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CEYLON TRADE UNION LEADER APPEALS TO BRITISH LABOUR

Special interview with D. G. William, vice-president, Ceylon Federation of Labour.

THE National Committee of the Socialist Labour League warmly salutes our sister Party, the L.S.S.P. (Trotskyist) Ceylon, on the eve of an historic General Election. It pledges its full support for the L.S.S.P. and will discuss a proposal to open a Fighting Fund to help them with election expenses.

1. Why did the Dahanayake government resign?

The main reason is that after the death of Bandaranaike this anti-democratic, chauvinist government could not carry on because the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Trotskyist) was able to counterpose a socialist policy to that of the present regime. There was no personality within the Dahanayake government who could unite the party as Bandaranaike was able to do.

2. Can you tell us something about the parties which will contest the general election?

First there is the U.N.P.* under Dudley Senanayake which has been considerably weakened.

The present S.L.F.P.* Party (the ruling party) will split into two or three groups. One group with Mrs. Bandaranaike will try to get an agreement with ex-Prime Minister Sir John Kotelawela and contest the election under his leadership. Another group will go back and unite with the old U.N.P.

Philip Gunawardene will try to revive the M.E.P.* on the basis of communal policies and contest the elections on this line.

All these groups will put forward a capitalist policy.

The only party that can counterpose a genuine socialist policy that will appeal to the interests of the working class is the L.S.S.P.

3. What is the strength of the parties in the present government?

There are 101 deputies. Of these 46 belong to the ruling party, the S.L.F.P. Four are appointed members. Seven are independents who support the government. In the opposition there is the L.S.S.P. with 14 seats. The C.P. with 3. The

Philip Gunawardene group with 6, the Federalist with 8 and the U.N.P. with 6. The rest are independents who sometimes support the government, sometimes the opposition.

4. Upon what policy will the LSSP fight the election?

1. The repeal of all reactionary laws like the public security Ordinance.
2. The nationalization of the tea, rubber and coconut estates.
3. Parity of status for the Tamil and Singhalese languages.
4. Repudiation of all secret agreements with the Imperialists.
5. The development of secondary manufacturing industries.
6. The abolition of the semi-feudal land tenure system.
7. The repeal of the Citizenship Bill and the enfranchisement of the Indian estate workers.

5. Do you think British imperialism will permit you to nationalize British assets and property?

We cannot rule out the possibility of armed intervention, or even economic sanctions against Ceylon. The British government is constructing a large air base in the Maldives not far from my country. They are not doing this for the pleasure of it. We already have the precedent of British Guiana and Suez.

If there is any attempt at gunboat diplomacy we hope that the British working class will take immediate action against the Tories, just as they did in November, 1956.

* U.N.P.—United National Party.

S.L.F.P.—Sri Lanka Freedom Party.

M.E.P.—Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (People's United Front).



D. G. WILLIAM, forty-one-year-old vice-president of the Ceylon Federation of Labour is a member of the Central Committee of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party. He joined the socialist movement while working as a catering worker 20 years ago. He has led many important strikes in Ceylon, including the 1947 general strike of government and private employees and estate workers.



L.S.S.P. Rally, Colombo. This audience of several hundred thousand demonstrates the extent of the support for the policy of the sole revolutionary party in Ceylon.

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A LESSON FOR LABOUR

ONE of the most significant aspects of the witch-hunt against the left-wing inside the trade unions and the Labour Party is its effect on individuals.

When Mr Peter Fryer was editor of The Newsletter and in the forefront of the fight for the policy of the Socialist Labour League, he was the target of a constant spate of hostility from the Right-wing and the capitalist press. The moment he resigned from the Socialist Labour League, in the letters column of the Guardian, this changed, and he has now become the News Chronicle's main weapon in its fight against the Marxists.

What will ultimately happen to Peter Fryer is a matter for conjecture and we have no desire to speculate on this, neither do we claim, as the wretched Communist Party did at the time of Hungary, that he is an ally of the capitalist press. What we do say is that those who leave the Socialist Labour League consciously or unconsciously assist the enemies of socialists when they unscrupulously attack the organization of which they were previously members. Anyone who attacks the socialist policy and organization of the Socialist Labour League has a friend in Fleet Street.

As everyone knows, the Socialist Labour League is opposed to the policy of the Communist Party because it believes that the price of that policy is compromise with the imperialists, for summit talks with the Soviet Union, when it should be the prosecution of the class struggle as a means of achieving socialism. Nevertheless, the Socialist Labour League has always maintained that despite its differences it will oppose a witch-hunt against the Communist Party because it believes that no matter what the differences between our two organizations, these are a matter for those who are concerned with the struggle for socialism, and not the concern of the enemies of socialism.

The Socialist Labour League stands for a common front of all working-class organizations against the witch hunting employers and Fleet Street.

