

The Newsletter

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**This
Week**

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THE BUDGET:

BIG BUSINESS HAPPY

Working class split

By The Editor

Sigh
of
relief
in
the
City

EVERY worker and trade unionist knows that the Tories are responsible for the present economic crisis. It is their system of profit-making and greed which constantly threatens the standard of living of the wage worker, widows and old age pensioners.

If there is a balance of payments crisis it is not the trade union and labour movement that is responsible but the fact that private companies made four thousand million pounds profit last year and that their system is organised to fit in with this gigantic profit grab.

Mr. Callaghan's budget, like right-wing Labour's policy as a whole, has avoided a head-on clash with the City of London. He has instead introduced measures such as the 6d. a gallon tax on petrol and dearer National Insurance stamps which are bound to increase the cost of living for the wage earners and poorer sections of the population.

No wonder the City has breathed a sigh of relief at the contents of his budget. These proposals will not really effect them in any way. They have ample means at their disposal to raise prices so as to offset any increased costs.

Such means are not at the disposal of the working class who are to be asked by Mr. Woodcock and the right-wing trade union leaders to accept a wage freeze.

No wonder the City is relieved because they have the right-wing trade union and Labour leaders on their side.

Of course, everyone will support an improvement in standards of old age pensioners and the removal of the health service prescription charges. But why should the working class be made to pay through an increase in the cost of living for these measures? That is the real issue.

Hypocrisy

A policy of giving with one hand and taking back with another shows the hypocrisy of the reformists Callaghan and Wilson, who are in reality nothing more than the servants of big capital applying policies which will not in the long run make any difference to the working class.

There is, however, a strategy behind the budget. These concessions are designed to create a division in the working class between those who are poorly paid and those who through trade union organisation enjoy higher wages.

Both Tories and right-wing

Alfred Dressler: an appreciation

THE Editorial Board of The Newsletter has learned with deep regret of the death of Alfred Dressler on Sunday, October 24. Alfred Dressler ranked as one of the foremost and sincere intellectuals who left the Communist Party during the Prague trials. He was especially active in the Leeds branch of the International Society of Socialist Studies and will always be remembered for his production of the record of the Eighth Plenum of the Polish Workers' Party.

As a founder-member of the Editorial Board of the 'New Reasoner' he collaborated very closely with John Saville and Edward Thompson. Although critical of Trotskyism, he always provided serious and thoughtful arguments to those with whom he discussed.

The labour movement has lost a serious worker on matters of important historical and theoretical interest.



Callaghan: avoids clash with City

Labour alike hope that the incomes commission will tie down all wages and salaries to long-term legislative agreement. The protagonists of the income commission speak about taking action over prices, but by the time the commission gets down to work, prices will have risen considerably over what they are now.

Wages, however, will remain the same, because it is anticipated that there will be an agreement reached between the Trades Union Congress and the government to freeze wages before Christmas.

Prices rise

Under a disguise of the improvement in the social services prices will go up and will be higher than they are today by April next year. Then, when the Incomes Commission proposals come up for decision, the Labour government is bound to introduce some curtailment of profits. But by that time big business will have plenty of time to prepare for any contingencies which might arise.

In other words, the first action of the Labour government, both on the 15 per cent surcharge and on the budget increases, is to attack the living standards of the working class. This is the classical role of reformism tinkering with capitalism, whilst at the same time absolutely rejecting real socialist measures against big business.

Sleep sound

You cannot place the responsibility for the economic crisis on the backs of the Tories as long as they own and control the property. Callaghan, Wilson and their ilk have no intention of touching this property, so the City of London can sleep soundly.

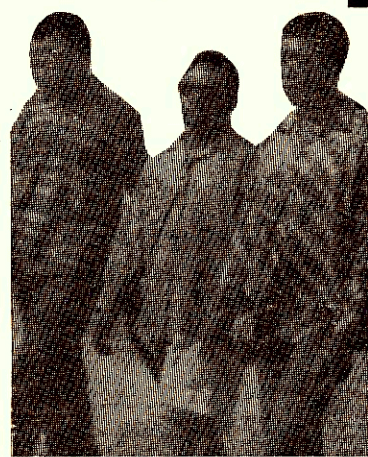
Like all reformist Labour governments in the past, what they have done is to hit and defeat the very people who voted them into office.

