

# The Newsletter

WEEKLY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

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## THIS SATURDAY YOUNG SOCIALISTS GRAND CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

CANNING TOWN PUBLIC HALL

BARKING ROAD, E.16

DOORS OPEN 12 NOON

XMAS GIFTS: PRIZES GALORE: SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS FOR ALL  
THE FAMILY  
LOOK IN ON SATURDAY AT THE WONDERFUL RANGE OF STALLS AND  
SIDE SHOWS

# LEFT MPs MUST FIGHT WILSON

## Talking 'left' again — Benn

By Newsletter Reporter

WHEN ASKED at a meeting of Bristol Labour Party Young Socialists, at which supporters of 'Keep Left' were present, if it was true that some employers were using the government's inflationary policies as an excuse to sack workers, Anthony Wedgewood Benn, Minister of Technology, is reported as saying that it was true in relations to car firms, adding:

'Some firms had a dud product which they could not sell, and hence reduced their labour force.'

He spoke in glowing terms of the 'technological revolution', which necessitated a fresh approach to socialist politics, and which 'outdated' both trade unions and parliament.

### Promise

He neglected to say whether this revolution had outdated the class struggle or whether the benefits of scientific advance would be returned to the working class.

Having discovered that his audience contained a large number of Young Socialists, he is reported to have promised that 'land, steel and the docks are to be nationalized in the next five years,' and that 'the commanding heights of the economy will be in public hands in 10 to 15 years' time.'

He attempted to defend reformism by assuring his audience that 'the ruling class is gutless, idle and lazy and will always back down', at the same time evading the whole issue of class collaborationist policies of the social democracy.

When he asked if the Young Socialists were in favour of a Vietnam truce leading to the reconvening of the Geneva conference, a YS member replied: 'You might as well say if pigs could fly would we support it?'

In order to placate his hostile audience, it is reported that he made remarks about the 'Stalinist bureaucracy' and claimed: 'I would have been a Bolshevik in 1917.'

### Exposed

When right-wing members of the Labour Party YS proposed that the meeting be closed they were overwhelmingly defeated.

To continue the meeting would further expose Benn as a 'left' in the best Frank Cousins' tradition.

Like Cousins, Benn was prominent in the middle-class protest movements, CND, Anti-Apartheid, etc., before Labour came to power, and, in October 1964, accepted a Cabinet post. Also like Cousins, he has remained silent since then while Wilson's government has carried out a continuous attack on the working class, including postmen.

The fact that he was given Cousins' post—previously he was Postmaster General—does not mean that there is less similarity between them.

THE CEYLON  
MERCANTILE UNION'S  
strike, led by Bala Tampoe  
of the Lanka Sama Samaja  
Party (Revolutionary),  
is now entering its  
fourth week.  
READ OUR ON-THE-SPOT  
REPORT  
on page three

## Statement by the Political Committee of the Socialist Labour League

WILSON, BROWN AND CALLAGHAN are at war against the wages and conditions of the working class. Unemployment is increasing week by week. Prices are going up daily. Meanwhile wages are frozen and the employers, actively supported by the right-wing Labour leaders, are preparing to drive them down still further on the factory floor. It is no longer a question of wage freezing—we are already in a period of wage cutting.

Every Labour voter knows that the Wilson government was not elected to create unemployment and reduce wages. But that is what is taking place. The Labour government has in fact organised the employers to fight the working class.

Its leaders spend most of their time hob-nobbing with the employers, encouraging them to fight the working class.

Millions of workers believed that a Labour government would solve their problems. Now they see the government of Harold Wilson betraying them to the Tory employers.

The Labour government is today fighting the working class and openly supporting the employers. There are no grounds for retreat. The working class must either fight the Wilson government or be reduced to the living standards of paupers.

This is one of the rare occasions, since the General Strike of 1926, when the rank and file of the labour and trade union movement have had to decide for themselves what they propose to do.

### LEFTS EVADE THE ISSUE

The so-called Labour lefts in the Parliamentary Labour Party hide behind the right wing and evade the issue. Abstention is not enough. How can you abstain on unemployment? How can you abstain when it comes to starvation for your family?

Yet this has been the position of the Labour lefts in Parliament up until now. Instead of openly opposing Wilson they have abstained on the grounds that if they had voted against the government they would have been forced to go into the opposition lobby with the Tories.

Such an explanation amounts to nothing more than fraud. The road is clear for fighting Wilson within the Labour movement. It is completely within the constitution to place a resolution before the Parliamentary Labour Party demanding the resignation of Wilson and his Cabinet.

### NO OTHER WAY

The left refrain from this because they know it would involve a fight to the finish. Yet there is no other way out. We demand that the left MPs fight Wilson. Place a motion before the Parliamentary Labour Party and demand that both he and his Cabinet resign at once.

If they, as they undoubtedly will, refuse, then the left MPs must call upon the working class to organise a national lobby and demonstration to force them out of office.

There can be no evasion. The left MPs must fight Wilson or be exposed as his main allies. It is up to them.

November 14, 1966

## HEALY RAPS CP

Newsletter Reporter

'THE OFFICIALS of the Communist Party who called upon the Leeds police to invoke the 1936 Public Act against the Young Socialists during a demonstration in opposition to the Prices and Incomes Bill [reported last week] were shaping a rod for their own backs,' said G. Healy, secretary of the Socialist Labour League.

'They did it in the USA during the war when they supported the use of the Smith Act to jail Trotskyist leaders, only later to find the same Act being used to jail their own leaders.'

'It is' he said, 'a fundamental socialist principle for working-class organisations to unite together, no matter what their differences, in opposing the use of the police against any section of the movement. The Communist Party leaders had clearly violated this principle.'

'And what price "left unity", this much abused cliché which the Communist Party is fond of dangling before the left in the Labour Party?'

'On the Leeds demonstration

they provided us with a good example of what they mean by such "unity".'

'Drop your slogans and carry ours', they said. If there are still some people muddleheaded enough to forget what happened to the social-democratic lefts in Eastern Europe after the war when they foolishly believed the Communist Parties wanted genuine unity, they should take careful note of this dictatorial request. Here is the real political bureaucratic face of Stalinism in action. Those who naively believed the CP prattle about "unity" finished up in concentration camps or before a firing squad.

'Fortunately Gollan and Co. do not have that power here,' concluded Healy, 'and they never will if the Socialist Labour League and the Young Socialists have any say in the matter.'

'Leeds is a warning. What the tinpot CP officials said in effect was drop your policies or we will ask the police to use the Public Order Act to force you to do so. Labour lefts please note.'



## As reduced labour force returns to motor firms, a plea from a shop steward:

# All the lads want is a clear, firm lead

BY SYLVIA PICK

UNEMPLOYMENT figures counted on Monday, but not to be released till next Wednesday, will certainly show the sharpest rise in Birmingham and the West Midlands. Since the October figures, which showed a total of over 41,000 wholly unemployed and on short time, the mass sackings of car workers from BMC factories have taken place.

Last week the car industry in the Midlands was in a state bordering on complete breakdown as a consequence of government policies. Factories already hit by redundancy and short-time working were in some cases brought to a standstill by the strikes against sackings at Morris Radiators, and of the car delivery drivers at Longbridge.

Following the return at Oxford, some firms are starting up again.

The Longbridge strike, which is official, has already lasted over eight weeks. A Midlands official of the Transport and General Workers' Union has said: 'The onus is on the employers. We will stick it out as long as they like.'

### NO DRIVE

Pickets have in fact built huts from which to watch the storage compounds at Austin's, and have a searchlight which shows what is going on in the compounds after dark.

But since the start there has been no drive by the union leadership towards a quick and decisive victory by enlisting the support of car production workers. These also voted overwhelmingly for work-sharing instead of redundancy, the principle for which the Longbridge drivers are striking.

This week work has been partially resumed in some of the factories affected by the two disputes.

But the desperate plight of some car workers can be under-

stood in the light of reports from the Tractor and Transmissions factory in Birmingham that a number of men there have received no pay whatsoever for the past three weeks, although they were not among those sacked.

Reports say that some have been reduced to asking the firm to declare them redundant, in order that they might draw the dole.

Workers at BMC's Fisher and Ludlow factory, Erdington, report that reactions to the crisis are very mixed and confused.

Many in the factory say that there should have been a resolute all-out fight against redundancy from the beginning.

Others take the more fatalistic line that there was nothing much they could do.

This latter reaction is the consequence of the disastrous weakness of trade union leadership, both local and national.