It is interesting to note that the treatment meted out to those who leave the Socialist Labour League is similar to that given to those who leave the Communist Party. Witness the case of Mr Frank Chappell, a one-time leading member of the Communist Party in the London area. At the height of a witch-hunt against the Electrical Trades Union, he suddenly becomes the hero of the capitalist press. Statements which he apparently made to the North London branch of the union have found their way, as these things will do even from the best of establishments such as Transport House, to the editorial desks of Fleet Street. It seems that Mr Chappell claimed that the Communist Party has industrial advisory committees and that these take an interest in the affairs of the ETU. And why not? The Tory Party has such committees, there is a direct liaison between sub-committees of the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party. The Catholic hierarchy have such committees in the form of Catholic Action. There is a whole paraphernalia of investigating committees

operating from plush offices in the West End, whose task it is to interfere day in and day out in the internal affairs of the unions.

The witch-hunt against the ETU is reaching its height in time to influence the election for national secretary, All supporters of the Socialist Labour League inside the ETU should give critical support to Frank Haxell.

Unity in action between the forces of the Left against the witch-hunt must be built up. We call upon rank-and-file members of the Communist Party to do everything in their power to force their leaders to join in the fight against the witch-hunters of the Socialist Labour League in the same way as the Socialist Labour League joins in the fight against the witch-hunters of the Communist Party.

The lesson from the Chappell and Fryer experiences is that those who resign from the Socialist Labour League or the Communist Party should at all costs avoid providing grist to the newsmills of Fleet Street.

WITCH-HUNTERS SERVE NOTICE ON V.F.S.

LAST week The Newsletter warned the left-wing in the Labour movement that the right-wing were preparing to launch a new witch-hunt. Our prediction has been strikingly confirmed by a statement in the Daily Herald of December 7. Mr. Jim Matthews, National Officer of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, and a member of the Labour Party National Executive Committee, attacked two former Labour M.P.'s, Ian Mikardo and Michael Foot.

'If they continue their attacks upon the party leader', he said, 'I shall be forced to raise the issue with the National Executive. The question might also be raised of whether the weekly newspaper (Tribune) with which Mr Foot and Mr Mikardo are connected should be proscribed.'

This statement marks a new stage in the fight against the left. At Blackpool, Mr Gaitskell laid the basis for the transformation of the Labour Party into an appendage of Liberalism. As the Financial Times said in its editorial of December 4: 'Mr Gaitskell had a triumph but not a victory, that has yet to be.' In order to secure a full victory, Mr Gaitskell will have to root out of the Labour Party the last remains of a militant left-wing. Matthews' warning is: 'Shut up or get out'. It is important to emphasize that this attack on VFS stems from the very same people who attacked the Socialist Labour League.

We warned at the time of our proscription that the reason for our expulsion from the Labour Party was that the NEC wanted to transform the party into a completely right-wing machine.

The wise men of the left told us that we had brought it on ourselves by forming an open organization. 'Be like us', they said, 'fight as individuals with a paper and you will be all right.'

It is now clear that all the guarantees given to the NEC by Victory for Socialism in 1957 are no insurance against an attack from the right. The only way to defeat the right is for the left to organize a struggle for its programme. Every member of the VFS must now be concerned as to how this fight can be conducted.

The starting point for the struggle must be unity of the left, including the Socialist Labour League, to fight for a programme which includes the extension of

Building Workers Demand Action

By BOB PENNINGTON

On January 14 the building trade employers are due to give their answer to the claim of the building unions for a fourpence per hour wage increase. This week, The Newsletter gives space to the opinions of building workers on the claim and presents their ideas on how they consider the fourpence can be won.

John Disley, a Merseyside bricklayer and a member of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers was emphatic that the 'claim will not be won without a struggle.'

What is needed in Disley's opinion is a 'publicity campaign to win support for building workers.

'Our unions should be blowing sky-high the lie peddled by the bosses and the press that high rents are caused by high wages. This is nonsense. The reason for high rents is the rake-off taken by the banks and the building rings. In some cases two-thirds of the rent goes in interest charges.'

He was against waiting for the employers to say no before the unions start a campaign. 'In previous years our union leaders have waited until the engineers' claim has been decided. This time we should get together with the engineering unions and discuss how the strength of both sections can be used jointly to get both our wage demands,' was his idea.

He told me how on Merseyside the lack of Federation organization on jobs is a big weakness. Along with a wages campaign there 'should be a campaign for Federation organization and the recognition of Federation stewards. This will put teeth into our fight.'

Men disgusted over Union inactivity

Federation steward at the Laing's Site in Great Queen Street London, John Roy has been 10 years in the building trade and is a veteran of many battles with the employers. John was one of the sacked stewards at South Bank and fought McAlpine right to the bitter end.

He was disgusted at the inactivity shown to date by the official union leaders to prepare for any fight for the fourpence.

'The employers will turn the claim down in my opinion. So we should start now preparing for a battle which includes a withdrawal of labour if necessary.

'I feel there should be a meeting of all the London stewards, called by the National Federation of Building Trade Operatives. This should be followed by meetings on every site and in the union branches. That's the way to swing the men behind the campaign and to show the employers we mean business,' was John's opinion.

