

A MAGNIFICENT LOBBY!

The Newsletter

WEEKLY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

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1,500 demonstrators demand:

No laws against the unions

BY A NEWSLETTER REPORTING TEAM

LABOUR MPs were booed and heckled in the austere lobby hall of the House of Parliament on Wednesday as they ran from trade unionists and youth demanding 'Which way will you vote on anti-union legislation?'

Across the street squads of police had hemmed in demonstrators who had marched over 1,500 strong through South London demanding 'No laws against the trade unions'.

What the MP's said

IN the heated discussion with those MPs who came into the lobby, many refused to commit themselves on the question of voting against legislation. Others said they would wait to see what the legislation contained, while some denied there was any move to pass such laws.

Those who were seen included: Harold Walker (Doncaster), Frank Allaun, James Dunn (Kirkdale, Liverpool), Crawshaw (Toxteth, Liverpool), John Mendelson (Penistone), Eric Ogden (West Derbyshire, and NUM sponsored), Ron Ledger (Romford), Trevor Parks (South-east Derbyshire), Paul Rose (Manchester), Stan Newens (Epping), Raymond Fletcher (Ilkeston, Derbyshire), Carmichael (Woodside, Glasgow), Stan Orme (an AEU MP), and John Rankin (Govan, Glasgow).

Allaun told lobbyists: 'With me, you are knocking at an open door.' He opposed legislation limiting the freedom of trade unionists, 'bar bringing the Labour government down'. He did not believe legislation would be introduced anyway.

Walker said he would be opposed to anything that set the clock back to the Taff Vale case.

Dunn, a T&GWU MP, said he had opposed the incomes policy, but wanted to know more about the proposed legislation before he committed himself.

He added that even though it might be against his conscience, and the majority felt legislation would be 'for the good of the country' he would vote with the government.

Crawshaw said it was necessary to have 'machinery' to deal with wild-cat strikes.

Mendelson was one of those booed out of the lobby after failing to answer questions.

Ogden, when pressed, said he would not vote against legislation. 'There must be penalties for breaches of agreements', he said.

Ledger said he did not know of any legislation. He thought the object of the Prices and Incomes Board was to keep prices down and incomes level!

Parks would 'choose his own method' of action on union law.

Rose was in favour of a 'socialist' incomes policy with better-paid workers holding back wages in favour of poorer-paid men.

Newens could not say how he would vote on legislation he had not seen.

Walker said he would never legislate against the unions. Asked if he would support legalised fines against unionists, he said he could not commit himself on 'hypothetical' questions.

Orme retreated to slow hand clapping after saying he would decide on his vote 'in the light of developments'.

The others became equally evasive, and seemed anxious to get away to other business when faced with basic questions posed by the workers who voted them into parliament.

Many MPs refused to see the lobbyists.

The trade unionists, Young Socialists and students had poured into London from all over the British Isles at the call of the Lambeth Trades Council to make it clear what the working class feels about the Labour government's anti-union proposals.

This was the most colourful, most militant, and most enthusiastic march and lobby of its kind since the 'official' lobby on unemployment in March, 1963.

But Wednesday's lobby was so much more significant. It was 'unofficial'—the TUC had withdrawn recognition from the Lambeth Trades Council soon after announcing the campaign and right-wing and Stalinist forces had lined up against it.

AGAINST GOVT.

It was also a demonstration and lobby against a 'Labour' government which was voted into power by those who so clearly and angrily made their demands in the Westminster lobby hall.

The whole day was a credit to all those trade unionists and youth who had campaigned through the rough weather of the past three months to gain support from numerous organisations and branches in every major industrial centre in the British Isles.

Marching behind the banner of the Lambeth Trades Council, the demonstrators set off from Kennington Park carrying banners and shouting slogans which carried the message 'No laws against the unions', 'Maintain the right to strike', 'Trade union law out! Wilson out!', 'Slap Brown down', and 'Legislate against the employers, not the unions'.

'A magnificent march' was on the lips of hundreds of trade unionists as they entered the Festival Hall Gardens on the last leg of the march.

INTEREST

The march aroused tremendous interest among office, factory and building site workers as it wound its way through the Elephant and Castle, St. George's Circus, Blackfriars and Waterloo to the Festival Hall Gardens.

As the marchers prepared to lobby their MPs, police moved in to surround them and allowed only 30 lobbyists into parliament at one time.

Time after time MPs ran back into the chamber as the lobbyists demanded an answer about anti-union law. Several times police intervened, and even more times the lobbyists booed the scurrying Members.

Later a huge report-back meeting was held in the Central Hall, Westminster.

On the march workers told our reporters of their reaction to the proposed legislation.

Representatives of 1,200 men on a one-day stoppage from the Vauxhall building site on Merseyside said:

AGITATE

'We are here to find out exactly what our MPs are doing. If these laws mean what we think they mean, we will instruct our MPs to oppose them. If they don't, we will agitate against them and expose them in their constituencies for their anti-trade union activities.'

Thirty stewards from Morris Motors, Cowley, Oxford, told how they had voted last Monday on their joint committee to call a one-day token strike of the whole factory if the legislation reaches its second reading.

'This will be the forerunner of further action,' said AEU senior shop steward Gerry Ashmore and John Power, another steward.

They spoke proudly of increasing wages by 39 per cent in one

WELL DONE COMRADES

THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE of the Socialist Labour League warmly congratulates all those trade unionists, Labour Party members, Young Socialists, Communist Party members and members of the Socialist Labour League who marched in the demonstration on January 26, organised by the Lambeth Trades Council. This demonstration and the lobby of parliament which followed was a great success, because it united some of the most representative sections of the working-class movement around a single major political demand: 'No anti-trade union legislation'.

It must be stressed that many of those who participated on the march and lobby were actual delegates who had been elected at mass meetings in factories and building sites representing thousands of workers.

The first major shots have been fired in a campaign which has already established a wide basis of organised support. This support must not only be consolidated, it must be extended every day as the threat of legislation grows.

IN THE VANGUARD of this potentially powerful movement are the thousands of Young Socialists who have for the last six years fought continuously to expose the treacherous role of the right-wing Labour leaders. For this they have been witch-hunted and expelled from the Labour Party, only to grow in size and political stature such as no other socialist youth movement in the history of the working class.

One of the slanders, and there were many, was that they were 'just kids' who could command no respect from adult workers. But this demonstration was a slap in the face for the slanders.

THE DEMONSTRATION, lobby and mass meeting established for all to see a fighting unity between the adults and the youth. We predict that this bond will grow stronger in the period ahead.

The youth have now the opportunity to learn from the long experience of the adult workers how to struggle against enemies of the working class within the labour movement. As they do this, they will enjoy the fullest support from the Socialist Labour League.

MORE SUPPORT

'It mustn't stop here. We must gather more support,' added one.

A. Waring of the Liverpool Speke AEU No. 3 branch commented: 'This is a good start. Now the district committees and shop stewards' committees must lead industrial action to stop these laws'.

