

The Week

CONFERENCE
MUST HEAR
KEN COATES

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS
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THE LEFT AT BRIGHTON

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THE BRIGHTON LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE AND 'THE WEEK'

The Week is sending many of its editorial team to Brighton this year in order to give adequate coverage to the Conference. In addition to this, The Week will also be co-operating with other left members of the Labour Party in the production of the daily information bulletin, 'Briefing.'

With so many comrades actively engaged we have decided to issue no copy of The Week during the period of the Conference. Instead our next issue, on 6th October, will be an enlarged double volume in which a large section will be devoted to news and analyses of the Conference debates and resolutions.

SHEFFIELD CSE from Peter Smith

The Sheffield Group has begun to meet regularly again after an interval during the summer. A left strategy to fight the economic policies of the Labour Government, and in particular the increasing unemployment, was the subject under discussion. The Group agreed that it is still imperative to continue to defend jobs through work sharing. Most members considered that the demand for "the right to work" should be the basis of a left programme in the coming period. In addition the Group believed that trade unionists should not agree to any action which would affect working conditions without a full disclosure of the financial information on which the decision was based. Most of the Group contributed to the discussion, which included statements from George Caborn, Nick Howard and Peter Smith. The next meeting will be Thursday 20 October in the Station Hotel, Wicker, and will discuss the Party Conference.

VIETNAM EXHIBITION VISITS BRIGHTON DURING CONFERENCE WEEK

The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation's Photographic Exhibition of the Vietnam War will be shown at The Presbyterian Church Hall, Queens Road, Brighton, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, the 4th, 5th and 6th of October, from 10.00 am to 9.30 pm. each day.

The Exhibition was first shown at Plackpool, where it was sponsored by over twenty trade unions. After Brighton it will commence a nationwide tour.

A mere year separates the Blackpool and Brighton Labour Party Conferences, but what fantastic differences there will be between the two events. Last year there was a genuine ovation when Wilson entered the hall: only the consistent left wing and the T&GWU delegates sat on their hands during almost orgasmic scenes of hero worship. The response was genuine in the sense that it expressed the feeling of elation that at last Labour had come to power. The people who applauded Wilson were not all right wingers. Many did not want to see the repetition of the obvious faults and vacillations of Labour's first year in office. At Brighton the clapping will be far more restrained. Those who clung to their illusions last year will be more thoughtful.

This year the platform will be defending not the policy of expansion but that of deliberately and openly creating unemployment, and this year's conference will be lobbied by the first victims of Labour's "Sack 'em" policies. Those who had doubts last year will, this year, be angry. But, alas, many of those who were angry last year will be nowhere to be seen.

In working their tactics at Brighton the left wingers can fall into two traps which in essence amount to the same thing: accepting defeat in advance and 'recognising' Wilson's right to rule the roost in the Labour Party. Mistake number one is that of withdrawing from the fray under the smokescreen of radical phraseology. Those who talk of building a new movement based on industrial struggles should consult their history books: they should weigh up carefully the experience of the pre-1914/18 war synicalist movement, which could call conferences on workers' control attended by hundreds of trade union delegates. The railwaymen and miners who had taken part in extremely militant strikes under revolutionary syndicalist influence, went away to the war completely captivated by jingoism. There are many examples to back up the thesis that it is absolutely necessary to combine industrial and political struggle, and that it is impossible to jump over historical stages. The workers will not break with their traditional party except under the influence of cataclysmic events; and when they do they go through many stages of development.

To abandon the fight inside the Labour Party whilst the overwhelming majority of the working class still see it as the only vehicle for their political expression is to abandon the working class to Wilson. Whilst ever the working class identify themselves with the Labour Party the task of left wingers is to fight to remain in this party; not at the expense of principles but in order to remain politically with our class. When Wilson claims to speak in the name of the Labour Party we need to be able to say: "Wilson lies: he speaks only for the right wing which is politically opposed to the entire raison d'etre of the party." How can we say that if we pull ourselves out and leave the field to him?

