully in line with the trotskyist theory that imperialism 'develops' its colonies and that the international division of labour is as beneficial to economically backward countries as to the advanced. (See "In Defence of Leninism" by I.C.O.). However Marxists by analysing concrete situations (instead of philosophizing about them) have come to the conclusion that imperialist investment benefits the imperialists and a few local middlemen etc.

Sayers' analysis of the situation in Yugoslavia does nothing to repair the inconsistencies in I.S.'s previous analyses on Yugoslavia.

Angela Clifford

More on the 'bourgeois working class' continued.

bourgeoisified." So the British working class is a proletariat, a bourgeois working class, and a labour aristocracy. Now, there's Marxist analysis for you!

CWO on

teachers + the left

Recently, political groupings on the Left (CPGB, SLL, IS, CPBML, Militant) have been in agreement that the Teachers' strikes represent a real move of the teachers as a body towards the side of the working class. The aims of this article are to examine what has been happening, to attempt to discover if this is such a move, and to explain why the Left is saying this.

Firstly, the events.

(The strengths of the teaching unions are as follows: out of 320,000 teachers in England and Wales, 227,000 including a majority of women and primary school teachers, are in the NUT, 42,000 are in the NAS--the union of the long-serving career teachers, ca. 40,000 in the Assistant Masters Association and the Assistant Mistresses Association (both mainly in grammar schools))

On Feb 15, 1969, an NUT Special Conference (the method by which salary increases are ratified) accepted the Burnham Committee offer of a basic scale of £860-£1600 for two years. The Annual Conference (April '69), however, reversed this decision and decided to press for an interim award of £135 on the basic as of April '70. (This, according to the NUT Executive will keep them just abreast of the cost of living). The EC opposed this move, as it would involve sanctions. The 'Left' of the NUT welcomed this decision; because, they stated, it was necessary to treat the State and LEA's as employers and use sanctions. (They were clear this meant strikes--lesser sanctions, E.G., boycott of school meal duties--1967--had failed).

The EC opposition to the £135 was on the grounds that to win it would require strong sanctions which the majority of the NUT members would not support (though militants at the Conference might). The Resolution passed at Conference instructed the EC to press for £135, but did not state that it must not accept less. Therefore the EC could have come away with a lesser settlement and not called for any sanctions.

However, the Inner London Teachers Association called a one-day strike on 9 July which was very well supported (though not all NUT members came out. The EC gave a semi-official blessing to the strike). Resolutions from local branches, letters, telegrams, etc., continued to urge strike action on the EC.

After the first Burnham Committee meeting about the claim had ended with a £50 offer, another one-day strike (in mid Oct) was called: this time most of the NUT members in the country participated. Again this action had started at the local level,

though the EC was much quicker in support.

In November, the Burnham negotiations again broke down. The EC, realising that to retain the leadership, it would have to become more militant, this time, balloted for strike action. This needs $\frac{2}{3}$ majority of all members--not just of votes cast for a school to be called out. The ballot results gave the required $\frac{2}{3}$, and so on 2 Dec, 4000 teachers struck for two weeks--their biggest strike ever.

Edward Short refused to intervene (though in 1963 Boyle had legislated salaries), after a call to do so from Heath and Thatcher. Short, however, said he was sympathetic to the idea of an inquiry into the pay structure--after the dispute had been settled. On Dec 15 the teachers panel rejected both a better offer and an invitation to go to arbitration. (The pay offer had been weighted in favour of the younger teachers, which the NAS would clearly have disapproved of--but the NUT also rejected the offer and the attempt by the Govt. to split them was averted). In mid-Jan, 5000 teachers came out for two weeks. The DEP said it would 'be flexible' in considering the claim re the Incomes Policy. The Govt. stated it would abide by arbitration--but, because it would not instruct the arbitrators to ignore the incomes policy, the teachers refused. At the end of Jan, 1970, 6000 teachers struck for eight days.

Early in Feb, Short again refused to legislate but said he would re-examine the Burnham machinery after the dispute was over. The teachers planned indefinite area strikes and exam boycotts. At present nearly all Birmingham, Waltham Forest and soon Southwark schools are out indefinitely.

The teachers' strategy has been firstly a limited withdrawal of labour (only 2% of the teachers have come out at once so far) and secondly a widespread propaganda campaign--to mould public opinion: 'Do you begrudge money spent on your children's future. Education gives value for money'. They have chosen parliamentary and council lobbies, petitions, vigils, and in a few cases orderly marches. 'It is worth paying teachers more for Education's sake: it is just and right', has been the theme.