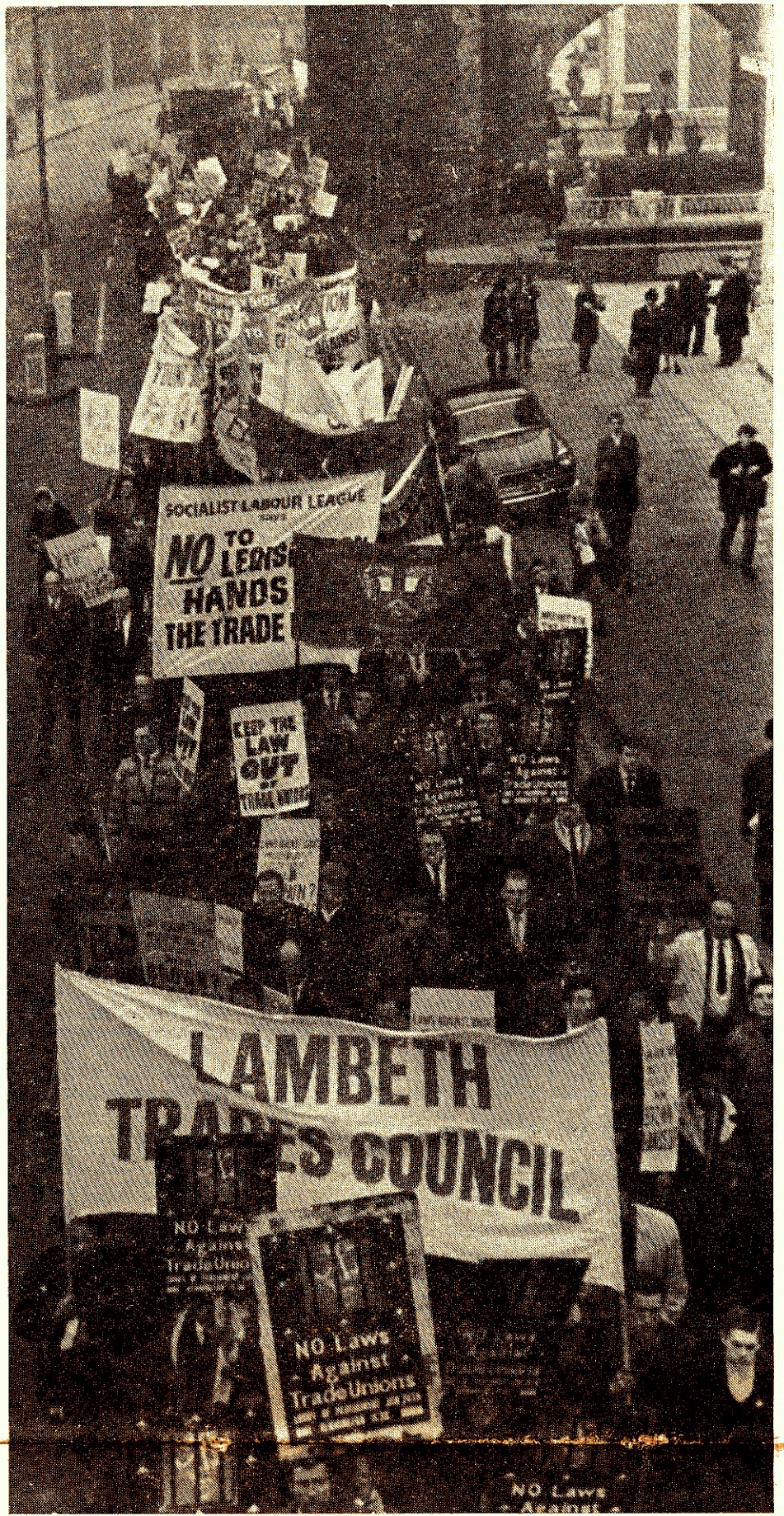
Massey Ferguson, Coventry, delegates, said they intended to 'collar' local MPs. Crossman, Edelman and Bill Wilson on the lobby along with Frank Cousins as a local MP and union leader, to demand they vote against any anti-union laws.

'We will tell them we represent thousands of workers who voted for them,' said one delegate.

Delegates from the Shepherd's Bush No. 1 ASW branch and from the Willesden and Cricklewood ASW said it was a 'wonderful demonstration'. The Labour government was wrong to attempt to bring in anti-union laws, 'putting us back where we started'.

Michael Coventry and William Myers, two delegates from Lucas, Liverpool, said: 'Our shop stewards are up in arms about

(Continued back page, col. 7)



The front section of the march which stretched for three-quarters of a mile STOP PRESS: THE 'DAILY WORKER' AND THE LOBBY—see page four

Central Hall Meeting

MORE than a thousand of the lobbyists crowded into the Central Hall, Westminster, to report back on the lobby.

Opening the meeting, Vivienne Mendelson, chairman of the Lambeth Trades Council, said: 'This campaign and demonstration today is the beginning of building a new leadership in the labour movement to lead the fight to defeat legislation'.

'Go back to your areas and campaign locally to draw into this campaign tens of thousands of workers in all the large towns. It depends on us,' she added.

Joe Mighty, a West Indian member of the Trades Council commented: 'We are gathered here to say that we are not prepared to sit down and have ourselves trampled on'.

'Left' MPs, he said, had shown

that they would not bring down the government on the question of legislation. 'We have shown that there is an alternative for workers to look to for leadership'.

Special appeal

He appealed particularly to coloured workers to join the fight.

A shop steward from the north-west said that the government was being ordered to pass legislation by the bankers from whom they have borrowed money. Legislation would cause strikes up and down the country.

Dave Ashby, national secretary of the Young Socialists said the demonstration had called a halt to all the betrayals of the past 15 months. He made a special appeal to all trade unionists to attend the national conference of the Young Socialists in More-

cambe in April, when a whole session would be devoted to the question of continuing the fight against legislation.

Central Committee member of the Socialist Labour League, Cliff Slaughter, said that the lobby had shown that it was possible to fight even when all those who claimed to represent the working class refused to fight.

Democracy

'One of the things that must be fought for, besides preparation for a new lobby in a few months time, is the question of democracy inside the trade union movement and against the ban on the Lambeth Trades Council'.

This was an essential part of the fight for the independence of the trade unions from the state.

'We must refuse to allow workers to be intimidated. Show solidarity with every dispute, and go forward to a daily revolutionary paper to give the working class a leadership that is not subservient to the international bankers,' he said.

Aileen Jennings, editor of the Young Socialist paper, 'Keep Left' said the meeting should protest at the way the police were brought in to prevent the lobbyists queuing outside parliament.

'No accident'

'This is no accident,' she said. 'They were brought in because the government wanted the lobby stopped'.

The Young Socialists had many similar experiences of police activity when campaigning for policies that 'hit the government on the head'.

A Morris Motors shop steward described his interview with Stan Orme, MP. He concluded by saying that the only way workers can fight to defend their rights is by taking the power.

A member of the Workers' Trade Union Alliance of Spain and of the London Typographical Society, A. Roa, called on workers to unite to defend their rights. Spain was a living example of what could happen to the unions—being tied to the state.

He was speaking in a personal capacity. Other unionists from Liverpool, Belfast and the Woolf Rubber factory in Southall were among those who also spoke.

The Newsletter

SELDOM in the history of British labour have workers been treated so scandalously as the railwaymen. Now, once again, they have been driven to declare strike action on February 14. This time, however, it is against a Labour government that they are being forced to strike—for it is the government of Harold Wilson, George Brown and James Callaghan which controls the railways as a nationalized industry.

But this is precisely what Greene, the railwaymen's secretary, and other right-wing leaders of the NUR, do not want. As members of the TUC, they are, in fact, committed to Brown's compulsory legislation.

How then is it possible for them to lead a successful strike? Under pressure from the railwaymen they have been forced to declare a strike whilst it is obvious they have no heart for it.

This poses some real dangers for the railwaymen. If they are forced into a strike under a leadership that doesn't want it, then the union can suffer a resounding defeat. Such a defeat would be a major disaster for the rank and file of other unions with wage claims in hand.

The railwaymen and leadership

It would put teeth into Brown's wages and incomes policy, and in so doing would greatly strengthen big business and the Tories.

The future of the railmen's strike, in fact, resides in the attitude of the entire union movement. Without the assistance of the rest of the movement, victory will be extremely difficult.

Immediately there is a wage claim of the London Transport workers. This claim will also lead to a showdown with the

government. Why cannot the actions of the railwaymen and transport workers be co-ordinated? A national transport link-up could be the beginning of a real strategy to defeat government policy.

The railwaymen must not be left to go it alone. Their fight for adequate wage increases has reached a crucial stage. Now is the time to give serious consideration to the problem of leadership.

To fight the state a new and more political leadership must be built. The present leadership is completely inadequate and far too compromised with the Labour leaders to be able to lead an effective struggle against them.

Immediately, railwaymen must demand that the union clears its decks for action. Appeal to the entire labour movement for help, and we are confident the response will be overwhelming.

The Newsletter

THE Engineering Employers' Federation is obviously enthusiastic about George Brown. Now that his proposed legislation against the trade unions is about to be introduced into parliament, its members plan to go one better. They are demanding that strikers who violate procedure should be fined by special tribunals for every day 'they take part in such a strike or other action'.

We have been warned!

country with employees numbering over two million. It includes those groups of employers who make record profits all the year round.

The arrogance of this powerful organisation is derived from the hostile attitude of the Labour government towards the trade unions. It has been strengthened in its reactionary belief by the infamous York Memorandum, which has governed its relations with the trade unions since the early 1920's.

Under this Memorandum, the employers have been able to victimise workers as they

please, allowing the cases concerned to drag their way through a procedure which hangs on for many months.

Practically all of the unofficial strikes in the engineering industry have been caused through the activity of the employers. Now they want the right to provoke strikes and fine those who go on strike. Here is another real reason for an all-out struggle against Brown's legislation. Once this becomes law, then it will undoubtedly open the way for such proposals as those of the engineering employers.