The second mistake has sometimes been called "left-footism" (no pun intended). It is based on the thesis that in order to fight effectively one must choose those issues where the maximum number of votes can be won against the platform and the most number of positions can be won by oppositionists. The theory falls down one one point: if one is faced by a determination to gallop as fast to the right as possible, the application of this method leads to one being dragged along to the right at exactly the same rate. If one confines oneself to being a single pace to the left of Wilson, one becomes in stages his left foot! Indeed the one he sometimes leans on! To abandon the fight on principle for fear of lack of votes means to hand over the party to the right. We need to generate an equal pressure to push it to the left. If the MPs are subject to the stifling and constricting pressures of Parliament, we need to subject them - in an intelligent way - to a pressure from the left.

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At Brighton the left must fight intelligently but firmly for the conscience of the party. To gain "victories" like the Vietnam decision at Blackpool is a complete waste of time. Of course we want to get the maximum number of votes, but not at the expense of capitulation. A victory gained at the expense of pretending to stand for something other than we do is not victory: it assists the rightward evolution of the party. The lesson of the two years is clear: all the manoeuvres, all the "careful" tactics and vote-catching gimmicks have not stopped this Government from evolving to the right faster than any other Government in history. To try to halt that evolution we need to stand firm. That is what the left should do at Brighton.

VIETNAM PROTEST MARCH TO TRANSPORT HOUSE ON EVE OF CONFERENCE

On Wednesday 28th September, Vietnam Solidarity Campaign members and supporters marched from the Victoria Embankment to the Labour Party Headquarters at Transport House where the following letter was delivered to Len Williams, the secretary of the party:

"Ever-growing numbers of British people are becoming disgusted with the policy of the present Labour Government in supporting the American Johnson administration in its war of aggression in Vietnam. So far, only a small proportion of the population realise the extent of British involvement and complicity and we consider it our duty to make certain facts known to the British public so they can pass judgement on the Government. The British people have been horrified by the many stories and photographs which have appeared in the British press illustrating the atrocities perpetrated by Marshall Ky's forces. We intend to make known to the British people that British officers are actively engaged in training these self-same forces in the art of jungle "counter insurgency" warfare in Malaya. We are going to make known to the British people the extent of British involvement in Thailand in protecting and helping to build American bases from which a very high proportion of the raids on North Vietnam take place. Many other incidents of British physical involvement in the war can be given, not to speak of the spineless parroting of American arguments about the war which emanate from British Government sources. Moreover, the economic consequences of the British Government's foreign policy are leading to sackings, unemployment and a lower standard of living for the British people.

"The present Labour leadership have, by their Vietnam policy, betrayed the principles upon which the Labour Party was formed. What would Keir Hardie, George Lansbury and other Labour pioneers make of all this? Even Ramsey MacDonald - who went to prison for his pacifist beliefs - would have rejected these policies. But Mr. Wilson and his team (many of whom have forgotten everything they said and stood for in their Aldermaston days) are not the Labour Party. Another aspect of the Labour Party is shown in the huge number of resolutions on Vietnam down for discussion at next week's Labour Party annual conference. The overwhelming majority of these resolutions are highly critical of the present policy of the Government. We pledge our solidarity with those in the Labour Party who are fighting - often in the face of expulsion threats to reverse Labour Party policy. These are the people who represent the true traditions of the Labour Party and we wish them every success."

NO WAGE FREEZE FOR SIR GERALD AND THE ICI SHAREHOLDERS from Geoff Coggan

Sir Gerald Nabarro strongly criticised ICI last week for its handling of applications for the company's £60 million loan stock issue. Sir Gerald was apparently very bothered about equality of opportunity - equality, that is to say, for the exclusive body of ICI shareholders. Some had apparently received their application forms later than others.

"These forms are virtually pound notes", Sir Gerald added. "According to stockbrokers every £100 worth bought could be worth £107 by the end of next week. ICI should have sent them by recorded delivery." He himself had applied for £6,000 worth which, on his own reckoning, should bring him a comfortable, undeserved and unworked-for £420.

