

# The Newsletter

WEEKLY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

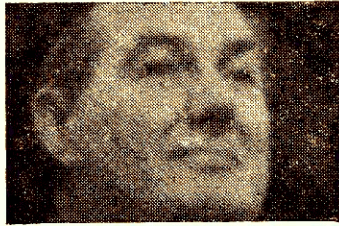
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An open letter from  
Isaac Deutscher  
to  
Wladyslaw  
Gomulka  
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WATCH  
THE CP ON  
THE DOCKS



## Callaghan's Budget

# COST OF LIVING AND HOUSING TO GO UP

by THE EDITOR

**'A SIGH OF RELIEF IN THE CITY'**— this is how Big Business hailed Callaghan's budget. So well they might. The budget is an attack on all wage workers and in particular the poorest paid workers. The pay-roll tax will be passed on to the consumer and the consumer is, in the main, the ordinary worker. As soon as it is applied, an immediate increase in the cost of living will take place.

Callaghan says that the cost of living will go up by 1 per cent. But this is mere speculation. Every enterprise from the smallest shop to the largest business will naturally increase their prices in order to include profits for themselves.

The increase will be well over 1 per cent and Mr. Callaghan's reply will be that wages must not under any circumstances go up. In other words, the budget means in effect a reduction in wages.

The hardest hit, of course, will be the homeless. The cost of mortgages for home buyers will go up from 6½ per cent to either 7 or 7½ per cent. The cost of new homes will go up by approximately £125.

Callaghan has perpetrated a fraud. By not increasing the beer or cigarette tax he has lulled the working-class into passivity and, at the same time, he has hit at basic living standards. Every shopkeeper must now raise his prices in order to recover the losses, plus a profit besides.

The purpose of the budget is to confuse the working class into a neutral position by a sleight of hand trick.

So far as the distributive trades are concerned, three things are bound to apply immediately the tax is implemented.

Firstly, employers will refuse outright any demands for wage increases in an industry where the wages are deplorably low.

Secondly, they will sack as many workers as possible and force those who remain in their employ to work harder.

Thirdly, they will put up their prices which will more than cover what they lose.

Contrast this state of affairs with the decision of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers' conference some days ago. Here the right-wing trade union leaders supported legislation against the trade unions on wages and incomes.

This union includes the most poorest paid workers in the distributive trades. But the leadership, far from defending their members, opened the doors for the actions of Callaghan against the working class. They leave their members in the lurch right at the point when these members need to be fought for and defended.

Callaghan has deliberately timed his pay-roll tax to start during the first week in September. By that time the Labour government hopes to have the anti-trade union legislation well on the way to the statute books. Not only will the cost of living go up and value of wages come down, but they are now preparing to institute a legal wage freeze.

The budget therefore favours the employers and acts against the working class, who voted the Labour government into power.

From start to finish it is a gigantic deception of Labour supporters. We must redouble our effort to fight the anti-trade union legislation and establish the right to campaign for more wages as prices increase.

## WHAT'S LEFT OF THE 'LEFT'?

By JOHN CRAWFORD

ONE of the best publicised secrets of the year is out. According to 'The Guardian' and the 'Daily Mail' last week, a group of younger Labour MPs has broken away from the old 'left' caucus led by Michael Foot, Sidney Silverman and John Mendelson.

The new-look 'lefts' include several MPs elected for the first time in 1964 and 1966. Up to now they were happy to follow Foot and company, that is to say to remain silent as Wilson betrayed the workers who voted Labour.

It will be interesting to see just how this new, with-it, switched-on 'left' will perform. None of them dared to make a public statement before the election that they would vote against anti-union laws.

Instead, they played the same parliamentary game which Silverman, Mikardo and their friends have turned into a way of life. The chief piece of equipment for this sport is the protest motion or amendment.

Wilson easily managed this

## MORE AEU BACKING FOR DOCKERS

Birmingham No. 11 branch of the Amalgamated Engineering Union passed the following resolution recently:

'This branch expresses solidarity with the dockers in their fight against the proposals set forth by the Modernisation Committee to end the dock labour scheme. We also support the dockers' opposition to the Devlin Report and their call for the nationalization of the dock industry under workers' control.'



## Youth pose real issues on May Day

By A Newsletter Reporter

SOCIALIST Labour League and Young Socialist members participated in May Day demonstrations in major cities last weekend, expressing their solidarity with the international workers' movement.

In London, youth and adults marched over 1,000 strong in their own lively and highly colourful demonstration behind portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky (see above), and the Socialist Labour League banner 'No laws against the unions'.

Ingenious floats, which took weeks to prepare, depicted the Vietnam war—this was chosen as the best on the demonstration—the 1926 General Strike, Housing, The Tolpuddle Martyrs, the dockers' fight against Devlin, and other questions facing working class.

The marchers set off with their enthusiastically received chants and shouts—'Victory to - Vietnam!', 'Smash Smith - Arm the Africans!', 'Throw the Devlin Report - Nationalize the docks!', 'Anti-union laws - Out!'.

### LIVELY MARCH

Crowds lined the route to watch the procession, many applauding what must have appeared a much more lively demonstration from the smaller than usual, less enthusiastic and silent Labour Party march, which contained only 15 Labour Party Young Socialist banners.

In the first big weather break since last year, the Young Socialists and Socialist Labour League were able to rally the biggest politically-conscious demonstration seen on a May Day in Britain for many years, while the Labour Party and Communist Party lost their youth to the seaside resorts and other summer entertainments.

Young Socialists took the poli-

tical initiative in the Newcastle march by showing Tyneside workers that the only way to fight the bosses is through socialist policies of nationalization and workers' control of industry.

Their float consisted of jailed workers and Wilson receiving a cheque for £900 million. The

title on the float was 'No laws against the unions'.

Some Young Communist League members left the silent CND contingent to join the Young Socialists.

See page three for reports from Leeds and Bristol.

## Mersey dockers vote for lobby

Newsletter Reporter

TWO thousand Merseyside dockers, meeting in Liverpool last Saturday morning, unanimously passed a resolution calling for strike action against the Devlin Commission on the docks and the government's proposed anti-union laws.

The resolution called for a:

'Stoppage on May 25 and a lobby of parliament against the Devlin amendments and against the anti-trade union legislation ("early warning bill") and call on dockers in all ports and all other workers to support these actions.'

### Serious decisions

Opening the meeting, Liverpool dockers Joe Cubbin, chairman of the Merseyside portworkers' committee, told his audience that they were there to take very serious decisions. Two items were being coming before parliament—the amendments to the dock labour scheme and the Prices and Incomes Bill—which would effect all working conditions and hamstringing militancy.

