

YOUNG SOCIALISTS RALLY FOR



Hundreds of Young Socialists highlighted the hypocrisy of the poster outside the Labour Party Conference in Brighton when they marched past last Sunday chanting 'Pay the pension increase NOW - Nationalize banks'.

PENSIONS RISE NOW

by Robert James

AS delegates at the Labour Party Conference heard their leaders retreat on every General Election pledge, 700 Young Socialists marched through windswept Brighton demanding an immediate increase in old age pensions, and the lifting of bans and proscriptions on Young Socialists.

All along the two mile route the youth, marching behind red banners representing Young Socialist branches from all over Britain, chanted: 'Pay the Old Age Pensions Now—Nationalize the Banks'.

Hundreds of posters demanded that the Labour government

The sight of the march had a tremendous impression on those delegates who had sat inside the conference to hear Wilson, completely unopposed, cover up the retreat of his government.

Dave Ashby, chairman of the Young Socialists National Committee (Majority) welcomed the marchers to a meeting where Mike Farley, National Committee Member for the North-West, who has just been expelled from the Labour Party in Bessie Braddock's constituency, told the large audience the history of the youth movement.

Witch-hunt

The right wing in the Labour Party, he said, had not envisaged a movement as strong as the present Young Socialists, which had been steadily built up since 1961, and this was the reason for the witch-hunt. He told of the fight by the YS to attract youth from the dole queues—youth prone to racist ideas—and of the tremendous hardship experienced by this youth and their families.

The Labour Party, he said, had been campaigning for years saying that old people had the right to live with dignity. But as soon as Wilson faced the financial crisis, he bowed before every wish and pressure of the 'gnomes of Zurich' and other big bankers who had loaned money to Britain.

Old age pensioner, John Malkin (65), from Leeds, was given a tremendous reception by the audience.

He thanked the Young Socialists on behalf of all old age pensioners for taking up their fight.

He told of some of the terrible conditions under which old people lived—how many slept in church crypts and in Salvation Army hostels—receiving only two slices of bread and margarine and a cup of tea in the morning.

He also related how his own family had lived on cods heads and had dressed in sacks in the early part of the century.

Mr. Malkin said he was pleased the Young Socialists had taken up the struggle for pensions. 'No one else put up such a good fight in the whole of the conference,' he said.

Nationalization

He agreed with the YS policy of nationalization to solve the crisis. But, he added, the distribution of coal should also be nationalized—that is where the profit is going,' he added.

Jackie Vance, a Northern Ireland Young Socialist said that the 13 years of Tory rule had meant misery and poverty for many people. The betrayals of the Labour government had encouraged a growth of racialism.

He spoke of struggles in Northern Ireland where the working class was divided on religious grounds. The labour movement closed its eyes to this, he said.

There were many unemployed youth in Ireland where youth were treated roughly by the police for hanging around and

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The Newsletter

WEEKLY JOURNAL OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

Saturday, December 19, 1964

Trade unions head for crisis

AS the trade gap widened to £103 million, Mr. George Brown announced that his Declaration of Intent over an incomes policy has been signed by the employers and trade union representatives. This amounts to two sides of the same crisis.

British capitalism is striving desperately to increase its investment programme in order to compete with its overseas rivals. The monopoly capitalists who in the past deliberately allowed their industries to become dilapidated and out of date are now trying to purchase automated equipment but are unable to pay for it out of their dwindling share of the export market. So the crisis of capitalism has to be foisted on to the backs of the working class and Mr. George Brown and Harold Wilson are the men for the job. They know full well after last week's piteous demonstration by the delegates attending the Labour Party Conference that they have a clear road so far as the functionaries in the Party and trade unions are concerned.

On the same day that George Brown made his statement, Sir William Carron, President of the Amalgamated Engineering Union and a Governor of the Bank of England, pushed an agreement through the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, which over three years will bring a few shillings to the lower paid workers and nothing to those workers who as a result of their struggles enjoy wages over the basic rate.

Under whose pressure is this Labour government reacting at the moment? It should be fairly obvious that it is acting under the pressure of the monopoly capitalists and that all the steps that it is now taking are designed to tie down the trade unions to agreements which will reduce the real value of wages.

Since the budget announcement, the cost of living has gone up and everyone knows that because of the high bank rate, unemployment will be on the increase within a matter of weeks. The working class are being hamstrung by their leaders at a time when their conditions are steadily worsening. Could there be any greater indictment of these right-wing renegades?

The employers are, of course, still cautious. They at least appreciate the militancy of the British working class. The 'Financial Times' in its editorial of December 17 says: 'For the time being, at least, Mr. Brown is likely to have more success in encouraging labour mobility and securing the abandonment of restrictive practices than in keeping wage increases in line with the rise in national output—particularly if that rise is small.'

Precisely. These more thoughtful representatives of the ruling class are hoping for modest returns. If they can move workers, irrespective of trade, from one department to the other, at wages lower than they previously received, thereby eliminating the value of craft and skill, then they will have achieved what they immediately desire. They will have struck a blow at the better paid sections of the working class which, in turn, paves the way to their conception of an 'incomes policy'.

As a result of these developments, the trade union movement is now in real danger. This applies in particular to shop stewards organisations. The Labour and trade union right-wing traitors are entering into and signing agreements with the employers which, if allowed to continue, will create unemployment, introduce speed-up and cut wages.

It is important for trade unionists not to be indifferent to what is going on inside the Labour Party. The struggle against the Labour Party right wing and the trade union bureaucracy is inseparable. The Socialist Labour League calls for the building of an alternative Marxist leadership. The Young Socialists have shown the way. Now is the time for every serious trade union militant to join this fight.

B/OSL FILE

The Newsletter

WEEKLY JOURNAL OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

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LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

Witch-hunt and wage freeze in Labour offensive

'Left' aid Wilson's attack on working class

AFTER 10 weeks of the Labour government, during which Wilson and his Ministers have attempted to overcome Britain's financial crisis by joining the employers' offensive against the working class, the Party's two-day conference at Brighton last weekend marked time.

While the number of demands from sections of workers for an increase in wages grow, at a time when the bank rate and import surcharges—with all their resultant features and effects on sterling—reduce the actual value of wage packets and pensions, the Labour leaders, backed by delegates and trade union leaders, spoke of Wilson's 'statesmanlike', hour-long speech, the great future of Britain under Labour... and wage freeze.

'Breakthrough'

George Brown, First Secretary of State and Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, told the conference on Sunday that he expected a breakthrough on an incomes policy and that the 'declaration of intent' of the unions to participate in such a policy would be signed this week.

In fact, the acceptance of the three year package deal by the 37 unions in the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions is, as Monday's 'Guardian' reports, 'a major contribution to the incomes policy because it seemed to offer a prospect of wage stability in a leading sector of the industry covering three million workers'.

President of the Electrical Trades Union, Les Cannon's opposition to the deal does not mean he opposed an incomes policy.

Monday's 'Guardian' reported that the ETU is demanding a court of enquiry into minimum rates and women's rates—these are not included in the package deal, which Cannon describes as 'alien to an incomes policy'. He claimed that some of his skilled members would still be earning £12 17s. 8d. in 1968 and that by then lower paid workers would have received only 10s. a week increase.