Continued page 4, column 6 →

### PUBLIC MEETING

## Hungarian Revolution

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20

CITY MEMORIAL HALL

SHEFFIELD

7.30 p.m.

## Aberfan organisations link up

### Demand voice on fund committee

BY OUR CARDIFF CORRESPONDENT

FIVE HUNDRED Aberfan villagers attended a meeting on Monday at which their two independent organisations merged to become the Aberfan Parents' and Residents' Asso-

ciation. They are demanding 10 representatives on the committee handling the disaster fund and want to see the terms of the trust deed before anything is finalised.

It has been discovered that during the clearing up operations, after the killer tip slipped on to the village, the lorries which have rumbled up and down the streets carrying away the slurry have caused cracks to appear in many houses. Two homes have had to be evacuated and a shop has been closed because they might collapse.

There has been some trouble in the past caused by subsidence.

But one woman moved out of her home said: 'During the past few weeks it has become much worse. I am sure the heavy lorries have caused this.'

Emergency powers have been given to the Port Talbot Borough Engineers department by the local council following a movement of two inches in a quarry tip threatening 30 houses in the town.

## Anti-wage freeze electricians under attack

From BOB SHAW

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY contracting electricians employed on a site at Newbridge, near Edinburgh, by James Kilpatrick and Son, a Paisley firm, had their employment cards sent to them through the post recently.

They were told in a letter that they were sacked because of an alleged unofficial meeting held during working hours, 'coupled with the continuous poor level of production and lack of co-operation in many aspects'.

Apprentices who were left on the site were expected by the firm to carry on with the journey-men's work.

### Tightening up

The company offered to re-engage the men on the condition that the working rules agreed between the Electrical Trades Union and the Electrical Contractors' Association would be strictly applied. The electricians who have now returned to the site claim, however, that working conditions have been tightened up and the rules rigorously applied.

The attitude of the local ETU officials was that the men were in the wrong and that they had no alternative but to return to work. A notice was pinned up at the Paisley headquarters of James Kilpatrick which invited all 'loyal' ETU members to prevail on their brothers to return to the Newbridge site.

The electricians had no alternative but to return under the firm's conditions. They were told that only 85 men would be re-started and that selection would be based on seniority.

At least one shop steward has

failed to regain his job although he had seniority of a number of years. He has now had to leave his new house in the Livingstone New Town and move back to Glasgow in search of a job.

Other sacked electricians live in the Bathgate area where unemployment is already high due to sackings at the BMC.

### Previous strike

Members of the ETU will recall the strike which took place at the Kincardie Bridge site in 1962. The strike was broken when electricians were sent on to the job at the instigation of the union office.

An attack was then launched against individuals and branches in the area and a number of ETU members were disciplined.

Electricians at Kilpatrick's think that they are being sorted out because they have led an unofficial movement against the government's prices and incomes policy and took part in a demonstration in Glasgow when contracting men marched to the union office and demanded a fight against the wage freeze.

Since the Kincardie strike many things have changed in the ETU. Many ex-CP members and other militants who were then in opposition to the union leadership have now followed them into full-time jobs in the union.

They now say that they are still opposed to the right-wing but claim that the way to defeat them is to beat them at their own game—by using the rule book.

This avoids any questions of giving leadership to rank-and-file movements which try to find a genuine policy to fight the electrical employers. It also means that they keep their nice new jobs.



## PETER JEFFRIES writes a discussion article

**THERE IS NOW** widespread speculation that Wilson is about to start serious negotiations for the entry of British capital into the European Common Market. He has promised a definite statement of intentions 'in the not too distant future'. Mr. A. G. Norman, Chairman of De La Rue, is also in the process of preparing a report on the consequences of entry for the Confederation of British Industry.

Lying behind these moves is the widespread recognition amongst many sections of the ruling class that British capitalism has no future outside Europe. Failure to gain admission in 1961 has left it in the untenable position of reliance on an old Empire market which is rapidly declining in importance.

Over the last decade the value of British trade with Europe has increased sharply as well as the volume of capital export. Britain now exports nearly 20 per cent of her goods to Europe, which stand at over £900 million.

In particular the giants of British capitalism, ICI, Courtaulds, Shell, Unilever, the motor firms, etc., have spent large sums in an attempt to penetrate the growingly competitive European market.

Should Britain remain outside these firms will be in an impossible position, facing better-equipped rivals as well as a tariff barrier. Only by joining Europe will they be able to compete on an equal footing with German, French and Italian firms.

But this, of course, is far from the end of the story. The British capitalists are by no means united in their desire to enter Europe and there are certainly deep divisions about the timing of entry and the terms of joining.

In many respects the City of London, dependent for its rich income on the position of the pound and the sterling area, remains hostile to integration with the Common Market. If this means any weakening of the pound, which it certainly would.

These divisions between the 'financial' and the 'industrial' wings of British capitalism reflect the particular history of Britain as the first capitalist nation, which undertook, through the City of London, much of the financing of industrialisation on a world scale in the latter part of the 19th century.

It is estimated that the City of London earns about £250 million each year from the financial transactions which it still carries out for in the rest of the world.

In addition, those sections of British industry which remain tied to the old markets of the Commonwealth and other semi-colonial areas fear that entry into Europe would spell ruin for them. Large parts of the engineering industry, the cruder parts of the chemical and textiles industries etc. are in this category.

In other words the divisions in the capitalist class, which exploded in the form of the Tory revolt of 1961 when Macmillan and Heath were attempting to gain entry, are as deep as ever.

### Contradictions

They reflect the real contradictions of British capitalism as one of the most backward sectors of the world economy.

These divisions are clearly revealed within the Labour Party. It is widely reported that whereas Brown is an enthusiastic supporter of entry on almost any terms, Wilson is much cooler, while Douglas Jay, President of the Board of Trade (who recently spoke in favour of a devaluation of the dollar at some point in the future) is said to be a hardened opponent of entry.

The possible entry of British capital into Europe is not only the concern of the British ruling class.

For one thing the whole future of the pound as an international trading currency is immediately raised. General de Gaulle has consistently refused to take part in any serious discussions about the reform of the world monetary system which do not include plans for the removal of the pound and the dollar from their privileged positions as 'reserve' currencies.

The fact that the dollar (and to a lesser extent the pound) was accorded the status of the major reserve currency after the war has allowed US capital to increase its dominance and pene-

tration into Europe and particularly France.

Even if de Gaulle is unable to force the ditching of the pound as a pre-condition of British entry into Europe, there is no doubt that closer integration into Europe would undermine even further the Commonwealth and sterling area as a viable economic and financial bloc and the pound would be clearly weakened as a result.

Not only would this seriously hit the City of London, it would also have major repercussions for the international financial system.

This is why speculation about entry into Europe coincides with renewed discussion about the value of the pound and its possible devaluation.

The immediate impact of entry into Europe certainly would be to worsen considerably the balance of payments.

In the first place it is estimated that the import bill for food would shoot up by 10 per cent, as well as other imports: this would flow from the ending of privileged trading agreements with the Commonwealth countries.

Entry into Europe would also involve an end of many of the rigid controls now operating against capital movements.

There would certainly be an increased flow of capital out of the country as firms sought new favourable investment opportunities in the European market. This has already been a feature of the last few years with Britain outside Europe and would certainly become much more important if Britain were to gain admission.

Both these factors would certainly impose enormous strains on the balance of payments at a time when the British capitalists are still massively in debt to the European and US bankers.

In such conditions it would be impossible to maintain the role of the pound as a reserve currency or to preserve it at its present value vis-à-vis the dollar.

The French have already proposed a plan to raise a massive loan for London so that it can repay its debts to the sterling area and wind up its present role.

### Disaster

Thomas Balogh, Oxford don and Wilson's chief economic 'expert', has circulated a paper to the Cabinet warning that entry into Europe at this stage would spell disaster for British capitalism in these and other ways. Wilson appears to have accepted his advice and is determined to rectify the balance of payments deficit before any firm steps are taken towards definite entry.

In any case the reorganisation of European industry and finance is of immediate concern to the United States. Johnson must be watching these developments with great interest and anxiety.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s there is little doubt that the main drive for Britain's entry into Europe came from the US.

Not only did they require a political counterweight to Germany and France in Europe and NATO; they were anxious to extract the maximum possible advantage from the large sums of money which had been invested in British industry.

This could only be done if the British motor-car industry, chemical and oil industries etc. were integrated with Europe, so that capital could move more freely and have a bigger market at its command.

In the present situation, however, British entry into Europe, which involves a sacrifice or devaluation of the pound, would be a serious threat to the position and stability of US capital.