BANKERS' CONTROL FOR STATE STEEL

Alan Rooney's article on "Aircraft - Bankers' or Workers' Control", in the last issue of The Week is worth re-reading in the light of the announcement of the appointment of Lord Melchett to the organising committee which is to precede the National Steel Corporation. Rumours that he is, in fact, to be appointed to the chairmanship of that committee have hardly been dispelled by his statement that "it would not be right for me to say whether I would accept the chairmanship." Lord Melchett is a director of the merchant bank of H. Samuel & Co.

The subsequent announcement of the appointment of Ron Smith, the postmen's leader is also ominous from the point of view of workers' control. The usual mixture of jobs for the city and jobs for the boys seems to be in the offing.

CSE IN THE SOUTH WEST from Tom Nicholls

CSE branches have now been established in Bristol, Cardiff and Gloucester and local committees are now in the process of preparing their autumn programme. Cardiff intends to concentrate on problems of local politics such as comprehensive education. Bristol CSE has already arranged a joint series of meetings with the Bristol Labour College, details of which will be going out shortly. Also planned is a week-end school on the background to the wage freeze.

HARLAND & WOLFF ENQUIRY CALLED FOR from a Belfast correspondent

Shop stewards have called for a public enquiry into Harland & Wolff at Belfast in view of the crisis in the shipyard and the frustration of workers who now find their jobs in jeopardy.

£7,000 SALARIES FOR AMERICAN CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN VIETNAM

The 'Daily Mail' reported last week that seven hundred US workers on airfields in Vietnam have been promised up to £350 in bonuses if they behave themselves and abstain from drunkenness, marijuana and pornography. The bonus is additional to a salary of £7,000, which it would take the average Vietnamese worker 210 years to earn.

JIM CALLAGHAN CONDEMNS THE PAY PAUSE from 'Briefing'

Mr. Callaghan said:

"Ah, (says the Chancellor), 'but, you know, we have got to relate wages to productivity, and of course wages have been outrunning productivity.' How does he apply this to the public services? How does he apply it to the firemen? Have the firemen got to put out more fires before they can get an increase in pay? Have the nurses got to heal more patients? Have the teachers got to teach bigger classes? What folly it is to relate this to productivity! We all know, those of us who are working in these fields, that the public services and the semi-public services have never been in the vanguard of wage increases; they have always lagged behind the caravan in the rearguard. To tell public servants and those whose conditions are governed by Wage Councils, that it is they who are creating this nonsense, is to put the cart before the horse.

".....So I ask Conference to say to the Government that we shall resist this wrecking attempt which is pulling down a wage system of conciliation and negotiation merely to cover up the blunders of the (.....) Party's economic policy. There is no solution to be found in the Government's policy in this particular direction. They will have to return to this system if they want public employees and employees in fields which are related to public service to feel that they are being justly dealt with.

"It is this system of Whitley Councils which the Government proposes to destroy. They have paid much lip service to it in the past; they have always said, and we have always argued, that if this system is to succeed, wage agreements must be sacrosanct when they are reached and arbitration awards must be inviolable. If this system is to succeed and if it is to depend upon wage agreements being inviolable and arbitration awards being sacrosanct, then this Government is guilty of breaking down this system and wrecking something which has worked well for 40 years. In Ernie Bevin's day at the Ministry of Labour, of course, if there was one thing he insisted upon and one thing which trade union leaders have had to insist upon with our members for many years, it is this, that we too should regard wage agreements as inviolable, we, too should regard them as sacrosanct; we have had to keep our share of the bargain as well. But now, of course, we have not got Bevin at the Ministry of Labour: that rock upon which our industrial relations were founded, of inviolability, of the sacrosanct nature of these agreements has been swept away.

".....I promise this, that in Parliament, as legislation is needed to deal with this action, we shall resist it with all the power we command. But it is no use relying upon a minority group of Labour Members of Parliament to defend this situation; the only safety for these workers, whether they be industrial workers in Government establishments, whether their conditions are determined by Wage Councils, whether they be white collar workers, is in the return of a Labour Government at the earliest possible moment. Let that message go out!"