On Sunday from the rostrum his concern for wage rates disappeared when he made a demand for a more efficient incomes policy which would

'begin a new era for the trade union movement'. This two-day affair was just another indication of the crisis in which the Labour government finds itself.

It laid bare the preparations for a showdown by Wilson and company, on behalf of the Tories and bosses, with the working class, and the

collaboration by the opportunists of the so-called 'left'. This was clearly revealed in the discussion on the Young Socialists in the secret session.

A reference back of the section of the annual report dealing with youth was defeated. Replying for the National

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URGENT APPEAL FROM NIGERIA

IMPRISONED for one year's hard labour by the 'independent' Nigerian government are three workers who played a prominent part in the successful strike in Nigeria this summer.

These men, Sidi Kayam, Jonas Kiomaskenagh Abam and Oleshengun Adebayo were framed on a conspiracy charge along with Dr. V. L. Allen, lecturer in economics at Leeds University, who was visiting Lagos for research purposes.

Because they were afraid of the newly-aroused strength of the working class, the Nigerian government needed a fake trial to intimidate the Left. In fact the trial has rebounded. Even though the accused were found guilty of such serious charges as sedition and conspiracy, they each got only four months on each charge! The popularity of those sentenced have been greatly enhanced.

It is absolutely essential that all socialists and organisations of the labour movement give full support to the campaign for the release of all four men. The Nigerians involved urgently need money to cover the cost of their appeal against sentence, together with other legal costs.

Of special concern is the plight of the children of Sidi Kayam, a seaman's leader, well known among English socialists as well as in Nigeria. As a result of the trial these dependants are destitute.

Kayam's wife has tried repeatedly to get employment, but is discriminated against because of the publicity given to the trial. She faces eviction because of unpaid rent since the summer and starvation for her children.

These Nigerian political prisoners have made a special appeal for help for Mrs. Kayam and the children. It is vital that funds be raised and sent to her immediately. This can be done reliably through Kayam's defence lawyers.

We call upon all members of the labour and trade union movement to respond to this appeal immediately. House to house collections, individual donations, fund raising by parties and social functions organised by trade unions or working men's clubs or by individuals. All of these are important and necessary means of raising finance.

Every British socialist has a responsibility to these fellow trade unionists and socialists in Nigeria. Mrs. Kayam and her children must not be allowed to starve. Please rush in all available finance before Christmas.

The Newsletter appeals to its readers to get special collections going between now and Christmas. Send the money to the Editor of The Newsletter, 186a Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4, marked 'Nigerian Fund'.



The Young Socialist demonstration is halted by the police before it reaches the Labour Party conference hall

CHRISTMAS BREAK

Because of the Christmas holiday arrangements at our printers, The Newsletter will not appear next week. The next issue will be published on January 2, 1965. Start your year right by placing a regular order for your post free copy of The Newsletter before the end of the year.

The Editorial Board of The Newsletter sends the

SEASON'S GREETINGS

to our readers and contributors and Best Wishes for 1965

Defence policy tied to economic crisis

By JOHN CRAWFORD

'TRIBUNE' and the 'Daily Worker' are both trying to present the issue of Wilson's defence policy as if some question of socialist principle remained undecided. Each of them 'hopes' that Wilson will not agree to American proposals for British participation in a Multi-lateral force (MLF).

But Wilson has already made clear his subservience to imperialism. The only question for him is how best to serve it in this period of crisis.

The military problems of the Western Alliance reflect its economic difficulties. The decline of their position in the world market makes it necessary for the British ruling class to scale down its military outlay.

The danger they strive to avoid is that further loss of military independence will lose them still more positions in the world economy.

The argument about Britain's 'independent nuclear deterrent' has, for a long time, been a phoney argument. Neither the

missiles nor the means of delivering them are available to the British without help from Washington.

Now, with the pound sterling resting precariously on short-term foreign credit, the oldest imperialist power has no room to manoeuvre with its powerful 'ally'. Whatever the press reports may have said, the Wilson-Johnson talks were, in reality, a monologue.

AFRAID

Their chief difficulty lies in the continued growth of Germany. Having fought two world wars, partly to prevent German military and industrial dominance in Europe, the British capitalists are afraid of allowing their German rivals too much independence.

Even though Adenauer has now been succeeded by more US-orientated tendencies, the Americans are also anxious to keep a tight rein on Bonn. At the same time, the overall need of imperialism to maintain its war preparations against the USSR demands an increased

carry out socialist policies to solve the economic crisis.

Their main banner demanded 'Nationalize Monopolies', 'Oppose Conscription', 'Bring the Troops Home', 'Leave NATO'.

Throughout the march, and after, the youth were harassed by Brighton's notorious police—several were searched before they left the town on buses.

Police uncertain

Before the procession was due to pass the conference hall, the police halted the marchers several times—at one junction the traffic lights changed three times before the march was allowed on its way again.

But the police were also uncertain of their moves. They could not understand that the same type of youth they had manhandled so brutally last summer, could march united and disciplined calling for socialism.

Crowds lined the pavement along the whole route, but the largest crowd was outside the conference, which, by that time, had just ended.

German military contribution.

Wilson and Gordon Walker are apparently making pleas for a special British role in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. This is the reason for the visit to Aden by Colonial Secretary Greenwood (ex-CND and Movement for Colonial Freedom).

In return for being allowed to police South Arabia, Wilson was asked to send support for the US puppet regime in South Vietnam.

If this is to be more than a token force, it is likely to raise once more the question of conscription being re-introduced by the Labour government.

The issue for socialists is not what form of nuclear co-operation is to be worked out between the US, British and German capitalists, but to mobilize the labour movement against the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation altogether.

First worked out under a Labour government, the Treaty ties the movement to the anti-Soviet alliance. Wilson, firmly committed to carry out the needs of imperialism, will not break with NATO, and all it implies, without a big campaign against this reactionary policy.

DURING the months prior to and since the election of the Labour government, the tendency towards opportunism has been strengthened considerably inside the labour movement. Professional careerists young and old have been busy grovelling before the leadership of Harold Wilson, hoping that their subservience will be noticed.

No matter what sort of behind-the-scenes conflict may be going on in the back rooms where Labour Party policy is finally decided upon, one thing is abundantly clear—the opportunists are united in their hostility to youth.

The 'New Statesman and Nation', 'Manchester Guardian' and 'Tribune' have constantly banded together to misrepresent and slander the Young Socialists. Ever since the Labour Party's youth movement elected a majority leadership opposed to the right-wing they have been the victims of one unscrupulous attack after another.

But these are not the only bureaucratic agencies who hate the revolutionary youth. In the background stands monopoly capital, with a police force that is being constantly strengthened and toughened up.

The Labour-controlled London County Council's Education Committee has just produced a report on how to combat hooliganism amongst youth. The remarkable thing about this document is that it drops all pretence towards reforms such as improved education and schools facilities.

In fact, it implies that only the police can deal with young people who are at war in one form or another with this capitalist society.

An editorial in the London 'Evening News' of December 14, 1964, commenting on the report declares that:

'Violent behaviour and crazy vandalism among youngsters is now a major national problem.'

'We would like,' says this Tory newsheet, 'to see a direct and hard-hitting campaign against hooliganism,' to prove that 'like crime' it 'does not pay'.