CLIFF SLAUGHTER

answers those 'lefts' who quote Lenin's 'Left-Wing Communism' to justify support of Wilson's government.

WORKERS in Britain are faced with pressing and urgent problems of wages and living standards. Trade union leaders, by collaborating with the employers, are exposing the working class to a serious weakening of their organised strength. The Labour government of Harold Wilson is the political initiator of the proposed new laws to outlaw 'unofficial' action on wages.

Legislation against the trade unions provokes a political struggle by the workers which will enable a new, Marxist, revolutionary leadership to be built.

This political struggle is necessary, and its necessity becomes evident and urgent for more and more workers, because British capitalism can no longer afford, through concessions and reforms, to limit the class struggle to the trade union field. So long as such reforms were possible, then politics in the labour movement could remain under the dominance of the middle-class and bureaucratic elements who inhabit the trade union apparatus and the 'labour left', particularly the Parliamentary Party.

But when the capitalists are forced to press the attack, restricting even trade union rights, and the working class exerts its strength independently of the bureaucratic 'leaders', then the role of the 'Labour lefts' is reversed.

Limit

The Bevanite movement, from which emerged the H-bomb 'shadow' Foreign Minister Bevan and the later Prime Minister Harold Wilson, was the limit to be reached by the 'Labour left'. Having run its course, and now in a situation where an independent class line, possible only through Marxism, is the only basis for opposition to Wilson, this 'old left' has become the most conscious apologist for Wilson and the right.

The international role of this 'old left' is also important. They are the only potential 'allies' of the 'unity' calls and 'popular fronts' of the local agents of the Stalinist bureaucracy, in open crisis since 1956.

They are the chief advocates and defenders, through special agents like Fenner Brockway, of the treacherous 'national' leaders of the colonial and ex-colonial peoples.

We have stressed that the building of a Marxist leadership is the essential question for the working class. This can only come from an organisation built upon the theoretical foundations of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, summed up in the resolutions of the first four Congresses of the Third (Communist) International and the founding document (Transitional Programme) of the Fourth International (1938).

It is significant that the final process of degeneration of the 'Labour left' has coincided with a struggle inside the Fourth International.

Socialists and the Labour government



To summarize the present class position of the Labour government is to show that the revolutionary approach of Lenin and Trotsky, far from being outdated is as relevant to the MacDonald (top) and Wilson (bottom) governments, and is the essential starting point for the working class today.

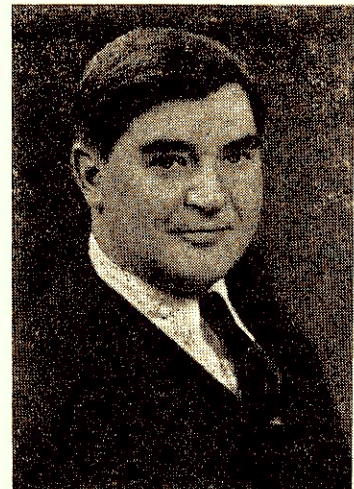
The Socialist Labour League and its comrades in the International Committee have emerged strengthened from a fight against revisionism, usually called 'Pabloism' after its most conscious advocate, Michel Pablo.

One of the leading theories of the followers of this trend, including those who have now split with Pablo himself, is the idea, cultivated in the capitalist countries for nearly 15 years, that a powerful left-centrist trend would be forced to emerge from social-democratic parties like the British Labour Party.

Adapted

'Deep entry' into such parties was justified by these expectations. The revisionists are incapable of drawing the painful negative conclusions about their theories, because they have become adapted to the left opportunists themselves.

These so-called Trotskyists (they produce the paper 'The Mili-



Bevanite movement was limit reached by 'left'

tant', and find great comfort from the left paper 'The Week') have condemned as 'adventurist' the struggles inside the Labour Party of the Socialist Labour League and its supporters in the Young Socialists.

They are now the most sophisticated opponents of the political campaign against trade union legislation, in which the Socialist Labour League and Young Socialists are prominent.

In order to justify this, the revisionists quote not only Lenin's 'Left-Wing Communism', but also the repeated reference in the document of the Communist International and the Transitional Programme to what was called a 'Workers' Government'

or 'Workers' and Farmers' Government'.

The Pabloites welcomed the election of the Wilson government as a 'left-centrist' or simply 'left' government, refusing to characterize it as a capitalist government.

We have seen that Lenin never in fact proposed support for the election of a Labour government as something 'better' than the Tories.

He was interested only in getting the reformists in, in order to defeat them.

What about the 'workers' governments? Here, too, we shall see that Lenin and Trotsky had completely different starting points and different directions from those who misuse their writings.

Further, Marxists should draw some conclusions from the experience of the working class and the Labour government.

Even in the middle 1920's, when Trotsky expected a MacDonald Labour government, if elected, to be able to bring in certain reforms, including some nationalization, he still wrote:

'It is necessary from day to day to struggle against compromising illusions, in other words, to declare a life and death fight against MacDonaldism.'

Trotsky also understood very well the role of the 'lefts' in relation to MacDonald:

'It would be a monstrous illusion to think that these left elements of the old school are capable of heading the revolutionary movement of the British proletariat and its struggle for power. In themselves, they represent a completed formation. They have only a very limited elasticity, their leftism is opportunist throughout.' ('Where is Britain Going?' page 130.)

At that time too, Trotsky pointed out that whereas a leftward swing in the working class pushed a Labour government in parliament, it brought at the same time a swing to the right among the lefts of the Independent Labour Party.

Contradiction

But of course, following Lenin, Trotsky saw in the election of a Labour government, a contradictory reality. On the one hand it represented the capitalist class, but on the other hand it brought to a head the struggle of the workers.

But this contradictory character could be used as a basis for revolutionary politics only by those who understood the class character of the Labour government and the irreconcilable struggle of the working class for power.

Conclusions

Trotsky did not prattle about the 'progressive' character of a Labour, as against a Tory government, but drew conclusions for revolutionary struggle:

'It is the very Party of MacDonald that is strengthening the confidence of the bourgeoisie and at the same time stretched the endurance of the proletariat to its last limits.' (Ibid. page 133.)

When the Communist International in 1922 put forward the idea of Communists supporting, and even participating in, 'workers' governments', this was part and parcel of the tactic of the working-class united front. Bukharin expressed very sharply the purpose of this tactic:

'For us the united-front tactics are primarily a great strategic manoeuvre designed to destroy the influence of social-democracy.'

Within this perspective, the Communist International decided that:

'The slogan of a workers' government is therefore suitable for concentrating the proletariat and unleashing revolutionary struggles.'

Communists should declare readiness to participate in such governments 'only if there are guarantees that the workers' government will really conduct a struggle against the bourgeoisie'.

Definition

We are of course still a long way from considering a British Labour government. In the same 'theses', the Communist International insisted:

'... the communist parties must bear in mind that while every bourgeois government is a capitalist government, not every workers' government is really a proletarian government, a revolutionary instrument of power. The Communist International must consider the following possibilities:

1. Liberal workers' government, such as there was in Australia, also possible in England in the near future.

2. Social-democratic workers' governments (Germany).

3. A government of workers and poorer peasants. This is possible in the Balkans, Czechoslovakia, Poland, etc.

4. Workers' governments in which communists participate.

5. Genuine proletarian workers' governments, which in their pure form can be created only by the Communist party.

character of the State, or to ward off, with the help of the corrupt workers' leaders, the revolutionary offensive of the proletariat and to gain time. Communists cannot take part in such governments. On the contrary, they must vigorously expose to the masses the real character of these pseudo-workers' governments. But in the present period of capitalist decline, when the most important task is to win the majority of the proletariat for the revolution, even such governments may objectively help to accelerate the process of disintegration of bourgeois power.' (The Communist International, Vol. I, 1919-22, Documents.)

It was only Trotskyism which took up this revolutionary thread in the struggle against reformism. The Transitional Programme, carried at the Founding Conference of the Fourth International in 1938, posed as the central question before the working class, indeed before the whole of mankind and its future, the resolving of the crisis of working-class leadership, the defeat of the reformist and Stalinist leaders by a new Marxist leadership in the Fourth International.

In drawing attention to the possibility of 'workers' and farmers' governments' this programme insisted that where they did occur, and even where representatives of the petty bourgeoisie were forced to go farther than they intended against the imperialists, such governments would be but short steps along the road to genuine workers' power, for which an independent Trotskyist leadership was the indispensable prerequisite.