Larry Cavanagh, Birkenhead dockers, declared that the recent bulletin issued by the Docks Modernisation Committee showed that the amendments to the scheme were a blatant sell-out.

### Dockers nationalized

'The "Liverpool Echo" had headlines last week saying that the government was considering nationalizing the docks. But this is brought forward as "pie in the sky" because of the big opposition to Devlin. If the government is really serious why doesn't it nationalize now?'

'Instead of that they're altering the law to put Devlin through. The dockers are going to be nationalized but not the docks. We'll be tightly controlled by the state and laws against militancy, and parcelled out among big employers, who have been given more power to discipline men,' he said.

'This is the time to fight. And there is no easy way. These amendments will be implemented very quickly. An then, in June, there can be the laws against the trade unions.'

'We can't accept the scheme,



and then have one individual fight after another as we kick against conditions, or militants will be victimised.'

### Amendments rejected

Peter Kerrigan referred to the No. 2 Bulletin of the Docks Modernisation Committee that had been printed and then withdrawn. He said that the proposition put by the Modernisation Committee had been that the dockers in the out-of-London ports should be given £11 minimum and in London there would be a £1 differential.

'They were afraid to print this bulletin. Like most of their

activities it was hidden from the dockers.

'Every meeting of rank-and-file dockers which has been acquainted with the content of the amendments has rejected them.'

'There is no divorcing the fight against the amendments from the fight against the anti-trade union laws. All are directed against rank-and-file leadership,' he said, adding:

'Trade unions cease to be weapons of the working class if they are subordinated to the state machine. And if you have no rank-and-file leadership then the people at the top can do all the conniving they like.'

By Newsletter Reporter

WHAT is the Communist Party up to in relation to the Devlin Commission and the anti-trade union legislation? Over the past three months, there is proof that the leadership of the Party has in fact sold out to the right-wing Labour and trade union leaders and is now busily engaged in actions which will result in the defeat of the trade union movement and in particular the dockers.

This is entirely in accordance with the policy of the Party towards the trade unions over the past 10 years.

The ETU scandal, which was never properly dealt with by Gollan and the leadership, enormously weakened the left forces inside the trade unions and opened the door for the most reactionary right-wing trade union leadership of Cannon and Chappel to take over what was previously a most progressive trade union.

They were brought to power virtually by the antics of the Communist Party.

Now let us take a look at the Communist Party role in relation to the fight against anti-trade union legislation.

The first organisation to call a national lobby against this legislation was the Lambeth Trades Council supported by the Socialist Labour League. The Trades Council was then disbanded by the TUC. Not a word of protest over

Continued page 2, column 1

## After sanctions — sell out

By MICHAEL BANDA

THE decision to open Anglo-Rhodesian talks while Central Africa seethes with opposition to Smith can have only one meaning for African nationalists and British socialists alike: it is tantamount to a complete sell-out of Africans by Wilson to Smith.

All the talk of sanctions and the Gilbertian farce of British naval parties boarding pirate tankers, while oil and supplies poured in from South Africa overland, have now been revealed to be a gigantic fraud, designed to placate African Commonwealth opinion, nothing else.

It was only when armed African freedom-fighters began shooting it out with the hated South African police force of Rhodesia and the spectre of another Algeria emerged that Wilson decided to act.

### Hand of friendship

Instead of condemning the repression and murder of African nationalists, instead of recognising ZANU as the legitimate expression of African nationalist opinion, instead of repudiating the odious Smith regime and assisting the African workers in every possible way, Wilson decides to extend the hand of friendship and reconciliation to Smith!

And all this was done in the same week that Wilson was attacking the British workers for their 'bloody-mindedness' and 'selfishness'!

Behind this sickening gesture there lies a multitude of reasons, least of which is the fear of an African uprising. More important is the decision of the Zambian copper companies to sell their copper at the rates obtaining in the London Metal Exchange—which is almost double the price of 'pegged' copper supplied to the fabricators by the big producers.

### U.S. jumps in

If the situation in Smithland escalates, so will the price of copper. For the British economy this will be hell. No wonder Wilson is worried.

But there are other worries more disquieting than the price of copper. It now appears likely that US imperialism, using the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity as its stalking horse, will use the crisis to capitalise on its successful Congolese venture by grabbing the economic lifelines of British Central Africa—and thus extending its political and economic tentacles deeper into the African continent.

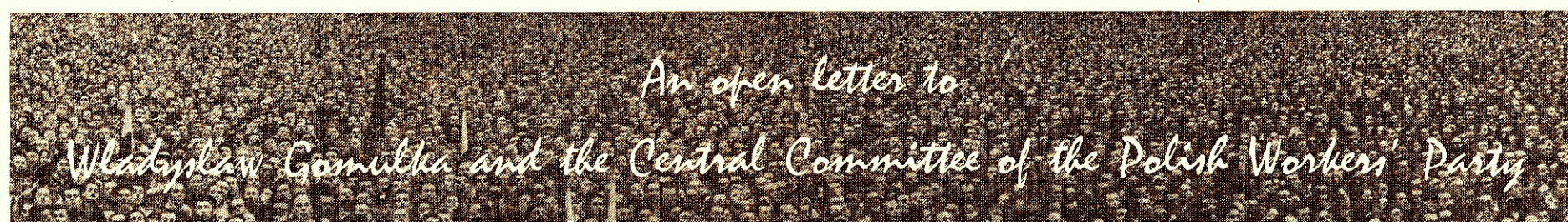
Thus Wilson's dilemma is a threefold one:

How to contain Smith, placate African nationalism and keep America out—all at the same time.

This is a hopeless task and it will require much more than a Bottomley and a MacDonald to retrieve the position which Wilson's policies have led him to.

In any case, Smith has now stated that there will be no compromise, but 'plenty of room for manoeuvre'—in other words, UDI stays.

The question is, if Smith is not conceding anything, then who is?



April 24, 1966



I AM addressing this letter to you in order to protest against the recent secret trials and convictions of Ludwik Hass, Karol Modzelewski, Kazimierz Badowski, Romuald Smiech, Kuron, and other members of your Party.

According to all available reports these men have been deprived of liberty solely because they have voiced views critical of your policy or certain aspects of it, and because they have expressed disappointment with the bureaucratic arbitrariness and corruption which they see rampant in their country. The charge against them is that they have circulated leaflets and a pamphlet containing false information detrimental to the State and its supreme authorities — the Public Prosecutor, it seems, did not accuse them of any crime or offence graver than that.

