

The Week

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS
Vol. 4, No. 16. 28th October, 1965

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- STOP THE ROT
- BRISTOL DOCK STRIKE
- DEVELOPMENTS IN BRITISH INDUSTRY
- BRITAIN AND THE GENEVA AGREEMENTS
- PUBLIC OPINION POLLS VERSUS BY-ELECTIONS

MEN OF PRINCIPLE

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THE WEEK

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR BUSINESS
Vol. 4, No. 12, December 1992



- THE FIFTY
- BRISTOL DOCK STRIKE
- DEVELOPMENT IN
- BRITAIN AND THE
- GEMBA AGREEMENT
- PUBLIC OPINION POLLS
- VARIOUS SELECTIONS

PRINCIPLE MEN OF

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MEN OF PRINCIPLE

In a letter to Tribune last week, Mr. Paul Rose, MP, declared his intention of not voting either the Government White Paper on Immigration or anti-trade union legislation. Thus he joins Eric Heffer and Sydney Silverman, who have also declared their intention of not voting for certain Government measures. Parliament has re-assembled this week and it is very likely that several other MPs will join in this movement. An entirely new factor in the political set-up in Britain will have thus come into existence. What is the significance of this phenomenon? What attitude should left wingers take towards it?

The first thing to note is that these comrades who have taken this stand represent the real traditions and heritage of the Labour Party. No amount of guff about "rocking the boat" or letting the Tories back in, can obscure the fact that by opposing colour-bar inspired legislation they^{are} acting in the spirit of Mr. Gaitskell's "Brotherhood of Man" amendment to Clause Four; neither can it obscure the fact that the Labour Party came into existence to defend trade unions not to nobble them. Every Labour MP should look at the question in this light, and they should realise that these comrades are also doing their best to ensure the possibility of the return of a fifth Labour Government. The second thing to note is that by making an open, public stand, these MPs are proving to the world at large that there is another aspect to the Labour Party. They are doing something to wipe out the shame of Mr. Wilson's first year. All over the world the people engaged in struggle against imperialism and other oppression will see these MPs as their representatives in Britain. By opposing the worst aspects of Mr. Wilson's policies these MPs will be giving direct and important encouragement to movements like the American anti-Vietnam war demonstrators.

But more has to be said: our men of principle will only become a political focus if they act in a co-ordinated way, along an agreed strategy and in a way in which they mobilise support both in and out of Parliament. This means not only clearing one's conscience but acting in a business-like manner. It also means something else: those of us outside of Parliament must give the maximum moral and practical support to our colleagues who have made the stand. Let us all work hard to achieve a position where, owing to an ever-increasing number of men of principle, Mr. Wilson's present right wing gallop is thrown into disarray. In this process a new alternative leadership of the Labour Party could be built. These are the issues. Those who do not support the men of principle will bear a heavy responsibility.

The Economist, in its October 23rd issue, examined the claim of Mr. Du Cann, the Tory Party's chairman, that the lead shown in the public opinion polls by Labour is not being repeated in local council by-elections. It dismisses the figure given at the Tory Party Conference: 20 gains as opposed to only 2 losses in 100 contests, as not being "significant." But the journal did consider "really significant" the comparison between votes cast in current municipal by-elections and those cast in the national municipal elections last May. It concludes, "...this comparison obstinately suggests that the Conservatives should be favourites to win any early parliamentary general election."

It continues: "Last May those nationwide municipal elections suggested that there had been an average swing against Labour of about $5\frac{1}{2}\%$ since the parliamentary general election last October: a swing sufficient to eject Mr. Wilson from power by a near landslide Conservative majority of near to 200. Local council by-elections in June and July showed almost exactly the same pattern as in May (see a detailed analysis in The Observer of August 15th last of council by-elections in which over 54,000 total votes were cast). August itself was a closed month for council by-elections; but a round of by-elections in middle and late September, ranging from wards in big cities like Manchester and Leeds to wards in marginal boroughs like Watford and West Hartlepool, showed the same broad pattern. So far there have not been enough by-elections in October to draw any firm conclusion; but the signs are that there is still no change in the pattern of local voting.

"On October 7th there was actually a further swing to Conservative at Andover compared with May, although a swing to Labour at Sandwich compared with then; on the same day Labour improved its Maytime vote in a Manchester by-election, but in two smaller towns in the Manchester region (Audenshaw and Dukinfield) the swing was to the Conservatives. Together, the average is one of no net change since May. To emphasise the gulf between the opinion polls and the municipal by-elections, the Conservatives celebrated the announcement of Labour's 11 point lead in the Daily Mail National Opinion Poll last Thursday by gaining two more seats that evening, one, in Wallasey, gave them control of the county borough council...."