(Extracts from James Callaghan's speech for the N.E.C. moving resolution opposing the pay pause at Labour's 1961 Conference : 2.10.61. L.P.C. Blackpool. Report p. 94-97)

INCOMES POLICY RESOLUTIONS.

from 'Briefing'

There is always a danger at Conference that delegates will combine their resolutions into two big composites, one for the party leadership and the other against. It may suit the Government for choice to be limited to a straight approval or rejection of its policies, but this is not how a democratic party should operate. Delegates should therefore make sure in the compositing committee that Conference will have before it constructive socialist resolutions which the Government will find it difficult to reject. This year there will no doubt be a composite resolution rejecting the governments incomes policy, early warning legislation squeeze and freeze - the lot. It will probably be based on the ASSET resolution (30). It is also probable that the delegates will be persuaded to maintain the E.T.U. (25) resolution supporting the Government. But what of the rest?

The Constructional Engineering Union (29) concerns itself with lower paid workers. This might be composited with resolutions such as those from Surbiton (35), Dagenham (46 and amendment), Malton (49) and Nottingham West (41) and call in its final form for effective price stabilisation, the statutory and permanent limitation of dividends, workers' participation in the control of industry and other things which the platform would find it difficult to oppose; finally demanding a socialist policy based on Clause Four.

Another composite might call for more effective planning and a rapid expansion of social ownership and heavy taxation on unearned incomes as such. The Government's incomes policy will no doubt be the main issue at the conference; and if conference does not approve the composite rejecting government policy outright it may approve another that is critical and constructive. It is important to have a constructive alternative on the agenda.

OUR CLASSES' SOCIETY - THE FACTS

from 'Briefing'

Prices and Incomes Increases during 1965 :

RETAIL PRICES	.....	4.9 per cent
WEEKLY WAGE RATES	.....	4.6 per cent
PROFITS AND DIVIDENDS	.....	13.0 per cent

Profits increased 280 per cent more than wage rates. REAL WAGES FELL.

Strikes - Gunter's Red Herring: Days lost in industry from different causes in 1964 (the latest year for which figures are available) were as follows:

SICKNESS	.....	285,610,000
INJURY	.....	20,880,000
STRIKES	.....	2,275,000

The Family Expenditure Survey of 1960 shows an INCREASE of relative poverty over 1954.

Eighteen per cent of sample households representing 7.5 million people were living in poverty. Of these, 2 million were living below the National Assistance Scale. $2\frac{1}{2}$ million children (one in five) were living in poverty.

POST SCRIPT : TO THE CONSCIENCE OF MANKIND : Bertrand Russell

My appeal to the American Conscience poses to the American people the relation of war crimes in Vietnam to their Government, society - to their very lives. Not only the American people are confronted by these events. So are we all. World opinion and world action must halt these vast atrocities, or "Eichmann" will come to stand for Everyman. "We," said Eichmann, "only provided the lorries." "He who witnesses a crime in silence, commits it", said Jose Marti.

Eichmann symbolises damaged humanity: those who do not know; those who do not think; those who cannot care. Marti expresses the quick, unfettered sense of human responsibility, of impatience with excuses for horror and of contempt for moral evasion. Who, among us, is not a witness to these crimes?

There can be few literate adults in the Western world unfamiliar with the war in Vietnam waged by the United States Government. The mass media of communications, notably television and news magazines, have displayed unremittingly the most graphic evidence of atrocities carried out by American forces and those responsible to them in Vietnam.

Photographs showing mutilation and torture of villagers and National Liberation Front prisoners have appeared on the front pages of the New York Times, New York Herald Tribune, the Washington Post and innumerable other newspapers and journals. Newsweek, Time, Life and Look magazines have carried large numbers of photographs of American forces engaged in operations in Vietnam with phosphorus, poison gas, chemicals and napalm. Such captions as "Smoking out the Vietcong: phosphorus more deadly than gas", have accompanied pictures in these journals.