\* \* \*

If this is the accusation, then the persecution of these men is disgraceful and scandalous. Several questions must be asked: Why, in the first instance, have the courts held their hearings in camera? Surely, no matter of State security was or could have been involved. All the defendants have been academic teachers and students, and what they have tried to do was to communicate their views to fellow students.

Why have they not been given a fair and open trial? Why have your own newspapers not even summarised the indictments and the pleas of defence? Is it because the proceedings have been so absurd and shameful that you yourselves feel that you cannot justify or excuse them; and so you prefer to cover them with silence and oblivion? As far as I know, Prosecutor and judges have not impugned the defendants' motives or cast any serious doubt on their integrity. The accused men have proclaimed themselves to be, and have behaved like, devoted non-conformist Communists, profoundly convinced of the

truth and validity of revolutionary Marxism.

I know that one them, Ludwik Hass, was, even before the second World War, a member of the Communist, so-called Trotskyist, organisation, of which I was one of the founders and mouthpiece. He then spent 17 years in Stalin's prisons, concentration camps, and places of deportation. Released in 1957, he returned to Poland so free from all bitterness and so strongly animated by his faith in a better socialist future that he at once decided to join your Party; and he was accepted as a member. No one asked him to renounce his past, and he did not deny his old 'Trotskyist' views even for a moment—on the contrary, he upheld them frankly and untiringly. This circumstance alone testifies to his courage and integrity.

Do you, Wladyslaw Gomulka, really believe that you have, in your 'apparatus' and administration, many people of comparable disinterestedness and idealism? Look around you, look at the crowds of time-servers that surround you, at all those opportunists without principle and honour who fawn on you as they fawned on Bierut, and as some of them fawned even on Rydz-Smigly and Pilsudski. On how many of these bureaucrats can your government, and can socialism, count in an hour of danger, as it can count on the people you have put in prison?

\* \* \*

Recently still your government claimed with a certain pride that there were no political prisoners in Poland since 1956. This claim, if true, was indeed something to be proud of in a country the jails of which had always, under all regimes, been full of political prisoners, especially of Communist prisoners. You have not, as far as I know, jailed and put in chains any of your all too numerous and virulent anti-Communist opponents; and you deserve credit for the moderation with which you

## WATCH THE CP

From page 1

this bureaucratic action came from the Communist Party leadership. Instead they concentrated their efforts behind the scenes to sabotage the lobby called by that Trades Council for January 26.

They, in fact, went out of their way to split any attempt by the left to forge united action against the Wilson government. They then called a lobby against the legislation on March 1.

Everyone knows that it was a sham. It was neither prepared nor organised in a way that would have mobilised workers. It was a form of protest that was doomed to failure from the start because the people who organised it wanted it to fail.

Let us now examine the results of such treacherous activity.

At the AEU National Committee the right wing carried the day in supporting anti-trade union legislation by eight votes. But it is clear that had there been a united campaign towards the end of 1965 and early in 1966 against the anti-trade union legislation these votes could have changed and the right wing would have been defeated.

In other words, the Communist Party, under the guise of attacking Trotskyism, opened the door for the right wing in the AEU to have a victory, just as they opened the door for the right wing of the ETU a few years ago.

We say that the Communist Party is only concerned today with helping the right wing of the Labour Party. They are not out to fight the right wing. They are out to fight the left wing, and they must be denounced and exposed in this role.

The Communist Party betrayed the rank and file of the ETU. Now they have betrayed the rank and file of the AEU.

Turn now to the docks. What

is Jack Dash, a leading member of the Communist Party, working under orders from its Executive Committee, up to?

On the surface of things he is the most publicised man in the capitalist press. He is truly the darling of the Fleet Street feature writers. But everyone knows that these scribblers take their orders from the millionaire press lords. Why is it that the press now chooses to give such publicity to Jack Dash and build him up as a genuine Cockney leader—a sort of pearly king on the docks?

The answer is clear, just look at how he has been carrying on in the docks.

One day he calls for all-out opposition to the Devlin Commission and the very next day he says that we should go to the Commission and participate in its work.

Jack Dash has no intention, like the Communist Party he represents, of fighting the Devlin Commission. He sets out to win the docks by left talk in order to try to control them. In the end we are confident that he will come down on the side of the Devlin Commission, thus emulating the same treacherous role that the Communist Party has carried out in relation to the anti-trade union legislation and the ETU.

There must be no trust whatsoever placed in Jack Dash or the Communist Party in the present struggles facing the trade union movement and in particular the docks.

We say watch these gentlemen. They are not communists—they have sold out to the right wing of the Labour Party.

The policies of the Communist Party, like those of the right wing of the Labour Party, cannot but lead to defeat.

treat them. But why do you deny such treatment to your critics on the left?

Hass, Modzelewski and their friends have been brought to the courtrooms hand-cuffed and under heavy guards. Eyewitness accounts say that they raised their chained fists in the old Communist salute and sang the *Internationale*. This detail speaks eloquently about

their political characters and loyalties. How many of your dignitaries, Wladyslaw Gomulka, would nowadays intone the *Internationale* of their own free will and choice?

I have been informed that before the trial, during the interrogation, the official who conducted it alleged that Hass and other defendants had worked in contact with me. I

do not know whether the Prosecutor took up this charge in the courtroom. In any case, the allegation is a complete falsehood. Let me say that if the defendants had tried to get in touch with me, I would have readily responded. But the fact is that I have had no contact with any of them. I have not even seen a single one of their leaflets or pamphlets. I judge

\* \* \*

Another occasion on which I allowed myself to have a say on Polish political matters was in 1957, when I explained, in a special essay 'The Tragedy of Polish Communism between the World Wars'. You may remember that your censors, Stalinists of the so-called Natolin group, confiscated the essay when 'Polityka' tried to publish it; and that then you, Wladyslaw Gomulka, ordered the essay to be widely distributed among Party members. In those far-off days, just after the 'Polish spring in October', you held that Polish Communists ought to know my account of the havoc that Stalin made of their Party, delivering nearly all its leaders to the firing squad. You knew that I had been one of those very few Communists who, in 1938, protested against that crime and against the disbandment and denigration of what had once been our common Party.

Moscow 'rehabilitated' the Polish Party and its leaders only after 17 or 18 years; and

then you, Wladyslaw Gomulka, apologised for having kept silent in 1938, although you had not believed the Stalinist slanders. I do not believe that you are right now in persecuting and imprisoning members of your own Party and your critics on the Left; and I cannot keep silent.

May I remind you of your own words spoken at the famous 8th Session of the Central Committee in October, 1956?

'The cult of the personality was not a matter just of Stalin's person,' you stated then. 'This was a system which had been transplanted from the USSR to nearly all Communist Parties. . . . We have finished, or rather we are finishing with that system once and for all.' (Your italics.)