The government's strategy, on the other hand, has consisted of firstly, the decision not to legislate and use its full power. They have calculated that the political effect of this dispute will not do great damage to their position. If they felt that the strike was forcing the issue of education policy and expenditure, on terms not of the Govt's choosing, they would not be 'held to ransom' by the teachers and would certainly legislate. The Govt does not feel the need to overhaul and reform the educational set-up yet, though they clearly intend doing so, after the dispute. (this is a view shared by the NUT Executive for though it identifies the pay rise with better education, an investigation into teaching at a time when the rank and file were aroused would endanger its position. A report could well recommend widespread downgrading and/or redundancies.)

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Thus the Govt have opted for ignoring the unions' rationale for the strike (i.e., the justness of more money for education) and are choosing to fight the strike at the economic level; a pay dispute involving withdrawal of labour. (Note the parallel between this and Ford management ignoring parity, although in this case the unions have not wanted the higher issue either). At the economic level, the mere passage of time may sap the militancy of the teachers. It is clear the Govt wants a solution which involves minimum loss of its face re the Incomes Policy. When the teachers' unions have played out the economic weapons, as far as the EC's decide to go, a 'mutually acceptable' pay solution is the most likely outcome.

The Govt's strategy appears correct: Firstly, there has been no surge of 'public opinion': no mass demos (students or workers, no organised working class support, including from the TUC). The mass media have given from time to time a sympathetic ear, but this is relatively unimportant.

Secondly, the EC's of the NUT and NAS are well in the saddle--this must be in the Govt's interest.

Thirdly, the time of decision is fast approaching--the use of the teacher's ultimate weapons (exam boycotts in this particular struggle). This rules out of course working class action which none of the 'Left' groups' within or outside the teachers' strikes have been calling for. Only the NAS--the most petty-bourgeois union--has called for this on a limited scale, i.e., strikes where firms' creches have allowed wives to continue working. It is to be noted that the Burnham committee was established following a teachers' strike in 1919 in the Rhondda which was supported by the miners and which resulted in a 50% salary increase for all teachers above pre-war levels and a sliding scale to take account of cost of living.

Fourthly, the Govt has the whip-hand anyway, for even if £135 were conceded without arbitration, the defeat is not a political one because by not responding politically, it has never allowed the dispute to reach that level. Also the intention to overhaul the pay structure etc will permit easy absorption of the award even on the economic level.

Now, as to whether the teachers strikes represent a 'move to the left'--to the side of the working class.

As a preliminary, it is necessary to investigate the position of teachers within the capitalist relations of production. The important point is that they do not produce surplus value, nor are they the means of appropriating it for their employer. What teachers produce is education, a necessary element in the reproduction of a literate working class. But this no more produces surplus value than the food consumed by workers does. Surplus value is a social product, not the product of

things even if they are intangible. (Though some workers don't produce surplus value, e.g., those working in the sphere of circulation--shop assistants etc, they are a means whereby their employer appropriates surplus value, for his commercial capital participates in the equalization of the profit rate. Teachers are not in this category either; education is not a commodity put on the market to make profits for LEA's. It can be argued that this is true of public schools, but in fact what is sold by Eton etc is not an ordinary education, as this can be obtained free, but a better education, i.e., a passport in the City etc) In the long run and indirectly, teachers aid in the production of surplus value and there is no doubt that they, like all under capitalism who must sell their labour-power, are exploited. But their position in production is different from the workers'.

This position of teachers within capitalist relations of production means that unless the struggle is fought politically, the govt can always win. It should be noted that an economic struggle by any section of the working class and petty bourgeois becomes political when the capitalist class and its state believe the balance of power between exploiting and exploited class threatened by the economic dispute. At this time, their political power, i.e., state power is used to break the strike. If this gambit succeeds, the dispute is lost and the organisation round the strike which brought this threat is fragmented and capitalist state power maintained. However, if the strikers meet political offensive with political defence, the issue becomes not the economic demand, but the preservation of law and order, i.e., the continuation of the capitalist state. At this point, the weapons and tactics of both sides have changed, and the struggle continues until this question is resolved in favour of bourgeois or proletarian state. If the strikers decide to defend themselves, they must seek the support of the proletariat as a whole. Thus, if after gaining this support, the proletariat as a whole fail to defend themselves, the capitalists have won. Equally, the mobilisation of the state, means that if the state is defeated, the proletariat must decide to then take the offensive and take state power or leave a political vacuum. There are numerous examples of proletarian defeats in British working class history. The most notorious is the General Strike 1926, when the bourgeoisie used every weapon at their disposal including the TUC General Council who insisted that the General Strike was purely economic. Except for the General Strike (and Red Friday its antecedent), these examples were marked by the strikers capitulating without requesting the support of the working class as a whole though they did look to the local working class and workers elsewhere in their trade. They made the first political defence, but gave in to continuing escalation by the bourgeois state.