The bombardment of hospitals, schools and tuberculosis sanatoria has been recorded unselfconsciously. The mere compilation of the photographs, reports and data from the Western Press affords a list of crimes as terrible as many of the acts for which Germans were executed at Nuremberg.

Chief Prosecutor Justice Jackson of the United States Supreme Court said in his opening statement at the Nuremberg trials: "The real complaining party at the bar is civilisation. Civilisation is asking whether law is so laggard as to be utterly helpless to deal with crimes of such magnitude as Germany's Civilisation expects this Tribunal to put the forces of international law, its precepts, its prohibitions and most of its sanctions on the side of peace."

The precedent of Nuremberg has direct relevance to our present situation. This was again articulated by Justice Jackson: "Certainly no future lawyer or nation undertaking to prosecute crimes against the peace of the world will have to face the argument that the effort is unprecedented and, therefore, by inference, improper."

In holding a War Crimes Tribunal in 1966 we maintain that our situation is analogous to the circumstances which made necessary the Nuremberg trials. We feel as people felt twenty-five years ago when Jews were being crammed into gas chambers. We are compelled to speak out, indeed to cry out, against crimes committed in Vietnam.

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We maintain that there is overwhelming evidence of a prima facie character, evidence shown daily by the very media of communication of the Western countries. This evidence supporting the charge of war crimes has induced us to prepare the international Tribunal which will function as a commission of enquiry.

What, then, is the nature of this Tribunal? Witnesses who are under accusation are free to attend, but will not be compelled. It has no power to sentence the accused or carry out penalties. It is not the spokesman of any government. These facts rule out an adversary procedure because without the ability to bring the accused to give evidence in their defence a trial is impossible. A mock trial would not serve the needs of the Tribunal, for its procedures would be inadequate to its purpose. The War Crimes Tribunal will, therefore, be more an international commission of enquiry which, as in the case of a grand jury, has prima facie evidence sufficient to investigate the crimes it believes to have been committed.

The weight and impact of the Tribunal will be a result of the eminence and representative character of its members. They will be men who are unimpeachable and whom no-one could accuse of treating evidence inadequately or unfairly. This point is emphasised because there will be some who will say that those who believe crimes to have been committed cannot judge the evidence impartially. This is to confuse an open mind with an empty one. We are not blank slates with no feelings or impressions. The Tribunal is called into being because of a passionate conviction that terrible atrocities and crimes against humanity are taking place at this moment against a small people. The Tribunal, like the grand jury which brings an indictment, will weigh evidence fairly but will hear that evidence because of its belief that crimes are being committed.

There will be the most precise examination of the characteristics, properties and effects of the chemicals, gas and other weapons used in Vietnam. More than two hundred witnesses and victims will come to testify from Vietnam. Scientists who have studied weaponry will give evidence. Doctors, nurses, newspapermen and witnesses will testify. Motion picture film and still photographs of the raids and the victims will be presented for the Tribunal's consideration. Documentary film will be made from the testimony of the witnesses, the proceedings of the Tribunal and the evidence. Tape recordings will be made of the hearings and pressed into gramophone records for wide distribution. Full data and testimony will be published.

The mere announcement of the Tribunal has led to the most widespread international interest and support. Spontaneous actions in favour of the Tribunal have taken place in many countries. Petitions calling on people everywhere to support the Tribunal are being circulated prior to the hearings. Committees of support are being formed in many countries. Teach-ins, debates and meetings concerning the Tribunal are being organised. Funds are being collected. Badges and stickers are being distributed. By such means as these it is becoming clear that a considerable mandate is being produced for the Tribunal proceedings. These proceedings will last twelve weeks and will take place in Paris.

The initiative in forming the War Crimes Tribunal is that of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation. We have sought to invite esteemed and accomplished people who have made a special contribution to human civilisation. Several of them are experts in international law with particular

knowledge and experience concerning war crimes. These latter include Professor (Dr. Juris) Vladimir Dedijer of Yugoslavia and Lelio Basso, international lawyer and Editor of International Socialist Journal.