\* \* \*

But are you not to some extent re-establishing that system? Do you wish these trials to mark the 10th anniversary of your own rehabilitation and of that 'spring in October', during which you raised so many hopes for the future?

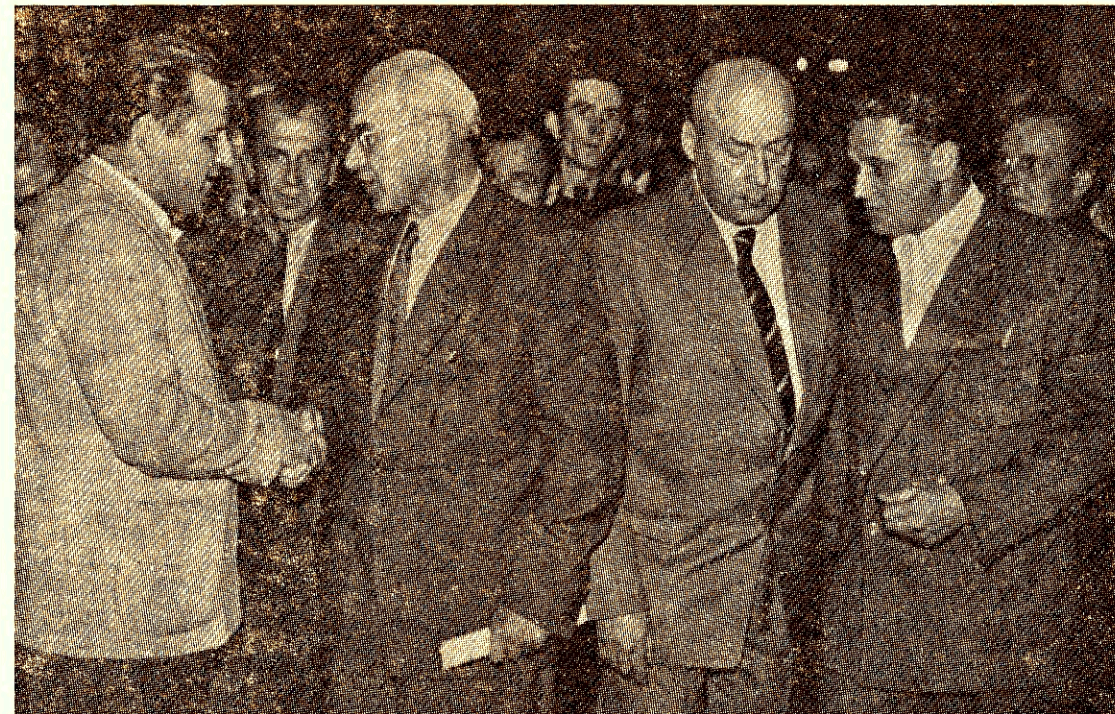
In the name of those hopes and in the name of your own record, the record of a fighter and of a political fighter under Pilsudski and Stalin, I appeal to you and to your colleagues of the Central Committee: Do not allow this miscarriage of justice to last! Dispel the secrecy that surrounds the cases of Hass, Modzelewski, and comrades. If you think that they are guilty of grave offences, then publish the full report of the court proceedings and let it speak for itself. In any case, I appeal to you to order an immediate and public revision of the trial. If you refuse these demands, you will stand condemned as epigones of Stalinism, guilty of stifling your own Party and compromising the future of Socialism.

Isaac Deutscher

London, April 24, 1966.

Isaac Deutscher is the well-known historian and biographer of Trotsky. Three of his books on the life of Trotsky have been published in Britain.

The picture at the top of the page shows a section of the 300,000 crowd attending a meeting in the 'spring in October' period in 1956



Gomulka is congratulated for his stand as he comes out from the famous Eighth Session of the Central Committee in October 1956

**T**HE united May Day rally held by the Ceylon Mercantile Union, the Ceylon Bank Employees' Union, the Ceylon Estate Staffs' Union and the Democratic Workers' Congress in the De Mel Park, Colombo, issued the following resolution:

1 This rally . . . takes note of the fact that the working-class movement in Ceylon has been seriously divided and weakened by the differences that exist within it and that this state of disunity is not only harmful to the interests of the working class as a whole, but has already resulted in serious damage to important sections of workers, specially in the government and local government services and state corporations.

The rally welcomed and endorsed the formation of the United Committee of Ceylon Trade Unions in terms of the resolutions adopted by the joint trade union seminar—held by the four unions which called the May Day rally—at Kandy on April 4. It called upon all other trade union organisations to join with the UCCTU to defend and carry forward the interests of the

## Ceylon trade unions'

workers of Ceylon, without distinction of race, nationality, religion, language, or political adherence.

2 The rally called upon the Minister of Labour to bring legislation immediately before parliament to make it a criminal offence for any employer or agent of an employer to induce any person to leave or refrain from joining a trade union or penalise any person for doing so.

3 This united May Day rally denounces the attempt of the government to impose further state control over the trade unions in Ceylon and to place further legal limitations upon their democratic rights of association and action, which has been manifested by the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry by the Minister of Labour.

4 This rally warns all sections of the trade union movement and the working class in general that whatever recommendations the Committee may

make in accordance with its terms of reference, they cannot be beneficial to the trade union movement, since its terms of reference relate almost entirely to matters that have been agitated upon by the most reactionary vested interests in Ceylon for several years.

The rally pointed out to the government that if it had any regard whatsoever for the point of view of the overwhelming mass of the organised trade union movement, which had boycotted the Committee of Inquiry, and if it had any desire to promote the development of trade union movement in Ceylon on democratic lines, its plain duty was to scrap the Committee forthwith and consult the trade unions on matters which call for improvement in relation to them.

4 This united May Day rally records its strong protest against the mass victimisation of leaders and members of trade unions that participated in the one-day strike of January 8, 1966, even though the unions participating in this

united May Day rally were not participants in the January 8 strike and in no way subscribe to the aims and objects of that strike.

5 This rally points out that the January 8 strike was a token strike in protest against a contemplated act of the government and that, however strongly the government or anyone else may have felt that a protest strike was not called for in that matter, there was absolutely no justification for the mass dismissals by the Ceylon Transport Board, the numerous interdictions effected by the government, Local Government Services' Commission and various state corporations, and the punitive fines generally imposed in consequence of that strike. This rally accordingly calls for the cancellation of all punishments imposed and disciplinary proceedings instituted in relation to the strike on January 8, 1966. This May Day rally also calls upon all trade unions, irrespective of whether they participated in the January 8 strike or not, and not withstanding the different viewpoints that they hold in regard

to that strike, to come together in defence of those sections of the trade union movement that have been victimised on account of it.