Jack Gateley, a Manchester branch secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers and a Federation steward, too, was sceptical about the employers granting the full fourpence.

He told me: 'The Manchester N.F.B.T.O. are planning a demonstration on January 11. We must work vigorously to make it a big success.'

To my question 'what if the employers turn the claim down?' he replied: 'Then meetings of the rank-and-file should be held on every job and in every area to prepare for industrial action in the summer.'

I asked him, why the summer? He explained: 'winter is a bad time in the industry. But that does not mean we should sit back and do nothing. We should use the winter and spring to build up towards action in the summer.'

Jack went on to urge the need for a rank-and-file movement. 'The union leaders negotiating in their London offices and tied to the negotiating machinery will get no results. Look what happened to our claim for the forty-hour week. It's been put in cold storage.

'That's why we need an active rank-and-file movement and the utmost unity between militants in different industries and of different political views.'

Himself a member of the Communist Party, Jack Gateley told me how in Manchester and Salford they were already building such a movement 'which unites miners, engineers, building workers, etc., and in which members of the Communist Party, the Labour Party and the Socialist Labour League work together.'

Leeds A.S.W. member urges rank-and-file action

Alan Exley, a Leeds member of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, asked me: 'How can we rely on the leadership to win the fourpence when despite the building boom since the end of the war they have allowed the employers to maintain so many of the medieval conditions that operated before 1939.'

He cited the 'primitive toilets, cattle-truck transport provided by many firms for their workers and a Working Rule Agreement imposed on the workers in 1927 and still in force.'

Alan felt that 'the way forward is through the formation of rank-and-file committees. This is the way to get a militant fight for our demands and to ensure we force the leaders to fight. Also it's the only way we can hope to hold back the employers' attacks,' he concluded.

nationalization and a fight for increased wages and shorter hours.

Gaitskell's strength in the Labour Party lies in the support of the top right-wing trade union officials. Our task is to consider how to secure the support of the rank and file members of unions like those dominated by Matthews, Carron and company.

It is possible to win this support because many of these trade union leaders are committed to the hilt by their trade union policies to extend nationalization.

And the rank and file see in the right-wing leaders an obstacle to the struggle for shorter hours and better conditions.

Jim Matthews is the same gentleman who had to resign as secretary of the National Joint Industrial Council for Civil Air Transport after his repudiation by the strikers at London airport.

The left in the Labour Party must show the connexion between the betrayals of Matthews and others on the

industrial field and their right-wing activity in the Labour Party.

No one should underestimate the statement of Matthews. Just as the statement of Douglas Jay was a warning of things to come at Blackpool, so Matthews is a kite-flyer for further proscriptions and expulsions. These straws in the wind by the right will shortly turn into clubs to hammer the heads of the left around Tribune and VFS.

The right-wing strategy is to destroy all left opposition before the next Labour Party conference. If Gaitskell and the right wing trade union leaders are to succeed they must, before the conference, prevent any development of a left alliance between the rank and file trade unionists and the left in the Constituency Labour Parties.

If the left begin a determined campaign now, linking the unions and the constituencies then the right can be defeated.

London Busmen Prepare for Action

By LARRY SMITH, Victoria Bus Garage

It is a common and very true statement that busmen are underpaid and overworked. By comparison with other jobs the busman's lot is a poor one; poor pay, shift work, week-end work, even "summer holidays" taken in the winter.

The busmen have tried many times to improve their position, but for every step forward through negotiations they have had to take one back. The struggle has been continuous, and the spirit with which the heroic battle of 1958 was waged is a tribute to the tenacity of the busmen.

That is why we have a fresh tactical move afoot in the shape of a fleet ban on rest-day and overtime working.

This is not the first time that this type of weapon has been used, it was employed successfully five years ago and proved to the employers that the busmen were determined to obtain a justifiable wage increase, and were impatient with the delaying tactics being used.

Much the same situation prevails today. A wage claim has been tabled and a meeting arranged. We need to demonstrate to all concerned that a fair adjustment in wages is long overdue, and that delay in settlement is unacceptable. If busmen stand idle and allow long and protracted negotiations to drag along we will be doing ourselves a great disservice. Now is the time to make plain our attitude, by refusing to volunteer for overtime until our claim has been met.

Overtime is an effect of staff shortage and without the volunteers there would be great gaps in the already depleted services.

The London public needs to know the reason for such poor service from London Transport. Basically it is because of the industry's failure to attract new recruits and keep those al-

ready employed. It cannot compete in the labour market with present wages and conditions. Between 1954 and 1958, for example, 24,000 new recruits were employed; during the same period 34,000 left the job. This 10,000 loss since 1954 represents 25 per cent. of the total. Services have been reduced over the same period, also by 25 per cent.