The pound is still responsible for the finance of roughly a fifth of world trade.

The US balance of payments deficit, which has become an increasingly serious problem during the 1960s, has placed a serious question mark over the position of the dollar. It is increasingly unable to bear the strains which it has to carry as the main means of international trade and finance.

Should the pound, which is still the second most important trading currency, lose its status as a reserve currency this would intensify the 'liquidity crisis' and impose a massive strain on the over-burdened dollar.

If, as a result of entry into the Europe, the pound was to be devalued this would certainly precipitate a first-class crisis in the world monetary system and

# Economics and the Common Market

particularly for the dollar.

The problems in the French and German economies would mean that a devaluation of the pound would lead to a similar devaluation for the mark and franc.

Last week saw the franc fall to a new low against the dollar, with a drop of £37 million in the French reserves.

Imports into France have been rising at a rapid pace and this, combined with an outflow of liquid capital seeking higher rates of interest abroad—especially in the United States—has produced a weakening of the balance of payments position.

### Sharp crisis

A much sharper crisis is developing in Western Germany, where the 'economic miracle' is giving way to a worsening balance of payments position, rising prices and a much slower rate of growth.

If the pound, franc and mark were devalued the dollar would be forced to follow suit and the spectre of a 'devaluation cycle' would once again haunt the capitalist system.

From this point of view the US would certainly prefer to see Britain enter Europe only when the pound and dollar are much stronger than they are at present. This means eradicating the British and US balance of payments deficits.

In the United States the attempt to curb imports and check inflation is now having serious implications for the prosperity of big business.

In its latest Report the First National City Bank of New York points to a significant fall in prices, in the capital spending plans of many sectors of the economy, to the continuing decline of house building and the mounting crisis in the motor industry where sales have continued to decline.

Most important they point to the movement of profits 'where a definite decline has set in' especially in manufacturing and particularly motors.

Profits would have been even more badly hit but for the sharp rise experienced by those firms in the field of defence, where, thanks to the Vietnam war, order books are over-full.

President Johnson has warned that further tax increases will be necessary to pay for a substantial supplemental appropriation Bill to finance the mounting cost of

the war in Vietnam. Apart from further increasing the outflow of funds and weakening the balance of payments this will further depress business activity and profits.

In this precarious position Johnson cannot afford to see the pound go. On the other hand it is more and more difficult for US capital to launch a massive rescue operation for Wilson should sterling run into trouble as a result of entry into Europe.

Nor will an end to the war in south-east Asia—assuming a deal is possible with the Stalinists—solve the problem: this would undoubtedly have a catastrophic effect upon US industry, much of which is, of course, directly or indirectly tied to the war effort.

In a similar way, Wilson, in attempting to 'straighten out' British capitalism before entry into Europe, is locked in insoluble contradictions. This 'straightening out' process in fact intensifies the problems of British industry. The motor industry is the classic example of this.

The squeeze, necessary to 'correct' the external imbalance and 'save the pound', has thrown the car industry into its worst post-war crisis.

### Car slump

Registration of new cars has slumped by roughly 60 per cent from the high spring rate.

It is now widely anticipated that production will fall a further 6-8 per cent in 1967 to a little over 1.5 million vehicles.

Such a cut-back, in new investment as well as production, must increase unit costs all round (i.e. it is cheaper to produce on a large rather than a small scale) in a situation of growing competition for the world and especially the European market.

The British Motor Corporation, the largest producer in Britain, is likely to be frozen out of Europe in the face of much bigger US and German rivals, all of whom have much larger capital resources at their disposal.

The cut-back in cars is hitting many other dependent industries: John Summers have announced that short-time working is 'inevitable' at their Shotton Works near Chester, which employs 13,000.

In general the profits of many sectors of British industry are being badly hit by Labour's policy and the Board of Trade in the latest issue of its Journal shows conclusively that profits

were already declining before the July measures were taken.

Thus Wilson, who wishes to bargain from a position of strength with de Gaulle and the other European leaders, is forced to take measures which weaken British industry and lay the basis for an even bigger crisis.

We are not dealing with 'mistakes' in economic policy but with the real contradictions of British capitalism.

Thus Professor Kaldor, another of Wilson's band of 'experts', in his inaugural address as Professor of Economics in the University of Cambridge, last week tried to show that a major cause of Britain's crisis was a shortage of skilled manpower.

In this he is of course 'correct', just as those who answered him by saying that the problem was in fact one of *too much labour* were 'correct'. It is impossible to have a 'consistent' economic policy in a capitalist economy which necessarily develops through contradictions.

Thus the entry of Britain into Europe is no 'easy' question for either the British bourgeoisie or for the capitalists of Europe and the United States. Whatever the outcome of the renewed turn to Europe by Wilson and Brown, some lessons are clear for Marxists and for the working class.

In the first place, it is clear that the divisions between the capitalist states are intensifying. Far from smoothing over the conflict between the development of the productive forces and the nation states, the Common Market has sharpened these contradictions.

Faced with a crisis of over-production the European Coal and Steel Community shows definite signs of breaking up and relapsing back into national plans.

The growing instabilities in France, and especially in Germany, where the future of the government is at stake, and where a significant growth is taking place in neo-Nazi organisations, are symptoms of these growing tensions between the European states.

Finally, inside Europe or not, Wilson must continue his drive against the working class.

The crisis in Britain makes this absolutely imperative.

Wilson has made it clear there can be no relaxation of the squeeze; the attack on the unions by the state must intensify and all industrial questions become more and more political questions which raise immediately the question of who holds power in society, the working class or the capitalists.

## Germ war in Vietnam?

Science Correspondent

**THE AMERICAN** imperialists are using the war in Vietnam to try out a whole armoury of terror weapons. They hope, in this way, to frighten the Vietnamese workers and peasants into submission and they also hope to scare off any other section of the world working class which might contemplate revolutionary struggle against capitalism. In the process they can increase the power of the terroristic machinery at their disposal.

Not only have the Americans used so-called conventional weapons like 'Puff the Magic Dragon', 'Lazy Dog' shrapnel shells and mass bombing raids. They use napalm to burn and destroy whole villages and townships.

They devastate thousands of areas of forest and standing crops using poison sprays. They use anti-personnel gasses against demonstrators and in battle, and they have even recruited beg bugs to act as scouts for their infantry.

The recent outbreak of plague which is still raging in the revolutionary stronghold of the Mekong Delta in South Vietnam raises an even more sinister question:

Is the US using germ warfare in Vietnam?

Many indications point in this direction. The US govern-

ment spends vast sums of money (114.5 million dollars in 1963-1964) on research in chemical and biological warfare—much of this is spent on germ warfare research at such places as Piri Bluff Arsenal, Arkansas, and Dugway Proving Ground, Utah.

The British allies of the US maintain the Porton, Hants, centre which is undoubtedly closely tied up in this grisly work: one of the chief Porton research workers, a Dr. Bacon, died recently of pneumonic plague caught in the course of his work.

These research sections have paid close attention to the development of new strains of virulent bacteria, and more than 140 variants of the plague bacterium *Pasteurella Pests* have been developed.

Many of these are far more virulent than natural strains. Other research is concentrated on methods of producing these in bulk.

Natural plague is carried by rats and other rodents, and transmitted to man by fleas. This was how the Black Death was carried: The epidemic of bubonic plague which ravaged across Europe in the 14th century, causing 20 million deaths.

American research has found new ways with this fearful disease. It can now be spread by spraying a fine aerosol containing the bacteria from a

plane or on the ground. Any unvaccinated person who breathes spray dies in agony.

The American imperialists in the past have shown no scruples about using germ warfare. A relatively crude form was used in the Korean war when special canisters containing infected rats and insects were dropped on North Korea and China. The Chinese government produced detailed evidence of these crimes and it was never rebutted by Washington.

Whether or not the US is in fact deliberately spreading the plague in Vietnam, one thing is absolutely certain. Even the most obscene methods of imperialist war have not broken the determination of the Vietnamese workers to throw off the yoke of imperialism.

They have quite the opposite effect. Johnson, the modern Genghis Khan, claims to be bringing democracy and civilisation to Vietnam. This is a lie from beginning to end. In order to protect their rotten and corrupt system, the imperialists are prepared to drag Vietnam back into the Dark Ages, using modern scientific techniques.

What stands between them and their aim is the power of the international working class. The choice is between socialism and barbarism and it can only be resolved through an all-out struggle to defeat imperialism under the leadership of the Fourth International.

## LETTERS

# From the JGS

Brussels, November 1, 1966

Comrades,

We cannot admit the account that The Newsletter, the organ of the Central Committee of the Socialist Labour League, makes of our demonstration of October 15 in Liège.