The present situation in Britain enables us to grasp more decisively the character of the struggle against the reformists, of both 'right' and 'left' variety. If we summarise the present class position of the Labour government, as our conclusion, it will be apparent that the revolutionary approach of Lenin and Trotsky, far from having been outdated, is the essential starting point for the working class today.

A vital part of the Transitional Programme is the fight for the independence of trade unions from the state, and the accompanying fight for democracy inside the trade unions against the bureaucracy.

Britain today, and the other advanced capitalist countries, are the arena of struggles on this question at a much higher and more intensive level even than they were when the Transitional Programme was written. The basic demands of the workers on wages and conditions have now merged inseparably with the political question of the relation of the trade unions to the state.

Relentless

Only a revolutionary party starting from the Transitional Programme is able to unite the struggles of the workers under such conditions. This requires a relentless fight against the Labour government which proposes the anti-trade union legislation in Britain.

Using the Labour government, the ruling class has taken the course of ending the 'democratic', 'free bargaining' relation with the working class, made possible by the imperialist position of Britain for so long. This relation, overlaid with compromise and con-

cession, relayed through a more or less privileged layer of better-paid workers, the 'labour aristocracy', is rendered impossible by the decline of British capitalism.

Thus it becomes necessary to replace concessions with 'discipline', and very quickly, as Mr. Gunter never tires of pointing out. It is the ex-Bevanite Wilson who is chosen to do the job. The working-class movement must also draw its conclusions quickly.

1. The social strata of labour aristocrats and bureaucrats, with the petty bourgeois 'intellectuals' who have always merged with them in the Labour Party, have found it just as natural to produce the personnel for the present phase of repressions and direct state service to the monopolies, as they did to play the role of a 'reformist' cushion between the working class and the capitalists.

2. There is nothing essentially new about the class role of the Labourites: it is the specially advanced stage of British capitalism's economic and political crisis which forces this role into the open.

Betraysals

At earlier times, particularly in the General Strike of 1926, the 1931 crisis, and the Second World War, the British social-democrats carried out open betraysals, condemning the working class to receive the direct blows of the capitalists.



Gunter never tires of talking of 'discipline' replacing concessions

In other countries, and particularly in Germany, the social democrats, even where they had officially embraced Marxism, in contrast to their 'untheoretical' and 'commonsense' blood-brothers in the British Labour Party, long since came out as the executioners of their working-class followers.

The British Labour Party leaders are thus acting in continuity with the role of social democracy internationally as the servants of big business.

The trade union bureaucracy serves to divide and weaken the workers industrially; their counterparts in the Labour Party serve in the field of politics and the state. The State is presented in class society as the arbiter between classes, and the political actions of the social democrats are 'justified' on these grounds.

However, the epoch of wars and revolutions, the epoch of imperialism, brings out even more clearly the role of the state as the executive committee of the ruling class.

(a) In the first place the state becomes more and more, ever since 1914, the instrument for mobilising the nation's capacity for total war and for the imperialist oppression of subject nations. Militarism, diplomatic secrecy and bureaucratisation are accentuated, the role of 'democratic' institutions like parliament becomes less and less important in the actual process of government.

(b) The state now plays a vital role in the economy itself, through subsidies, taxation policies, investment control, nationalization, military budgets, etc.

(c) International finance-capital demands a certain relation with the governments of the various nations. This international responsibility to the capitalist class seems to contradict our first point, the use of the state to mobilise for national wars. Indeed this contradiction is real, and goes through various phases of mounting intensity. The present 'liquidity' crisis is typical.

(d) The special relation between imperialism as a whole, under the leadership of the US, to the degenerated and deformed workers' states, ties the governments of countries like Britain ever more closely to the overall military and strategic needs of imperialism.

(e) Imperialism is still dependent on the control of the colonial and semi-colonial countries, though the methods of oppression have changed. The crisis of the capitalist system necessitates ever more malignant and intensive

forms of exploitation of these oppressed peoples.

Any government of an imperialist nation is drawn into the military, political and economic machinery of exploitation developed in line with these processes. In Britain this is especially critical because the capitalist structure of this old colonial power has been dependent upon obsolete methods of exacting tribute from the workers at home and abroad.

Wilson's Labour government is the employers' instrument for removing the obstacle of the organised working class from the path of the capitalists who want to rescue themselves from this tragic situation.

It is this definite historical character of the class role of the Labour government which determines our decision to base ourselves on the principles of Lenin and Trotsky, to fight for the defeat of Wilson and his reformist henchmen, to build a new revolutionary Marxist leadership.

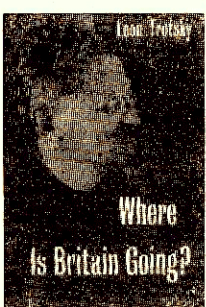
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By Leon Trotsky

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THE BEN BARKA AFFAIR

by John Crawford

Corrupt right-wing group a threat to French workers

WHILE it may never be possible to tie up all the strands which intersect in the Ben Barka affair, the general pattern can now be seen fairly clearly.

In the very heart of the French state apparatus exist powerful right-wing forces, at this stage ranged against de Gaulle.

They connect the Paris underworld with the feudal regime of King Hassan II of Morocco. Their influence extends widely in police and espionage services. The possibility of their connection with the US Central Intelligence Agency must not be excluded.

The events of the past few weeks show that the critical divisions within the French ruling class, which de Gaulle the Bonaparte was supposed to have overcome, continue to tear apart the Fifth Republic, as the Third and Fourth.

Only the absence of a revolutionary workers' party allows the present set-up to continue.

ABDUCTION

On October 29, just before the Presidential elections, Agomedi Ben Barka was abducted in broad daylight in the Boulevard St. Germain. He was taken to the car which drove him away by two members of the Paris narcotics squad, Inspector Souchon and his assistant Voitot.

He was last heard of in a villa belonging to a brothel owner, Bouchesche. In the villa were some retired gangsters, the chief of the Moroccan secret police and one Antoine Lopez.

The latter is important, because he combined several professions.

Not only was he an airline inspector at Orly Airport, but he was also an agent for the spy service SDECE (Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre Espionage), for the Moroccan intelligence and for the narcotics squad.

A later arrival at the villa was General Oufkir, Moroccan Minister of the Interior and leading reactionary politician. He was responsible for the brutal suppression of the Casablanca riots last March.

He had been trained in the French Army and was head of the Moroccan section of SDECE until 1960. Then he switched over to the Moroccan police, and extended his political influence in Morocco.

He is now wanted by the French police for questioning about the torturing to death of Ben Barka. However, since he returned from France to Morocco on October 31, they are unlikely to arrest him.

This was not the first time he had attempted to dispose of his victim. Ben Barka was a leading left-wing nationalist. He had broken away in 1959 from the ruling Istiqlal Party with his UNFP.

CONDEMNED

In 1963, Oufkir announced that a plot against the life of King Hassan had been discovered. Ben Barka was condemned to death, and remained in exile thereafter.

In June he was due to attend the Algiers Conference of Afro-Asian states. Oufkir's agents attempted to fix up a deal with Ben Barka to allow the kidnapping of Ben Barka in return for an enemy of Ben Barka's in exile in Morocco.

Nothing came of this, and in any case, the Conference was cancelled when Ben Barka fled.

When Ben Barka was finally taken in Paris, it was under cover of negotiating the making of a film about colonial liberation. It is here that Georges Figon enters the story.

This former gunman arranged the meetings which led up to the

abduction. In December, between the two ballots of the Presidential election, Figon issued a series of statements in the press about his part in the killing.

He also told the world that he had been bribed by the police to keep quiet. All this time he was supposed to be in hiding, with the entire Paris police force looking for him.

'SUICIDE'

The climax came on January 17. Just as the police were about to close in on his flat, Figon was shot. The announced 'suicide' of this key witness is regarded with universal scepticism.

The official investigation has discovered this much about the affair. But bigger questions remain to be answered.

The police inspector in charge of protecting Moroccans in France watched the abduction, but thought it was in order, because he knew Souchon.

Even when he made further inquiries later, he was told by his superiors not to bother about the incident.

No action was taken until November 5, when a report reached de Gaulle. However, even this report omitted all references to the SDECE or police being involved.

It seems likely that this delay was related to the date of the elections. If the political implications had become public, it is possible that de Gaulle would have been defeated.

The SDECE has innumerable connections with agents of all kinds. Many of these are the 'barbouzes' (bearded ones), who were collected by de Gaulle's supporters to fight the OAS.

The service was responsible to the Prime Minister via General Paul Jacquier. Last week Jacquier was sacked, Leroy, head of his African section, placed under house arrest and the SDECE made entirely responsible to the Minister of Defence, Messmer.