Right wing collaborate with the police

In one large industrial area in West London, Young Socialists who are known to be openly in conflict with the Labour bureaucracy are being constantly hounded by the police. If they are distributing leaflets, they are provocatively stopped and their names are taken. All the while the police make threats against them in order to provoke them.

If they hold open-air meetings the police stand around trying to create disturbances. One young lad of 14 years was kept several hours in the police station and threatened that if he went near the Young Socialists he would be severely dealt with in future.

In this kind of activity right-wing Labour agents collaborate closely with the police. In south-west London police handed a list of the names of Young Socialists who they declared were associated with the Socialist Labour League to the right-wing agent.

Only a few months ago this same agent handed a list of names of people to the police whom he claimed were local members of the Communist Party.

Behind the crisis of youth

During the special national conference of the Socialist Labour League held at the end of November a lengthy discussion took place around the problems facing the youth. A section of the resolution adopted by the conference explained the crisis in this way:

'Young people reflect more sensitively and directly than any other section of the working class the uncertainties of the capitalist system. The unprecedented growth of productive forces implied by automation multiplies these uncertainties, hastens the

Youth against opportunism

by Frank Williams

crisis of capitalism, all within the context of the war and revolutions characteristic of imperialism, the last stage of capitalism.

Youth bear the brunt of the economic dislocations caused by capitalism's inability to rationally utilise the potential of automation. Besides unemployment, these young workers are the first to feel the impact of the intensified exploitation imposed upon unskilled and semi-skilled workers by automation under capitalism.

As a result of these economic contradictions of capitalism in the face of automation, traditional forms of consciousness are strained to breaking-point; automation demands the leap to socialism. This necessary leap in consciousness and organisation of the working class conflicts sharply with existing capitalist ideology, most directly with the ideas of the labour aristocracy and bureaucracy, and this conflict is expressed most sharply among the youth.

It takes the form of widespread frustration, outbursts of protest, indiscriminate manifestations of contempt for established institutions and authorities, and above all a militant hatred for the police. We must understand this as an elemental but as yet unconscious anti-capitalism; this is why the same youth are so willing to fight bitterly against the Labour bureaucracy.'

Young people are not born hooligans. It is capitalist society which creates the conditions that lead to the instability of many layers of young people, particularly those who work in poorly-paid, blind-alley jobs and live in bad housing and overcrowded conditions.

The Young Socialists have had experience of working amongst broad layers of such young people and have won many of them over to socialism. Unless such work is done then these youth would be left open to the poisonous propaganda of the racials.

Young Socialists have demonstrated at the same time that they are capable of mobilising large numbers of apprentices and students. In the latter case some of them have come from the ranks of the upper middle class. This is the remarkable thing about the British youth movement. On the basis of an advanced socialist programme it unites politically young workers from all walks of life.

Role of Pabloite revisionism

The rank and file of this movement are not very much affected by the hostility of the capitalist press, the right wing and their fake left agents. New and more revisionist methods have had to be introduced against them.

For the last four years a small group of Pabloites have been actively engaged in fighting the majority leadership of the Young Socialists. At times they pose as wild-eyed lefts and push the youth into adventures.

For example, they supported the Stalinists in the recent abortive apprentices' strike which was called without the slightest preparation. When the Young Socialists demanded a serious and more lengthy period of preparation they were denounced by the Pabloites as strike-breakers.

A few days ago in the Wandsworth Constituency Labour Party rooms, three Young Socialists were expelled by a combination of Pabloites and the right wing. Their crime was that they brought along 30 young people to join the Young Socialists branch.

Leading the Pabloites in this area is a man called S. Mani, an ardent supporter of the United Secretariat in Paris. For

several weeks before the expulsions he openly boasted that he was going to get together with the right wing and arrange them.

The right wing then took extra-precautionary measures and called out a large force of police. As Mr. Mani and his friends were speaking in support of the motion of expulsion, the police were outside provoking the youth who wanted to join.

It would be hard to find another example of such blatant treason to Trotskyism. Another leading Pabloite in the London area, supporting Mani, declared that he, Mani, was right to take such measures against 'young hooligans'.

In other words, the united front against the youth between the opportunists and the forces of the capitalist state is now complete. The Tory 'Evening News', the right-wing Labour leaders and the Pabloite revisionists are all united in denouncing the youth as 'hooligans'. The opportunists are making a last-ditch stand against the growth of the Young Socialists into a powerful organisation.

The meaning of police intervention

Whether Messrs. Mani and his fellow Pabloites know it, there is an historical precedent for the use of the 'democratic' police against the revolutionary youth movement.

On February 24, 1934, one of the early international congresses of revolutionary Trotskyist youth organisations was taking place at Laren, Holland. Amongst the delegates present were four young Trotskyists who were emigrés from Hitler's terror and who had travelled to Holland from their place of exile.

In the course of this conference, the 'democratic' Dutch government carried out a raid and arrested the delegates. They handed these four young Trotskyists over to Hitler's police and they were never heard of or seen again.

The calling of the police

against the youth by the Labour Party is something new in British politics. There has been a long tradition of free speech in the English labour movement which in turn afforded some protection for Trotskyists when they were the victims of Stalinist persecution particularly during the Second World War. This tendency for the right wing to rush to the police is a symptom of the real degenerate nature and crisis of British capitalism.

Only a few years after the Dutch capitalists handed over the young Trotskyists to Hitler, Holland itself was overrun by the Hitlerite armies.

People like S. Mani who openly collaborate with the right wing in expelling Young Socialists are the lowest form of traitor, not only to the Trotskyist movement but to the working class as a whole. These people should be politically ostracised and banished from all contact with the revolutionary youth movement.

Why the split?

The most frequent argument of misrepresentation which is commonly used against the Young Socialists is that by their militant struggle they are turning their backs on the official movement. This, of course, is a lie from beginning to end.

The Young Socialists never had any other choice but to fight the right-wing bureaucracy. Since 1960 they have been constantly at loggerheads with its full-time officials.

If the split between the Young Socialists and the adult party has come at the moment it is because of the capitulation of the Wilson government to the forces of monopoly capital.

For over four years the Young Socialists debated and discussed and carried resolutions on policy matters opposed to the present course of the Labour government. The right wing, the 'Tribune' and Pabloite revisionists participated fully in that debate. With their control of the machine they tried to rig

Continued from page 1

Executive Committee, Bessie Braddock said the new Youth sub-Committee of the NEC would look into the matter of the Young Socialists.

In a typical witch-hunting speech she said there had been tremendous disruption in the Young Socialists. The Streatham YS branch has been disbanded earlier in the year, and the National Committee of the organisation had to be closed down after taking two unconstitutional and irresponsible actions (supporting Streatham against its closure).

A 'disgraceful' gathering had been held outside Transport House which brought much bad publicity to the Labour Party. Streatham Young Socialists had visited other YS branches and Constituency Parties trying to get support.

Mr. D. Ashby, called an unconstitutional meeting of the National Committee, which eight members attended—two were not invited and one would not attend.

Manifesto

This meeting produced a document [the Manifesto 'Forward with the Young Socialists'], and the National Committee had called a conference which was completely unofficial, she said.

There had been a considerable increase in disruption, but there were large numbers of Young Socialists who supported the Labour Party.

The NEC saw fit to send, from its November meeting, a reminder to Constituency Labour Parties and Young Socialists that the YS is part of the Labour Party and has to obey its constitution.