Other members include: Gunther Anders, the Austrian writer; Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre from France; former President Lazaro Cardenas of Mexico; Stokely Carmichael, National Chairman of the Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee in the United States; Professor Josue de Castro of Brazil, former head of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation; Isaac Deutscher, the British historian; Danilo Dolci from Sicily; and Peter Weiss, the Swedish playwright. It should be clear that the Tribunal is geographically representative as well as prominent. Because of the eminence of the Tribunal members, not all of them can be in Paris for twelve weeks. The legal staff of the Tribunal will take depositions from witnesses and present findings to Tribunal members wherever they are. At the conclusion of the hearings the judgement of the Tribunal will be printed. Support for this judgement will be solicited on the most intensive and world-wide scale.

There are those who raise the question of violence on the part of the National Liberation Front and the Vietnamese resistance to the United States. The War Crimes Tribunal would no more think of considering as crimes the Vietnamese resistance to American aggression than did the Nuremberg Tribunal treat the rising of the Warsaw Ghetto, the struggle for survival of the partisans of Yugoslavia, the resistance of Norway, the underground in Denmark and the Maquis in France as worthy of condemnation. It was the Gestapo who were condemned and not their victims. That assessment was central to the Nuremberg trials themselves, and so it is with respect to the War Crimes Tribunal and Vietnam.

Although it is impossible to compel defence witnesses to appear, the Tribunal is prepared to hear witnesses for the defence, but only those who have been formally requested by the U.S. Government to appear on its behalf. Unauthorised witnesses cannot be accepted in defence of the United States' actions because they would inevitably be considered inadequate or unfair by the U.S. Government, which would insist on regarding the matter of its defence to be its own concern. The serious and solemn character of the Tribunal proceedings require that Government approved defence only will be permitted where the U.S. is concerned. For these reasons, I have written President Johnson requesting him to appear in his own defence or designate persons to come on his Government's behalf.

The Tribunal views its responsibilities to be to civilisation and to mankind. Chief Prosecutor Justice Jackson of the U.S. Supreme Court had said at Nuremberg: "If certain acts and violations of treaties are crimes, they are crimes whether the United States does them or whether Germany does them. We are not prepared to lay down a rule of criminal conduct against others which we would not be willing to have invoked against us." This Tribunal was called in the conviction that these crimes have again been committed and that judgement must again be invoked against those responsible.

It is important to note that the Nuremberg Tribunal was conducted by victorious nations against a defeated one. The international War Crimes Tribunal has no victor's powers, nor any State authority. It holds a brief for the decent feelings of people everywhere. The international investigating committee will travel throughout Vietnam, gathering evidence. It will report in November, 1966, in Paris. People of all countries: Help the War Crimes Tribunal. Make it a Tribunal of the conscience of mankind.

Our last issue carried extracts from a report on the opening stages of the trial of Hugo Blanco and others involved in the peasants' struggles in Peru. We follow with a brief account of the final days leading up to the savage sentences passed against Blanco and his co-defendants. The account is extracted from World Outlook:

The Peruvian military authorities, acting as both prosecution and judge, sentenced Hugo Blanco, the peasant leader, to 25 years in the grim prison of El Fronton. His co-defendant Pedro Candelo was given 22 years ... and six others received sentences ranging up to 5 years. ... Up to the final moment on Sept 8, it was feared that the military might carry out the plan they had reportedly envisaged - giving Blanco the death sentence. Evidently they reconsidered in view of the reaction that was visible even in the small town court room of Tacna where people lined up for admission ... and where the audience clearly favoured the prisoners, at times expressing such sympathy that the judge had to clear the court.