The editors of this journal claim that in order to force you to withdraw your banners on the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the Jeunes Gardes Socialistes (JGS) called the police.

We are outraged at such a lie, we must clarify this question: 1. Some comrades of the National Federation of the Jeunes Gardes Socialistes asked you to give up your slogans which were not those for which we had agreed to demonstrate and on which the leadership of your organisation had shown agreement during its visit to Brussels.

Let us recall that during this visit to Brussels you proposed to take part in the demonstration with a slogan against the Geneva agreements, and that we agreed to this, but that at no time did you bring up the question of a banner of support for the Hungarian revolution.

2. We did not call the police to have you withdraw the banner, for if the police had intervened it is clear that you would not have demonstrated.

3. You did not have to fight to defend your banners. You marched with all the banners that you brought, with the agreement of the JGS.

4. The departure of the demonstration, forseen for half past three, took place at four o'clock (or half an hour late), solely because we were waiting for the JGS groups coming from other regions. Consequently, we demand that you retract publicly in The Newsletter and in 'Keep Left' your lying allegations and that you publish this letter in The Newsletter and in 'Keep Left'.

A refusal on your part could only be considered as breaking off relations between us.

We cannot, in any case, see what you could still have to do in the future with people whom you consider to be denunciators and accomplices of the bourgeois police.

Comrades, dialogue is very difficult with people who insult easily and who vulgarly confuse their closest allies with their worst enemies and the valets of capitalism. But we nonetheless dare to hope that a regrettable quarrelsome spirit will not push you uselessly to compromise an action which has already cost you and us much effort.

Revolutionary greetings

Albert Fajersztajn,

National Secretary, on behalf of the National Bureau.

# Reply

The National Secretary,

Federation Nationale des Jeunes Gardes Socialistes,

Brussels, 1, Belgium

November 15, 1966

Dear Comrades,

We are in receipt of your letter dated November 1 which was considered by the National Committee of the Young Socialists at its meeting on November 12 and 13. I was asked to reply to you as follows.

1. We broke no agreement so far as the main slogans on the demonstration were concerned. Our contingent prominently carried large banners against NATO and the war in Vietnam.

Had we known that you wished to obtain agreement on a list of proscribed slogans such as defence of the Hungarian Revolution in case they antagonised the Stalinists then we would have promptly made our disagreements known.

The political basis of our participation in the Liège demonstration was stressed in the editorial of the September issue of 'Keep Left', as follows:

◀ We would therefore like to take this opportunity to speak frankly and openly to all those who will march at Liège on October 15.

We, the Young Socialists, want a permanent international youth leadership, beginning with what is now possible in Western Europe. We do not expect, and it would be wrong to expect, complete agreement with everybody who will be at Liège. We will fight in unity with those who oppose NATO and the war in Vietnam—but that it only a beginning, a good beginning.

The question is, how are we going to build revolutionary parties to overthrow capitalism in Western Europe?

On the revisionist programme of the degenerate Stalinist bureaucracy in Western Europe, on the corrupt imperialist programme of Wilson, Brandt, Mollet, Spaak?

Or the Fourth International led by the International Committee which includes the Socialist Labour League.

There can be no evasion of these issues. The Young Socialists declare their wholehearted solidarity with Liège because we stand for revolutionary victory of the world working class, with youth in the vanguard, against Wall Street imperialism and its West German, French, Belgian and English hangers-on. We come to Liège as Marxists and Trotskyists. ▶

The Hungarian revolution is very much a Trotskyist question.

2. To suggest that the police were not called in to remove the Hungarian banner carried by the Young Socialist contingent at the Liège demonstration on October 15, is simply untrue. We direct your attention to the statement issued by D. Longley, the chief marshal of our contingent, and published in The Newsletter, November 12, 1966. (A copy is enclosed.)

We can appreciate that many members of the JGS were and are embarrassed by such conduct, but this is a matter which you must deal with in your own organisation. Pierre Legreve, the member of parliament for UGS in Brussels and one of your adult leaders, writing in a recent issue of 'La Gauche', justifies your right to call in the police as follows:

◀ The principle should have been recalled that it is impermissible in a united front demonstration, for some to take for themselves the right to impose slogans that are unacceptable for any other participating tendency. Differences have never been resolved by provocation but by discussion. If these points had been made, no one would have been able to blame the JGS for not having used force—or what is worse—for not having called on the police to enforce the decisions that they had taken in good faith. They would have deprived those demonstrators, who have now finally separated from us, of the impression of being badly treated. ▶

The editors of 'La Gauche', which includes Ernest Mandel, wholeheartedly endorse this viewpoint.

We repeat what has already been written in The Newsletter. The police are an agency of imperialism. Our hostility towards them is a principled question and it is not permissible to call them in to deal with a vital issue such as the Hungarian revolution in a demonstration of Young Socialists.

The right-wing Labour leaders and the Stalinists are constantly resorting to this sort of thing because they represent bureaucracies which are in fact agencies of imperialism in the workers' movement. Those JGS members who tried to placate a tiny handful of Belgian Stalinists in Liège by calling in the police can only be designated 'servants of imperialism'.

In saying that, we are convinced that they were a very small minority misled by leaders such as Mandel and Legreve. The vast majority of JGS members are sincere Young Socialists who are, we are certain, opposed to what happened.

A number of Danish Stalinists and Pabloites tried on three occasions before the march to remove by force the banner on the Hungarian Revolution. They were unsuccessful.

We are prepared to meet a delegation at any time from the JGS to further examine the matters you have raised.

As you have requested, a copy of your letter and this reply is being sent to The Newsletter for publication. We also request that you have this correspondence published in 'La Gauche'.

Yours fraternally,

Sheila Torrance,  
National Secretary, Young Socialists.

### OUT SOON

#### Fourth International

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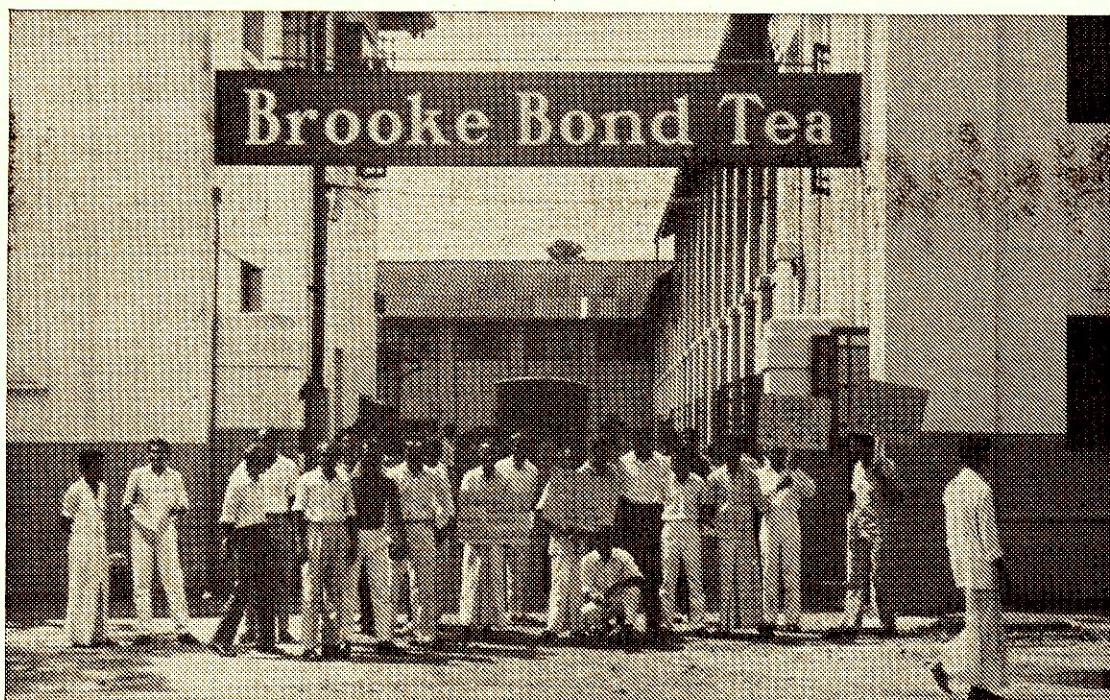


on-the-spot report

CEYLON

# Wide class support for CMU strike

## Revolutionary lead scares government, reformists and CP



NEWSLETTER PHOTOGRAPH

by TONY BANDA

ON NOVEMBER 1 all the branches of the Ceylon Mercantile Union, whose members work in the establishments of the Employers' Federation of Ceylon, came out on strike in support of a call by the Union's General Council. The strike was forced on the union by the refusal of the employers to revise a five-year-old collective agreement. Negotiations have been going on for 16 months now.

