

The Newsletter

WEEKLY JOURNAL OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

Young Socialists lead Labour fight

Firm policies in conference resolutions

By ANN GRAY

IF the Labour bureaucrats thought they merely had an electioneering force in their youth section then the Easter conference of the Young Socialists will be a rude awakening for them.

In her very own contribution to the top pops, Bessie Braddock has written an electioneering song which says: 'Labour Party leaders have got youth on their side'.

As far as policy is concerned the youth are not at the side of Bessie and her mates, they are way out in front.

Whilst Wilson conducts sham 'schoolboy' fights with Sir Alec Douglas-Home in the Houses of Parliament, Young Socialist branches up and down the country have got down to the serious task of drafting a programme for Labour.

In the amended agenda released by Transport House last week a whole section calls

for extensive nationalization by the next Labour government.

Demanding that the Labour leaders learn from the experience of the last Labour government, South Shields calls for nationalization of all the major industrial combines without compensation.

This will 'avoid the debts placed on the mines and railways when they were nationalized by the last Labour government, which have prevented their proper functioning,' says the resolution.

After their successful unemployment rally in February, the Young Socialists are determined to take the fight for jobless youth even further.

Implement Clause Four of the Constitution as part of a planned economy which will ensure full employment, is the demand from Leeds North West.

HOUSING

On the question of the appalling housing conditions which people are forced to suffer, Nottingham North states that a repeal of the Tory Rent Act, nationalization of the banks and building societies, industries and the land is the only answer to Rachmanism.

Resolutions on immigration come early on the agenda and many branches have sent in resolutions calling on the Labour leaders to repeal the Tory Immigration Act.

Kirkdale, Liverpool branch



'youthful' Bessie

says the Act is 'an attempt by big business and the Tories to split the working class on racialist lines'.

The actions of the Parliamentary Labour Party in failing to oppose the renewal of the Immigration Act are described as 'cowardly' by Leicester South East.

Eight branches sent in resolutions declaring their uncompromising opposition to any kind of conscription.

FORCES

'The strengthening of the British Armed Forces can only be in the interests of big business,' says Dulwich.

There are many more resolutions demanding opposition to apartheid in South Africa, deploping the action against socialists in Spain and Portugal, improvements in the educational system and Labour's opposition to the new Police Bill.

TORY CRISIS ON RPM

Labour must win middle class by nationalizing monopolies

By OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

STAGGERED by the collapse of its pre-election inflationary boom, the Tory Party reeled into what may prove to be an even more serious crisis during the second reading of the Retail Price Maintenance Bill.

Twenty-one Tory MPs voted against the Bill and 35 abstained. This is far more serious than the Suez crisis, when 15 abstained, and during the Profumo crisis when 27 abstained.

Behind the crisis is the worsening economic situation and the urgent need for the monopolies to fight the trade unions over wages and working conditions, if profits are to be maintained.

The Retail Price Maintenance Bill is designed to build up a case for wage freezing.

Already Mr. Maudling has spoken about the need of the government to make considerable increases in taxation, which, in effect, will amount to wage cuts.

These are measures which the monopolists immediately want to institute in order to bolster up their tottering economy.

The Labour Party abstained in the vote and refused to expose the real nature of Tory policy.

Wage freeze

Harold Wilson is already heavily committed to this policy so far as freezing wages and increasing taxation is concerned.

Tory opponents of the Bill, of course, also evaded the issues and concentrated their fire on the defence of the small shop-keeper.

Many of those who abstained are representatives of marginal seats with majorities of only a few hundred in several cases.



Wilson: already committed

They depend upon such middle-class elements as the small shop-keeper to maintain their parliamentary seats.

However, their defence, as usual with the Tories, is a sham.

The crisis of the small shop-keeper arises from the growth of monopoly capitalism.

By refusing to challenge the Tories through a policy of nationalization of the great monopolies, the Labour Party is driving the small shop-keeper into the arms of semi-fascist tendencies.

Attract vote

A policy to attract the vote of the small shop-keeper to the Labour Party could only be successful if an all-out attack against the monopolies by nationalization was launched.

The Tory crisis is very much the same crisis as that which

will confront the Labour Party when it takes the power.

The right wing play with the idea of doing business with the monopolists. Labour candidates have in fact declared this in their pre-election speeches.