Despite the fierce repression in Peru and all the efforts to railroad the trial through in a hurry in the remote town of Tacna, near the border of Chile, it was clearly evident that nationwide sympathy for the prisoners was building up. Each day of the trial was featured in sensational headlines in the Lima press. Despite the garbled accounts, the heroic stand of the defendants broke through and ... echoed through the country. In addition, expressions of international sympathy were mounting. If Blanco were condemned these could rise to a storm of protest. Evidently the military decided that it was better to give a long sentence in the notorious dungeons of El Fronton. In Peru, where students and unionists were mobilising support for the defendants, the reaction to the trial and long sentences was immediate. Meanwhile, abroad, Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre had joined the long list of distinguished figures appealing to President Belaunde for an immediate amnesty.

When Hugo Blanco was placed on the stand he was questioned for 2 hours, but very little of what he said concerning his political views and aims in the peasant struggle appeared in the biased Peruvian press. ... He indignantly denied that he had committed any crime and said that he was guilty only of initiating an agrarian reform. "I am contented with everything I have done for the peasants and I can now die tranquilly." At one point before the packed courtroom, Hugo Blanco levelled an accusing finger at the consulting judge who had demanded the death penalty. "If the death penalty is going to be applied against me," he said, "then don't let a guard be the one to have to fire the shot, but the auditor Fernandez -- with his own hand!" In face of the tumultuous response of the audience the judge suspended the hearing.

Speaking for the defence, Dr. Batillana sought to bring out the humanitarian aims of the defendants as well as their political views. He challenged the jurisdiction of the court, stating that the charges should have been brought before a civil court. The military, he said, had not only acted as the prosecution but also as the judge. If the defendants were found guilty, he said, he would take the case to the supreme court. Pedro Candela's attorney, Doctora Laura Caller continued this line of argument

After recessing for 8 hours, the judge opened the final session. Sentences of 2 to 5 years were passed on seven of the defendants. Candela was given 22 years, terminating 1985. Hugo Blanco was sentenced to 25 years, terminating 1988. He rose to his feet, "Tacna has passed down its sentence. The people will soon hand down theirs. Tierra o Muerte!" "Tierra o Muerte" responded the audience, and the judge ordered the court to be cleared. Both Blanco and Candela stated at once that they would appeal against the savage sentences.

EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN KEN COATES AND TRANSPORT HOUSE.

Dear Mr. Williams.

23rd September, 1966.

I note with surprise that the Report of the NEC to Conference does not appear to contain any reference at all to the disciplinary exertions of the Organisation sub-committee in Nottingham. Since these are highly controversial having resulted in the unconstitutional deprivation of rights of three members of the Party, and in the upholding, in flat defiance of the constitution, of my own expulsion, numerous affiliated bodies of the party have assured me that they wish to secure a full discussion upon them at Conference. Can you kindly advise me as to the reasons for the failure of the Report to mention matters of such importance, and as to whether some supplementary document may be submitted for the information of Conference at a later date?

I should be grateful if you would also assist me by forwarding my formal request to Conference that I should be given a hearing on these matters. The rights of membership in the Party are gravely threatened by the implications of the treatment I have received at the hands of the Organisation Sub-Committee, and I wish to appeal to Conference to hear my version of events before it finally decides whether or not to sanction the NEC's decision to uphold my expulsion. I shall be in attendance throughout Conference, and respectfully place myself at the disposal of delegates.

Ken Coates.

Dear Mr. Coates

27th September, 1966.

The General Secretary has referred your letter of 23rd September, 1966 to me as the officer responsible for dealing with correspondence relating to disciplinary matters. In regard to your own expulsion I have to point out that you were expelled by the General Committee of the Nottingham West Constituency Labour Party on 9th November, 1965, under Clause XV section (3) of its rules, and you exercised your right of appeal under this rule which reads as follows:

'It shall be the duty of the General Committee of this Party on the advice of the Executive Committee of this Party to take all the necessary steps to safeguard the Constitution, programme, principles, and policy of the Labour Party within the Constituency. Where action is taken under this Clause involving the punishment or expulsion of any organisation or individual or the exclusion of any organisation or individual from membership, such organisation or individual shall have the right of appeal against the punishment, expulsion or exclusion to the National Executive Committee which Committee shall have power to confirm, vary, or reverse the action taken by the General Committee.'