A complete overtime ban needed

Services have, therefore, been systematically reduced in line with the staff shortage and this brings us back to the overtime question. Overtime working is a feature of the busman's job. His standard of living is regulated by the amount of overtime available. Some busmen regard it as a necessity and if there was none it would mean a greater exodus from the job. Yet overtime could be wiped out almost overnight. Then we would be left with the basic pay and this is surely what we are mainly concerned with. Only by a determined effort now can we be sure of getting an increase in that basic wage. A complete ban on overtime is a way of showing that determination, but all must do it and do it now. Do nothing and you will get nothing.

RAILWAY RANK-AND-FILE ORGANISE

By Alan Stanley

Delegates of railwaymen employed on the Marylebone-Sheffield line, meeting in Leicester, have set up a rank-and-file committee to organize a fight against threatened redundancies.

Although the meeting consisted mainly of A.S.L.E.F. men there was a sprinkling of N.U.R. members. One of the decisions taken was to approach all union branches along the old Great Central line (Marylebone-Sheffield-Manchester) urging them to send delegates to the next meeting. Union rivalry is not to be allowed to stand in the way of developing a struggle against the bosses. The committee chairman is a member of the N.U.R. and the secretary of A.S.L.E.F.

Other decisions taken include a recommendation to men employed on the line to stage a one-day token strike and a call to local M.P.'s to give support to the struggle.

"There was a big militant feeling in the meeting," one locoman said. "Response was very good. Only one branch—Annesley—has refused to support us or send a delegate. Some railwaymen may be inclined to think nothing can be done, but the example of the dining-car men shows that this is not the case."

The setting-up of a rank-and-file committee marks a big step forward in the battle against redundancy. A token strike will be useful provided it is regarded as a demonstration and that workers are not allowed to imagine that this alone will force the British Transport Committee to retreat.

IRISH AIR DISPUTE

By our Industrial Correspondent

The recent dispute between the electricians at Dublin Airport and Aer Lingus (Irish Air Lines) is far from being satisfactorily settled. The electricians accepted a Labour Court recommendation only because strike action at that time would have proved ineffective.

They had served strike notices to expire on November 16

after their five-point demand had been rejected by the company. These were—

1. That the electricians be supplied free with additional tools required. If not then some compensation should be paid.
2. That the electricians be paid time and a quarter for shift work.
3. That compensation be paid to electricians for travelling to and from work on Sundays because of the lack of public transport.
4. That the former differential between electricians and chargehands be restored.
5. That electricians on shift work receive 18 days' holiday and those on temporary shift work for a minimum of two months should receive an additional day for each two-month period.

Five days before the strike was due to start, the dispute was heard by the Labour Court and the men were requested to postpone strike action, the Court intimating that it would make its recommendation as soon as possible. Strike action was accordingly postponed until the following Thursday.

In the meantime, however, the petrol distribution workers took strike action in support of their wage claim and as a result of this the airport was forced to close. This meant that any action taken by the electricians would have had little impact and they therefore accepted the Labour Court's recommendation, although it rejected four of the five points and compromising over the differential by recommending an increase of 12s. 6d.

More struggles ahead

It is likely that the electricians will submit their claims again when circumstances are more favourable. The most likely time would be during the tourist season, perhaps June or July. The undisputed importance of the electricians would make it most unprofitable for Aer Lingus to reject their demand in such a peak period.

HUNGARY

KHRUSHCHEV SPEAKS

by Bill Hunter

In Budapest last week, Mr. Khrushchev—defending the 1956 Soviet intervention in Hungary—casually let drop the news that there were differences in the Kremlin at that time.

'Some of our comrades,' he said, 'wondered if the intervention might be "misconstrued".' The conclusion had been reached that not only would intervention be understood, but it would also be "appreciated."

Khrushchev said nothing about who differed from whom. And nothing in any real sense about the arguments that were put forward.

The opinions of Khrushchev, of Mikoyan, of Zhukov and the others remain deliberately shrouded in mystery.

Would there be intervention from the West if Soviet troops were used? Would Poland be set further alight? What would be the effect among the Russian people themselves?

We can be sure that this was the type of question discussed in the Kremlin at the end of October, 1956. It can be said with absolute confidence that one question would not figure in the discussions: What course can best assist the international socialist struggle?

No issues of principle

And recriminations there would certainly be on Khrushchev's Twentieth Congress speech. Khrushchev, in another speech in Hungary last week gave a glimpse of this. 'Some people,' he said (again the faceless 'some'), had declared that his condemnation of Stalin was partly the reason for the "complications" that had occurred and these "some people" had declared he should not have put "the question sharply."

Again, as his speech made plain, the issue was not whether his revelations on Stalin were true. The test for all sides in these Kremlin discussions was whether or not the actions weakened the bonds of bureaucratic control over the Russian and East European peoples.

That the opposition in the Kremlin was certainly no principled one can be judged by the fact it remained silent when the Russian tanks went into Budapest the second time; that, although fully aware of the truth about the uprising, it remained silent when the revolt was denounced as fascist, silent when Kadar's government broke its pledges of 'no reprisals,' silent on the execution of Maleter, Nagy, Hungarian workers, students and youth.