Wilson and Callaghan are, in fact, the architects of defeat, miserable Parliamentary careerists who are at the moment only providing the role of a caretaker government whilst at the same time creating the conditions for the return of the Tories.

Hard labour for Dr Allen

and

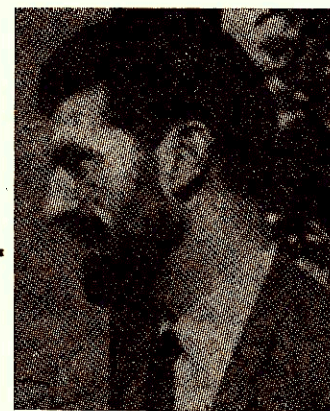
three Nigerians



Left: Oleshengun Adebayo

Centre: Sidi Kayam

Right: Jonas Kiomasekenagh



By Robert James

A VICIOUS one year's hard labour sentence was passed on Dr. Leonard Victor Allen, the 41-year-old Leeds University lecturer accused with three Nigerians of plotting to overthrow the Nigerian government, at Ikeja, Eastern Nigeria, on Tuesday.

The Nigerians, trade unionists Jonas Kiomasekenagh and Sidi Kayam, and teacher Oleshengun Adebayo received similar sentences.

The trial opened on July 1 when the four accused pleaded not guilty to conspiring to overthrow the government, drawing up a plan for the same purpose and possessing a seditious publication.

Dr. Allen will begin his sentence at the end of a two-month term imposed last month for making a false statement and using a false document in an alleged 'escape attempt' dressed as a tribesman.

DEPORTATION REFUSED

Pleas by Dr. Allen's counsel, Mr. Michael Odesanya, for a deportation order on the grounds of the lecturer's deteriorating health due to separation from his family, allowing him to resume his academic work in Britain, were rejected by chief magistrate Ufnnilayo Wickliffe.

Arrested on June 16 on a charge of managing an unlawful society for the purpose of overthrowing the government, Dr. Allen was discharged, but immediately arrested on the present charges.

An authority on trade union affairs Dr. Allen was due to return to Britain last month

after a six-month tour of Africa where, it is understood, he was gathering material for another book.

He arrived in Nigeria soon after the victorious general strike in which the workers gained substantial wage increases.

ARDUOUS

While he was detained on the original charge, Dr. Allen went on a hunger strike and also claimed, through the British press, that he was not receiving any help from the British authorities in Nigeria.

Later he was released, re-arrested then released again on £500 bail.

The long and arduous trial has been a tremendous physical and financial strain on the four accused.

The Nigerians are well known among the working class of the country and it is almost certain that the arrests and trial were staged as an attack by the puppet government of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Belewa on the conditions and wages won through the general strike.

THE following telegram has been sent by the National Committee of the Socialist Labour League to the Nigerian High Commissioner.

On behalf of trade unionists, Labour Party members, Young Socialists and students, the National Committee of the Socialist Labour League strongly protests against the sentence of one year's imprisonment with hard labour passed on Dr. Victor Allen, Jonas Kiomasekenagh and Sidi Kayam and

Oleshengun Adebayo.

We demand that the three Nigerian trade unionists be immediately released and Dr. Victor Allen returned to Britain.

G. HEALY,
National Secretary
Socialist Labour League

We urge other members and organisations of the trade union and labour movement to send similar protests to the High Commissioner at Nigeria House, 9 Northumberland Avenue, London, W.C.2.

PROTEST

against the savage sentences passed

on

DR. LEONARD VICTOR ALLEN
JONAS KIOMASEKENAGH
OLESHENGUN ADEBAYO
SIDI KAYAM

The Socialist Labour League calls on members of the British trade union and labour movement to join

**A LOBBY OF MPs at the
HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 6 p.m.**

**A PROTEST MEETING at the
ST. BRIDE'S FOUNDATION INSTITUTE,
BRIDE LANE, FLEET STREET, E.C.4
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 7 p.m.**

English lecturer jailed in S.A.

A NOTHER English lecturer has been sentenced to imprisonment in Africa. He is Alan Keith Brooks (24), who was jailed for two years for 'furthering the aims of communism', by the Supreme Court in Capetown, South Africa, on Monday.

