

The Newsletter

WEEKLY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

Vol. 9, No. 464

October 15, 1966

Price 6d.

**OFF TO
LIEGE—
500
YOUTH**

APPROXIMATELY 500 YOUNG SOCIALISTS will be travelling to Liege in Belgium this week-end to meet socialist youth from all over Europe who will be demonstrating against the war in Vietnam and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

This massive undertaking by the British youth involves them travelling overnight to Liege and back by special boat and train.

**Central Committee of
the Socialist Labour League**

MEETING LAST WEEKEND, the Central Committee of the Socialist Labour League decided on the dates for a special conference of the organisation, towards the end of 1966.

The purpose of the conference will be to assess the qualitative nature of the League's work since the election of the Labour government, especially in the last year, in relation to the consciousness of the working class.

**SLL
congress
and
mid-week
paper
planned**

This discussion, which begins in the organisation in the next week, will be a political preparation for the strengthening of the League's programme of developing a mass revolutionary party to lead the working class to power, forging links with and strengthening the international working class in the process.

A major step in intervening with and for the working class in the immediate struggles against the betrayals of the reformist leaders of the labour movement will be the production of a mid-week issue of the Newsletter as a move towards the daily newspaper. Introducing his report, which will form the basis of pre-conference discussion and the main conference document, the League's national secretary, Gerry Healy, said: 'We must be prepared in Britain for a vastly different situation in terms of class conflict which will produce a change in the trade union movement and great possibilities for the revolutionary party.'

This estimation was based primarily on the growing crisis of imperialism. A fresh economic analysis was now urgent because this was affecting events on the political field as never before. The recent meeting of the International Monetary Fund had decided nothing, only 'laid bare the old wounds between the capitalist powers and the crisis of the dominant capitalist power—the United States'.

The dollar could not be strengthened in the next two years, he said, and the 1966-1967 balance of payments would be 'in the red'. Along with high interest rates and the gold trend away from Fort Knox was leading to a growth of unemployment among the poor and semi-skilled workers, especially the Negroes.

The US crisis was the main-spring of the crisis in other capitalist countries, and the unemployment in Britain—brought on by the government's policies—was in its early days.

Substantial unemployment would really begin in the early part of November.

The cutback in the home market had led to increased costs and made industry less competitive. The wage freeze was intended to bridge the gap between rising costs and reduce the value of purchasing power in order that British capitalists could compete again with other groups of monopolies.

'But unemployment may well be here to stay,' said comrade Healy. 'There is a big change-over taking place in the economy, characterised by the intensified competition for world markets.'

Recent approaches by Johnson to Gromyko showed that the US would seek to enlist the aid of the Soviet bureaucracy in facing the working class in the economic crisis. The Stalinists would again play their real counter-revolutionary role in world events and in the Soviet Union itself—against the working class.

The aftermath of the seamen's strike in Britain was a rising consciousness among the working class. It was a political strike. The working class was being drawn into politics, not necessarily or immediately to revolutionary politics, but into a questioning of the Labour government in power.

It was a political questioning and a testing-out of the present leaders in front of the working class.

The position of Wilson was a political continuation of MacDonaldism. MacDonald had broken from the labour movement to find for the bosses a new audience among the right-wing social-democrats, in order to convince the right wing and the Conservatives that a section of the Labour Party could preserve capitalism.

Recently 'The Economist', the Tories' weekly business hand-book, had said that Wilson was seeking a 'new audience'.

The movement in the trade unions was to the left. But the crisis in the Labour Party was an ideological crisis of reformism, and the 'left' leaders, to whom the radicalised workers were looking, were part of this ideological crisis.

The conflict between Wilson's and Frank Cousins' 'ideology' was only seen by the 'left' as a matter of 'debate'.

The extension of the immediate post-war colonial struggles into the metropolitan countries would put people like Cousins to the test.

Such a situation showed the superiority of Marxism which, beginning with the needs of the working class, could see the ways and means to build the revolutionary party in the next period, based on previous experiences.

Continued page 4, column 1

WILSON'S POLICY - NOVEMBER 4th

UNEMPLOYMENT DAY

BY THE EDITOR

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4, is 'black Friday' for thousands of motor car workers. On that day they will draw their last week's wages and whatever redundancy pay they are entitled to and then its off to the Labour Exchange, that capitalist scrapheap of human misery.