Labour Party conference

But the NEC had no intention of making any changes in the structure of the YS.

We have got to get rid of the disrupters, she said.

One centrist delegate said that the NEC bore much of the blame for the position in the Young Socialists. There was organisational friction which was the only reason for the survival of 'Keep Left', a newspaper circulated among Young Socialists. He appealed to the NEC to let the Constituency Parties run the YS branches. They will be able to deal with disruption, he said.

Tolerate

A Coventry delegate said that the Labour Party could tolerate disputes over pensions and nationalization, but could not tolerate the YS going outside the constitution. That was the reason for the disbanding of the Coventry YS.

It was clear that, by referring the question to the sub-committee, the Young Socialists has virtually been closed down. There was no mention of a Young Socialists Conference in 1965, which makes it all too obvious that the NEC and the centrists want to revert back to the 1955-60 position when the Labour Party had an almost non-existent youth organisation tied to the constituency parties.

Bessie Braddock expressed the complete hatred that the NEC has of those Young Socialists who are fighting for socialist policies. On Sunday afternoon this youth showed its feeling for the plight of the many old age pensioners who will suffer from cold and hunger this winter because pensions have not been

innumerable meetings and conferences but to no avail.

At Brighton last Easter they were fairly and squarely defeated, not only on policy matters, but on the election of a national committee to lead the movement.

The Young Socialists organisation at its present stage of development cannot do any more than carry through a split from the Labour Party. To allow itself to be broken up and witch-hunted would be a disaster for the forces of international revolutionary socialism.

But this does not mean that they are turning their backs on the labour movement. On the contrary, by their struggles they are and will attract tens of thousands of young people who will form the leadership of socialist opposition to the bureaucracies inside the trade unions and the Labour Party in the period ahead.

The Young Socialists is a training ground for the cadres of the future mass revolutionary party. They all know about such traitors as the fake-lefts, right wing and Pabloites. They have seen them in active collaboration with the police.

This is part, but only part of a most invaluable education. All Young Socialists must now receive in addition an all-sided Marxist education.

A resolution on youth adopted by the Trotskyist International Left Opposition in 1933 had this to say about such an education:

'Blind obedience is a virtue in a soldier of a capitalist army but not in a proletarian fighter. Revolutionary discipline is founded on collective thought and collective will. A supporter of the theory of scientific Communism does not believe anything on word. He judges everything by reason and by experience. The youth cannot accept Marxism on command, it should assimilate it for itself through an independent effort of thought. This is precisely why the youth should not only have the opportunity to educate itself but to make mistakes in order to rise through its own errors to the Communist conception. Bureaucratic and factitious discipline has crumbled to dust at the moment of danger. Revolutionary discipline does not exclude but demands the right of checking and criticism. Only thus can an indestructible revolutionary soldiery be created.'

This is the position of the Socialist Labour League. That is why hundreds of youth are now joining our ranks and many more will join during 1965. This is the only organisation which understands their problems and speaks out on their behalf.

raised immediately by the Wilson government.

One or two delegates made pleas for the old people, but they were not answered by the platform, or Wilson in his speech.

'Disappointment'

'I share your disappointment that although the legislation [to raise pensions] was quickly introduced and quickly passed through the Commons, it is not possible to start the payments when they are most needed—in the winter; though special provisions have been made to help those on National Assistance with their fuel costs.

'But for Heaven's sake, don't let us get on the defensive about it. Some remarks I have read suggest that this government, which was prepared in the midst of difficult economic circumstances to act where our predecessors had not acted and—if they had been returned, would not have acted—is a government of unfeeling Scrooges. Put the responsibility where it lies. If the Conservative Government of Sir Alec Douglas-Home had decided that pensions should have been increased and if they had started the preparations in July or August, we could have had these increases in force by Christmas,' he said.

Certainly the responsibility lies with the Tories, but nowhere in Wilson's 'statesmanlike' speech did he say, 'Make the Tories pay'.

For an hour delegates sat listening to Wilson say he will make them, the rank and file, pay.

George Brown was quite blunt

National strike paralyses France

THE power of the working class was felt throughout France on Friday, December 11, when over two and a half million workers in the nationalized industries came out on a 24-hour strike.

Workers involved are employed in the railways, public transport, electricity and gas industries, the mines, the post office, the banks, the schools and the airlines.

The strike, which was called by all the trade union confederations, was against the wage freezing in the public sector.

Plans of the French government for revitalising French industry have been based upon wage freeze for these workers.

The strike was widely followed by the public employees. There was an almost complete stoppage of face workers in the mines, only 2 per cent reporting for work.

Electricity supply was reduced to the minimum required to enable hospitals to continue to function. Only very few main line trains ran, and these could only be pulled by steam or diesel locos.

The Sud-Aviation factory, which is the French firm concerned with the 'Concord' project, the Toulon Arsenal, the National Insurance offices at Dijon, and the Treasury offices at Besancon were halted by the strike.

DEMONSTRATIONS

The strike of the power workers meant that from 60 to 70 per cent of the factories in private industry were forced to close on Friday.

There were many demonstrations throughout France. At Versailles, strikers marched through the town shouting their demands for higher wages. At Clermont-Ferrand, a joint demonstration was organised between the workers and the farm workers and peasants.

Five thousand strikers took part in a demonstration in Nantes.

The police force issued a statement that although they were forbidden to strike by law, they supported the strike against wage freezing for public employees.

In an interview with the press, a postal worker pointed out that a technical worker at the post office earns only £12 per week before stoppages.

'It is impossible to live decently on such low wages,' he stated. 'Prices have not been stabilised; neither have the capitalists' profits nor the military credits. On the other hand,

wages, salaries and pensions have been stabilised. . . .'

Food prices in France are intolerably high and the housing crisis is growing worse. There is a constant lessening in the availability of housing credits. In Lyon, the city authorities were unable to build one single workers' flat this year.

NO SOLUTION

But the strike, though effective in itself, and opening up the road for further action, provided no solution to the problems of the French working class, as no clear revolutionary lead was given by the big parties or unions.

The Catholic-led trade unions, for instance, are demanding that the workers should be given their 'just portion' of the national wealth. At the same time, the building workers in the Stalinist-led CGT did not demand nationalization as an answer to the housing crisis, but protested against immigration.

No trade union or political party has given any clear lead to what the solidarity expressed in last week's strike should lean on to.

Without a clear lead from a revolutionary party, this great solidarity and enormous strength displayed by the French workers will merely be frittered away and lead to frustration and ever-worsening conditions.

The reactionary protest of the building workers' union is a threat of divisions that will seriously weaken the French working class.

Mississippi

Sheriff acquitted in civil rights murder case

ON June 21, three civil rights workers, Andrew Goodman, aged 20, and Michael Schwerner, aged 24, both white men from New York, with James Chaney, aged 22, a Negro from Meridian, Mississippi, arrived in Philadelphia to look into the burning of a Negro church. Shortly after arrival, they were arrested on a trumped-up speeding charge by Sheriff Lawrence Rainey and Deputy Sheriff Cecil Price.

They were first taken to the Sheriff's office, outside which there is a notice depicting the United States Justice Department officials as 'Jew Communists'. Afterwards they were lodged in Neshoba County jail.

Meanwhile the Sheriff and his agents got in touch with the Ku Klux Klan who then arranged to murder these three innocent men.