5 This united May Day rally fully endorses the view that no scheme of profit-sharing can be a substitute for an adequate wage, and points out that the most urgent economic need of the workers of Ceylon at the present time is an all-round and substantial increase of wages and salaries, since there has been and there is no likelihood of any reduction in the high cost of living, despite all promises of the government and the empty press propaganda about bringing down or even adequately controlling prices.

6 This united May Day rally further stresses that the rates of Dearness Allowance of government employees and most categories of workers who are paid Dearness Allowances have remained fixed since 1955, whilst the vast mass of workers on the plantations and in certain other sectors have not

# Food shortages, unemployment, imprisonments, zooming prices

**ARTICLES** in the British press last week on the occasion of General Aguiyi Ironsi's 'hundred days' were aimed at resurrecting the differences — sectional and tribal—by which the reactionary regime of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa maintained its rule until the January 15 coup in Nigeria.

In fact, our Nigerian correspondent writes, the workers and peasants are still in a militant mood, loosely united around the impetus of the coup, and prepared for further action.

It is only the feudal landlords, judges, magistrates and businessmen who are dissatisfied. Their political interests have been weakened, but their other interests are, in the main, still being looked after.

Many of the civil servants who served under the Federal and regional governments are still in their positions. These, and especially the permanent secretaries, are now advising the military government.



Many of Abubakar's (seen left) civil servants advise the military government

Our correspondent reports that there is little change in the civil service circles—only three or four top civil servants have lost their jobs, and this is because they were known to be politically committed to the old regime.

The masses are angered by the status quo, and this leaves Ironsi—contacted and badgered by British and US interests—in a precarious middle position.

## End soon?

He knows that with a slightest turn to the right anything could happen, and he must recognise that his rule cannot last too long.

Already committees have been drafted to work on a new constitution, the economy and administration, in preparation for civilian rule.

Only in the Eastern Region has the young Lt.-Col. Ojuku confiscated plots of land from the leading politicians and judiciary—there have been many demands that Ironsi follow suit in the rest of the country—but in other areas, politicians of the previous regime are still enjoying their privileges.

Will Ironsi, under pressure

# Explosive situation in Nigeria again

## NEWSLETTER CORRESPONDENT

from imperialist agents, hand over to these men who have their freedom, which is more than can be said for the young heroes of the coup?

The young officers who began the coup under Nzeogwu in the North are all now in 'protective custody', and labelled 'mutineers' by Ironsi.

This group of officers—the oldest is probably only 34—have, in fact, tremendous support among the masses, who have been demanding their release.

The workers and peasants know that these officers, along with university graduates, were fighting for different things than Ironsi.

On January 20, the coup began simultaneously in all the regions. The hopes and aspirations of the people lay with the young men from the North, but Ironsi, through mistakes and betrayal, was able to take over in Lagos.

The Northern officers were invited to the federal capital by Ironsi, who signed a document guaranteeing safe conduct for them and security for the relatives of those who had died fighting in the coup.

Nzeogwu was seen walking around Lagos for several days, but was then put in 'protective custody'. He and other Northern officers have been there since, without trial.

## Great danger

But here lies a great danger—aggravated by the food shortages.

These shortages are hitting the same people who fully support the young officers. Nzeogwu and his comrades also have supporters within the 8,000-strong army.

On the other hand, the organisations around which hungry and angry workers could unite for socialist action are bureaucratic machines, tied internationally to social-democracy, Stalinism and the church.

Three of the five major organisations—the Nigerian Trades Union Congress (which has its main base in the Stalinist-led Socialist Workers' and Farmers' Party); the Nigerian Workers' Council (a Catholic Action group); and the Labour Unity Front (formed by 'neutral' unions, and attracts many militants)—formed a loose confederation

The 1964 General Strike (a militant meeting seen right) illustrated what the Nigerian workers could achieve

in March. Since then they have not made any demands.

In this situation, many union branches have by-passed the central organisations and made demands for better food supplies and rent control.

As rich landlords and big businessmen have bought out the poorer farmers, these men have taken their families to the major cities, resulting in native 'Rachmanism' and the inevitable unemployment.

In Lagos some workers earning £8 a month are having to pay between £4 and £5 a month for rooms. As a result of a lot of pressure there has been a reduction of 2s in the pound for two-roomed accommodation, but not for flats. This has, quite naturally, angered the flat occupiers.

## Rents cuts call

Rent associations have submitted a memorandum to the military government calling for 50 per cent to 75 per cent cuts in rents, the setting up of rent tribunals and rent control.

After the 1964 General Strike in Nigeria an agreement was signed on rents and prices, between the unions and the Federal government. But the government was not prepared to carry out the clauses be-

cause of the landlord and business interests.

Ironsi is attempting to carry out sections of the agreement.

But his regime cannot, in its middle position, halt the rising cost of living.

As 'The Guardian' points out, he is not to blame for the fantastically high food prices—the position would have been the same under the Federal government.

## Real cause

What writer Walter Schwarz fails to point out is the real cause of these zooming prices—the drive for more raw materials for export at the expense of staple foods.

Our correspondent writes that at its dearest, Garri (sold by the cup) was only 1½ a cup.

During this planting season—when prices reach their highest—it now stands at 4d a cup in the cities.

In the provinces it used to sell at 12-15 cups for 1s. It now stands at six cups for 1s.

The government does not encourage the growing of the staple yam, Cassava (Garri), rice, maize and so on. Most of the land on which these crops could be produced used to be communally owned but has

that the feeling among the masses is that tribalism should be wiped out and some sections have even delivered a memorandum to the government that this should be decreed.

The imperialist splitters though, are counting on the self-preserving tactics of the bureaucratic union leaders who, in the industrial centres, maintain tribal unions, refusing to contact other areas 'because they are of a different tribe'.