The call for strike action was preceded by a magnificent rally of the union membership at Colombo's Price Park on October 25. Here the General Council was authorised to call a strike if the Federation rejected any one of the four following conditions:

- No member to get less than the minimum increase proposed by the Federation for any particular category as a result of conversion to the nearest point on the new scales as proposed by the Federation;
- No distinction to be made between married and single employees in the conversion of the new scales;
- No compulsory retirement of any employee at 55 years;
- The new salary scale to operate on the increased salaries from June 1st, 1966, with arrears of pay from that date.

The employers who conceded point three were later to withdraw that in the face of a threat of strike action.

The Prime Minister and his ministries were unable to alter the course of events and 67 of the country's major imperialist and native-cum-imperialist businesses were struck on the morning of the 1st.

### Familiar firms

Some of the names of the firms affected might have a familiar ring to our readers. Names like Brooke Bond, Lipton, Bata, Singer and subsidiaries of the world's tobacco, chemical and shipping giants, and all the great forwarding agencies, shippers and brokers.

Slowly but surely the grip of this section of workers, which is practically total in the clerical, supervisory, technical and minor-office-staff fields, is being felt on

the economy. As is to be expected, there is a wail from the press. Even the Prime Minister (who has up to now played the impartial arbiter) has had to complain about the effects of the strike. More than 7,000,000 lbs. of tea and 7,500 tons of rubber have piled up in the warehouses of the ports of Colombo and Trincomalee. Tea and rubber auctions have had to be cancelled. 'No Agreement, No Work!' say the strikers.

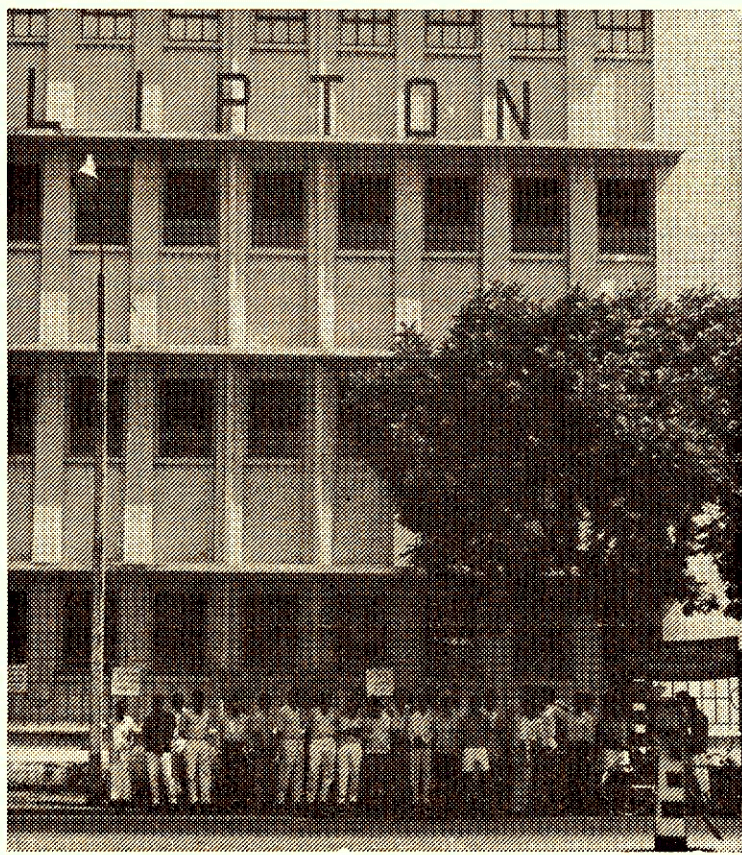
Here in Colombo, in temperatures soaring into the near nineties, often forced to stand exposed to the merciless midday sun and in a climate which could lay claim to being the world's most torrid, these strikers hold their ground day in and day out chanting slogans and singing

satirical songs to the rhythmic beat of a kind of Bongo drum.

The picketing is systematic, and its impact is striking. Each picket has a standard banner with the union's name and branch proudly emblazoned on it. Placards state the case of the strikers. Scabs are usually treated

to a somewhat rough and ready portrait with a few clues to their identity. Adjacent trees are decked out in a bunting of red pennants.

Across the road or just round the corner is their opposite number—the law, a proportion of whom are armed with rifles. In



Members of the CMU are seen in both photographs picketing well-known firms. NEWSLETTER PHOTOGRAPH

some areas, motorised infantrymen armed with clubs lie in wait (perhaps they are not armed with more lethal weapons on account of their proximity to coups d'état). Police riot squads stand by at their headquarters.

Yet for all this display of armed violence, the government is racked by an internal crisis brought on by the worsening terms of world trade and loss of markets for its main exports and its evident loss of popularity in the recent mini-election (it lost all three seats).

### Laws withdrawn

Although a more or less permanent state of emergency has reigned in this island for nearly eight years certain sections of the legislation have been withdrawn on representations from the unions. These include those sections covering the maintenance of what are termed 'essential services' (in which field a great part of the CMU operates), and the press censorship.

Amongst the big imperialist firms there is one section which wishes to 'do business' with the union and another which would see it smashed.

The CMU is, in many respects, in the vanguard of the struggle for unionisation of the country's working class, which includes most grades of technical, supervisory and white collar workers. They are, by the very nature of the near-colonial conditions obtaining here, practically submerged into the proletariat.

What interests the ruling class most is that this union is making serious inroads into sections of the working class hitherto considered the preserve of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Re-

formist) and Communist Party (Moscow- and Peking-orientated) demagogues. These are the manual and unskilled sections of workers.

In the port of Colombo for instance the CMU's membership embraces grades from the highest supervisor down to the wharf hand. On this framework this union could possibly build the most powerful revolutionary confederation of unions in this country's history.

The union is already acting as a pole of attraction to such workers and hence the concern of the bourgeoisie lest it serves to undermine one of the chief props of the bourgeois-democratic regime which has reigned in this country since 1948, i.e., the LSSP (Reformist) and Stalinist-controlled unions.

### Overtime banned

Nonetheless, plants and workshops not directly affected by this dispute have banned overtime or even struck work, as have the manual grades at Singers, in solidarity action. Most prone to this kind of sympathetic action are workers who are breaking their relations with the reformists and moving towards the CMU.

It also comes as no surprise that this strike causes some embarrassment in these quarters, hitherto conspicuous for their silence or slanders of the CMU leadership. There is verbal support aplenty, and now, a threat of a stunt or two which, if anything, would be in order to provide the government with a provocation. The CMU has warned them that it does not desire such kinds of 'help'.

Enormous changes have taken place in this country in the last ten years or so. Besides the near exhaustion of sterling balances, an aggravation in the terms of trade, loss of markets and a chronic downward trend in the prices for its primary products (tea, rubber, coconut, cocoa), there has been a huge population increase (double pre-war) and a huge rise in partially and fully unemployed.

### More literate

This has been accompanied by a terrific rise in literacy and educational standards. An estimated quarter of the population is school-going, one of the highest proportions in the world.

Thousands of GCE-level students are forced to seek employment in working-class occupations. This element, now com-

ing to the fore in trade union and student struggles, is not the material that the demagogues are finding easy to hoodwink.

The CMU by its very composition and makeup benefits by the influx of new recruits with this background. The combination of these with the experienced political and trade-union cadres of the union and now the inflow of the finest militants of the semi-skilled and unskilled urban workers, will mean a qualitative change in the trade union movement of Ceylon.

Above all, it will provide for the first time a stable working-class base for the development of a truly representative party of the working class, a party which will make a decisive break with the politics of Pabloism as it has expressed itself in the past history of the LSSP.

### Leadership change

Already, new sections of workers, organised in the public service sectors, state-sponsored industries and new private industries, are voting with their feet for a change of leadership.

This means—in terms of the harrowing experiences of past: communal (racist-pogrom) politics, endemic rationing of the essentials of life, the black market, a permanent emergency, coups and counter-coups and assassinations—essentially a new revolutionary Marxist leadership.

The ingredients of this already exist in the leadership of this union, which, despite the multifarious allegiances of its membership, is able to achieve absolute unanimity in the conduct of its struggle against the imperialists and their various agencies in the labour movement.

The secretary of the union, P. Bala Tampoe, and the assistant secretary are members of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary), along with many other branch officials.