As soon as the Klansmen who were to execute the 'sentences' arrived in Philadelphia, Deputy Price dropped the charge of speeding and released the men. He later joined the Klansmen in following and murdering the three men.

ARREST AND RELEASE

Their estate car was found burned and, six weeks after the crime was committed, the three bodies were found in a dam a few miles from Philadelphia. All three had been shot.

Seven months after this brutal murder was committed, the FBI arrested 21 men, amongst them the Sheriff Rainey and his deputy. Such is white justice in Mississippi that almost immediately after arrest they were released on bail and the Sheriff returned to duty.

Six days later the case came before Commissioner Miss E. Carter, who promptly decided that there were no grounds for referring the case to a grand jury. The charges were then dismissed against 19 of the 21 men arrested, including the Sheriff.

In the case of Michael Schwerner, the FBI indictment stated that he had been chosen because 'he was a white man who worked for integration, he was a Jew, he was from Brooklyn and he wore a beard'. The other two happened to be with him when they found themselves trapped by the Klansmen. Schwerner's widow commenting on the arrests said: 'How can you get convictions when the jury will be composed of relatives and friends of the defendants and no Negro can sit on the jury?'

She also alleged that the FBI investigators lost a vital day before they took action on the missing youths. It was during the night of that day that the murder was committed. If they 'had moved into the case faster' she said, the murders might have never taken place.

FEW people in Ceylon will lament the passing of Mrs Bandaranaike's government. Despised by the right and distrusted by the left it has disappeared into the limbo of history never to emerge again.

Nevertheless, as I pointed out in my previous article, the coalition did considerable damage because it confused and disorientated the trade union and labour movement at a time when the movement was preparing to launch a massive retaliatory offensive against the Sri Lanka Freedom Party government and the capitalist system in Ceylon.

There is no doubt that if the movement around the 21 demands, presented by the 14 trade union organisations, had gone ahead in unity and discipline, then the death knell of capitalism in this island would surely have sounded.

Instead, the leaders of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party who were thrust into the vanguard of the movement, quietly like Bedouins in the night, crossed over into the enemy camp at the decisive moment, thus paralysing the movement around the 21 demands.

The coalition has come and gone and—nine months after they were adopted—the 21 demands have not yet been presented. This is the balance sheet of betrayal.

First, the LSSP-dominated unions withdrew from the Joint Committee of trade union organisations—which left nine organisations out of the 14. Then the Moscow CP-dominated organisations, in line with their policy of supporting the coalition, began to raise all kinds of procedural points and objections.

Dissension

Adopting a more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger attitude to the coalition these unions at the end of October attempted to qualify the 21 demands with a political preamble whose operative section read:

'We condemn and oppose the present campaign that the vested interests have launched against the government and wish to emphasise that, while seeking a satisfactory settlement between the government and the working class in the matter of the 21 demands, the signatories will continue to fight against the campaign of these vested interests.'

'Forward', 13/11/64

This created immediate dissension since it meant tying the JCTUO politically to the coalition bandwagon. Out of the



Port workers belonging to the LSSP (Revolutionary) Union

NIGERIAN IMPRISONMENTS

STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

1964 has marked a major step forward for the working class in West Africa, because of the success of the Nigerian general strike and the beginning of independent working class politics in Nigeria.

When these Nigerian workers won important wage concessions and defeated all attempts at victimisation after their general strike, they struck fear into the hearts of the bourgeois government, which is nothing more than a caretaker for British and United States capital investments. At the end of the strike, 6,000 workers gave union leaders a mandate to form a new socialist workers' party, and the government decided to act.

Using the arrival in Nigeria of a British University research worker, Dr. Victor Allen, they manufactured a fantastic charge of sedition and 'conspiracy' for the overthrow of the government and arrested three prominent Nigerian trade union leaders: Sidi Kayam and Jonas Ktomasenagh Abam, port workers' leaders, and Oleshengun Adebayo, teachers' leader.

During the trial, the police (whose head was a white South African) submitted as their main

The second of two articles by **MICHAEL BANDA**, Editor of The Newsletter, who has returned from a visit to Ceylon.

Which road for the LSSP? (revolutionary)



Sensing the failure of the 21 demands, many sections are pressing their demands for better pay and conditions

eight organisations, three favoured the CP line, one was neutral and four, led by Bala Tampoe of the Ceylon Mercantile Union, opposed.

More dissension began to emerge when it was learnt that Mr. Thondaman of the Ceylon Workers' Congress was in favour of submitting the 21 demands to the government but not to the private employers because the Estate Employers' Federation were absolutely opposed to the demands.

The estate employers, employing over 700,000 workers, argued that the 21 demands would cost them an additional 855 million rupees per year and that an increase of such magnitude, if passed on to the cost of production of tea, rubber and coconut, would cripple the plantation industries.

The employers and Mr. Thondaman omitted to mention

the fact that the Indian estate workers have not had a wage increase for 15 years!

At the end of November, the Moscow CP unions took a unilateral decision to submit the 21 demands together with the political preamble. This piece of chicanery, however, rebounded on the organisers when representatives of three postal unions and the Port Commission Workers' Union, belonging to the CP-dominated Federation, walked out of the meeting at which the demands were adopted.

Lessons

Thus by the time the coalition fell only five of the original 14 organisations remained. These were the Ceylon Mercantile Union, the Ceylon Trade Union Federation (led by the pro-Chinese CP), Ceylon Workers' Congress (Indian Plantation Workers), Democratic Workers' Congress (Indian Plantation Workers) and Central Council of Ceylon Trade Unions.

During the six months of coalition rule, however, certain invaluable and salutary lessons were learnt by the unions under reformist domination.

The dramatic desertion of the 21 demands by Perera (N. M. Perera, who became Finance Minister, presided at the mammoth rally which

launched the 21 demands in March 1964) and Colvin R. de Silva, and their support of the reactionary Press Bill antagonised large sections of workers in the government-run industries and this precipitated a drift towards the unions of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary) as well as those dominated by the pro-Chinese CP.

This process has, no doubt, been hastened now that the coalition has fallen. A similar though not so pronounced drift has been going on in the Moscow CP-dominated unions.

Another interesting feature of the present situation is the change in the moods of certain sections of organised workers who, sensing the failure of the 21 demands movement to make headway, are pressing their own sectional demands against their employers.

Strikes impending

A new wave of strikes on various matters, which have been postponed because of the 21 demands, is now impending.

Above all, however, the failure of the movement around the 21 demands provides irrefutable proof of the correctness of the Transitional Programme which states that 'Trade unions . . . cannot replace the party' and that 'in periods of acute class struggle, the leading bodies of the trade unions aim to become masters of the trade union movement in order to render it harmless.'

Only a workers' and peasants' government could secure the 21 demands but before this could be realised a proletarian Marxist party was required. This is precisely what the situation lacked.

The LSSP leaders had already abandoned the revolutionary programme when they embraced in 1963 the United Left Front with the approval of the United Secretariat in Paris.

Bala Tampoe, who usually outshines other trade union leaders in perspicacity and political courage, correctly opposed this opportunist tactic at the time.

In Britain the Labour government has stated, through its Commonwealth Parliamentary Secretary, Bottomley, that it will not protest, since it is convinced that Allen had a fair trial. The Stalinist parties remain shamefully silent on the question.