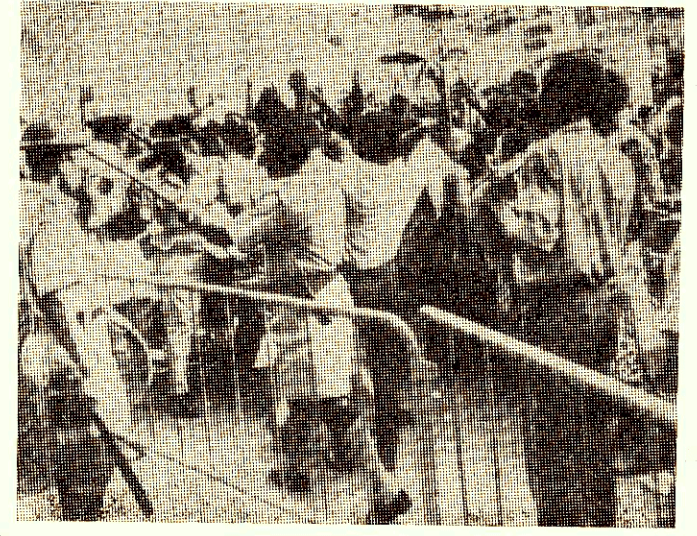
Even in a shop like Woolworths, our correspondent says, the workers' union in the East is Ebu, in the West Yoruba and in the North, Hausa.

## Precarious life

In the Northern region there are two miners' unions and in the South there is one, all three maintained on tribal grounds.

But for those out of work, to live means probably turning to crime, to be hounded by police, occasionally to be thrown into already overcrowded jails, and probably to sleep under the bridges near the Lagos docks.

Since life is precarious under the military government, it is easy for the employers to use the unemployed as scabs in strikes—after a recent dock



A very active and brutal police force (seen here in last year's election riots) is still used by big business to round up the unemployed to scab in strikes

## MAY DAY

From page 1

### LEEDS

SUNDAY saw one of the biggest and liveliest May Day marches to be held in Leeds in recent years. This was the opinion of the hundreds of people who came out to watch the march as it went through the streets of Leeds.

Well over half the demonstration comprised contingents who marched under the colourful banners of the Socialist Labour League and Young Socialists.

They added a splash of red colour and attraction with three decorated vans, many bright banners and a huge float portraying the Labour government's attack on the working class in the form of the proposed Prices and Incomes Bill.

Throughout the whole march these contingents kept up a barrage of chanting and shouting 'Legislation Out! Out! Out! Defeat US Imperialism in Vietnam! LBJ LBJ how many kids have you killed today?'

Officials of the Trades Council did their utmost to stop the Young Socialists and the Socialist Labour League from marching. They attempted to use the police to split up the march and remove many of the banners which attacked the anti-working class policies of the Labour government.

After over half an hour of heated discussion they were forced to give in and the march started.

The Communist Party was difficult to locate on the march as its representatives did not march under independent banners. Apparently they believed that May Day should be one where politics are left behind in the interests of unity with the right wing!

### OWN MEETING

None of their leading members took any part in the fight against the Trades Council officials.

After the march the Young Socialists held its own meeting which was very well attended.

Jean Kerrigan, Young Socialist National Committee member from South Yorkshire, outlined the fight of the Young Socialists for an alternative leadership to the right wing of Wilson, Brown and Callaghan.

A rank-and-file member of the Leeds Trades Council congratulated the youth on their fine display and said that he completely dissociated himself from the actions of the right wing in trying to disrupt the march.

Cliff Slaughter, Central Committee, Socialist Labour League, spoke about the meaning of May Day as one when the working class displayed its solidarity throughout the whole world. The Socialist Labour League was for the maximum unity, he said, but this had to be unity for a struggle against the capitalist class.

He exposed the right wing as the real splitters and disrupters in the movement.

Finally he called upon all those present, youth and adults, to fight for the biggest possible lobby of Parliament on May 25 against the proposed anti-trade union legislation.

Finally, in the evening, the Young Socialists held an extremely successful dance in a local hall which was packed with youth from Leeds and other parts of Yorkshire who danced to one of the leading groups in the area.

### BRISTOL

BRISTOL'S Labour Party suddenly cancelled their May Day march without warning and instead invited the City's workers to a Saturday evening dance and a Sunday meeting, addressed by two Labour Lords and local MP, Postmaster General, Anthony Wedgewood Benn.

Yet the hand-out distributed at the meeting had the audacity to announce: '1966 is an occasion of special celebration, for it follows the return to power a month ago of a new Labour government.'

The decision to call off the march was taken by the Borough Labour Party without consulting the wards, constituencies, or the trade union movement.

To have marched through the streets would have been 'a public relations' and anyway there would have been insufficient support (last year between 300 and 400 people attended), said the Borough Labour Party.

### Hall quarter full

The meeting itself was attended largely by middle-aged Party members and the Colston Hall was not even one quarter filled. It has a seating capacity of 2,000.

The first of the main speakers was Lord Collison, CBE, general secretary of the National Union of Agricultural Workers. He told the meeting that the British people had to work together as a nation so that Britain could pay back the loans which the government had taken from the International Monetary Fund.

This could not be achieved without sacrifice, and the Labour government, which the British people 'admired so much', would make sure this was done. An incomes policy was necessary, he said, if we were to fend off inflation.

Lord Collison was followed by Wedgewood Benn and Lord Longford, whose speeches were in a similar vein.

It is disgraceful that the May Day demonstrations in Bristol should be shunned by a Party that still purports to represent the interests of the working class.

### First May Day

At the first May Day celebration in Bristol in 1890 it is reported that large numbers of workers marched through Bristol to the Downs where the crowds were so huge that separate platforms were required. Eleanor Marx Aveling was the main speaker.

Since then the Labour leaders have so compromised themselves with the ruling class, they have been guilty of so many class betrayals, that even the people who put them in power at the last election show little real enthusiasm for them.

But is this surprising when the leaders both nationally and locally are such cowards that they cannot stand up and be counted on May Day?

The May Day march which did take place, no thanks to the Labour Party, was barely 120 strong and was composed chiefly of Communist Party and Young Communist League members, with a group of students from Bristol University Socialist Society.



# May Day resolutions

even been granted the Special Living Allowance of 17/50 Rupees that was granted to government employees and in 1958 to all other categories of workers with regulated wages. This united May Day rally accordingly declares its support in general of the demand of the workers in the public and private sectors for immediate and adequate increases in their wages and salaries and expressly supports the demand of the plantation workers for the immediate grant of their 17/50 Rupees demand.

6 The rally reminded the government of its promise to defend democracy and to grant political rights to public servants and demanded immediate full trade union, political and civic rights to all workers who are denied such democratic rights.

7 This united May Day rally extends May Day greetings to the world's toilers and expresses its solidarity with the struggles with workers' organisations and mass organisations all over the world against exploitation and oppression and for the advancement of the interests of mankind.

'This rally hails in particular the grimly sustained struggle of the heroic people of Vietnam against the totally unjustified occupation of their country and the powerful and criminal onslaught upon them by the armed forces of the United States of America with the support of some of its allies. This rally wholeheartedly endorses and supports the demand that has been raised throughout the world for the immediate cessation of imperialist, military intervention of the United States and its allies against the people of

Vietnam and the withdrawal of their troops from Vietnam so that its people may be free to decide their future in what ever manner they deem fit.