Why the speech?

For what purpose did Khrushchev make his 'revelation'? The speech on the Hungarian intervention was made to Budapest factory workers. It is highly likely he was seeking to lessen the hostility of Hungarian workers by implying that Soviet leaders, some of whom were opposed to intervention, were not so bad after all.

But the speech is also connected with the preparations for negotiations between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the capitalist governments.

According to last Sunday's Observer, Khrushchev shifted his ground in describing the Hungarian revolution. What was in the past almost invariably an 'imperialist coup supported by fascists' became an uprising of counter revolutionary forces 'temporarily joined by some workers.'

And Khrushchev would have one eye on international negotiations when he described as 'reasonable' the point of view of 'those comrades' who questioned the intervention.

He was showing Western capitalist statesmen that the Soviet leaders were men with whom it is possible to negotiate and resolve questions.

LAMBETH TRADES COUNCIL SHOWS THE WAY

I. Demands rank-and-file enquiry into TUC

The Lambeth Trades Council, second largest in London, has carried the following two resolutions:

'That this Trades Council believes one function of the General Council of the TUC is to rebuff press attacks on active trade unionists and shop stewards, not to pander to our enemies by a so-called enquiry, which will make attempts by the government to introduce legislation easier.

'If the General Council is genuinely concerned by the so-called unofficial disputes, they will find the reason in the attacks of employers on wages and conditions, in victimization, and long drawn out negotiations, often resulting in negligible awards.

'Of course there should be no unofficial strikes, every dispute in defence of union members or living conditions should be made official. As this is not the case, this Trades Union Council demands that there should be a rank-and-file enquiry through the Trades Councils as to why the General Council refuses to support men who are forced to take action, why leading members of that Council write for Tory papers advocating Liberal and Tory ideas and if these views represent the majority view of the Council, and why the General Council refuses adequate support even to so-called official strikes such as the bus and rent strikes.'

II. Attacks rent rise

'The contemplated raising of rents by the Tory St Pancras Council and by the Labour council in Willesden is of concern to all trade unionists.

'If the increases are imposed it will strengthen the hand of Tory and Right-wing Labour Councils throughout the country in imposing fresh increases, and will encourage private landlords, investment companies, etc. to exert pressure on the government for fresh de-controls and rent increase proposals for private tenants.

We call on the London Federation (of Trades Councils) to convene the widest possible all-London conference of delegates from the London and Middlesex councils, trade union branches, tenants' associations and constituency labour parties to discuss the most effective way for the whole movement to defeat the proposals from both boroughs referred to, and any others that are known to be contemplated in the near future.'

LETTER

With all due respect to Brian Pearce, did a note of sarcasm not creep into his comment upon Peter Fryer's activities in Portugal? I trust I was mistaken in detecting an almost Stalinist sneer that 'he who is not with us may be a Fascist or a sympathiser.' Doubtless when the results of Peter Fryer's investigations are published it will be apparent he hasn't abandoned the socialist convictions he has held for so many years.

London, S.W.4.

ALAN BENNETT

[Brian Pearce comments: As my reference to Ralph Fox's book on Portugal should have made clear, I appreciate very well that an opponent of Trotskyism may be a genuine anti-Fascist. I certainly share Alan Bennett's hopes regarding Fryer.]

HOW CAPITALISM WORKS

By TOM KEMP

Two friends have got together for a few sessions to discuss some of the basic principles of Marxist political economy and how they apply to capitalism today. Q is a worker who, by his experiences, is being drawn from reformism towards socialist ideas, but as yet he has done little study of Marxism and is still imbued with ideas which are current among Labour Party 'new thinkers' and 'responsible' trade union officials. A is an economist trying to explain things as fully as that can be done in a conversational way and without the use of too many technical terms or tedious details. This is the first conversation.

Q. I am glad of this opportunity for a good discussion. Since I have become active in politics I have done so much running about that I never seem to get time to read a book. Anyway, much as I want to understand economic questions they always seem so difficult that I am discouraged.

A. I want to try to help you and not display knowledge. Marxist economics is not an abstract set of theories but is closely bound up with the development of the political struggle. It is this down-to-earth quality which distinguishes Marxism from other theories and leads us to call it 'political economy' and not just 'economics'. However, I am afraid that economics is a complicated matter and does require some effort. We have brought out a short syllabus which gives a fuller outline of some technical points than we need to go into in our discussion, and some hints for reading.

Q. What about those technical terms?

A. Well, every science has its special vocabulary, which makes for precision of thought. In technical language terms may have a different meaning from that which they have in everyday life, and the terms of the Marxists technical vocabulary do not always fit in with those of other economists.

Q. The word capitalism, for instance. Isn't it rather a term of abuse? I've heard lots of people use it who don't seem to be clear about its meaning, and at Labour Party meetings I have heard speakers say that it no longer exists, or has changed fundamentally since Marx wrote about it.