Not a shred of proletarian internationalism remains in these traditional leaderships of the working class. Everywhere the organised workers, the youth movements and the trade unions of every country, must respond to the call for political and financial support for the four imprisoned men.

International Committee of the Fourth International, 6.12.1964.

Resolution

While the Central Committee meeting of August 4, 1963, adopted the ULF Agreement (24 For, 15 Against), the following resolution was moved by Comrade Bala Tampoe and defeated (14 For, 23 Against, 2 Neutral).

The Central Committee rejects the document for a United Left Front which the negotiating committee consisting of Comrades Leslie Goonewardene, N. M. Perera and Colvin R. de Silva have accepted in consultation with the MEP and the CP.

The CC further censures the negotiating committee for its acceptance of this document since it is materially different in regard to aim and programmatic content even from that which the CC adopted by a majority vote on 7.7.63.

It must be borne in mind that the CC originally decided on a United Front tactic in relation to a list of concrete demands around which the masses were to be mobilised in the perspective of uniting them in action against the SLFP Government and the forces of capitalist reaction. This perspective of the development of the class struggle through a United Front tactic has been substituted by a parliamentary governmental perspective. What is worse is that the programme now placed before the CC, in this perspective is designed to serve as a basis for setting up in parliament of merely a more progressive capitalist alternative to the present SLFP Government. This is clearly borne out by the following:

- (1) The reactionary Soulbury Constitution is not to be abrogated but only modified;
- (2) Ceylonese capitalist ownership in the estates, industries and commerce is to be preserved;
- (3) The armed forces of the capitalist state (i.e., police and the military) are to be preserved;
- (4) The demand that Tamil should be made an official language has been abandoned to accord with Sinhalese petit-bourgeois communalist sentiment;
- (5) Likewise, the demand for the grant of citizenship rights to plantation workers who have been rendered stateless has been abandoned for a deceptive formula.

In the result, what is contemplated is the establishment of a capitalist coalition government in association even with the SLFP.

Betrayal

This betrayal, which the United Secretariat tried to disguise as a victory for the working class, destroyed any hope of overthrowing capitalism in Ceylon and postponed to the Greek Kalends any prospect of realising the 21 demands.

This betrayal would not have been complete, of course, without the assistance of the Moscow CP—which has collaborated with the reformist LSSP openly in order to undermine the unity of the working class and prop up the coalition.

The pro-Chinese CP, led by N. Shanmugathasan, while it has collaborated with the revolutionary LSSP on many matters, nevertheless is seriously ham-



Members of the LSSP (Revolutionary) outside the waterfront office of the Party in Colombo, Ceylon

pered by its blind allegiance to Peking. As a result its policy is a mixture of centrist confusion and revolutionary militancy.

On the reactionary Press takeover, for example, the Peking group came out—to most people's amazement—in support of the government.

Of the ULF today, nothing remains except a skeleton organisation around Robert Goonewardene, who regrettably tags along behind the reactionary opposition in parliament.

On the other hand, Philip Goonewardene, leader of the MEP (Peoples' United Front) has discarded the last vestige of Marxism to become a raving racist and religious bigot allied



Colvin R. de Silva: Bête Noir of the working class

with a semi-fascist organisation—the JVP.

In this connection it would be interesting to hear what the United Secretariat has to say NOW of its own brainchild—the ULF!

At the split congress of the LSSP it demanded a government of the ULF!

The LSSP (Revolutionary) is the only Marxist party in Ceylon. On it lies the responsibility for leading the workers and peasants of Ceylon out of the labyrinth of confusion and communal discord on to the road of revolutionary struggle.

Nature of LSSP

The pre-condition for this struggle, however, is an uncompromising and relentless struggle against revisionist ideas and trends within its own ranks. The measure of success or failure in the accomplishment of the tasks that confront it will be judged by the extent to which it disabuses itself of the residue of revisionism which it inherited from the old party.

The old LSSP never was a Marxist or revolutionary party. It was a left centrist party not unlike the POUM of Spain or the British ILP. Its only merit was that it created a labour movement in Ceylon and tried to unite all nationalities, castes and creeds under its banner.

Its leaders introduced to Ceylon for the first time the ideas of contemporary Marxism. But the party remained essentially a party of propaganda and agitation—and in the final

reckoning a party of reform.

Like the POUM, the LSSP itself was the product of unprincipled unification which took place in 1950 between the Bolshevik-Leninist Party (the official section of the Fourth International, led by Leslie Goonewardene and Colvin R. de Silva) and the reformist LSSP (then led by Philip Goonewardene and N. M. Perera, with a large base in the rural areas).

The only purpose of the unification was to win the general elections of 1952. Hence the theoretical arming of the party and the training of cadres was sadly neglected.

The bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leadership of the party denied the necessity for professional revolutionaries in the leadership and tried to blackmail the party when a resolution along such lines was carried in 1952.

Following the split in the 4th International in 1953 the LSSP after an initial vacillation allied itself naturally with the Pablo-Cermain clique who helped protect the leaders from criticisms either from within or without the LSSP (see the 'Great Betrayal' by Gerry Healy*). This unholy alliance came to an end in 1964—but not entirely.

Expulsions demanded

The Unified Secretariat, with the support of the Socialist Workers Party, made sure to preserve the umbilical cord with the LSSP by refusing to expel Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene from the ranks of their organisation.

This was done despite two requests from the leadership of the LSSP (Revolutionary) which is affiliated to the US.

In a conversation with me, leading members of the party expressed their anger and consternation about this inaction. They pointed out that Colvin R. de Silva, in particular, had become Mrs. Bandaranaike's right-hand man and the Bête Noir of the working class.

Instead of expelling this odious traitor, the U.S. replied to the LSSP in a document, two-thirds of which was occupied by a splenetic attack on Gerry Healy and the Socialist Labour League!

The leaders of the LSSP (Revolutionary), quite rightly, rejected this scurrilous letter and repeated their demand for the expulsion of these two renegades.

Regardless of whether the U.S. expels Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene, the LSSP (Revolutionary) has no alternative but to break from this centrist swamp. This is not a formal organisational question but a dire political necessity for the survival of the party as a revolutionary organisation.

Either it takes the path of centrism or the path of revolutionary Marxism. The first leads to the Unified Secretariat—the second to the International Committee of the Fourth International.

A SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE PAMPHLET
CEYLON: The great betrayal

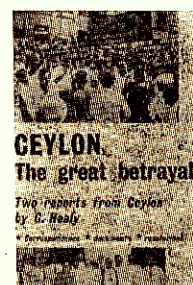
Containing:

- Two reports from Ceylon by G. Healy dealing with the background and developments behind the Lanka Sama Samaja Party Coalition and the role that the United Secretariat in Europe played in this betrayal.
- A reply by the SLL to an attack made on it by the magazine 'World Outlook'.
- A statement by the International Committee of the Fourth International.
- Complete resolutions submitted by the three tendencies represented at the LSSP Congress of June 1964.
- Correspondence from the International Secretariat to the LSSP.

Price 1/- Obtainable from 186a Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4.



Pickets in a recent strike at the Brooke Bond Tea company



Industrial Newsletter

Building workers lobby on wage agreement

By NEWSLETTER REPORTERS

The Central Council of the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives on Tuesday opposed a move, initiated by the Amalgamated Union of Building Trades Workers, to break the three-year wage agreement which was imposed in 1963.