Brooks and student Anthony Trew (23), were each sentenced to four year's imprisonment, but two were suspended. A physiotherapist, 23-year-old Stephanie Kemp was sentenced to five years' jail—with three suspended.

All three pleaded guilty to belonging to an underground organisation, but denied committing sabotage.

The judge told the accused it was not an offence to oppose apartheid or take up the cause of the underprivileged, 'nor is it an offence to join associations with the view to bring about political economic or social changes.

'It is only so when it is sought to bring about such changes by causing disorder or disturbances or by the commissions of unlawful acts that crime is committed.'

This statement looks ridiculous in the light of the repressive actions by the extreme Verwoerd regime which has sent people like Nelson Mandela and Dr. Neville Alexander into jails, where they are treated brutally, for opposing apartheid and taking up the cause of the underprivileged, which the Judge referred to.

Devlin makes interim report

LORD DEVLIN has made his interim report on the docks dispute to the Minister of Labour, Mr. Ray Gunter, who ordered a quick enquiry soon after the Election, in order to prevent an embarrassing dock strike.

Shortly before making his report—confined to the wage question—Lord Devlin, meeting the unions and the port employers, said the wage offer was too low, but the claim was too high!

Just how much difference can there be between the 12s. 6d. extra offered and the 25s. the TGWU claim that would mean anything to the dock and his family?



THROGMORTON STREET

FOR THE £15 DOCKERS' WAGE

Organise national rank and file committee

Says Birkenhead docker in letter

IT was good to read two weeks ago of the appreciation of The Newsletter by dockers in the Surrey Docks, London. Here in Birkenhead, Garston and Liverpool ports, this tremendous weekly paper is a 'must' and is read eagerly week after week by hundreds.

One docker in the Irish club some weeks back expressed the value of the paper when he said to all those around him—'Get this paper, it's the only one that gives you the real facts behind the news.'

The editorial 'Organise now against decasualisation' (Newsletter, October 31) is no exception: especially the fact that one of the main authors of the 'new deal' for skinning dockers is none other than the 'left' Mr. Cousins!

But there is one point which needs more explanation and that is the so-called dockers' wage demand for an increase of 25s. being turned down at the end of July.

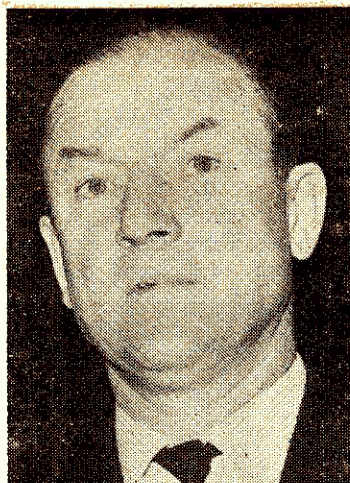
Trickery

That 25s. exemplifies the trickery and treachery of the Transport and General Workers' Union officials and the London Liaison Communist Party-led committee.

TGWU branches in Merseyside, Manchester, Hull, Scotland and London, not to mention other ports, mandated the negotiating committee for £15, £12 10s. and £14 in Hull months ago.

No branch has mandated O'Leary for 25s. Neither has it been discussed at any branch. When O'Leary told the employers to start with 25s., that was a betrayal of the mandate and one of the biggest of many gifts to the employers over the years.

The London Liaison committee knew this very well, but at no time did they expose



Crichton: brains behind
decasualisation

O'Leary and Co. On the contrary, they kept on telling the dockers that the TGWU was changing for the better, that it was going to do the job.

On the very day that Jack Dash (a leading member of the Liaison Committee) called off the one-day token strike, because of the TGWU bluff of ending the national agreement and then proceeding obsequiously to carry out the agreed procedural force of four weeks and then two weeks' strike notice, one of the Stalinists on Merseyside was calling for unity behind the officials!

There is no end to their betrayal and servility, except the building of a national rank and file portworkers' committee.

Precisely because there is no national leadership, the TGWU have, up to this point, got away

(Cont. p. 4, col. 6)

London dockers locked-out for being late

TWO hundred dockers were 'locked-out' of the Royal Docks on Wednesday following an early morning meeting to discuss a proposed claim for a 50 per cent piece-rate pay increase.