A. To the first part of your question, the answer is No. For us, capitalism is a very precise term. Marx, incidentally, usually spoke about the 'capitalist mode of production', but since his time words ending in 'ism' have become rather popular and we shall stick to 'capitalism', remembering that it is a particular 'mode of production'. As for what you say about capitalism having disappeared or changed into something else, most of our discussion in the future will revolve around the question of what has been happening to capitalism in recent decades.

Q. Good! That is just what I want. But I suppose that first we ought to decide what we mean by capitalism.

A. Of course. Some people have seen some of the old features of capitalism alter and have assumed that this means that it has changed its nature or disappeared. So it is important to be clear about the definition.

We can put it this way. All societies above the most primitive level are divided into classes, so that some people do the work and others take over part of the fruits of their labour. As a matter of fact, there can be no social progress until there is a surplus of this kind. If everybody had to grow their own food and make their own clothes there would be little time left for other activities, so from the social surplus a section of the community has to be supported to engage in government, warfare, culture, religion and so on. The surplus goes first to the ruling class, and these activities are closely bound up with the ruling class.

In earlier societies the surplus was produced by producers who were not free men. They were slaves or bond-men. They could not work for whom they liked and quite an element of force entered into the relations with their master. The worker in capitalism is not forced to work in quite this way. He is free, but since he owns no land or machines, no means of production, he has to find employment under the spur of economic necessity, that is, hunger.

He enters into a contract with a boss to supply his output

of muscular and nervous energy for a given period, on tasks determined by the boss. He cannot choose what work he does, or entirely the way or the pace at which he does it.

Q. He certainly can't. I know its sometimes laid down in the most minute detail.

A. Yes. It depends, of course, but the principle is the same. Let us say that the worker sells his labour-power because he has nothing else to sell. In the time during which he is working, however, he produces more value than he receives in wages. We call this surplus value. Surplus value is appropriated by the capitalists because they own the means of production. But it is not enough to produce goods. These goods have to be sold on the market (we call them 'commodities' for that reason). Only when the commodity is sold can the capitalist realize in money the surplus value which is, as it were, contained within it. I want to stress here that, although commodities for sale have been produced in other kinds of society before capitalism developed, it is only in capitalism that labour-power itself becomes a commodity, to be bought and sold.

Q. So when I work for the boss, I am really selling my labour-power, as you put it, and the boss is getting something for nothing at my expense.

A. That is the long and the short of it. There are a few complications which we needn't bother with at the moment. For example, some workers are helping to realize surplus value, by transporting or selling things, and others are maintained out of surplus value, for instance policemen and soldiers. They do not produce surplus value.

Q. I see. So what we are talking about is workers producing commodities.

A. Essentially, yes. Note that the workers are exploited—they get out of the process of production less than they put in. Of course they could not get back in wages all that they put in, under any system. Under socialism, for example, there would still have to be public services of the kind that exist at present; indeed, they would be greatly expanded.

Q. But you say workers are exploited under capitalism. Don't we find workers owning their own houses, good furniture perhaps, and even things like motor-cars?

A. Yes, but this does not mean that they are not exploited. Of course, some people consider it very crude and wicked to say that workers are exploited, and, as you know, the boss is always telling you what a fine chap he is to provide you with a job, and that in doing so he is serving the public interest.

In fact, capitalism is the most highly refined system of exploitation that has ever existed—so refined that workers hardly realize that they are exploited.

Q. Well, there's certainly a rush for the door when the hooter goes. And the workers resist being exploited, I think. For example, when they establish a regular speed of work which is bearable but is less than they could do if they flogged themselves. However, it is very difficult all the same to get them to see the position as you have described it and to take part in politics.

A. There's really nothing to be surprised at about in that. You might say that lately you have been on a quiet sector of the class front with full employment lulling working people into a false sense of security. But the battle has been going on all right. After all, it's there, at the point of production, even under the most favourable conditions, that the worker loses

his individuality and becomes a tool whereby another person achieves his purposes. It is at the point of production that the relations between worker and capitalist are seen in their essence—as a buying and selling of human nerves, energies and flesh and blood. You might say that this relation makes up capitalism, that the machines lord it over the workers as an impersonal power in society. It does not really matter that the

old-style individual employer has been replaced by an elaborate organization like a limited company or even a nationalized board. These changes have not changed the fundamental relations in society. They make no difference to the workers being exploited in the process of labour-power being bought and sold.

(To be continued)

STUDENTS PICKET SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE

Newsletter Correspondent

Students from the University of London (the largest contingent came from the Marxist Society) picketed South Africa House early Monday evening, when the High Commissioner was holding a reception for all white South African students studying in England.

A soon as the pickets walked around the entrance with banners saying: 'Trade Union rights for non-Europeans,' 'Abolish the pass laws' and 'Boycott South Africa House,' they were confronted by police who arrogantly ordered them to disperse. When asked by the students under what regulation they were forbidden to hold a poster parade, the police told the pickets not to ask questions. One policeman turned on a Pakistani student saying: 'It's you people who come here and make trouble in this country.' Two African students were also amongst the pickets.