### Far-reaching

The issues in this strike are of more far-reaching consequences than the immediate issues at stake. The ruling class senses this and is moving with great caution. Behind the scenes, the reformists and Stalinists would rather cut their noses to spite the image of the CMU.

On the other hand, the union has the sympathy of ever-increasing numbers of the working class and the lower middle class. Many eyes are focussed on this contest.

Earlier this year a major part of the Ceylon plantation workers received a severe set-back in an eight-week strike. This was in large measure due to the anti-strike attitude of a rival union on the plantations, and inadequate leadership on the part of the union involved.

But if the employers' front is successfully breached, the CMU could sweep the trade union field clear.

Since the stakes are high, this struggle could be a long and bitter fight to the finish. The union leadership has warned the membership of the prospect of such a struggle. The working class has no choice but to fight it through to the end.

# The class struggle in Greece

As Secretary of the International Committee of the Fourth International, Cliff Slaughter recently visited Greece. This article consists of material collected there, together with the lessons of discussions with comrades of the organisation publishing 'Workers' Vanguard'.

IN THE SUMMER of 1965, Greek politics were rocked by a great crisis. The king and his supporters attempted to change the inner structure of governmental rule, with the consequent changes of personnel and techniques; but the different segments of the ruling class were prevented from settling their internal quarrels by the fact that the Greek workers and lower middle classes (petty bourgeoisie) turned out in hundreds of thousands to intervene in the crisis. For many weeks they continuously participated in mass demonstrations in Athens against the monarchy and the reactionary role of the army.

Behind these great events lay a period of several years in which a section of the Greek capitalists were striving to end the worst features of the repressions which followed the Civil War of 1944-49, only because they wanted to open up the path to greater business expansion in Greece.

These sections, eventually congregated around G. Papandreou, relied especially on the support of the Greek Stalinists in the Communist Party who, although illegal, form the backbone, if that is the right word, of the present liberal-democratic front (EDA).

Its function is to keep the political role of the masses within the limits of a degree of 'democratisation', strictly within capitalism.

The Greek bourgeois understand that this political line is in accord with the whole counter-revolutionary direction of world Stalinism, in its latest phase of 'peaceful roads' and co-operation with imperialism.

This whole development has been and is a rich confirmation

of the perspectives of world Trotskyism, as developed by the International Committee.

For this reason the Greek Trotskyists have been able to intervene in the favourable objective situation and to undertake a certain amount of clarification, fighting for their policies as Trotskyists before a large number of workers in struggle.

At this stage it is important to carry forward the discussion and analysis of last year's events and the whole economic and political implications of them, in order to arrive at a clear definition of the strategic and tactical perspectives of Greek Trotskyism. That is the purpose of this article.

### 1. The Greek working class and the petty bourgeoisie

Of Greece's total population of 8,450,000 (1961 census), wage-earners make up 1,300,000. Part of this one and a quarter million is made up as follows:

320,000	factory and handicraft workers,
141,200	building workers,
61,000	road and rail transport workers,
35,000	seamen.

If we take the figure of those working in establishments of over 50 employees, and combine it with the transport workers, we can speak of a more concentrated section of the industrial working class of some 215,000 wage earners who in general go beyond the individualist horizons and petty-bourgeois mentality dominant among workers in small manufacture and handicrafts. These figures were typical of the whole of the 1950s.

It is important to take into account the fact that these workers are surrounded by certain strata of the population whose influence was of importance in the period of the 1950s.

The same 1961 census gives us the following figures:
Wage-earners ... .. 1,300,000
Employers ... .. 116,902
Self-employed ... .. 1,200,000

Of these self-employed, 770,000 are peasants. Thus in the cities

we have a total of 430,000 self-employed, i.e., this section is as numerous as the workers.

The same situation is revealed in another way in a different part of the census, which speaks of 119,000 industrial establishments.

320,000 industrial and handicraft workers, and 119,000 industrial establishments—about three workers on average for each enterprise! And yet this is no mistake: the figures are correct. Greece has thousands of small workshops with one or two employees, or only the owner and his family. This same picture holds true of trade and commerce, with 130,000 self-employed.

This large class of impoverished petty bourgeois is one of the features of the epoch of imperialist decay in a whole number of countries. They characteristically overwork themselves and their families, living under a burden of crushing debt; if and when they employ anyone else they avoid normal wages rates and insurance payments.

A tiny minority become capitalists, but the majority's hopes of doing so are lost in lives of grinding debt and poverty.

In this class we find a large number of angry, revolted, frustrated people whose politics are of the left-wing protest type; in Greece they support the Stalinists. They surround and confuse the working class with their petty-bourgeois illusions and pro-Stalinist ideology. They provide a base for another petty-bourgeois group whose ideas and personnel dominate the Stalinist and left-wing organisations: the thousands of high-school and university graduates who cannot find jobs in the civil service, who have no secure prospects, who feel themselves socially rejected, insulted, alienated.

In the 1950s the workers, and especially the industrial workers, suffered great political disadvantages which are being heroically overcome in recent years.

They had been defeated in the 1944-49 Civil War; mass unemployment tended to demoralise many sections, repressive laws intimidated many workers, given the absence of leadership. The masses remained left-wing in sympathy, still loyal to the Communist Party which was the only

way they could see of expressing their socialist aspirations.

But for the time being the masses of the workers were politically passive.

Overcoming the difficulties of this period was further complicated by the influx into the towns from the countryside of thousands of rural workers and landless peasants.

They had no proletarian traditions, and since they entered the industrial towns after a proletarian defeat, and with the working class dominated by Stalinism, they mostly retained the individualist outlook of the peasant.

In addition, a special type of labour aristocracy was formed. In the first place, certain workers who had a special skill in good demand protected themselves against the current high unemployment by concentrating on consolidating their position vis-a-vis the employers and keeping out of wider issues.

Thus the Greek portworkers returned right-wing leaders to union office throughout the 1950s.

Secondly, Greek industry is extremely backward. Most factories employ one or two master-craftsmen, paid well above the average wage and given special working conditions, alongside a larger number of poorly-paid operatives.

Throughout the 1950s and especially after 1957, emigration from Greece went up by leaps and bounds. Especially in the 25-45 age-group, many thousands left for Western Europe or Australia, and their places were for the most part taken by unskilled youth, many of them from the countryside, underpaid, badly treated, dispersed, insecure and lost in the towns.

They were, of course, unorganised, and participated in politics only when demonstrations turned into violent clashes with the police. The organisation of these young workers is one of the keys to the struggle in Greece.

The Stalinists, dominating the labour movement, made no serious effort to recruit, organise and lead these youth in struggle. Instead they built up their front organisations throughout the 1950s through the dominant in-

fluence of the self-employed and the petty-bourgeois intellectuals, as is always the case in the labour movement when the working class is temporarily defeated and quiescent.

It was these petty bourgeois who organised mass petitions, paraded in the streets, and generally occupied the political scene. Protesting, searching, looking for a way out, they represented a class which veered from the left to the centre (1952 elections), from the centre to the right (1953 elections), and back once again to the left.

This crisis in the lower middle class is a ferment in capitalist society which, given revolutionary leadership and a working class on the march, can supply enormous strength to the revolutionary forces of the proletariat.

Under circumstances where, as in the 1950s, the working class is suffering from the effects of a major defeat and from treacherous leadership, this middle class hangs like a lead weight round the neck of the working class, blocking off the paths to revolutionary class consciousness. The struggle against Stalinism and its social base is therefore an absolutely necessary part of the task of Marxists in Greece. Only Trotskyism can provide the leadership for this task, as the Greek working class emerges from the dark period since the Civil War.

### 2. The Greek capitalist class

By 1950 the Stalinist-led guerrilla was smashed, but the bourgeoisie remained mortally stricken with fear because of the power shown by the working class during the Civil War. Shipowners and other big capitalists exported most of their capital to England, America and Switzerland.

For the most part, consumer goods had to be imported on American credit and state loans. Inflation was rampant. People had learned from bitter experience not to deposit their money in banks; instead they invested in gold or in expensive apartments. Industrial development stagnated.

But by 1953 the most far-sighted capitalist leaders began to grasp more correctly the changed situation. They saw that the workers and poor peasants were demoralised by the defeat of the Civil War.

At the same time, the Stalinist states in the Balkans, bordering on Greece, were pleading for friendly relations and trade.

Thus both internally and externally some capitalists saw the prospect of more secure conditions for investment. A new policy was initiated. In 1953 the drachma was devalued from 15 to 30 per dollar. Through heavy indirect taxation and foreign loans the state began to provide a basis for renewed industrial development.