BLOW

This is implicitly a blow at Pompidou, who is the representative of French banking interests.

Morocco has rejected the warrant for Oufkir's arrest, and Hassan stated last Sunday that 'he and the Moroccan people as a whole were convinced that the spirit of uprightness which animated the police had never varied'.

The Moroccan regime is now seeking to replace the considerable aid it has had from France by US sources. The French Ambassador to Morocco has been withdrawn.

It is possible that de Gaulle was manoeuvring to change the Moroccan regime with the aid of Ben Barka. The two are known to have met last July.

But more is at stake in this affair than de Gaulle's policies or prestige, which have suffered big blows.

The reactionary forces involved are revealed to have powerful positions in the police force, the army and the civil service.

They will undoubtedly be used, when required, against the working class.

The Communist Party policy of the 'lesser evil' can never defeat them, only a struggle to overthrow the corrupt and decaying French capitalist system itself.

WORLD NEWS ROUND-UP



Premiers go—but imperialism stays

By MICHAEL BANDA

ON January 22 three out of five Nigerian Premiers—not to mention an undisclosed number of Nigerian politicians army officers and dignitaries—were executed by officers of the Nigerian army in an abortive coup.

With the Premiers went the constitution, parliament and other pseudo-democratic trappings which were used to conceal the thuggery and skulduggery of the medieval regional and central governments.

In the West, Premier Akintola was shot dead. In the North the Feudal Emir—the Sardauna—of Sokoto was surrounded by rebel soldiers in his home and machine gunned and his palatial residence reduced to rubble by mortars.

Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Federal Prime Minister, died mysteriously at the hands of unidentified captors.

ESCAPED

Dr. Azikiwe—recovering in a London Hotel—and Okpara in the Mid-West escaped the vengeance of the officers.

Although successful in the North and West the officers were defeated in the Mid-West and East, primarily because they lacked any kind of progressive social programme which would have evoked an active and favourable response from the masses of impoverished workers, secondly because of the narrow base upon which the conspiracy rested, as well as the extreme secrecy of the whole operation.

(Many of Major Nzeogwu's soldiers were not aware of his motives until the final moment.)

The failure of the uprising in the South led finally to the assumption of power by General Irons, supported by the Civil Service and 'loyal' units of the army and imperialism.

All the customary paraphernalia of military rule have been brought to bear while the working class and peasantry celebrate the overthrow of their former corrupt, tyrannical rulers—but continue to keep a watchful eye on their new rulers.

Undoubtedly this is one of the most important events in the history of the largest 'self-governing' dependency in the British Empire.

It is certainly the most significant episode since the Royal Niger Company surrendered its



Abubakar killed



Azikiwe safe in Britain

charter and the Foreign Office proclaimed the Southern and Northern regions of Nigeria a British Protectorate in 1900.

Although abortive, it will be remembered as the first time when all four ethnic groups, Hausa, Ebo, Fulani and Yoruba, collaborated to create a bourgeois national government as opposed to the intrinsically divisive and retrograde system of Federal administration designed, cultivated and imposed by the British imperialists.

LAST ATTEMPT?

It is probably the last such attempt that Nigeria will see.

For many decades, it was British policy to exploit the religious and ethnic differences between Moslem north and pagan south under the system of government known as 'indirect rule'.

Not only were elected Africans heavily outnumbered in the legislative council by nominated members, but the northern territories were not represented at all and were administered by British political officers working through the traditional rulers such as the Emirs, Sultans and chiefs.

This system, which was introduced under the 1922 Clifford Constitution, was amended slightly in 1942 in favour of elected Africans.

In 1944, the first African National-bourgeois party was set up—the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC) under the leadership of Dr. Azikiwe and Hubert Macaulay.

Having deliberately kept the North backward, the British, in 1947, under the terms of the Richards Constitution attempted to counter the growing influence of the NCNC by giving direct representation in the Central government to the Islamic rulers of the North.

DIVISIONS

To complicate matters further, the South was divided into two regions—West and East—along tribal lines with separate regional assemblies.

This divide-and-rule policy was upheld by the Labour government despite the opposition of the NCNC and became the basis upon which tribal politics flourished, and, inversely, the country disintegrated rapidly.

(The governor, Sir Richards, for his 'distinguished' services in perpetuating imperialism in Nigeria was made a Labour peer—Lord Milverton of Lagos!)

What Sir Richards could not finish, his successor, Macpherson, did.

Regional separatism was his guiding principle. His constitution—the 1951 constitution—not only retained the shadowy regional assemblies, but even invested them with legislative and executive power.

The majority of seats in the single chamber central legislature was, characteristically, reserved for the backward traditional northerners.

In the early fifties, the Action group, a splinter group led by Obafemi Awolowo who is committed to tribal separatism and the NCNC began agitating for 'self-government by 1956'.

This was opposed by the northern representatives (the Northern Peoples' Congress) and led subsequently, to the resignation of the Action group delegates from the Council of Ministers.

The Cabinet collapsed. A new constitutional conference in 1953 was called in London. This led to a further intensification of the principle of 'Federalism' as

(Continued on back page)

The Tamil language question

A statement by the CC

of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary)

1 THE DRAFT regulations under the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act now before Parliament, seek to establish a legal status on a regional basis (Northern and Eastern Provinces), for the Tamil language which is subordinate in relation to the status already given to the Sinhala language under the Sinhala Only Act.

Whatever falsehoods the Sri Lanka Freedom Party-led coalition parties may say to the Sinhalese masses about these regulations and whatever explanations the Federal Party may make to the Tamil masses concerning these regulations, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary) emphasises to both the Sinhala and Tamil masses that the United National Party-led government has brought these regulations to accord the Tamil language a status which is a subordinate status and not the official status which the Tamil language should enjoy.

The language rights of the Tamil-speaking people cannot be realised without Tamil also being declared an official language together with the Sinhala language.

2 NEITHER A UNP-led government nor a SLFP-led government can be expected to grant the language rights of the Tamil-speaking people because both are constituted of bourgeois parties competing with each other within the parliamentary framework for the votes of the Sinhala majority of the Ceylonese masses.

It was the UNP that organised and took a leading part in the anti-Tamil riots of 1956 and 1958. And as late as 1960 it was the UNP that sought to rouse communal passions of the Sinhala people by publishing a map showing Ceylon divided into a so-called Tamil area and a Sinhala area.

Today it is the SLFP that leads the campaign against even the introduction of regulations for the implementation of the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act enacted by every SLFP government in 1958.

3 IN 1960, the Federal Party thought they could get the Tamil language rights through the SLFP and supported the bourgeois SLFP government. What they got in the end was the detention of their Members of Parliament and military suppression for the Tamil-speaking people.

When the LSSP abandoned its socialist position and accepted portfolios under Mrs. Bandaranaike's SLFP in June 1964, the Tamil-speaking people lost a champion of their democratic rights and the Federal Party no longer faced any competition from the socialist left for the leadership of the Tamil-speaking people.

The Ceylon Communist Party, of course, with its equivocal and treacherous policies on this question, had never seriously affected the attitude of the Federal Party on this question. But it was all along the LSSP

that stood out intransigently for the working class and the democratic rights of the Tamil and other minorities.

It was in this situation the Federal Party decided to join the United National Party, and accept a subordinate position for the Tamil language without serious resistance from the Sinhala masses.

What makes the position worse for the Tamil-speaking masses is that today their former socialist champions have become their open political enemies before the Sinhala masses.

4 WHAT THE SINHALA masses have still to realise fully is that the real question today is not a question of whether they should consent to some language concession being made to the Tamil masses, but of the Tamils being recognised as equal citizens of Ceylon together with the Sinhala people.

Nor will the Sinhala masses lose anything of their rights if the Tamil-speaking people also win their language and other rights. But on the other hand, so long as the Tamil people are not recognised as equal citizens with the Sinhala people, both the Sinhala and Tamil-speaking people will continue to be divided from each other and subjected to bourgeois rule whilst the problem of national unity remains unsolved.

5 THE ENTIRE history of the Tamil language problem alone proves that the problem of national unity, which involves the problems of the fundamental democratic rights of the minorities of Ceylon, can never be solved under bourgeois regimes, whether it be headed by the UNP or by the SLFP. Both have a vested interest in keeping the masses divided and subject to bourgeois rule.

The Tamil language rights and the rights of the other minorities can be won only in united struggle against the capitalist class and by ending capitalist class-rule. Separate movements for winning minority rights will be mere dissipation of human and material resources without real gains.