In the teachers' strikes, if the Govt chooses, it can win politically, i.e., with its state power through legislation, parallel with its use of police, even troops, to break strikes--which succeeds unless challenged--politically. No one has even brought up the question of fighting a legislated settlement.

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When workers strike, the employer loses the surplus value they produce or are ancillaries to this production. This is a strong economic incentive to concede their demand. When there is no similar economic incentive to give in.

In, 1931, the teachers' movement was a somewhat different story to 1970. Early in September, 1931, Govt cuts were announced-- 10% off the dole, 12% off civil service pay, 20% off the forces' pay, and 15% off teachers' salaries. The Invergordon Mutiny was a direct response from the forces; the teachers' response was the formation of Teachers' Defence Committees (rank and file organisations, cutting across union boundaries.

"Accept the salary cuts, and you are helping to keep declining capitalism going a little longer. Fight salary cuts today, and you weaken the position of the decaying social system. On with the fight, therefore of the united organisations of the rank and file--they alone can lead the way, they alone are the sworn enemies of capitalism." Manifesto of the London Teachers' Defence Committee.

There were demonstrations of the unemployed and teachers together (e.g., in Trafalgar Square) which the NUT Executive opposed and then accepted.

"The NUT Executive rang down the curtain, but the rank and file have rung it up again. Now we must keep it up. The NUT Executive still persists in opposing local action and especially demonstration action. Our reply is to point to the success of action taken locally and unofficially..." Educational Worker, Nov, 1933.

By Sept 21, all the cuts had been reduced to 10%. But, along with all this was the understanding that only political action could secure victory; and an understanding of their role within capitalism.

"The opinion seems to be widely held that progressive teachers should 'use their opportunities' and 'tell children the truth'. But some comfortable illusions lie beneath this opinion: that we are free to teach what we will. Large classes, the authoritarian discipline, the meagre equipment, the carefully selected textbooks all form a system driving towards one end--fitting children for their office and station in life, e.g., in capitalist society. So we are to tell the truth and act a greater lie than ever. Bluntly, we are paid to do a job, and must do it, just the same as other workers." Educational Worker, Nov, 1933.

As against this, we must examine the present Left within the teaching 'profession'. Firstly, affiliation to the TUC is as far as they go toward calling for united action with the workers.

Secondly, their unofficial action within the NUT is limited to influencing, pressurising the executive into action, plus vague rhetorical proposals for democratising the union. The only

concrete demand here is for the removal of headmasters from the Union leadership. This dominance of the heads is however, merely the result of normal elections, etc.--i.e., it is not constitutional dominance and cannot be legislated over. Thus it indicates the Left's weakness in relation to the mass of teachers, and their petty-bourgeois level of political understanding. (This negative demand is analogous to petty-bourgeois demands for right of recall: if the electorate do not think an official is serving them properly, they can recall him and elect another to truly 'serve' them.) The Left has candidates for the Executive on the anti-headmaster platform--instead of the building of political understanding at a mass level, which they all claim they are doing with electioneering and rhetoric.

As for the Left teachers conception of what their role as teachers is, they are mere petty-bourgeois radicals. Firstly, they express professionalism in the 'Teacher's Charter', which calls for representative Governors (from teachers, parents, students and citizens) equally) to lay down broad outlines. The teachers staff association would then have the freedom to teach what and how it liked (after fullest discussion with students). It says nothing about exams, and gives the 'Head' the right to attend students and teachers meetings. (Teachers' Charter is published by 'Rank and File', the broadest and most effective left, grouping. It is mainly trotskyite)

Secondly, the Left dodges the political issue of teachers in capitalism, and concentrates sometimes on attacking anachronisms of the old order, e.g. corporal punishment, grammar schools, streaming. By implication, the new comprehensives etc represent a step forward, i.e., to the left. But the bourgeoisie also recognise these changes as improvements. Comprehensives, says the Financial Times leader of 6 Feb, '70, are now accepted by nearly everybody. What the Left avoids is an analysis of the meaning of these changes in class terms. At other times the Left attacks the new, i.e., when it threatens 'the individual', i.e., dehumanised conditions in education, erosion of freedom to learn. The new education policies constitute an attack on the pupils and students--'factory-schools'. The Worker (CPBML), Feb, '70, tells us that there will be a vast overproduction of graduates, of 'intermediate strata in objective contradiction with monopoly-capitalism'. This apparently fickle attitude toward state education policy is explained by the fickleness of petty-bourgeois politics. At certain points, the state gains advantage by concessions to petty-bourgeois 'individualism' and 'radical democracy' only to negate these later when the petty-bourgeois politics is unprepared for struggle. Instead of constructing a class analysis, the teachers' left are eclectic and opportunist. Indeed, Sam Fisher (head of Inner London Teachers' Association and member of CPGB) goes so far as to state that Education is the only hope for our children as there will be no working class in the twenty first century only technicians.