Internationally such steps were necessary for finance capital, as the pattern emerged of heavy capital exports to precisely such countries as Greece, rather than to the tumultuous colonial countries.

However, while the capitalists were very pleased to get cheaper electricity and transport at no increase in cost to themselves, they in fact continued to hold back from investment, particularly long-term investment. Exports amounted to only 2 per cent of national production. Most of industry continued to consist of small factories with obsolete machinery and a large part of capital expenditure devoted to wages.

Greek industry was encouraged in its conservatism by the protection against foreign competition by high tariff walls, and against local competition by various local monopolies. Continuous international borrowing, easy because of international capitalism's hope to ensure the stability of the area, made it possible to continue importing without a balance of payments crisis.

But while the bourgeoisie and sections of the better-off petty bourgeoisie grew rich on state loans, import permits, political graft, etc., Greek society was in turmoil, even if in a more silent and concealed way than in the 1940s.

Most import agencies, profits, investments, luxuries, etc., were concentrated in Athens, with the

rest of Greece becoming more and more a kind of internal colony of the bourgeois of the capital city. 44 per cent of national industry, 50 per cent of national production, all the banks and ministries, were concentrated in Athens.

The building boom and the ostentatious spending of the Athens bourgeois was just the other side of a situation where the countryside and the smaller towns stagnated.

This stagnation in the provinces had its own social effects, which made a virulent contribution to the character of the present struggles in Greece.

Traditional ties and loyalties, the influence of traditional office-holders in church, school and state, the standing of the traditional intelligentsia, the myriad influences through which the rule of the bourgeoisie in a backward country is cemented, were systematically undermined.

The peasant youth who had fought in the Civil War would not go back to the old, narrow, priest-ridden, patriarchal life of the village and the provincial town.

The state continued to rule the countryside through police violence, resting to a certain extent on the desire of some of the older generation for a relief from the conflicts and hatreds of the Civil War, which in the countryside had taken particularly brutal and violent forms.

This state control could not stem the tide of change, the peasants' desire for the higher standards of city life. Foreign products brought foreign films and music. American styles of dancing became a symbol of revolt against the conservatism of the older and defeated generation.

In this situation, the same phenomenon appeared which has characterised all the capitalist countries in the post-war period: 'public opinion' began to get agitated about the youth.

Sociologists and journalists, always to be found in the front rank of those capable only of being surprised by what is under everyone's nose, noted with astonishment that, for example, Continued page 4, column 6



# Midland car workers face hard times

BY NEWSLETTER REPORTERS

## BIRMINGHAM

### 300 Rover men to be sacked

By Newsletter Reporter

ABOUT 300 ROVER workers are to lose their jobs at the end of December, it was announced on Wednesday. Most are from the main Solihull (Warwickshire) plant. They are work staff and hourly-paid workers.

Rovers say this is 'related to the government's recent statement that no relaxation in the present economic restrictions affecting the motor industry can be contemplated in the near future'.

The firm's managing director has already warned shop stewards: 'I would not like you to think that I regard the position as anything but extremely grave.'

### Lads want a clear lead

From page 1

Right-wing and Communist Party officials have played a similar role of putting the brake on militancy. They have substituted formal union 'procedure' and gimmick publicity stunts for the bold decisive lead the workers were looking for.

Unemployed men from Austin's factory say that few of their number have found satisfactory alternative jobs.

One young worker declared disgustedly that the jobs offered were 'rubbish'. The pay was in some cases less than half their former earnings at Austins.

Another worker said he had been offered a job at £9 per week delivering coal. His wages at Austins had averaged £23. A workmate living at Rubery had the offer of a job at Castle Bromwich; the journey would have involved him in nearly two hours' travelling each way, and the pay was £12 per week.

A 48-year-old worker had taken a job as a post office worker, sorting mail. His pay was to be £14 5s. ('about half what I used to get at Austins'). His wife had no choice but to search for a job.

For some years Birmingham workers in most industries have in general enjoyed a high level of earnings compared with other parts of the country. These have been won and supported by the high wage rates of the car workers.

This steward drew the correct conclusion from his experience. It was a direct contradiction of the pessimism of many right-wingers and fake 'lefts', who seek to escape blame for their own cowardice by bleating that 'the working-class won't fight'.

What he said was:

'All the lads need is a clear, firm lead with the right political line, in place of all this stalling, double-talk and messing about. It all comes down to leadership, and that's what we've got to fight for now.'

This issue of building a new revolutionary leadership is basic to every campaign fought for by the Young Socialists and the Socialist Labour League.

## OXFORD

### From factory to a Father Christmas

THE DOLE QUEUES have been growing to enormous lengths in Oxford over the past few weeks, and it is clear that the unemployment figures must be reaching 3 to 4 per cent.

A special Ministry of Labour office has been set up for ex-car workers, and many of those collecting dole on Friday (November 11) had to queue for over one and a quarter hours, despite the fact that they had all been asked to turn up at specific times. The normal dole, dealing mainly with non-car workers, was also packed.

One semi-skilled BMC worker was offered two jobs—Father Christmas in a multiple store, and deep-sea fishing.

By November 1, only 120 of the 2,000 to be sacked had been found jobs, and the situation seems to have improved very little.

The four factories in the Oxford area—Morris Motors, Cowley, Morris Radiators, Pressed-Steel-Fisher, and M.G. Abingdon—employed a total of 30,000 men. It is the only major industry in Oxford, apart from a few small engineering firms.

On November 4, 1,700 were sacked from Morris Motors—400 more than originally announced. The figure was raised at the last moment when it was clear that no light would be put up against redundancies.

Pressed-Steel-Fisher sacked 300 with another 600 to go in December (this is 300 more than originally announced and said, by the management, to be due to sackings at Rootes).

#### SURPRISED

Morris Radiators have sacked 24—originally the figure was 100. The Radiators' unofficial strike, which lasted for three weeks, involved about 200-300 out of the 1,200 employed there, but finally led to 12,000 being laid off in the Oxford area alone.

This surprised Radiators' stewards who claim that they were forced to call off their last unofficial strike because it had no effect on the rest of the BMC combine.

Radiators men were forced to go back this Monday through Sir William Carron's casting vote against the strike on the Amalgamated Engineering Union's executive, which refused recognition.

The Transport and General Workers' Union also refused support on the grounds that the majority of strikers were AEU members; it would only call out its members if the AEU did so first.

At the lobby of parliament on October 31 by Midland car men, Jack Jones of the T&GWU claimed that his union would give official support to any action by members against redundancy.

#### DISGUSTED

When pressed, he argued that the Radiators' strike was an exception.

About 70 Radiators' strikers and BMC Morris Motors shop stewards went to the lobby and were disgusted and angry at the performance of Dick Etheridge, convener from BMC's Austin plant at Longbridge, Birmingham, who defended lobbied 'left' MPs.

In fact a meeting of the BMC combined shop stewards committee, scheduled to take place after the lobby was called off, probably because concrete demands for action would have been made there.

The joint Morris Motors stewards had already made a call for workers to be prepared for an official strike against redundancy.

The BMC management at Oxford announced just before a previous mass meeting of Morris workers that the BMC Service section was a separate company so far as redundancy was concerned. This has been the most militant section of the factory in the past, and since it is the only section unaffected by

lay-offs, it seems the management intends to split off this militancy from the rest of the factory.

Only a few days later the management announced a new wage scheme applying to this section temporarily (until a job evaluation scheme is carried out) as its workers move into the new semi-automated Horspath plant. This scheme means a cut in wages of at least £5 a week.

(It was this scheme which BMC Service workers struck against earlier this year, and which led to the 'Noose Trial'.)

Also the management has attempted to single out militant sections of transport workers (see last week's Newsletter report on the strike of Morris Motors drivers). Those involved have



Etheridge: Defended 'left' MPs

since been reinstated, but no-one regards this as permanent.

Since all the sackings were according to length of service, manpower will have to be redistributed through the factory, and it is clear that during this process the management will attempt to break down the strength of the car workers.

### GAVE OUT UNION LEAFLETS — SACKED

BY OUR CARDIFF CORRESPONDENT

THE GIANT Guest, Keen, Nettlefold organisation is launching an attack on trade unionism at its Cardiff works as more and more of its employees go on short time.

On Friday (November 11), a member of the Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union was instantly dismissed for distributing union recruiting leaflets.