The vast majority of those who become unemployed will have no jobs to go to. Ministry of Labour officials who have been visiting the large motor plants have had little or nothing to offer; a few jobs in engineering miles away at much less wages, vacancies for deep-sea fishermen, and one or two jobs on the North Sea oil rigs. There are simply no jobs in any way comparable to motors, either in Luton or Oxford.

The word 'redeployment' is rapidly becoming recognised as the language of right-wing Labour scoundrels, whose main object is to join hands with the employers and sack workers.

Let's cut out the phrasemongering about alternative jobs. Millions voted Labour, because they believed it would stand by the working class against their enemy, the Tory employers. But the illusion has been rudely shattered. The Wilson leadership now stands four-square in defence of profits against the working class who elected it.

Behind Wilson is the ultra-right-wing clique of trade union leaders, led by such people as Lord Cooper of the Municipal and General Workers' Union. In the background are the 'lefts' who even now are hoping that nothing is going to happen. Their job is to sow illusions and confusion in order to disarm the working class, precisely at a time when they most need decisive leadership.

No alternative but fight

If the Labour government operates Tory policy and attacks the working class, what other alternative is there but to fight back? But, say the fake 'lefts', this may mean letting the Tories in. Nothing of the sort. This government is in power until 1971.

To clear out Wilson and the right wing now would not jeopardise the cause of socialism. On the other hand it would probably mean that they would join the Tories just as MacDonald did in 1931, but that would be all to the good. The time to start openly fighting Wilson is now so that the working class is prepared and ready to resist any Tory threat that he may unleash.

The policy upon which this fight must be waged is as follows:

● Real socialist planning requires the nationalization of all the basic industries under workers' control.

● Full independence for all colonial and semi-colonial countries in the British commonwealth.

● Withdraw all troops from overseas, and scrap the arms budget.

These three demands if acted upon would constitute a decisive advance towards a socialist Britain and an end to unemployment and the threat of war.

Far from fighting for socialist policies the present leadership is running away from the struggle. This is done in a way that produces the utmost confusion in the ranks.

Take Dick Etheridge, shop stewards' convenor at the BMC Longbridge works and leading member of the CP. He now plays the same role as Jack Dash did during the seamen's strike. At each critical turn in this strike Dash held the dockers back from struggle and tied them firmly behind the T&GWI.

At the Brighton motor car workers' demonstration on October 3, Etheridge deliberately misled those present about the outcome of his talks with Wilson. Speaking to 'Daily Express' reporter John Grant, he said: 'I think we achieved the impossible'. At the car workers' meeting immediately after the interview he conveyed the impression that something was gained, but at the end of his statement it was obvious that Wilson did not commit himself to making a single concession. Yet Etheridge deliberately tried to cover up for him.

In the audience was Mr. Bert Ramelson, industrial organiser of the Communist Party, who told motor car stewards who were critical of Etheridge's report back to 'shut up'. He also, on behalf of the Communist Party, tried to cover up for Wilson.

CP's role

This, then is the real role of the Communist Party. It makes 'left noises' in order to convey the impression that it opposes Wilson. Then, when real action against him is proposed, it tells the workers concerned 'that they have already won a victory', and that it is not necessary to fight. In this way it disarms and betrays the working class, just as the fake 'lefts' do inside the Labour Party. All this flows from the

Continued page 4, column 5

VIETNAM Brown's dead rabbit

AFTER BRIGHTON

By MICHAEL BANDA



IF THERE IS one thing for which the present Labour government will be remembered, it will be for the multiplicity of its abortive plans and schemes. Even Attlee, with his groundnuts and Gambian eggs (alas too many were counted before they were hatched) has nothing to equal Wilson in this sphere.

He has a plan for Rhodesia, a plan for Aden and the Far East, a plan for unemployment, a plan for wages, a plan even for transport—and now a plan for Vietnam!

It is alleged in some quarters that the 'plan' to end all plans for Vietnam was cooked up as a sop to the disgruntled ego of George Brown, who, since he was 'kicked upstairs' from the Department for Economic Affairs to Foreign Secretary, has had nothing to do apart from addressing the Commonwealth Prime Ministers on foreign affairs.