It is interesting to note the attitude of the police towards students, particularly those from the colonies, who voice class issues.

THE RAPE OF THE CAMEROONS

Author: Felix Roland Mounie. Publishers: Committee of African Organizations. Price 6d.
By M. Banda

Few British workers—except those interested in stamp-collecting—would know what the Cameroons is and where it is situated.

This is not surprising. Ever since the Cameroons was first annexed by German imperialism in 1885 it has been treated only as a geographical expression—and a pretty remote one at that.

The Germans ruled it in the same way as they did their African dependencies: with brutal military efficiency.

After the First World War the territory was transferred by the League of Nations to the joint mandate of Britain and France.

When the League collapsed Britain and France continued to rule the territory. After the second World War the farce was repeated. The Cameroons was placed under U.N. Trusteeship while the mandating powers continued to administer their respective halves of the land.

The wishes of 5 million Africans were of course ignored. Instead the British half of the Cameroons was divided into two units. The Northern unit was incorporated in the administration of Northern Nigeria while the Southern unit has been given the opportunity of joining the French Cameroons or Nigeria.

Whatever happens this much is certain, the Cameroons will remain permanently divided and its independence crushed beneath the combined weight of the French Community and the British Commonwealth.

This pamphlet written by the President of the Union of the Populations of the Cameroons is a vivid description of life in the French Cameroons—the only territory in West Africa which is engaged in an armed struggle with imperialism.

It is the same old story of legalized murder and torture, arbitrary arrest, public execution and violation of every democratic right: the theme of La Question and Gangrene.

The author also indicts the cultural social and economic policies of France which have made the Cameroons into a festering slum.

As the Appendix states: 'There are no Cameroonian magis-

trates, no Cameroonian District Commissioner and there is only one Cameroonian lawyer.'

A record achievement by any standards! The author unhappily spoils his pamphlet by putting his reliance on the U.N.O.—the thieves' kitchen of imperialism.

This seems to me to express his own lack of confidence in the African peoples, in their unity and determination to rid Africa of imperialist oppression.

The Cameroons' people have lit a fire in the backyard of French imperialism. If European and African labour fan the flames sufficiently then the tottering edifice of the Fifth French Republic will collapse with a resounding crash.

COMMENTARY

A PARENT'S ANGLE

by Betty Healy

RECENT surveys show that people are marrying and having families younger, planning their families, and wanting to work longer in later life. In other words the pattern of family life is changing. Formerly a boy learnt a trade and hoped to work at it until he was 65. Now workers, especially women, may try their hands at several different occupations, from office or factory to teaching.

Another enquiry in Nottingham recently showed that from the standpoint of health and general well-being fathers should have more time to take an active part in the home (not just the Sunday dishes and coal), and mothers should be free to take jobs and get away out of it.

We are getting tired of investigations into why women work and whether they should. The point is—they do, and generally they have to. One-third of the labour force in Britain are women. The two demands which have the greatest bearing on this problem are for equal pay and the forty-hour week. The Engineering Employers recently turned down the equal pay demand. Union leaders show at best a feeble recognition of these principles; it is for the membership to insist that they pursue them more vigorously—and to work for them on the job.

Marriage cuts income

Students are discovering what the old age pensioners found out long ago: 'It doesn't pay to be married.'

First of all, if a bright girl works hard and achieves a University place, and her mother is working as well as her father, the Education Authorities apply a means test to the parents' joint income, to decide whether the girl receives a grant, or even her full college fees.

But if, on the other hand, two students decide to enter the married state (they mostly have to share a room with somebody anyway), then what happens? The girl is now the young man's dependent. Her allowance may be cut and if he then enters employment or has a good income he may have to contribute to her fees.

All this sort of thing was supposed to be finished with the Poor Law Relief. Further education is supposed to be within reach of all who have the ability and working capacity. These regulations force students not only to work in the vacation but to undertake all sorts of deceptive practices which the Authorities wink at.

Constant Reader | Labour Youth

I see from my local paper that Mike Birch, of my own Labour Party (i.e., the one I was expelled from), Finchley, spoke at Blackpool for a revived Labour League of Youth, with its own conferences and so on. 'He suggested that past failures were due to young people not having a free hand.'

The story of how Labour's youth movement was first scuppered, in the years just before the war, should be better-known—especially because it illustrates how the Right wing are helped, with or without intention, by the Stalinists.

Alarmed by the growth of Left ideas among the League of Youth members, Labour Party H.Q. in 1936 suspended the League's national committee and deprived it of its right to discuss policy. The pretext was provided by moves on the part of the Stalinists then active in the League—headed by Ted ("Blue Lamp") Willis—to bring about a merger with the Young Communist League. The first reaction of the Stalinists was one of bluster (We Shall Not Surrender). To the surprise of the less sophisticated this attitude was soon, however, rapidly reversed.