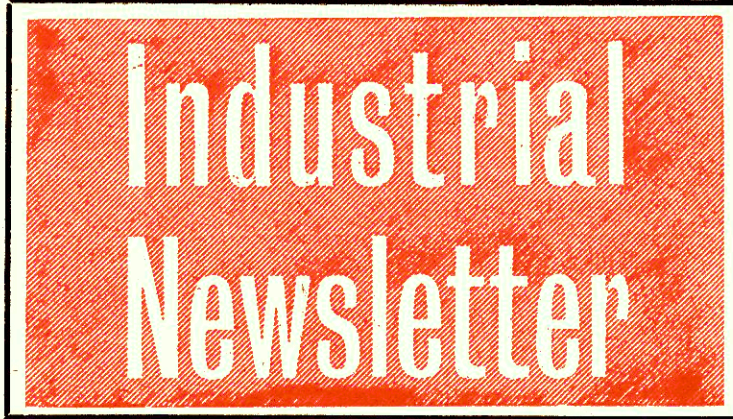
The man involved, 26-year-old Mr. Brian Evans, is treasurer of the Cardiff Central Ward Labour Party. The distribution of leaflets was part of a drive to extend trade unionism among white-collar workers at GKN's Cardiff works, where 200 are already CAWU members.

The leaflets also gave notice of a meeting, to be held on Wednesday, which the union members will go ahead with. On Monday night they were distributing leaflets outside the works.

Short time is increasing among the manual workers. At the Castle works, the cold roll mill and wire section are on a three-day week, while the bar and strip section is on a four-day week.

A similar position exists at the Tremorfa works, at the GKN Iron and Steel Works, and at the GKN, Cwmbran (Monmouthshire) works.

This is the background to the victimisation of trade unionists carrying out routine activities; such is the crisis of giant firms like GKN that they must attempt to smash trade union organisation.



## COVENTRY

### Aircraft firms hit as well as motors

DURING OCTOBER Coventry's unemployment figure jumped by 34 per cent. The coming months of November and December promise an even grimmer prospect.

Six hundred workers have already been sacked from the local BMC factories, Dunlops have sacked 250 and a further 210 will follow at the end of the month.

Rootes intend to sack 700 just before Christmas.

The British Piston Ring Co. has announced 126 redundancies, and Carbodies intend to sack 100 workers.

This brings the total to nearly 2,000 sacked from Coventry's motor factories in the last few months of the year.

Every worker in Coventry knows that this is not the end of the story; it is anticipated that some sackings will also take place in the local tractor plant of Massey-Ferguson, which is at present working only three days a week.

#### 500 to go

Reports from some Massey-Ferguson shop stewards indicate that at least 500 will be declared redundant by the end of the year.

The position at Leyland's Standard-Triumph subsidiary is also grim—a four-day week is operating and around 200-300 may lose their jobs soon.

To combat this growing unemployment the Rootes shop

stewards have combined with other stewards' committees to call a trade union rights committee conference in the city on December 8.

Local members of the Communist Party are known to be sponsoring this conference, and local Party meetings have taken place calling for cuts in overseas expenditure and a ban on imports.

#### Fallacy

The fallacy of this programme can be seen from the fact that the day following one of these meetings, addressed by the CP convener from Bristol Siddeley Engines (Parkside), Coventry, and a CP steward from BMC's Austin plant, it was announced that an American order for Bristol Siddeley Viper engines had been cancelled and that production would be cut by 75 per cent.

It appears that the US government has put into operation the CP policy of cutting imports, in order to help balance her payments.

The present employment position in Coventry also shows that the established labour and trade union leaders have no answer to the present crisis.

Workers who attend the December 8 conference must seriously consider the policies of the Young Socialists and Socialist Labour League, who have continually called for the nationalization of the motor and engineering industries under workers' control.

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## Dublin tenants protest 40,000 strong

AN ESTIMATED 40,000 Dublin Corporation tenants marched through the city streets last week against proposed rent increases. The march, organised by tenants' associations throughout the Dublin area, was, without doubt, the greatest display of working-class militancy seen in the Irish Republic for decades.

Significant features of the march were the militant slogans on the placards carried by many demonstrators and the high proportion of young workers amongst the marchers.

However, in contrast to the militancy of those taking part in the march, tenants' leaders restricted themselves to making formal protests to Corporation officials.

In the present situation, this is useless.

As long as Dublin Corporation has to pay exorbitant interest rates on loans from the banks it has no option but to demand higher rents.

A possible alternative might be to raise the city rates, but since this would turn the small owner-occupiers against the Corporation tenants, this alternative would solve no problems for the workers.

#### Nationalization

The real needs of the tenants demand a policy of socialist nationalization of the banks, the land and the building industry. No other solution is possible at a time when the world capitalist system is going into a deeper crisis.

The tenants' militant march came not long after the massive demonstration of small farmers (reported in the November 5 Newsletter), demanding higher prices for their produce.

Seen against the background of rising militancy among industrial workers in a number of hard-fought strikes during the last two years, these movements show that the time is ripe for the replacement of the capitalist government of the Irish Republic by a government representing the workers and small farmers.

But the present Labour leaders, together with the tenants' leaders and National Farmers' Association officials, are unwilling to give the lead.

The building of a new leadership in the Irish Republic, as in all other countries, is imperative if the needs of the working people are to be met. The recent intervention of the Northern Ireland Young Socialists in a Dublin anti-war demonstration (reported November 5) marked an important and timely step towards the building of such a leadership.

## Struggle in Yorks coalfield increases

By Newsletter Reporter

SINCE THE MASSIVE exodus from the mining industry over the past two years, there has been a rapid intensification in the utilization of manpower, especially in highly-mechanised mines.

This is reaching its climax at Wheldale colliery, Castleford, Yorkshire, where a struggle has been in progress.

About four weeks ago, a section of faceworkers arrived at the pit bottom 20 minutes early, having completed their job. They were seen by an under official who said money would be deducted from their wages as they had contravened the five-day week agreement. The men demanded their money back and the management, faced with a strike, gave in.

#### Other work

Two weeks after this incident, on the night shift, a section of workers were approached by an under official who demanded that a workman who was doing his normal task should also do the work of another man as this section was understaffed.

Immediately he demanded that another workman do other tasks. This led to an alleged swearing incident, the man was sent out of the pit, and he was followed by his workmates.

On the following day, all production workers struck, some of them commenting that 'this has been brewing for months and was bound to happen'.

They have since gone back to work and a decision on the dispute is still pending. It is the second strike of its type at Wheldale this year.

## GREECE

From page 3

since the early 1950s peasant girls have avoided men who have no education and no horizons beyond the village, that young peasant couples no longer have more than two or three children, and will instead sacrifice part of their income for a radio or for European-style clothes.

In the towns, high-school and university students regularly broke out in demonstrations; these would start on varied pretexts, but invariably end up against the government. A general feeling of frustration and contempt for everything conservative pervaded the national life. It was an anticipation of bitter conflicts.

1956 was a year of great symptomatic importance: student demonstrations starting over Cyprus quickly turned against NATO and the government, with hundreds of thousands coming on to the streets.

The EDA was lost, and could only advise its members to avoid clashes with the police. During this period the EDA lost one third of its student members because of the Hungarian events and the attitude towards them of the Greek Stalinist leaders.

It was also in 1956 that peasant demonstrations broke out in many areas as a protest against the State prices for farm products. This spelled danger to the time-honoured use by the bourgeoisie of the country against the town, a device implemented through gerrymandering electoral laws, government contracts for public works, and the buying off of local intellectuals.

As the countryside began to boil over, the bourgeoisie felt its isolation from the changing relation between the other classes,

and inevitably began to rely more on the open use of force and the state machine.

During the 1956 elections working-class youth organised a large, militant demonstration; Stalinist officials who tried to stop them were beaten up. In the election campaign the EDA formed a bloc with the Liberal leader G. Papandreu.

This bloc won 48 per cent of the votes, against 47.38 per cent by the right wing. However the electoral laws gave the right a parliamentary majority.

The Stalinists were now playing a very special role. The Liberals themselves, before the war the strongest and most dynamic of the bourgeois parties, had in recent years been thrown aside as useless by both the American and the Greek big bourgeoisie.

In these circumstances they had split into several small warring cliques.

For them to achieve any political standing whatsoever on behalf of the capitalist class, they leaned exclusively on the division and confusion of the masses and the political weakness of the proletariat.

It was the function of the Stalinists to perpetuate this weakness, and to guide into parliamentary and peaceful channels the awakening militancy of the masses. If 'liberalism' was to revive in Greece, if a course was to be set to 'democratic capitalism' for a while, then it would depend on the Communist Party!

Next week:  
1963: a new stage

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