Obviously a new educational policy has been under way for some years now, and unless it is analysed politically, the only line

VII

the Left teachers can take up is that of petty-bourgeois radicalism, for this will be the highest political level in the absence of Communist politics.

Thirdly, the strike is being fought at the economic level and on the basis of acceptance of official unionism (for the Left is not engaging in unofficial organisation but agitation within the structure). Also it has supported the Executive's strategy of a strike which is moral and 'progressive' (more about education in general than just salaries---Sam Fisher)--- in sharp contrast to proletarian strikes, where clearly the most important element of strategy is relative strength. The only pressure the Left is putting on the Executive is for stronger strikes---more out for longer, and for better public opinion moulding, a national one day strike. (Socialist Worker of week 19 Feb, '70).

It remains only to examine the reasons for the left groups (CPGB, SLL, IS, CPBML, Militant) saying the strike constitutes a move towards the proletariat. Firstly, in the absence of Communist politics, the economic struggle is seen by these groups as the first shots in the revolution (this is as true over the Ford strike last year, the GEC 'occupation' etc.) The fact that teachers are taking militant action for the first time (as it appears to those who choose to ignore history) seems to show that everyone is moving toward revolution. Thus action at the economic level becomes revolutionary political action and these groups need not worry about Communist politics. The absence of Communist politics is due to the non-Communist politics of the Left, it is not due to the resistance to change or Communism of the British working class.

Another important reason is of course that many of the groups have many petty-bourgeois, including some teachers, thus it is a justification for petty-bourgeois radical activity of all sorts ---that it is moving the petty-bourgeois to revolution. Following this logic, they should attempt to infiltrate the NFU, for the farmers have been much more trouble to the police, i.e., in keeping order on demos than the teachers. Indeed the farmers virtually controlled the streets of Westminster for a time more than the politicians have done for years. Logically, for the 'Left' economists, this great militancy against the same Labour Govt should signify that the farmers are the vanguard of the petty-bourgeoisie.

Our position is that no economic struggle can be a step toward revolutionary struggle unless its meaning for the workers and the Communist movement are clear. It is true that these meanings may not be clear to the strikers before the strike. But unless the 'left' make a Communist political analysis of it which the strikers can understand and act upon, there is no 'shift in revolutionary understanding'. To say that there is, is economist.

VIII

The teachers are salaried workers; their conditions of work are dominated by petty-bourgeois features: for teachers in all schools the chances of deputy heads and headships (chances which are increasingly better for first, men and second, for men in primary schools) these bring great power and substantially increased pay; the training itself; a pay structure favouring greater educational 'achievement' and long-serving teachers; and a position of responsibility for the law and order of pupils in classrooms. The trade unions' leaderships are not militant and anxious to avoid alienating the public, the LEA's and Govt; they are petty-bourgeois in their political positions.

The Left within the Unions have a two-forked approach: petty-bourgeois radicalism and economism. The Left has made no attempt at analysing the teachers' place in capitalism or at how the teachers could be part of a Communist movement. This last is an important question because the Left now views teachers as 'the same as anyone else in the working-class' and therefore implies that the approach to them should be no different. But because at present, most of the relations of production in teaching are petty-bourgeois and the trade-union and Left politics are also petty-bourgeois, how teachers can become Communists must involve sorting out: (1) Are the teachers as a mass petty-bourgeois or can they be won over politically to communism. (because they are salaried workers and not property owners who profit from that property, this must be worked out.) (2) If the teachers are working class, then the theory necessary to defeat the petty-bourgeois politics at present predominant and bring them to a Communist position (It should be noted that this theory must deal not only with the teachers but with the working class as a whole and the international Communist movement.) (3) If the teachers are petty-bourgeois, then how they can form an alliance with the working class on Communist terms.

The Left is hoping that capitalism will 'proletarianise' the teachers 'naturally' in its course of grinding to a halt. This determinism can only be hailed by the capitalists as the finest prop to the system. The theoretical question of the distinction between petty-bourgeois and proletariat is important to British Left politics because of the increase of salaried workers with petty-bourgeois conditions yet still exploited by the capitalist class and the decline of the small property-owner and entrepreneur. It is only after this distinction is worked out that Communist politics can begin here. For the politics of an alliance with the petty-bourgeois are patently different than the politics of exposing economism and petty-bourgeois radicalism and establishing Communist politics.

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