They turn completely away from the strength of the working class to compromise with the most reactionary capitalist elements.

Harold Wilson and company are already paving the way for more authoritarian forms of right-wing government in this country.

These Labour leaders are, in fact, opening the doors for a dictatorship of the de Gaulle type to be established in the next few years.

If the economic crisis is driving the Tory Party out of office, how is it possible for a Labour government to succeed when it proposes to carry out the same policies as the Tories in relation to this crisis?

Sharp warning

The right wing are today leading the labour movement to disaster.

The Tory crisis is a sharp warning of the dangers ahead. We must redouble our efforts to build an alternative Marxist leadership within the labour movement which will carry forward the fight for socialist policies and against the right wing who are in fact agents of the Tory Party.

Power men to work to rule

THE work-to-rule and ban on overtime by 130,000 men in the electricity supply industry is to be put into operation on March 23—the day after official summertime begins.

They are demanding a 40-hour week, higher pay and longer holidays.

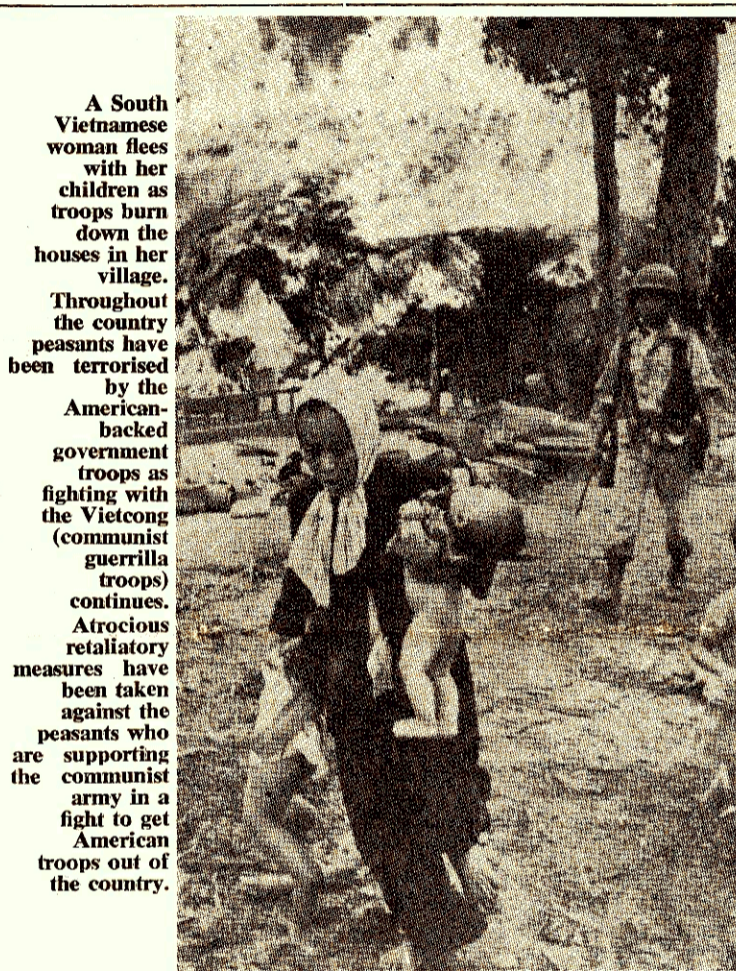
Their action follows a breakdown in talks with the Electricity Council.

Domestic supplies may be affected by the ban because, the papers say, 'supplies to industry must be kept going at all costs'.

Supplies to hospitals and similar places will be kept going.

The union leaders have agreed to this militant step at a time when it is least embarrassing to them.

Last year when similar steps were taken during the cold spell, the national press and union leaders hounded the 'unofficial' leader of the action, ETU member Mr. Charles Doyle.



A South Vietnamese woman flees with her children as troops burn down the houses in her village. Throughout the country peasants have been terrorised by the American-backed government troops as fighting with the Vietcong (communist guerrilla troops) continues. Atrocious retaliatory measures have been taken against the peasants who are supporting the communist army in a fight to get American troops out of the country.

U.S. moves towards war with North Vietnam

SPECULATION about the possibility of all-out war in Vietnam has been strengthened by a series of happenings in the USA.

