

## *Editorial*

The events in France, which took place when most of this number was already with the printer, serve only to point the urgency of the choice before the British people. In 1821, after the victory of the Holy Alliance, George Cruikshank drew his portrait of the Boa Desolator, or Legitimate Vampire, overlaying the continent of Europe like "an ugly Incubus, sucking the blood and stopping up the breath of man's life" (page 11). Today those twin vampires - the holy ideological crusade against Communism, and the sordid actions of colonial repression - have long been sucking the life-blood of Western democracy and the Western labour movements, weakening these organisms and leaving them as an easy prey to the viruses of chauvinism, militarism and reaction. Even though Soustelle and Massu may chafe at NATO and American domination, they are themselves products of the situation analysed by Ralph Miliband, in which NATO, the Holy Alliance of our own day, has strengthened the forces of counter-revolution, propped up German industrialists and Catholic dictatorships, and reduced the working-class movements of the West to impotence.

Today we face a dual danger. First, some local conflict may at any time lead us directly to the threshold of a Hydrogen War. And, second, the Cold War itself, with every day that it continues, is actively poisoning the political, intellectual and cultural life of Europe - West and East - and is making disengagement ever more difficult. The amassing of destructive power, the maintenance of blocs and bases, - these assume an impetus independent of events: as economic and political life is constricted, so the darker forces of reaction, driven out of public life in 1945, are given an opportunity to reassemble in every country. In the West, Adenauer, MacMillan and now de Gaulle: in the East, the Stalinist relapse, the renewed assault on Yugoslavia, the maze of compromise in which Poland is entrapped. Another ten years - if we get through them - and Military-and-Business dictatorships will be the rule on both sides of the "iron curtain."

Claude Bourdet sent us his brilliant article on European independence two or three days before the revolt of the Algerian generals. Events have not altered the force of a single one of his arguments: but they have reduced even further the possibility that France could initiate these policies. Although we do not discount the possibility that de Gaulle (or a successor) might attempt an adventure outside the framework of NATO, the policies of active neutrality which Bourdet advocates can - by their very nature - only be initiated by a Government influenced by the socialist movement, willing to renounce chauvinist aims, and colonial repression (whether Algeria,

Cyprus or Kenya) and appealing in the spirit of internationalism over the heads of governments to the ordinary people East and West.

Three months ago we argued that of all European nations, Britain is best placed to end the deadlock. We now believe that it is a matter of extreme urgency that British public opinion be educated in every possible way to insist upon the policy of N.D. **plus** active neutrality, which is sketched by Professor Cole. We do not think that agitation for nuclear disarmament on its own is enough, although we go every inch of the way with the Campaign. The uncompromising "Aldermaston mood" of moral protest against the hellish engines of war must be matched by a growing internationalist outlook, which comprehends the weight of responsibility which events have placed upon the British people and which anticipates the kind of active neutralist diplomacy which is the necessary complement to N.D. We like the tone and tendency of Roddy Barry's argument; but when he suggests that the question of NATO is irrelevant - and then proceeds to advocate a "non-nuclear policy" almost identical to our own - it is clear that we are at cross-purposes. No-one wants to make the immediate renunciation of NATO into a new dogma: how, when, and through what intermediary stages the power blocs are broken up must depend upon events. But surely it is not irrelevant to insist that socialists must be opposed not just to the mechanism of total destruction - the Bomb - but also to the entire complex of power, military alliances, sadistic jingoism and social reaction which underlie its threatened use?

The tide of reaction has been rising in Europe since 1948, and scarcely anywhere has it yet begun to ebb. Today we can feel a breath of cold wind here also, as we watch those prominent commentators and politicians who tore a passion to tatters on behalf of Hungarian democracy, but who now find no difficulty in justifying and even applauding the supersession of democracy across the channel. For our part, our sharp opposition to many of the dogmas, organisational principles, and policies of orthodox Communism is well enough known. This is therefore the time to stress the paramount need for socialist and communist unity of action, especially at the rank and file level, if the advance of Fascism in France is to be checked. Certainly the argument with Stalinism must go on; and when the causes for the present immobilisation of the French working-class are analysed, we believe a heavy share of blame must fall on the leaders of the French C.P. We can only hope that in the face of common danger, socialist and communist workers will discover a common purpose promising new directions and better leaders in the future; indeed, if they cannot find common cause today, they will find it soon enough tomorrow in General Massu's gaols,