The struggle for minority rights must flow into the mainstream of the class-struggle led by the working class against the forces of capitalism.

6 THE REALITY of the Ceylon situation is widespread landlessness and growing poverty in the rural areas, increasing unemployment, high costs of living in the context of a continuing wage-freeze, acute shortage of housing, shockingly inadequate educational facilities and brutal police assaults on persons who seek to protest against their intolerable conditions.

7 AND EVEN at this moment the workers and wage-earners are stepping out in class action against the capitalist class and the UNP-led government. There are definite indications that the workers and wage-earners can be mobilised for big class battles in an anti-capitalist orientation.

In this context it is criminal irresponsibility for the N. M. Pereras, Colvin R. de Silvas, Leslie Goonawardene and Keunemans to indulge in abominable and filthy communalism. They are only helping the UNP-led government and capitalist reaction.

The UNP-led government that has already proved their incapacity and their bankruptcy in relation to solving the pressing economic problems of the people will welcome any opportunity to impose emergency rule and blame everybody else for their failures.

8 THE WORKING class and toilers among the Sinhalese and Tamils cannot permit their leaders to drag them into the fire of communal conflict when conditions are favourable for struggle against the Ceylon capitalist class and the UNP-led government.

Even at this juncture it is not too late for the working class to cry halt to this dangerous and calamitous course taken by their criminal, irresponsible and opportunist leaders.

The UNP-led government and forces of capitalist reaction can be fought only on the basis of a united front of the working class and toilers freed from the nauseating and choking fumes of clericalism and communalism.

Edmund Samarakkody,
Secretary.
Lanka Sama Samaja Party
(Revolutionary)

Soviet writers for big 'show' trial

Newsletter Correspondent

FOLLOWING the scathing attack by 'Izvestia' on Soviet writers Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuri Daniel, many Western journalists have been predicting a Stalin-type show trial.

These two men have been held since September without trial for allegedly sending material out of the country to be published.

There have been protests over the arrests from all over the world and inside the Soviet Union.

Recently three other people, writer Vladimir Byovsky and poets Leonid Gubanov and 16-year-old Julia Vishnevskaya, were arrested and placed in lunatic asylums—they had headed a group demanding a public trial for Sinyavsky and Daniel.

The 'Izvestia' attack has taken for granted the writers' guilt. In Sunday's 'Observer', Edward Crankshaw comments: '... (Izvestia) abuses them in terms which might have come straight from the purge years of the 1930's.'

He then quotes the 'Izvestia' article:

'Time will pass and nobody will remember them any more. Pages saturated with bitterness will moulder on the rubbish heap. History has told us, not

once but many times that slander, no matter how copious and malicious, will inevitably melt away under the burning breath of truth. So it will also be this time.'

Crankshaw likens this to Vyshinsky's speech for the prosecution at the trial of Bukharin in March, 1938, which contains similar phrases.

The Izvestia article continues:

'Both men represent the utmost moral degradation. Both spatter their paper with everything that is most vile and filthy. . . . Into what bottomless morass of abomination must a so-called man of letters sink to cast a slur with his hooligan pen on the name we hold most sacred! [Lenin]. It is impossible to reproduce here relevant quotations; so malicious is this scrawl, so disgraceful and filthy!'

Crankshaw points out that the quotations cannot be reproduced 'for the simple reason that they do not exist—even the quotations given, he adds, are torn out of context.'

The words of the 'Izvestia' writer may soon rebound on the Soviet bureaucracy. 'History has told us that slander . . . will inevitably melt away under the burning breath of truth.'

Leon Trotsky, who was himself sentenced in absentia in the infamous trials of the 1930's, and was slandered by the Stalinist bureaucracy during all the years of his exile, outlined the Bolshevik attitude to art, including writers, thus:

'... The Marxian method affords an opportunity to estimate the development of the new art, to trace all its sources, to help all the most progressive tendencies by a critical illumination of the road, but it does not do more than that. Art must make its own way and by its own means. The Marxian methods are not the same as the artistic. The Party leads the proletariat but not the historic processes of history. There are domains in which the Party leads, directly and imperatively. There are domains where it only co-operates. There are,

finally, domains in which it only orientates itself.

'The domain of art is not one in which the Party is called upon to command. It can and must protect and help it, but it can only lead it indirectly.' ('Literature and Revolution' Leon Trotsky.)

In the situation in which he wrote this, seeds of Stalinism were flowering into the weed that increasingly tangled and finally strangled those people who criticised it.

Today, the Soviet bureaucracy finds its crisis deepening as the world imperialist crisis deepens, and criticism from writers, when published abroad, heightens that crisis.

The bureaucracy still lies, it still falsifies to satisfy its own needs. And so, the trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel is necessary to lengthen its life.

Unfortunately the protest against the bureaucracy is, for the most part separated from the working class and is driven into anti-communist channels. This is really a product of the bureaucracy for, as Trotsky said: 'the domain of art is not one in which the Party is called upon to command. It can and must protect and help it, but it can only lead it indirectly.'

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CONTINUE JANUARY 26 CAMPAIGN

SOUTHALL LOBBY DEMANDS INQUIRY

By Newsletter Reporter

MEMBERS of the Transport and General Workers' Union and Young Socialists lobbied members of the union's national committees on January 20 to demand an inquiry into the Southall branch of the union.

This branch allowed alleged fascists to attend its annual meeting while workers from the Woolf Rubber factory, who were on strike at that time, were turned away. Police were called in to eject two Young Socialists—members of the branch—who had objected to this treatment of immigrant members.

On the lobby, national committee members were handed leaflets as they entered union headquarters at Transport House. They were asked to raise the question of the Southall branch at their meetings.

BRUSHED PAST

They were also asked to support the lobby of Parliament called by the Lambeth Trades Council.

Members of the agricultural section national committee agreed to raise the matter, but others brushed past.

Asked if he was against fascists, one official said, quite openly, he was not.

The lobbyists were refused permission to put the matter before the committee meetings. They were told it was a matter for the Southall branch to deal with.

When it was pointed out that it was the leadership of the branch which had taken the action, the lobbyists were told to write to their area secretary.

Cuts in night shift after strike victories

Newsletter Correspondent

ABOUT 40 workers at West Yorkshire Foundries, a subsidiary of the Leyland group, were sacked recently. The redundancies were caused by the suspension of the night shift in several of the foundries.

It is reported that further cut-backs in night-shift production may bring the total redundancies up to 200.

Until recently, the factory, which produces castings for the motor industry, was advertising a wide range of vacancies, and most departments were understaffed.

Last year the Leyland group, whose profits rose to £28 million, invested a reported £2 million in a new gravity die department.

At the same time, due to successful fights to unionise the factory, workers won a number of important concessions on piece-work prices, bonus payments and mobility of labour.

The management was unable to defeat any of a number of strikes in which British and immigrant workers united solidly behind their demands.

Fight attacks by Tories employers and government

By JACK GALE

BRTAIN was one of only four countries where workers' actual purchasing power decreased last year, according to a report by the International Labour Organisation. The others were Ireland, Hungary and North Korea.

This news coincides with the rejection of the railwaymen's pay claim by the Prices and Incomes Board, and the award of a miserly 15s. interim payment to the bakers. Many national newspapers claim that the full £1 has been won because night workers will receive 10s on top of this 15s.

Behind all this is the determination of the government, the employers and the Tories to break down the working conditions and union rights built up by the working class over many years of struggle. This was made clear last week by Roy Mason, MP, Minister of State, Board of Trade, with special responsibility for shipping; by the bosses of Imperial Chemical Industries; and by Sir Keith Joseph, MP, a leading Opposition spokesman.

Speaking at a Sunderland shipyard last week, Mr. Mason—who is a miners' MP—said that the 'wage drift' was moving too fast.

'The wage drift is going on faster than many union bosses realise,' he declared, and he went on to complain that this was making some shipbuilding contracts profitless!

At Newcastle the following day, Mr. Mason bemoaned the fact that progress in abolishing restrictive practices was not fast enough.

'STABLE COSTS'

He wanted to see 'stable labour costs' and an 'effective use of the labour force'. In plain English, this means sackings, speed-up, discipline and no wage increases. Mr. Mason made this clear. The problems in British yards, he said, were over-manning, absence of shift work in some areas, and restrictive practices.

While this trade union-sponsored MP was attacking the conditions built up by trade unionism, one of the biggest monopolies in Britain—I.C.I.—was also taking steps to speed up production.