The fact is that Mr. Brown's 'plan' looks suspiciously like so many of the dead rabbits which McNamara and Johnson have been producing for the last two years from the same diplomatic top hat.

And for this reason it has been deservedly rejected by Hanoi, Peking and even Moscow.

If George Brown thought that Asian opinion would be favourably impressed by his rotten swindle, he has now learned differently.

As any peasant knows, all talk about reconvening the Geneva conference is the product of either duplicity or stupidity.

While Brown was prating at the United Nations, his mentors at the White House were weighing up the alternatives in Vietnam and all the evidence suggests another frightening round of escalation.

Blunt statement

The 'Time' magazine in its first pages states it bluntly:

'The US once again is on the threshold of fundamental and far-reaching decisions about the war in Vietnam. The decisions have been deferred for the time being by the coming Manila conference, a fresh flurry of peace feelers, and, not least, next month's congressional elections. On a November 8 is past, President Johnson will not be able to delay much longer the need to determine how far and by what means—barring any realistic prospect of a negotiated peace—the US is prepared to go to achieve a military victory.'

Johnson, having thrown 320,000 US youth into Vietnam and having bombed the country incessantly for 18 months now realises that the National Liberation Front and the Hanoi government, far from throwing in the sponge, are content to let the war go on indefinitely until the US pulls out.

All attempts to seal the South against infiltration has failed and the US army is now contemplating mining the entire demilitarised zone at a fantastic cost.

The mounting cost of the war has prompted prominent US politicians and military figures such as Curtis Le May and Eisenhower to advocate the use of nuclear weapons to bring the war to a 'successful' conclusion.

But nobody, not even George Brown, is going to get the US off the hook in Vietnam. That is why, after November 8, the world, and south-east Asia in particular, can expect some dramatic developments in the undeclared war.

What next for the 'left'? By Gerry Healy

The Labour Party Conference summed up on PAGE TWO

NEXT WEEK

G. Healy's series PROBLEMS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL will be resumed. This article will deal with 'The Robertson group in the USA'

FOOTNOTE

IN A FOOTNOTE to his article 'Behind the Ulster Crisis' on page 3, Cliff Slaughter writes:

In a Cabinet reshuffle last week, Faulkner was removed as Leader of the House at Stormont (the Northern Ireland parliament), though retaining his position as Minister of Commerce.

Mr. Brian McConnell was relieved of his post as Minister of Home Affairs, and appointed a Minister of Development.

One Minister of Development already exists, and in present circumstances one wonders how even he could have the prospect of much to occupy him over the next period!

TWO FINED IN BRIGHTON

AT BRIGHTON magistrates court on October 11, two men were fined £20 each after pleading not guilty to a charge of using 'threatening behaviour'.

They were charged under Section 5 of the Public Order Act, 1936, as amended by Section 7 of the Race Relations Act, 1965. Prior to their court appearance they had been imprisoned in Lewes jail for eight days.

According to the 'Morning Star', October 12, the police said in evidence that 'the accused had been arrested after shouting and waving a banner in defiance at a procession consisting of a large number of Young Socialists'. Both 'Carroll and McDonald', the 'Star' goes on, 'agreed in

evidence that while carrying a banner inscribed 'Birmingham Council for Peace in Vietnam' they tried to join the march after failing to find a CND contingent'.

They said the marchers had told them to leave the procession and Carroll said he had been pushed out.

'Carroll added, the 'Star' continues 'I started shouting back and asked my friends to come out of the crowd'.

A spokesman for the National Committee of the Young Socialists declared on Tuesday that the sentences passed on the two men were harsh and unjust and that use of the Public Order Act 1936 with the amendment by Section 7 of the Race Relations Act 1965 is absolutely wrong. 'The Young Socialists' de-

monstration at Brighton on Sunday, October 2,' he said, 'was supported by over 1,200 youth and adult trade unionists. It was by far the largest demonstration on the eve of the Labour Party conference. All opponents of the war in Vietnam and the wage freeze were cordially invited to join it.'

The National Committee spokesman said that he understood that 'Carroll and McDonald were asked to join but they refused'.

Instead they had marched on the pavement beside the demonstration calling upon the demonstrators to break ranks and join but they refused.

'Had this taken place it would have constituted a disruption of the demonstration leading to a conflict with the police,' said the spokesman.