The Economist compares this position with that of last winter, when the public opinion polls were also showing a gain in Labour's popularity since the general election, and local council elections were showing a drop in it. It was precisely at that moment when the Leyton and Nuneaton parliamentary by-elections shattered the self-confidence of Mr. Wilson and his team. The paper points out that the differing predictions will be put to the test when the next parliamentary by-election results come through: those of Westminster on November 4th, and Erith and Crayford, one week later.

How can one explain this discrepancy? And what significance has it for Labour? The most likely explanation for the difference between the NOP result and actual voting figures is that in one case the people concerned are passive - one merely answers questions in the NOP - and in one other the people have to be active - actually go and vote. If this is the case the element of apathy and lack of enthusiasm would hit Labour much more. On the other hand, it is well known that local elections evoke a much lower level of interest in Labour voters than parliamentary ones. However, the same could be said for parliamentary by-elections as opposed to General Elections. Pondering over things, Mr. Wilson must be glad of Liberal support.

THE BRISTOL DOCK STRIKE

from a Bristol correspondent

The first independent proposals for ending the Bristol and Avonmouth dock strike (Editorial note: this item was written before the strike ended) have been submitted by Mr. Geoff. Wood, a member of DATA and Bristol Left Club, in a long letter to the Bristol Evening Post. Geoff Wood has for many years played an active role in his union and has over 20 years' experience in the negotiating field. At the time of writing the unofficial dock strike is at the end of its third week and is one of the bitterest disputes in recent years affecting TGWU workers. The strike arose from a dispute over an agreement for unloading packaged timber from the Gloucester City, negotiated by the union's full-time officials.

The key paragraphs of Mr. Wood's letter are interesting because they cast light on one of the causes of unofficial strike, i.e., where the officials get out of touch with the men on the job. He says: "I have not seen any report that the employer's offer was made known to the members for their consideration before they were officially committed." He then goes on to describe the procedure in DATA in which agreements negotiated at a district level are invariably submitted to the members for approval, and which lead to good relationships between the members and the full-time officials.

Commenting on the dilemma of the union in the dock strike: "Apparently the employers are sitting tight because they have an official agreement. I might think that it would be in their own interest to recognise a genuine dilemma of the union and cancel the offending agreement and allow negotiations to be reopened." He concludes: "This means that I would return to work on the Gloucester City under the existing agreement, satisfied with public recognition of a moral victory, and satisfied that a contribution had been made to getting an improved trade union organisation. This would be contingent upon an assurance from the executive that adequate consultation would take place with members to secure a new agreement,....."

The strike will indeed have achieved something important if it leads to a more democratic procedure at this level of the TGWU.

BRISTOL AND AVONMOUTH DOCKERS RETURN by Tom Nicholls.

500 dockers at a meeting called by the unofficial strike committee on Wednesday 20th October, voted overwhelmingly to return to work on Monday 25th. An official TGWU meeting the morning before had broken up after only ten minutes when Mr. Tom Davies, the union's port officer, had refused to allow questions or discussion from the floor.

By this time, in the words of the Financial Times correspondent, the issues had widened far beyond the original dispute - over the handling of packaged timber. Instead it had become the latest manifestation of the dockers' widespread lack of confidence in TGWU docks officials.

LONDON MEETING ON DEVLIN

Voice of the Unions has organised a meeting to discuss the situation in the docks today. The meeting will take the form of a conference on the Devlin Report and will be held in the Keir Hardie Hall, Cumberland Road, London E. 13, on Saturday, 6th November, from 2.30 to 6.30 p.m. Bob Pennington will be one of the speakers.

Railway Review of October 22nd carried the following lead article:

"When the representatives of the NUR went to see the Minister of Transport about the production and repair policy of British Railways' workshops, he told them that if they had any ideas on legislation they should let him have them. The issue was discussed by the NEC at their recent quarterly meeting when policy was determined. The NEC noted that the Minister had removed the restrictions imposed by the former Minister on the BRB's proposal to make wagons for customers outside the publicly-owned transport sector for use on the railways in this country.

"The Minister also made a statement in the House of Commons on March 31 this year that the Government intends, as opportunity arises, to introduce legislation to remove the statutory limitations which impede the nationalised industries, thus enabling the national assets, such as BR workshops, to be employed to the fullest extent. 'It is understood that the intention is to allow the workshops to tender for export orders.' So the NEC worked out the union's policy. Additional legislation should be introduced to provide:

"The right of British Railways to manufacture vehicles, etc., for other industries.