You will note that this rule gives the National Executive Committee power to make a decision on an appeal of this kind and that it is not required by the rules or Constitution of the Party to report its decision to the Annual Party Conference. Your letter will, however, be placed before the National Executive Committee when it meets on Friday next, 30th September, 1966.

Sarah Barker.

Dear Mr. Williams.

28th September, 1966.

To-day I received from Miss Barker a reply to my letter of 23rd September which I addressed to you. Her reply raises a number of important matters, and I would be grateful if you would draw these to the attention of the NEC.

It would be contrary to the principles of natural justice to rule that the NEC's decision to uphold my expulsion is not a matter for which it is accountable to Conference. Once the NEC upheld the West Nottingham action, it became an action of the N.E.C. This action should be reported to Conference, like any other disciplinary decision. More important, I should be allowed to contest it before

Conference, in exactly the same way as any other punished person should have the right to appeal against his punishment. It does not make the slightest difference who initiated the action which was taken against me: once the NEC stepped in to uphold it, the force of that body was placed behind the decision. To argue otherwise would be to say that I had the right to join any other Constituency Labour Party than the West Nottingham one. Is that what you are saying? If you are, then I will avail myself of the opportunity, since a number of Party organisations have indicated to me that they are willing to accept me into membership. But I think you do not argue from this position. If your decision means anything, it means that you endorse the decision of West Nottingham to exclude me, which in turn extends that exclusion to cover the whole territory over which you hold sway. I wish to add that even if you rule that I can join another CLP, I still wish to appeal to Conference against your decision to uphold my expulsion, because that expulsion was wrongful, unconstitutional and damaging to my reputation. A cardinal principle of democratic justice anywhere is that the judiciary should be separate from the executive. I have constantly maintained this principle throughout this case: and I only submitted to a hearing by an executive functionary because I understood that in the event of biased judgment being given I should have the right of Appeal to Conference. This is certainly the impression given to all delegates to last years' conference, when instead of discussing the motion of an Appeals Tribunal, Conference was guided by its chairman into an elaborate dissection of the Dow case. If I have no right to appeal to Conference, then I will never have been judged by persons independent of the executive. This is a crucial matter and its implications go far beyond my own involvement in it.

I consider that it is extremely unlikely that the NEC would have upheld my expulsion if it had received an objective account of the case. Since according to the very rule which Miss Barker's letter of the 27th September quotes, the expulsion was completely unconstitutional, the NEC has become involved in the sanctioning of unconstitutional behaviour. My expulsion was never discussed, according clause XV section 3, by the constituency executive. This fact can be confirmed by reference to the minutes of that body, as can the fact that for all other purposes the executive worked normally. Where, if not at Conference, can this matter be adjudicated impartially? I submit that it is in the interest of the NEC, no less than that of the Party as a whole, that the affair be properly ventilated there. I would point out that if you agree to allow me to appear before Conference, I would appreciate sight of two documents, in accordance with the promise made by the NEC and passed to me by Miss Barker in her letter of 31st January, 1966. (The NEC have agreed that you shall have sight of any document which is submitted concerning your expulsion.....) In flat breach of this promise I have never been shown the complaint sheet of the Nottingham Aldermen against me, or Miss Barker's own Report on the investigation. Naturally if I am to conduct an effective defence before Conference, I need these papers.

It is also necessary to point out that there was, conjoined with and to the disadvantage of my appeal to the NEC, an investigation into the affairs of the Nottingham City Party. This investigation met all one weekend, and used as a pretext to confine my own hearing to the evening of the preceding Friday from 6.30 pm until 2.30 a.m. As a result many of my witnesses were prevented from testifying. As the constitutionally elected President of the Nottingham Party, I was present at this enquiry. The outcome was that the NEC took novel disciplinary sanctions against three members, at the same time as it upheld my expulsion. None of these matters figure in your Report. All of them, it seems to me, should become the property of Conference. Although I raised this problem in my letter of the 23rd September, Miss Barker's reply ignores it.

Ken Coates.