The Stalinist youth paper *Advance*, in its issue of November, 1936, explained that after all the League was still allowed to carry on propaganda, and this must be its "strong point." The shape of things to come was indicated by an article in the same issue from the pen of Soviet youth leader Kosarev, in which he said: "It is necessary to unite all sections of the youth, without political, religious or other distinctions."

From that time onward the Stalinists not merely gave up every kind of criticism of official Labour policy from the Left, but began to try to use their position in the League to promote ideas far to the Right of Transport House's stand at that stage. The role of the League members, it was explained, was to be foremost in doing the Labour Party's donkey work; this would win the gratitude of the leaders and then, filled with remorse, the latter would restore the League's rights. Those who persisted in trying to fight Transport House for an independent socialist youth movement were "Trotskyist wreckers": "There is no place for them in a live movement," wrote Willis, "just as there is no place for boils on a healthy human." Meanwhile, the anti-socialist doctrine of the "people's front" and "peace alliance" was gradually unfolded, until the Stalinists were seen advocating through the League machinery they controlled, a government headed by Churchill, Attlee and the Liberal leader of those days, Sinclair, and voting Liberal against Labour in certain by-elections.

All this gravely weakened and confused the membership, and it gave Transport House the pretext in early 1939 to go forward to the next stage in suppressing the youth movement. The Stalinist-dominated national committee was disbanded, the annual conference called off, and every form of separate youth organization at district and national level forbidden. Thus the war came to a Britain in which the Labour youth movement lay in ruins, thanks to a "combined operation" by the Right and the Stalinists.

"New Left" Journal Fails

"Malicious enjoyment of others' misfortunes" is something which British people undoubtedly experience from time to time, but for which, characteristically, we have no one word, and so have to use the German "Schadenfreude." It is a feeling we might be tempted to indulge in connexion with the news that the monthly magazine called *The American Socialist* is ceasing publication—but of course one doesn't yield to such unworthy feelings.

Two years ago or thereabout Cedric Belfrage recommended to me this production of a "sensible, non-sectarian" group which had broken away from the Socialist Workers' Party,

the American Trotskyists; and I have often seen it since on sale at the Partisan, headquarters of our own "New Left."

Our sister weekly in New York, the *Militant*, comments on the decease of the *American Socialist*: "Because they lumped together 'dogma' and valid Marxist concepts, they proved unable to develop the cohesive body of theory and programme needed to stand up against the adverse circumstances of the times. Moreover, the editors deliberately cut off all connexion with their Trotskyist past, which did not help them as interest revived in Trotsky's views."

Nikita and Nicholas I

Khrushchev's addiction to old Russian proverbs and sayings is now well-known. Another feature of his extraordinary speeches which attracts attention is the historical allusions he now quite often makes. One of these, in his recent address to the works of a Budapest factory, I find most suggestive.

Soviet armed intervention in Hungary was dictated by the class interest of the international proletariat, he claimed, just as the armed intervention of Tsar Nicholas I in Hungary in 1848-1849 had accorded with the class interest of 'the international reactionary bourgeoisie.'

Now, to talk of an 'international reactionary bourgeoisie' in 1848 is to commit an anachronism. The revolution which the Tsar helped the Habsburg emperor to put down was a bourgeois revolution and enjoyed widespread sympathy among the European bourgeoisie. Tsarist Russia was then not a bourgeoisie but a feudal-autocratic State, and acted as such in Hungary.

Nevertheless, it is true that the dominant element in one national bourgeoisie did welcome the Tsar's action, and even helped it materially with a timely loan. The British bourgeoisie, having established their own power at home and emerged as masters of 'the workshop of the world' jealously sabotaged trends towards bourgeois revolution elsewhere, except where (as in Greece or South America) they felt confident of establishing British economic control. In Central Europe, in particular, bourgeois revolution, leading to customs union and rapid capitalist development, might destroy a profitable market for British goods. Hence a covert sympathy for the brutal interventions of Tsarist Russia in support of the status quo.

The sympathy had to be covert because of the enthusiastic friendship of lower middle-class and working-class sections of the British people for continental liberation movements. Need to 'adapt' to this led to Lord Palmerston, the outstanding statesman of the time, evolving a highly-refined technique of saying one thing while doing the opposite, which Marx analysed with deadly penetration. Behind a screen of phrases and gestures, Europe was held down for years under what Marx called 'the Anglo-Russian slavery.'

Now, what I find suggestive in Khrushchev's reminder of this period is that it deals with a case of collaboration in maintaining the status quo against revolution between two powers of quite different and even sharply opposed social structure. Each for its own purposes—Russia in defence of feudalism and autocracy, Britain in defence of commercial monopoly—stood hostile to the aspirations of the peoples of Europe, and in spite of contradictions and conflicts they managed to work together a good deal of harm. If historical precedents are needed to back our warnings about the real aim of 'summit talks,' what about this?

The fact that common interest in opposing revolutions did not prevent Britain and Russia from eventually coming to blows in the Crimean War also offers food for thought.

BRIAN PEARCE