Over 2,000 men were at the meeting called by the Royal Docks Liaison Committee. When the 200 arrived late at the Dock Labour Board to have their attendance cards stamped, they found the windows shut in their faces. Officials refused to stamp their cards.

During the lunch hour, 3,000

dockers agreed that if the cards had not been stamped by the end of the day they would hold a meeting on Thursday morning to vote a complete withdrawal of labour.

The Wednesday meeting decided the pay claim be made through the individual unions.

At the Thursday meeting the men decided to strike, so bringing the docks to a standstill. However, they decided to return to work in the afternoon so that union officials could 'look into the matter'.

A capitalist analysis of the Labour government

THE TIMES
reassures
its
readers

'THE TIMES' of London has always been rightly regarded as reflecting some of the most informed and advanced opinion in ruling class circles.

Written for the 'top people', its pages cover a wide area of international news and provide considered opinions in the editorial columns upon the most serious questions.

Last week I dealt with the praise given to the Wilson government by the paper 'World Outlook', whose Pabloite editors referred to the Labour government as 'left social-democratic' and called upon socialists to support its 'progressive measures'. On Tuesday November 3, 'The Times' provided a remarkable confirmation, in an indirect way, of our criticism of these revisionists.

In The Newsletter we said clearly that the Labour government represented not a gain by the working class so much as a reflection of the need of the bosses to use a Labour government for its own desperate purposes.

'Left trend'

Socialists must start from the struggle against the employers and against measures taken by the government in support of the employers.

'The Times' notes that the election of a Labour government coincides with similar developments in West Germany, France and Italy.

In West Germany the social-democrats made recent gains in local elections and may go close to a majority in next year's general election; after many years in the wilderness in France some sort of 'left front' is being mounted to fight against de Gaulle's Presidency; in Italy the socialists are near to taking part in government again, helped by the divisions within the Italian Communist Party.

It is wrong to think, says 'The Times', that all this means a turn to the left in Europe: '... the trend is more in favour of the centre than of the left as such.'

The editorial goes on to give a brief outline of the development of European 'socialist' politics since the end of the Second World War. After emerging powerfully from the war because of the upsurge of working-class desire for social change and the enthusiasm for Russia, these parties were replaced by 'centre' and 'Christian Democratic' parties during the anti-communist period of the Cold War.

Revival

'The Times' should add that this was only possible because of the deal made by Stalin with the capitalist rulers of America and Europe, followed out to the letter by the Communist Parties and fellow-travellers of Italy and France, and that the Korean war saw the beginning of a prolonged period of boom.

'The Times' notes two important developments which helped the revival of the 'socialist' parties: first, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, whose suppression by Khrushchev weakened Marxism in Europe; and second, the decision of the German Social-Democratic Party in 1959 to remove all socialist demands from its programme.

The Newsletter insisted at the time of that social-democratic conference in Germany that this was a decisive turn by these

agents of capitalism and that similar moves were afoot in Britain in Gaitskell's campaign to remove Clause 4 from the constitution of the Labour Party.

These were necessary in order to adapt these parties more adequately to the needs of monopoly capitalism. The capitalists themselves had long since abandoned any idea of pure competition, or property-owning democracies and recognised the need for more decisive state intervention in the economy.

'The Times' sums up:

'This rise (of the left), such as it is, derives less from the acceptance of traditional left-wing ideas than from their partial rejection by the left itself—as well, to be fair, as their partial acceptance by the right... The desire for change has been able to find expression only since the democratic left became respectable. If a swing is taking place it is a symptom of the growing consensus of the centre, where basic social and economic doctrines are no longer at issue... a certain softening of political frontiers seems likely. Europe is not so much turning left as just turning.'

What could be clearer? Capitalism must make a turn in order to overcome its crisis.

corrupting working-class parties arises from a crisis whose other side must inevitably be the heightening of the struggle of the workers themselves against all the results of this crisis.

Consequently, 'The Times' does not consider, for example, the other result of the crisis of Stalinism surrounding the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. From various Communist Parties came not only renegades from the movement but cadres who learned from that Revolution the lesson of the necessity of a Fourth International of revolutionary parties based on the teachings of Trotsky; this happened in Britain and in



'The Times' ignores the crisis of Stalinism

Hungary itself, to name only two examples.