A 50-strong deputation, representing 15 London building jobs who were supported by contingents from Portsmouth, lobbied the meeting in support of the AUBTW move.

George Lowthian, general secretary of the AUBTW and last year's chairman of the Trades Union Congress, angrily told them: 'We will do the negotiating. Who do you represent?'

Under the 1963 agreement the building workers' demand for 1s. 6d. an hour and a 40-hour week was met by 9½d. for craftsmen and 8d. for labourers spread over three years, and a reduction of hours to 41 by November 1964.

The final increase, due in November next year, is 2½d. an hour for craftsmen and 1d. for labourers.

At Tuesday's meeting the AUBTW submitted a resolution calling for this to be amended to an increase of 11d. for craftsmen and for labourers' rate to be fixed at 87½ per cent of the craft rate.

AGREEMENT

The Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers proposed that the claim for 11d. and a 40-hour week be made at the end of the three-year agreement.

No vote was taken on either of the two resolutions and both were remitted to the Federation executive. Harry Weaver, general secretary of the Federation made it clear that the 1963 agreement would stand.

Talks, however, are going on with the employers over wages and hours.

The deputation, organised by a rank and file committee, handed the chairman of the Federation a resolution calling for support for the AUBTW resolution and a militant leadership to secure the balance of the 1s. 6d. an hour, a 40-hour week, three weeks' paid holiday, sick pay more in keeping with the cost of living (the employers agreed two

months ago to pay from April next year 10s. a day sick pay), and 100 per cent trade unionism.

One of many posters carried by the lobbyists read 'Our Declaration of Intent—No Wage Freeze'.

CAMPAIGN

Jim Hiles (ASW), secretary of the Joint Sites Committee, said the lobby was the 'opening gambit' in the campaign.

'We hope to give a lead to London building workers and workers throughout the country and raise the building worker to his proper status in society.'

Another lobbyist said bitterly: 'This is the only industry where a man can serve a five-year apprenticeship and be recognised as a journeyman and as soon as it snows, find himself on the stones.'

Camberwell builders walk out

Building workers at the Camberwell Council building site, London, walked out on strike after six union men were sacked.

The union—the Amalgamated Society of Painters and Decorators, whose regional organiser is the Mayor, Alderman Walter Allen—refused to declare the strike official and ordered the men back to work.

A shop steward on the site said that another six men would also be sacked because the firm claimed there was not enough work.

'They say there is not enough work, but I find there is enough to keep all the men for another 13 weeks,' he said.

'It is very unfair of the firm to sack these men just before Christmas.'

Workers at SCOW face redundancy

By ERIC NELSON

If fake lefts still have any illusions about the ruthless intentions of the Steel Company of Wales or the treacherous role of the right-wing union officials, they should be dispelled by the latest developments in Port Talbot.

As reported in last week's Newsletter, the leaders of the six craft unions, involved in the joint crafts negotiating machinery, agreed to a package deal with the management.

This will give shift workers a rise of 22s. a week and 19s. 9d. for day men. In return the union leaders have given the employers a free hand in the reorganisation of the works and redeployment of labour.

REDUCE

This includes the power to reduce the number of craftsmen's mates drastically.

On Thursday, December 10 the company specifically denied all rumours that reorganisation would not involve a cut in the number of mates.

After stating that negotiations with the mates' union were in process, a SCOW spokesman declared: 'The company has not

wavered in its determination to achieve the proposed reductions.'

But the mates will not be the only steel workers affected by reorganisation. Union leaders have constantly misled craftsmen on what automation and reorganisation will mean for them.

The report on reorganisation brought out by SCOW, and agreed to by the union leaders, shows how exploitation of craftsmen will be stepped up enormously, and their numbers cut down.

INTERCHANGEABILITY

This report states: 'There will be complete interchangeability between craftsmen of various unions.'

'There will be complete mobility of all craftsmen... the management must have complete freedom to use all craft skills as required.'

Further on the report states: 'Any craftsman will carry through a job from start to finish, without having to call in other grades of skilled personnel to carry out subsidiary work...'

Thus an electrician, who at present would do electrical repair work, would under the

BMC to produce cars in Spain?

By SYLVIA PICK

The British Motor Corporation have refused to say whether there is any truth in the recent report that their Mini cars are to be assembled in Spain in the near future.

The company has not confirmed or denied that negotiations are taking place and that an announcement will be made to this effect soon after Christmas. Mini models would be assembled, according to the report, mainly from British-produced components.

In recent years Spain has attracted much attention from international monopolies. BMC already have an agreement with the Spanish company, Sava of Valladolid, for the production of commercial vehicles under licence. Rootes have facilities in Spain; Ford and Chrysler have been negotiating for them.

This is part of a new trend among world capitalists. In their search for higher rates of profit, they increasingly move into countries such as Spain, Ireland, Southern Italy, Turkey, Australia and South Africa, the less well-developed areas of the advanced world.

For their purposes these countries have advantages over the under-developed and backward areas. They have good transport systems, more highly skilled workers and a higher level of income to provide a domestic market.

On the other hand wage rates are lower than in the very advanced countries such as America and Britain, and there are higher rates of unemployment.

In Spain a quarter-century of fascist government has weakened trade unionism and the power of the workers to fight for higher wages and shorter hours.

Birmingham

In Birmingham, the assembling of the Mini cars is done at Austin's factory, Longbridge; at Fisher and Ludlow's, Erdington; and at Nuffield Metal Products, Washwood Heath.

Local trade union officials are extremely reluctant to discuss the possibility that the Minis might be built in Spain in the near future, or the implications affecting the jobs of their members.

Councillor N. Cook, Birmingham organiser AEU, said he had read the report but the union 'hadn't discussed it; nobody at all had expressed concern'.

Mr. J. Barker, former chief shop steward at Austin's for the National Union of Vehicle Builders, said if there was any truth in the report his union would be hardest hit. NUVB members work on body trimming, finishing and painting.

Referring to the opening of a

plant in Australia some eight years ago, which 'affected us badly', he estimated that at the present time only 50 per cent of the components used in Australia were British-produced. Taking work to the Bathgate factory in Scotland had also 'left a big gap in the Midlands for some time'.

Car workers should press for the nationalization of their industry as the only solution for chronic insecurity of employment.

Talk by employers of their concern for the raising of 'national living standards' is shown to be nothing but humbug.

They show no more concern for the living standards of workers in British factories than they would for those of Spanish workers if and when the company opens a new plant in Spain.

Cardiff bus workers unite in overtime ban

Cardiff busmen have achieved a measure of success in their late service ban.

That they have got anywhere at all was only the result of the militancy and solidarity of rank and file bus workers. No credit at all is due to the officials of the Transport and General Workers' Union.

The ban was started to enforce a demand for protection on late night services, after a series of disturbances involving attacks on drivers and conductors.

This is in line with the press and police witch-hunt against youth seen last summer, and shows the way the bosses hope to discipline youth and play on the conservatism of many adult workers.

The TGWU assistant area organiser, F. Tyrrell and branch secretary Thomas Phillips, attempted to have the ban lifted on Thursday (December 10), but only five out of 400 at a mass meeting accepted this proposal.

On Friday night, solidarity was even greater with only two supporters for the official motion out of 400-500 present.