- Workers unite for workers' power.
  - No state control of trade unions.
  - Defend January 8 victims.
  - For an all round wage increase.
- THE UNITED COMMITTEE OF CEYLON TRADE UNIONS  
Prins Rajasooriya, Secretary.
- THE CEYLON BANK EMPLOYEES' UNION  
THE CEYLON MERCANTILE UNION  
THE CEYLON ESTATE STAFFS' UNION  
THE DEMOCRATIC WORKERS' CONGRESS

been bought up by businessmen, forcing the farmer and his family into the towns.

The land is now cultivated, through mechanisation, to produce ground nuts, cocoa, palm kernel and rubber.

Intensive production has now led to a glut of cocoa and, because of the world market surplus, much of it is being stored by the government. It has been taken on credit and many producers have not yet been paid for their crop.

Once in the towns, the farmer finds himself either added to the large number of people already unemployed, or separated from other workers by the fact that he is in a different union.

## Still a bond

But the divisions are not so great—during the 1940s and 1950s under colonial rule many farmers fed workers when they were out on strike. There is still this bond.

Recently there have been a large number of strikes demanding better pay and conditions, and it is on these occasions that the British and American agents (particularly the so-called Peace Corps) hope to play on tribal differences to split and defeat the workers. Our correspondent writes

strike the police went to the trouble of rounding up the unemployed for the bosses!

With these developments, the situation in Nigeria is as explosive now as it was just before the coup and during the 1964 General Strike.

Recognising the revolutionary potential of the workers, peasants and unemployed, 'The Times' expresses the fears of big business:

## 'Honeymoon over'

'... the honeymoon has been over for some time ... the inability of the military regime to make up its mind on vital questions is becoming dangerous.'

The General Strike illustrated, in limited terms, what could be achieved among the Nigerian people.

If the desire for a breaking down of tribal differences can be united behind a militancy similar to that achieved in 1964 and, most important of all, behind socialist demands of expropriation and nationalization posed by a Marxist leadership, then Ironsi, and the bureaucrats and capitalists under his wing, can be smashed.

Only then will the problems of jobs, rents, food and land be solved.

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# May Day speeches

## Build alternative leadership to Labour traitors!

## Victory to Vietcong!

## All out on May 25 lobby!

## Against anti-union legislation and Devlin Report on the docks!

### Gerry Healy,

National Secretary, SLL

WORKERS in all the big towns must be mobilised, rallied and roused in the factories, pits, shipyards and docks to 'the greatest demonstration this city has ever seen' to defeat the Labour government's proposed anti-union legislation, said Gerry Healy, national secretary of the Socialist Labour League, on the League's platform in Hyde Park, London, on Sunday.

'In the next three weeks, we have got to rouse the working class, and warn them of the great danger in this legislation, of what is happening on the docks.'

'We must unite the dockers with the entire trade union movement. An injury to one is an injury to all, no matter what the government,' he said.

He urged workers to turn out in their tens of thousands on a massive demonstration and lobby of parliament against the legislation on May 25.

'In Liverpool, 2,000 dockers have already decided to lobby parliament against the Devlin Report and the anti-union laws on that day,' said Healy.

The international bankers had dictated the policies of the previous Labour government in its 17-month term when the legislation was first proposed. 'These same bankers will dictate its policies also during the next four to five years,' he added.

'Over the past 17 months the Labour government, with a majority of three, excused themselves on the grounds that if they implemented socialist policies they would be prevented from doing so by the international banks.'

'Now their majority is 97—yet they replace the most reactionary governor of the Bank of England by another city banker, who is equally reactionary.'

#### Hailed by Tories

'The replacement is being hailed by the Tory press as the wisest action Wilson could take,' he said.

Wilson had gone to the AEU conference and told members—'from some of the biggest enterprises in Britain—that they must give up their rule book.'

'He is speaking on behalf of the international banks and big business, because the rule book, however complicated, has been drawn up by tens of thousands of working people to protect their interests against the banks.'

Wilson was encouraged by union leaders, like those in the NUR, who were quick to support the anti-union laws.

Yet Wilson's government had appointed a Tory, Aubrey Jones, at £237 a week to the Prices and Incomes Board which said the railwaymen could not have more than a 3½ per cent wage rise.

#### Where is control?

'Where is the incomes control over Aubrey Jones, over the whole batch of people elected by the Labour government to the nationalized industries?' Healy asked.

Attacks on the trade unions were justified on the grounds that Britain could not pay her way, but the government failed to explain that it was the £437 million spent on arms and £250 million overseas investments which caused the balance of payments crisis.

This spending was used to protect the exploitation of colonial and semi-colonial countries where raw materials and labour were cheap and there were no trade unions.

#### Standards undermined

'The policy is to step up overseas investment and for British workers to keep their wages down so these investments can be sent overseas where scab labour is used to undermine the standards of living of the colonial and British working classes,' Healy commented.

'If the Labour government wants to bring in laws to freeze wages, it is because they want more money to invest and spend on arms to maintain capitalism.'

Wilson spoke of 'planning', but how can you plan capitalism when the basis of capitalism is profit?

'You cannot plan without taking over the resources from the



of England and the City of London where the rules work against the majority of people, where there are business conspiracies to keep wages down.

'Yet nothing has been said by the Labour government against the City of London. Wilson, Brown and Gunter all go to lunches with the big bankers. There is no difference between them in this respect—they want to attack the working class at all costs.'

The line of the 'Tribune'-ite lefts had been not to 'rock the boat' and to let Wilson get on with running capitalism.

'But it is possible to change this right-wing government through leadership, through mobilising the working class for socialist policies.'

#### Genuine fighters

'It is possible to end the arms bill and overseas investments and remove the capitalist class under a different leadership and policies,' he said.

Healy said the Socialist Labour League enjoyed the support of large numbers of Communist Party and Young Communist League members 'because we have maintained these people want to fight genuinely for socialist policies.'

He asked them to consider why their Party had lost the incomes policy resolution by eight votes at the conference of the AEU, a union in which the Party had great support.

Why had the Party not campaigned against anti-union legislation, and waited until March 1 before calling a lobby? Why did they split the working class by opposing the Lambeth Trades Council lobby on January 26?

'If, he stressed, 'we had had a united campaign it would have been possible to change the vote at the AEU conference.'

He again made a call for all workers to join the May 25 lobby and demonstration.

Ministers were prisoners of the civil service.