As part of the same process the Hungarian workers showed the path of political revolution to the workers of Eastern Europe through workers' councils, confirming the programme of the Fourth International, that

able to expect too much to follow from them.'

'The Times' is here drawing attention to the fact that whatever leaders might say, the workers will insist on fighting, and attention should be paid to this.

Doom

They cannot understand the workings of the whole capitalist system as one which is going to its doom through a series of international and inter-connected conflicts, with working-class leadership settling the historical issue—that would involve rejecting the whole bourgeois outlook—but they insist on being able to root out trouble-makers in their own backyard.

They write:

'Trade union leaders are on the whole responsible and knowledgeable men willing to give their co-operation on reasonable terms. But they can be easily outflanked by unofficial leaders who are assisted by the fact that in an inflationary economy the interests of some employers join with the pressure for higher pay to defeat any prolonged attempt to hold earnings below the market rate.'

This has the same meaning as the first 'Times' article we analysed. Some employers must change their traditional attitudes and accept the vital role of the opportunist leaders in the trade unions and Labour Party in regulating the economy.

Limited

In this case 'The Times' can see the immediate difficulties in the demands of rank-and-file workers. But that is the limit of their understanding; they only give the working class credit for being able to understand and fight for its immediate economic demands. They assume that the workers, like themselves, will continue to accept the limits of bourgeois society, only challenging for small adjustments within it (such as getting the 'market value' for their labour!).

Shrewdness, cunning, and the ability to corrupt many gene-



The Hungarian Revolution, 1956: Many came from Stalinist movement to learn the lesson of the necessity of the Fourth International

rations of labour leaders, have enabled the British capitalist class, with 'The Times' always well to the fore, to ensure up to now that the working class does not go beyond reform demands and reformist leaders.

But the present crisis of British capitalism brings home to root all the chickens of a hundred years of bloody exploitation and super-profit on a world scale.

The struggles it brings will see the downfall equally of the capitalist class itself and its faithful servants the Labour leaders, because from these struggles we have begun to build in the Socialist Labour League a revolutionary leadership which presents the challenge of Marxism in living, active form to the British workers.

the political bureaucracy of Stalinism must be overthrown, but not the planned socialist foundations of the economy.

All the crises and civil wars called up in the period of imperialist decay, together with their reflections within the camp of the Stalinist bureaucracy, provide revolutionary opportunities for a working class led by a Marxist party, based on the only scientific theory which can see the world system as a whole, in terms of one struggle between capitalists and workers. Such parties in fact are being built in the course of the real struggle against the capitalists and their agents in the Labour movement.

'The Times' is unable to achieve this overall view of the contradictions of the system, because it remains within the bourgeois world view of formal logic and accepts the capitalist order as natural and eternal. Only the conflicts under its very nose call for treatment of a different kind.

Generosity

For example, in its first editorial the same day, a different question is taken up. 'The Times' comments upon a speech by Les Cannon, right-wing ex-communist president of the Electrical Trades Union.

In this speech to the ETU policy-making conference, Cannon pledged support to the incomes policy of Wilson and spoke strongly against 'restrictive practices'. The next day he had strong words for the unofficial strikes by ETU members on power station construction sites.

'The Times' welcomes his generosity but warns that fine words butter no parsnips:

'Mr. Cannon's sentiments do him credit, they cannot be too often urged by trade union leaders or too closely heeded by those to whom they are addressed, but it is impos-



Gaitskell: Attack on Clause 4 part of 'turn'

selling Wilson as a 'left winger' they, in fact, assist the capitalists, who have decided that Wilson is all right by them.

For all its urbanity and sophistication, 'The Times' is unable to get to the bottom of the matter, however. Only the dialectical method of Marxism can do this, providing a basis for working-class political action.

As always, the spokesmen of the ruling class neglect the power of the working class itself. They constantly fall into the illusions of their own bureaucratic and parliamentary system, assuming that everything in the class struggle depends upon official programmes and combinations of people within the apparatus. It never strikes them that their very need for

The story of a centrist (ii)

Hobnobbing with Stalinists and Fascists

By Peter Arnold

business, of course) Stalin 'calling upon him to end the persecution'.

Brockway modestly comments, 'It made worldwide impression.'