Beyond

One bus worker declared that 'it may be our union, but it does not fight for us'.

He pointed out that organisers like Tyrrell are beyond effective rank and file control.

The Friday night meeting showed that the real issues involved were not late night attacks, but poor pay, long hours and the strain on bus workers that this causes.

The meeting was justly suspicious of the role of the police. When two constables entered the meeting they were forced to leave, not by the platform, but by the militancy of the rank and file.

Throughout the meeting there were calls for the resignation of the union officials.

Only the militancy of the busmen secured them, by Tuesday, full written assurances of protection and insurance.

The busmen were angered by the continued attempts to smear and divide them.

Labour councillor Poolley declared that they were only banning late shifts in order to get off early over Christmas.

Transport Manager Singleton said that he could get coloured crews to break the ban because they want more money.

This is an absolute falsification. There has been complete solidarity of white and coloured workers throughout and both are objecting to this shabby attempt to divide them.

Railmen get wage increase with strings attached

By A Newsletter Correspondent

Main line men on British Railways have been awarded a 9 per cent increase in wages by the railways board.

The rise was awarded by an arbitration tribunal and the board estimates that it will cost an extra £22 million a year.

Earlier this year we reported in The Newsletter that the rank and file of the National Union of Railwaymen wanted to hold out for a 13 per cent rise. At that time their union leaders were vainly trying to hold them back.

No doubt the Labour government has breathed a sigh of relief that the railwaymen never went on strike to fight for their demands.

As it is, the whole thing was channelled into arbitration and as usual the workers come out of it with less than they demanded.

CONDITIONS

With the help of the national press, the board try to make it appear that this new increase is a golden handshake for the railmen. But there are many conditions below the surface of this wage increase.

Although the minimum rate of drivers will rise from £15 to £16 8s. a week and porters wages are increased from £9 14s. to £10 11s., there are also a number of vague references in the national press to increased efficiency, and redundancies.

With the Labour government announcing its intention of operating an incomes policy in full co-operation with the trade union officials, it is hardly surprising that there should be strings attached to such a wages agreement.

In an editorial in the 'Daily Telegraph', Tuesday, December 15, it was pointed out that:

'If Dr. Beeching is to make proper headway in reducing this liability (the deficit incurred because of the increase) the cost must be offset either by higher fares and freight charges or by more efficient use of manpower and equipment.'

MANPOWER

No one, least of all the Tory press wants to make it clear at this stage just what efficient use of manpower really means for the rail workers, but it is certain that sackings and speed-up will be a part of this deal.

At the end of October a spokesman on the Railway Board hinted that there might be enough money available for a pay rise if the unions were willing to co-operate in unrestricted liner train running and in single manning of locomotives.

Old age pensioner jailed for 2 years

In the Edinburgh High Court last week, 80-year-old James Steele was jailed for two years for supplementing his old age pension by counterfeiting two-shilling pieces.

It was stated in court that at the age of 72 Steele had to retire, and because he was unable to live on his old age pension, he designed and made a press for producing florins.

In six and a half years James Steele produced about £1,000 worth of coins. In court it was alleged that he wished to be independent of appealing for National Assistance.

His defending lawyer stated, 'There was no fraud on the public. It is difficult to know on whom the fraud would be. He has gained, but no one has lost and no one has suffered.'



Greene: More co-operation

In other words, in order to have higher wages, the railwaymen may have to sacrifice either their jobs or many of the trade union rights and traditions that have been fought for over the years in the labour movement.

Sidney Greene, general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, had this to say about redundancies: 'If we can get reasonable safeguards they'll probably get some more co-operation.'

Does Greene mean that if the employers had made the package deal more attractive the rail workers would have been more inclined to speed-up?

Nothing has so far been said about the tube men. Talks on their pay are to begin between the unions and the London Transport Board soon.

Nottingham busmen on one-day strike

By Our Nottingham Reporter

Following their ban on overtime, Nottingham busmen staged an unofficial strike last Saturday over their claim for more pay.

On Friday, men at the Bilborough depot walked out of a meeting addressed by Harry Ball, branch chairman of the Transport and General Workers' Union after he had spoke of a 10s. a week rise—in the form of an attendance bonus—offered by the transport manager of Nottingham City Transport.

Meeting

The men held a meeting at the gate with busmen from three other depots. They rejected the offer and decided to strike the following day. The strike was 60 per cent effective—three depots out of five stayed out all day.

The main depot in the city, which has over 60 per cent of the buses, continued to work half its routes.

On Monday a mass meeting decided to end the overtime ban so that local and national discussions could take place during the next three weeks. The Bilborough busmen were severely criticised for their strike action by the union bureaucrats.

During the discussions the militancy of the busmen—expressed in the 100 per cent unity between Jamaicans, Indians, Pakistanis, Poles and English workers at the three depots and their action in 'Bull Week', where wages earned are paid out in Christmas week—may recede.

Committees

Everything about the dispute points to the need for rank and file committees.

With five depots in the town, but with one depot controlling most of the buses and with union leaders entrenched there, it is obvious that rank and file committees must be formed within the next three weeks so that when the results of the much vaunted negotiations are announced, a real fight can be waged for the busmen's demands.

BEA CABIN STAFF STAGE 24-HOUR STRIKE

Newsletter Correspondent

Stewards and stewardesses of the British European Airways staged a 24-hour strike in protest against their wages and conditions on Tuesday this week.

Standing on picket lines outside the airport gates the strikers shouted to 'blackleg' cabin staff who would not join the stoppage.

The air stewards and stewardesses on strike are demanding that their wages structure be reviewed and that better allowances for food and accommodation, when they are away from home, should be given.

CRITICISM

Strikers claimed they received no allowances for keeping smart and yet they received constant criticisms of their dress.

A steward is reported to have said that the majority of cabin staffs are worse off financially than a London bus conductor.

BEA officials claim the strike is unconstitutional and officials of the Transport and General Workers' Union, according to a BEA spokesman, agreed to urge their members to carry on working.

In other words, union officials will help to break a strike for higher wages and better conditions.

YS March

Cont. from page 1

told there is a future for them in the Army.

In Belfast YS members had visited old age pensioners' clubs and federations to explain the fight they were taking up.

Bill Dow, who fought the election for Labour in Paddington South, said there had been glib talk at the conference.

'It is tommy rot to say that it was the best conference on record. They didn't want resolutions on pensions and taking over industry. They didn't want these because they didn't want to embarrass Harold Wilson,' he said.

He said the YS demonstration was a first shot in a whole general reaction against the Wilson government's policies.

In the next few months many workers would be making demands to end the wage freeze.

Socialist policies

Young Socialists had to go back to their areas to work against the witch-hunt and for socialist policies.

The chairman of the strike committee at Woolf's Rubber company in Middlesex thanked the Young Socialists for supporting, in every way, the successful strike of over 400 Indians at the firm.

After speaking of the crisis and betrayal of the Labour government and the struggles of the Young Socialists, Ashby said:

'The field is now clear before us. We have the opportunity of building for the first time in Britain. Western Europe and the USA, a real independent socialist movement for youth which will be in the vanguard of the struggles of workers, which go far beyond the struggle for pensions.'

He said the Young Socialists were going ahead with their own conference in the New Year at Morecombe, where youth would discuss 'a real living movement'.

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