Roger Hilsman, the Assistant Secretary of State, who strongly disapproved of any attempt to extend the war beyond the 17th parallel into North Vietnam, recently resigned.

Messrs. McNamara, Secretary of Defence, General Maxwell Taylor, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, William Bundy, the new Assistant Secretary of State and John McCone, director of the Central Intelligence Agency made a sudden visit to Saigon.

There has been a US proposal to create a separate S.E. Asia Command and a new command structure in South Vietnam in direct contact with Washington.

ASSURANCE

President Johnson gave an explicit assurance on February 7 that more US troops will be sent into South Vietnam if needed. At present there are 15,500 soldiers and marines and 19 US generals (!)

(The present cost of the war to the US taxpayer is something like 1,500,000 dollars a day.)

There have been diplomatic moves initiated by the US to seal off the borders of Cambodia and prevent supplies from reaching the Vietcong in South Vietnam.

Finally, Mr. McNamara, in a recent statement, said that he would 'take all necessary mea-

asures to prevent a communist victory'.

In Vietnam today, however, there is a wide gulf between what is necessary and what is possible—between the two there falls the shadow of a nation in arms and an army with a 20-year record of sustained and heroic struggle.

Logistically speaking there is only one 'possibility' for American imperialism: to step up the supply of arms to South Vietnam and simultaneously bomb the northern cities.

PREVENT

General Giap has demanded that Britain and the USSR, as co-chairmen of the 1954 Geneva agreement, prevent an escalation of the war.

But sections of the US ruling class, it seems, are looking forward to 'police action' in Asia.

Stewart Allsop quotes one policy-maker in Washington as having said: 'If the Chinese intervened we would at last have a heaven-sent opportunity to hit certain targets in China.'

'In any case, overt hostilities with the Chinese could hardly be more dangerous than communist victory in Vietnam, which would be the beginning of the end for Asia.'

Such enthusiasm will soon confront the world and the US with the prospect of an enlarged war from which there might be no return.

The British labour movement must give a resolute rebuff to any such adventures.

Railwaymen put in claim for more pay

AFTER Dr. Beeching, chairman of the British Railways Board, refused to give a 40-hour week to 250,000 railwaymen, two unions agreed to put in a new pay claim.

The National Union of Railwaymen and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen decided to consult with members of the Transport Salaried Staffs Association before taking definite steps.

At a meeting of the Railway Staffs National Council last week the claim for shorter hours was turned down on the grounds that the 'principle of shorter hours had not been generally established in industry'.

Debt

Three weeks ago Dr. Beeching proudly declared that £17 million had been wiped off the railways' debt. Perhaps he hopes to make that figure even better this year by keeping the wages of the men down to a minimum level and making them work long hours.

When the National Union of Railwaymen and the Associated

Your help still needed

THIS is the first three-colour Newsletter. Now that the new plant at our printers is settling in, our technical staff are able to turn their attention to even greater improvements.

There is, however, room for many more improvements which can only be carried out if you, as the reader, assist us in finding a solution. We need more local correspondents who will regularly furnish us with news of what is happening in their localities.

We regret that The Newsletter is unable to pay for such reports because our finances at the moment are extremely limited but we will cover any expense incurred in obtaining photographs from local newspapers.

Our bankers' orders guarantees have now shot up to £115 monthly. We are still £85 behind. Nothing would give us more pleasure than to wipe out this deficit by the end of March. What about it?

'Passport' for Soviet workers

IN A LONG speech made at a conference called by the Soviet Praesidium to discuss the agricultural crisis, Khrushchev outlined his new proposals for working conditions in the USSR.

In a plea for greater wage differentials, he said: 'We must boldly adopt a path of material encouragement for the quantity and quality of products. We must fight against egalitarianism and for the principle of pay according to work.'

He also demanded greater freedom for the farmers to grow what they wanted after state deliveries had been met.

To implement this policy, he demanded a system of 'labour passports'.

Record

Every worker will be issued with one of these passports, which will contain a record of the holder's personal history.

This, according to Khrushchev, would make it difficult for 'criminals and parasites to live without working. The present police documents', he continued, 'are inadequate for this purpose'.

These proposals are part of a Khrushchev scheme to overcome the agricultural, economic and trading difficulties which Tom Kemp has been examining for The Newsletter for the past five weeks. This week on page 2 he deals with the USSR and the world market.