Referring to the Labour Party platform across Hyde Park, he said: 'It is a fraud to talk about socialism and come down here on May Day while representatives of big business sit up there in the City of London.'

#### City closed shop

Wilson had talked of getting rid of the rule book but, Healy added, 'If you want an example of a closed shop, go to the Bank

### Aileen Jennings,

Editor of YS newspaper Keep Left

'IT IS the Young Socialists who make May Day what it really is—an international workers' day when workers throughout the world commemorate the traditions of those who have fought in the workers' movement in the past.'

'No doubt Wilson and his cronies would like to keep May Day a quiet respectable affair with no big demonstrations and no class identity.'

It was the same leadership which, in the Labour Party, hounded the youth, she said. It did not want Young Socialists who stood by the working-class interests, particularly after the Labour Party took power.

The majority of youth had been undeterred by expulsions, closures and the witch-hunt. They wanted to continue the fight for socialist policies and had held two highly successful conferences at Morecambe, last year and this year, after breaking with the Labour Party.

Young Socialists had voted for and campaigned against the bankers and the bosses; against the imperialist war in Vietnam; against youth fighting on behalf of the employers in Aden; against wage freeze and against legislation on the trade unions and rent increases. It was the Young Socialists who had organised a lobby of Parliament after the Labour government refused old age pensioners an immediate increase.

'Many ask why did we fight for the return of a Labour government,' she said. 'We fought for the return of Labour not because we support Wilson's policies or his banker friends, not because we did not want to rock the boat, but because we believe it is necessary for the working class first of all to vote against Toryism and secondly to go through the experience of the betrayal of the Labour government so that they may learn exactly where Wilson and Co. stand.'

Young Socialists attempted to show workers, through big campaigns, where the Labour government stood.

'We have already had some success. The Young Socialists united with adult workers in the fight against anti-trade union legislation. We led workers from all over the country on a lobby of Parliament. We mobilised 1,500 on January 26, because we saw through our fight in the Labour Party just what measures Wilson was proposing to take to try and stop the working class gaining wage increases,' she said.

When Wilson sent congratulations to Lord Cromer on his retirement as governor of the Bank of England and appointed another banker in his place, the Young

Socialists knew that he intended to attack the working class on behalf of big business.

'That is why we say there must be an all-out fight against any attempt to bring in laws against the trade unions. We call on the rank and file of the Young Communist League and the Communist Party to join with us in this fight.'

'The Young Socialists call on all workers to join the lobby against anti-union law on May 25. Give it your support and make it a really massive lobby. Particularly we call on the dockers.'

Workers on the ports have a common fight against the Devlin Commission and the anti-union legislation.

The fight taken up by British



A vociferous section of the YS marchers echo the demands of their posters

### Dave Ashby, National Chairman of the Young Socialists



THE YOUNG SOCIALISTS' national committee had called the May 25 lobby of parliament against the anti-union legislation, 'to show we will not tolerate an attack on the unions and attacks of the Devlin Report,' said Young Socialists' chairman, Dave Ashby.

'These policies are anti-working class, anti-Labour, the policy of the banks and the strategy of the government,' he said.

The government had not given power to the working class, but had consistently carried out policies opposed to those of the majority of the people in the country and throughout the world. The main task before socialists and workers was to expose the politics of Wilson and company to the workers of the country in rallies and lobbies to build an alternative leadership, which could take the workers to power.

'We don't think you can build the alternative communist movement which will be able to take the workers to power, without bringing in masses of young people,' said Ashby.

In Britain the Young Socialists had a history of struggle against the right wing of the Labour Party. This fight had been fully vindicated and had now drawn in older workers who had supported and united with the policies of the Young Socialists.

In Vietnam young workers and peasants, fighting for their own rights and interests, had brought the US ruling class to its knees.

'If it can be done there, then the powerful British working class will settle accounts with all the fakers and those who get in on the workers' vote in Britain,' said Ashby.

In Vietnam, he added, 'only the full, complete and utter victory of the Vietcong will suffice us.'

### Larry Cavanagh, Sec., Merseyside Portworkers' Committee

LIVERPOOL dockers Larry Cavanagh called for the unity of all sections of the working class to support dockers in their fight against the proposals of the Devlin Report.

Nine months ago, dockers had rejected the recommendations of the Report and only the previous day 2,000 dockers in Liverpool had re-affirmed that decision. They had also called for a lobby of parliament on May 25 against the Devlin Report and the anti-union legislation.

Merseyside dockers had travelled to London the same day to seek unity with London dockers. They had attended a demonstration called by Jack Dash, of the London Liaison Committee.

Dash had presented petitions at 10 Downing Street, and the whole affair was over in 20 minutes, said Cavanagh.

'This is only a substitute for a fight and deludes the dockers that the best way is to petition asking for inquiries.'

'There have now been inquiries for two years. We don't want any more.'

'We want full nationalization of the docks with workers' control.'

He said dockers represented one of the biggest bulwarks against putting the employers back on their feet, and the theory of the Devlin Commission had been worked out by the right wing to achieve this.

He maintained there had been a press, TV and radio silence on the struggles of the dockers and the Young Socialists.

He again appealed for all sections, Young Socialists, Young Communist League and Communist Party members, students, and trade unionists to give full support to the May 25 lobby.



### Michael Banda, Editor of The Newsletter

EDITOR of The Newsletter, Michael Banda, said that May Day was the occasion 'when we pay homage to the heroes of capitalist repression, some of them never seen again by their compatriots, and when we re-dedicate ourselves to the international emancipation of the world working class. We are not merely interested in what happens here, but all over the world.'

Only recently an entire Communist Party had disappeared in Indonesia, with the support of world imperialism and international social democracy.

Now the Labour government had made a £1 million gift to the Indonesian government for 'humanitarian purposes'.

'This is £2 per head for all those killed,' said Banda, adding that no gift had been made to the starving millions in India 'because there is no profit'.

He said the Socialist Labour League opposed the arrests of co-thinkers in Poland by the government of Gomulka, and demanded the release of Soviet writers, Yuli Daniel and Andrei Sinavsky. Socialism would not have been possible without the contribution of such writers in the past, he said.

He mentioned the struggles in Vietnam—of the fakery of the 'lefts' in their so-called opposition to Wilson on this question—and the hypocritical exchanges between Wilson and the Smith regime in Rhodesia.

The Socialist Labour League had been the first to warn of Smith's intended UDI, and the only organisation to call for the arming of the Africans.

Concluding he said: 'We extend our arm to all fighters throughout the world who are struggling against imperialism and say they have our support. It is our greatest regret that we are unable through state power to bring a greater contribution to their struggles. To do that we say there will be greater struggles in this country.'