A conference has just taken place at the Escher (Surrey) headquarters of the Electrical Trades Union between senior I.C.I. officials and 50 ETU shop stewards.

This is an effort—backed by the ETU leadership—to get I.C.I.'s 56,000 manual workers to accept the company's proposed new productivity scheme. This was agreed last October between I.C.I. and the national officers of the unions concerned—including the ETU and the Boilermakers' Society.

Unfortunately, it was reported that when copies of the agreement were distributed to the workers, hundreds of them were simply stuffed into the boilers.

I.C.I. is anxious to get this agreement working on three trial sites at Wilton, Billingham and Hillhouse, where most of the 50 stewards come from, because international competition dictates that I.C.I. must invest in new plant and equipment to the tune of £130 million during the next few years.

This massive investment requires a change in the established practices of the workers.

Thus an I.C.I. expert in job assessment was quoted in 'The Observer' as saying:

'Money isn't the problem. We can always talk money. What we have never been able to do before is to talk union practice so frankly and openly. This is the proper measure of our breakthrough.'

Meanwhile, Sir Keith Joseph, addressing a meeting of Conservative trade unionists in Leeds, outlined a Tory plan for getting tough with the unions.

A Tory government would

change the legal definition of a trade union, he declared.

'Only those associations of employers or workpeople whose rules are approved by a new and powerful registrar will have the legal status of a trade union.'

The Tories, he promised, would create a system of industrial courts and establish a code of good industrial practice.

'It is far too easy to break agreement,' he said.

While Labour MPs, big business and the Tories unite to attack the conditions of the working class, the press is urging the Labour government to stand firm against the railwaymen and the bakers, and to uphold the authority of the Prices and Incomes Board.

'The Observer', in particular, sings the praises of Ray Gunter and George Brown for being willing to 'climb into the ring' with the unions.

'Thus it is clearly necessary for all workers to unite behind the campaign against anti-trade union legislation which was initiated by the January 26 lobby. The employers, the Tories and their agents in the labour movement must be defeated.'

STOP PRESS:

Daily Worker and the lobby

THE national Tory press imposed more or less a black-out on the news concerning Wednesday's lobby, with the exception of 'The Guardian'.

The 'Daily Worker', which, during all the weeks of preparation for the lobby remained silent, gave its readers a distorted and one-sided report.

'Many delegates,' it said, did not agree with the Lambeth Trades Council call to 'stop paying the political levy as a protest'. The report-back meeting at the Central Halls, attended by over 1,000 who lobbied, carried a resolution on future policy with only three against.

These three were members of a small opportunist sect masquerading under the name of the 'Millitant' group! So where were the 'many' whom the 'Worker' correspondent found in the lobby?

Here is the relevant extract:

'I Call on all trade unionists and Labour Party members to campaign for the cessation of all centrally-paid affiliation fees to the Labour Party by the trade unions at national level unless an undertaking is given by the Labour Party National Executive Committee to oppose such anti-working-class legislation.'

It will be seen that the Trades Council is not asking trade unionists to stop paying the political levy out of the blue, as it were. It is simply asking national trade unions to do this unless the Labour Party 'agreed to oppose anti-working-class legislation', something quite different from what the 'Daily Worker' claims.

The 'Worker' calls for 'pressure' on Labour MPs. What kind of pressure, may we ask, do they propose? Is not the Lambeth Trades Council proposals a most effective form of pressure?

The 'Daily Worker' is angry because so many of its members supported the lobby. Hence the distorted report.

Industrial Newsletter

BAKERS ANGRY OVER INTERIM PAY RISE

By SYLVIA PICK

ASERIES of bakers' meetings in the Midlands angrily rejected the paltry 12s and 15s 'interim' pay rises—recommended by the Prices and Incomes Board—before these figures were officially accepted on Monday.

Bakery workers at district level had made it very clear before the publication of the Board's report that they would not be satisfied even if they were offered the £1 interim payment, mentioned in discussions.

Their objective is still the £3 10s increase to bring their pay up to £15 for a 40-hour week.

One large Birmingham bakery reports that at a 'jam-packed meeting', workers voted overwhelmingly not to accept the interim £1 as a final settlement.

A spokesman for the workers said: 'They will never accept this. There is real anger here... and the feeling that we have been let down.'

PLANNED STRIKES

The bakers began their campaign for a decent living wage before Christmas and planned to hold two-day strikes in various parts of the country for four weeks, after which they intended to call a national strike.

Public sympathy and support for the bakers was strong. Even housewives unable to buy bread felt that the bakersmen, with a basic wage of £11 10s and forced to work anything up to 72 hours a week, had a cast-iron case for their action.

Mention of the £1 interim payment was made after a meeting of the Bakers' Union leaders in Birmingham at the end of November.

It was declared then that the national strike would be called unless the employers had agreed

to negotiate on this by December 7.

George Brown's request that the claim be submitted to the Prices and Incomes Board was rejected at this stage.

Five days later there was a complete about-face by the bakers' leaders. The strike was called off, the claim referred to the Board and nothing further said about the interim payment.

WAIT

Angry bakers were told to wait for the Board's report and reminded of the employers' 'public spirit' in agreeing to peg the price of bread for three months on the Board's recommendation. There were also hints that the bakers' leaders had been told that their members might get the £1 interim after Christmas.

In mid-January came the second bombshell. The Rank-Hovis-McDougall group increased the price of its bread, and was followed by other flour and bread-making combines.

Union officials declared that this considerably changed the situation, but still urged union headquarters advised its members not to take strike action until the Board made its report.

This appeared on January 19 offering 15s a week more to male production workers and 12s to distribution workers.

Here is a case where a section of workers—militant, solid and well-supported—have been held off and manoeuvred into a position where clearly they are being offered only minimal gains.

They must continue their struggle for a better living standard, in spite of the acceptance of the Board's report on their behalf.

This struggle involves the building of an alternative leadership which will reflect the fighting spirit of the rank-and-file bakers.

CROYDON RENT STRUGGLE

'Action' group to picket councillors

THE campaign to mobilise tenants and trade unionists against Croydon Council's proposed rent increases of up to 25s is off to a good start.

Engineering and foundry workers have pledged support and made donations to the 'All Action' Committee.

This committee is representative of the tenants, the Trades Council, the Labour Party wards, Young Socialists and old age pen-

sioners' organisations.

Meetings have been called on every estate this week and next Monday (January 31) a mass picket of the councillors will begin at 6 p.m. at the Croydon Town Hall.

Labour councillors must be wondering what their next move should be. Their actions are likely to cause a deep split in the local Labour Parties.

The Labour group has failed to mobilise any opposition to the Tory plans; in fact they kept the whole thing quiet for six weeks until the Tories themselves gave out the news.

Now Labour councillors say they are with the tenants 100 per cent in opposing the rent increases.

But what are their fighting plans?

First, to call for a rate increase to spread the burden over the whole community.

Second, if this fails, to call for the rent increases to be spread over a six-month period.

Labour Councils are putting up rents all over the country and they cannot even oppose rent increases where there is a Tory-controlled council!

The Croydon 'All Action' Committee is completely opposed to this policy of the Labour councillors.

Jack Webb and Frank Fadden, chairman and secretary of the Committee and leading members of the local Labour Party, told a Newsletter reporter that they are writing to the Labour councillors to make their opposition clear.

In a letter to local trades union branches, Frank Fadden says: 'If Council rents go up—then the rents of private tenants will follow, and on the leaflet and posters issued by the Committee, they say: 'Not a penny on the rents! Not a penny on the rates!'

The 'All Action' Committee was well represented at the lobby of Parliament on Wednesday, because members are well aware that the rents issue cannot be separated from the fight against attacks on wages and conditions and the anti-trade union laws.

No compromise on rail pay

By BOB SHAW

THE decision by railmen in North Scotland and the Midlands to back their executive's strike call for February 14 indicates the anger felt at the rejection of the NUR's wage demand by the Prices and Incomes Board and the recommendation that sweeping changes must be introduced which would worsen railwaymen's conditions.

Young railwaymen in particular are incensed at their low pay—at 19 or 20 they receive no more than £7 or £8 a week.

Under the Beeching plan, railwaymen were subjected to widespread redundancies as lines and depots closed and many were forced to new towns.

Despite the fact that the number of workers had been reduced by almost one third without any drop in the amount of traffic handled, the men remain badly paid and work in the most atrocious conditions.

The threat to the railwaymen is a real one and is of great importance to the working class.

Not only has the Wilson leadership taken over the aims of the employing class, but the government is also seeking to smash all attempts by workers to hit back.