During the whole of the period, the Independent Labour Party was working closely with Stalin's representatives in this country, or as Brockway puts it in his inimitable manner:

'We slipped into a united front with the Communist Party... without considered attention.'

The method of this united action is best summed up in the negotiations between the Independent Labour Party, Cripp's Socialist League (a group operating inside the Labour Party) and the Communist Party in 1936. Once again let us hear from Brockway:

'The first problem was the form of organisational unity at which we should aim.' Only once that was settled presumably did they move on to 'the second problem' which was the programme of the campaign. Brothers let us first unite and then think of something to unite about.

Collapse

The joint action was a failure throughout and finally collapsed completely on the issue of fighting the Labour Party bureaucracy. They threatened to expel the Socialist League for co-operating with proscribed organisations, and the League officially disbanded, the mem-



Mosley: his October 1936 march called off through actions of a terrified Brockway

bers continuing to co-operate individually.

The showdown came when the Party leadership threatened to expel George Strauss if he went ahead to speak on the same platform as Maxton and Pollitt. The fight was called off, and the great unity campaign collapsed. The Independent Labour Party had again learnt nothing.

Indictment

Even Brockway has to admit: 'Thus ended ignominiously the Unity Campaign. Its result was the destruction of the Socialist League... the strengthening of the reactionary right-wing leaders and the disillusionment of the rank and file.'

A damning indictment one might think, yet Brockway still concludes: 'And yet if I am asked if the ILP made a mistake in entering the campaign, my answer is "No".' (Ibid., p. 269)

He then goes on to produce his analysis, which should be of lasting value to the workers of all countries: 'The real lesson of the campaign was the need to limit action to specific issues.' It should be written in letters of gold!

The way in which Brockway, as a true centrist, shied away from class action, is well illustrated in his encounters with the fascists.

The Independent Labour Party newspaper played a large

part in calling out the workers of East London to prevent Mosley's march in October 1936. Brockway describes how he rushed down to Aldgate on the day and found a huge crowd of workers, already fighting with the police.

The sight terrified him. He dashed to the nearest 'phone box and got on to the Home Office to ask them to stop Mosley's march!

'I insisted,' he writes, 'that if the procession were allowed to approach Aldgate there would be bloodshed and that, after this warning, the responsibility would lie with the Home Secretary.'

Naturally, the Home Office was only too pleased to oblige. The procession was called off. As one contemporary put it, it was a 'feather in Brockway's cap'.

Brockway's attitude to bloodshed, however, did not cause him to sever all connections with the fascists. At the time when the POUM was fighting the fascists (and the Stalinists) in Spain, Brockway, 'debated with Mosley's first lieutenant William Joyce [later Lord Haw Haw during the Second World War] before the students of Aberdeen University. I am humiliated to say that on the vote I lost in the debate....'

Impressed

He was obviously impressed with the fascists, as he writes: 'Joyce's indictment of the inequalities of capitalism might have been uttered by any socialist.'

All ended in a traditional British way: 'After the debate, we both accompanied our supporters to a students' ball, but Joyce didn't dance.' ('Inside the Left', p. 272)

Here is the man who describes himself as a 'revolutionary socialist' attending a dance with fascists and all that he can find for them is praise at their indictment of capitalism and concern at their failure to dance. How can these people hope to lead the working class, when they cannot even recognise the most naked of their enemies?

It must be stressed once again that this took place when the German, Italian and Spanish workers were being subjected to the most enormous suffering by fascism. To Brockway, fascism is not the class enemy in its most horrible form, but chaps with different ideas, which ought to be discussed.

Internationally his policy was as disastrous. But how could it be otherwise for this narrow English empiric. Describing his 'fight' to build what was to be known as the 3½ international he makes no mention at all of political discussion with any foreign party. Presumably, this did not play an important part in what he calls his 'interesting visits to various parts of Europe'.

'Knowledge'

He does tell us a lot about himself though. Describing a meeting that he addressed in Poland in 1931 he writes: 'It was fiercely interrupted by Communists and there were scenes of fighting. I had not before seen such political ferocity.' I should hope not, too. Just imagine that happening in Slough!

He also tells us that in Poland he 'found a knowledge of British politics and an enthusiasm for the ILP that surprised me'. After all he knew