Wilson, in fact, seeks to accomplish what the Tories could not do—break the power of the trade unions.

He and the right wing seek to use parliamentary legislation to jail and fine workers who fight back against the employing class in defence of their wages.

With the introduction of such legislation, the NUR strike threat becomes a political battle with the employers and the Labour government.

NEW LEADERSHIP

In order to win this battle, the whole of the working class must support the railwaymen. Above all, a new leadership must be built to replace those who have sold out.

Workers have to be mobilised in actions such as the lobby of parliament which took place this week and which aimed to defeat anti-union law.

But leaders of the NUR have no stomach for such a fight, they much prefer the negotiations which go on behind closed doors. The sharpest vigilance is necessary to ensure that a rotten compromise is not reached. Such a settlement could only now mean defeat, since the government has made it clear that the money for wage increases will not be found.

An improvement in railwaymen's wages in the conditions of the present critical situation of the economy can only be gained at the expense of the employers. The means:

- Suspending compensation payments and

- The extension of nationalization against the private road hauliers.

These demands should be put forward to counter those of the Prices and Incomes Board.

The reaction of the national press to the railwaymen's strike threat was violent and unanimous.

The government, said the 'Times', must have courage and stand firm. The 'Financial Times' noted that the labour leaders had always claimed that they could curb the unions and cynically suggested that now they would have the opportunity of showing how it was done.

They know, of course, that the anti-trade union legislation is being pushed forward for such a situation as this. They also know that the Labour government has the task of holding down workers' wages whilst British capitalism heaves itself out of its crisis.

THE NERVE?

They question however, if Wilson and Brown will have the nerve to carry through the struggle.

Amongst the Labour 'lefts' the strike threat by the NUR has created ill-concealed panic. They fear an open clash between the working class and the Labour government. They search for 'constitutional' explanations.

It was all a mistake... The new Minister of Transport would not agree with the Prices and Incomes Board decision... the report by the Board had many flaws, etc., etc.

Neither Cousins nor Barbara Castle have made any mention of opposition to the Prices and Incomes Board decision. Neither have resigned from Cabinet positions to range themselves alongside the underpaid railwaymen.

It would be very dangerous for railwaymen to believe that all that is now required is a threat of strike action after which a suitable compromise will be reached.

In the 1950's such concessions were forced from a reluctant Tory government. The high point of such traditional trade-union methods was reached with the Gullebaud report which stated that railwaymen's wages should be brought into line with industry in general and did award increases from 8 per cent for starting grades to 18 per cent for top grades.

The Tories immediately gained acceptance of wide-reaching changes to modernise the railways.

Lord Beeching was brought in to take charge of modernisation. Steam was replaced by diesel and electric traction, railway workshops were closed, new schemes were prepared to hand out to private hauliers whole sections of the railway for profit-making, such as the liner train scheme.

These schemes form the basis of the attack on railwaymen by the government.

Coupled with the joining of the Confederation of British Industries by the Railways Board, it means a ruthless drive to exploit the nationalized railways in the interest of private profit-making.

AWAIT BREAKDOWN

Such schemes are well advanced in various parts of the country and only await the breaking down of union opposition to start full operation.

At Gushetfauld in Glasgow a completely new yard has been prepared for the running of fast modern 'liner' trains. These trains already run between Glasgow and London, completing the journey in eight hours and hauling at their maximum 750 tons of goods packed in special conveyors which can immediately be picked up by private firms in London.

The scheme has great attraction for road haulage firms who find that much bigger profits can be made by having a certain type of goods sent by rail.

It is by such schemes as these that private industry aims to make the railways bring in the profit for them.

The plans of Wilson and Brown must be defeated. The wages of workers such as the railwaymen, which are threatened by the decisions of the Prices and Incomes Board, must be defended. Every support must be given to the railwaymen in the fight to defeat the government on February 14.

Lobby

From page 1

legislation. This is great, the best demonstration we have ever attended. The trade unions won't do anything. It has been left up to the Lambeth Trades Council.

Other delegates from Merseyside included plumbers from the union's district committee, central lodge and No. 4 branch.

Old age pensioners were represented by Mr. J. Bingham, chairman of the Merseyside district committee of the National Federation of Old Age Pensioners.

The Clarence power station construction site had sent four out of every 20 workers invited to pay for transport to the lobby.

Merseyside Boilermakers' representative Derek Tankard said: 'We are here to defend workers' democratic rights. What right have Labour MPs to legislate against the unions?'

Two delegates from the Liverpool T&GWU and shop stewards from the Runcorn, Cheshire, ICI building site commented: 'It is wrong to take away the working man's rights. We intend to take strong action on this question. We want to see George Brown as a member of our union.'

Dockers from Merseyside said that their employers offered them a wage rise, but wanted them to reduce manning scales. They saw their fight as part of the struggle against anti-union law.

Delegates and shop stewards from Bristol Siddeley Engines (Amstey) Coventry and British Celanese, Coventry, said they would press MPs not to vote for such legislation.

WELCOME LEAD

John Walls, convener and delegate from George Mann's stop stewards committee, Leeds, said legislation was a threat to the shop steward's organisation. 'We welcome the lead given by the Lambeth Trades Council to bring about the defeat of this law.'

Seven AEU shop stewards from Vauxhall Motors, Ellesmere Port, said that no government would get away with passing such legislation.

Robert Thomson from Birkenhead PTU No. 1 branch said the unions would fight for the right to strike. The TUC's action, he said, 'was a lot of rubbish'.

Another PTU delegate said: 'We want to bring in a true socialist government. These leaders are in on false pretences. We want more nationalization. If Labour nationalized, we would support it. But we will not support a government legislating against the unions.'

Steve Olaokun from Willesden, London, ETU said: 'The government should stop this bill and the working class should fight for its standard of living.'

Many more delegates and representatives from organisations and union branches from all over Britain which have given support to the lobby (reported in The Newsletter since November) touched on similar points.

Imperialism stays in Nigeria

From page 3

opposed to the concept of a stable, centralised, unitary government.

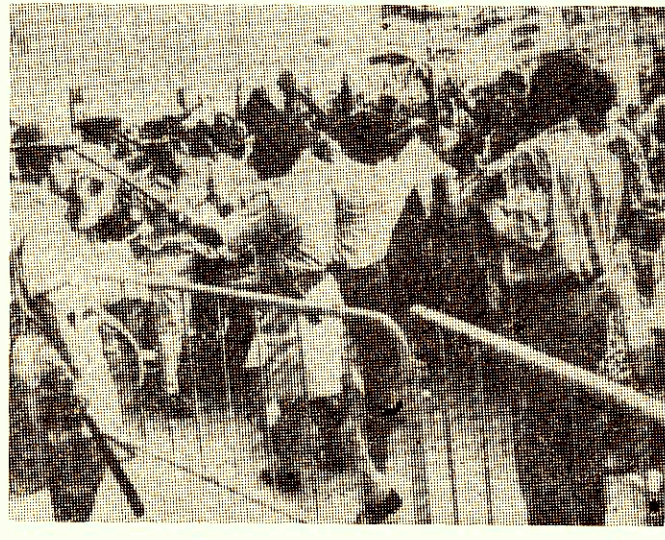
The nascent capitalist class of Nigeria lacked the power and material resources to unify the country under its own leadership. It was evident then that the relinquishing of formal political control by Britain would lead inexorably to an acceleration of the centripetal forces in Nigeria.

The only alternative to the administrative 'unity' of the British was, and is, a socialist revolution led by the working class, the only non-tribal force and the real protagonist of 'unity' in Nigeria.

The dilemma of the Nigerian capitalists was best exemplified by Dr. Azikiwe who, when faced by the obstinacy of the unregenerate tribalists from West and North at the London conference, gave way and compromised on the transfer of residual powers to the regions.

This 'agreement' only led to an even looser federation than the people had been led to expect.

Tribal exclusiveness and regional separatism were extended at the three subsequent con-



Police deal roughly with people demonstrating against rigged elections

ferences which were called.

The 1958 Constitution which finally granted 'self-rule' to Nigeria did little to alter the balance of power in favour of the Federal government, nor did it do anything to curb Northern domination of the legislature.

Regionalism gave rise to uncontrolled nepotism, patronage, corruption and gerrymandering.

Armies of thugs were maintained by the tribal-political bosses and the stuffing of ballot-boxes and impersonations, as at the last elections in the West, was customary procedure.

The late Akintola was said to use these methods. He thus projected his 16-storey house in Lagos and millions of pounds put away in numbered accounts in Switzerland.

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