"The right of British Railways to manufacture for export.

"That the Minister shall have the additional power to approve the decisions made by the Board on all major activities concerning workshops, i.e., on maintenance and repairs as well as manufacture and production.

"That it shall be incumbent upon the BRB to ensure that their own workshops are brought up to and maintained in a state of full efficiency.

"That it shall be obligatory upon the BRB to ensure that its own workshops are fully loaded before any work is contracted to private industry.

"That purchases of material, components, etc., from outside firms only be resorted to when it is not practicable to produce requirements in the railway workshops.

"And, that the restrictions imposed by Clause 5 of section 13 in regard to the manufacture of road vehicles, bodies, chassis, etc., should be removed....."

ENOCH POWELL ON ANTI-TRADE UNION LEGISLATION

from Ken Bodfish

Mr. Enoch Powell had this to say about anti-trade union legislation at Weston-Super-Mare on the 19th of this month:

Legislation to prevent unofficial strikes by making collective agreements about terms and conditions of employment enforceable by law meant that all workers and employers must belong to, and be controlled by their union. This was a picture rather like the so-called corporate state of Fascist Italy, an economy where each industry was nationally organised by syndicates of employers and employees. Like all other attempts at price-fixing - and essentially this is a system of price-fixing - it is attended by the nemesis of black market, evasion and lawlessness. (my emphasis - K.B.)

ADVERTISER'S ANNOUNCEMENT : British Political Fringe by George Thayer is just out and describes the spectrum of minor political parties today. 30/- from your bookseller or plus 1/6d postage direct from the publishers, Anthony Blond Limited.

Certain structural alterations are taking place in British industry which are of great importance for socialists, and which will have their impact on the structure of the working class movement and its political balance. I will deal with three industries which have been in the news recently.

Shipbuilding

The Financial Times of 23rd October reported that "Tentative discussions are taking place within the British shipbuilding industry aimed at some form of rationalisation - either in the form of actual mergers or much closer industrial collaboration - which would reduce costs and return shipbuilding to a profit-earned basis. One yard on the Tyne has received several approaches and it is believed that similar discussions are taking place on the Clyde and elsewhere. But the general attitude of the shipyards is to delay any final decision until the Government-commissioned Geddes report on the industry is published early next year.....mergers and rationalisation discussions, however indefinite, have been accelerated by the losses announced recently by leading shipbuilders - the Swan Hunter group, and Hawthorn Leslie - and the appointment of a receiver by the Bank of Scotland for the Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Company." It is worth noting that in the latter case the workers are already demanding urgent Government action to prevent a closure which would have a severe local affect.

Discussing the various methods of rationalisation possible, the paper says, "...financial mergers may prove to be necessary and these would make sense only on a regional grouping: on the Tyne perhaps between Vickers, Swan Hunter and Hawthorn Leslie; on the Clyde with such firms as John Brown, Lithgows, Fairfields, Scotts and Greenock Dockyards. Before this, however, much could be achieved in the way of industrial collaboration. A number of yards on the Clyde, for example, have their own engine-building works and a good deal of rationalisation could take place here.....What is evident is that some of Britain's shipbuilding capacity will have to go out of use. It has a capacity of about $1\frac{3}{4}$ million tons of shipping a year but output has never gone beyond the 1.4 million tons level in the post war years." Mathematicians among our readers will have worked out that the Financial Times is saying in effect that 20% of the shipbuilding capacity in this country should be closed down, or "rationalised". We can guess what this means in terms of sackings, etc.,

Iron and steel

This industry, in contrast to the shipbuilding sector, has experienced a very favourable period. However, it is expressing some doubt about the future. This is clearly brought out in latest issue of the quarterly Steel Review, which is the official journal of British Iron and Steel Federation. The first thing the journal brings out is that certain steel firms will be pressing the Iron and Steel Board to sanction an increase in prices. In attempting to justify this it said that a recently completed survey had shown that since the Board last adjusted prices, just over six months ago, costs had risen by the equivalent of about £20 million a year. The bulk of this increase being due to higher wages and salaries. But worse still according to a leader in the journal "With the possibility of a downturn in trade lying close ahead, such a further massive increase in costs in such a short period must bring into question the adequacy of the present level of steel prices."

to be continued/

As the heavy door closed behind me it was securely locked by the ward sister. I walked slowly away up the long winding drive, averting my eyes from the inert lumps of clothing which seemed to litter the grounds. The words I'd just heard came again and again into my mind: "Got any ciggies, have you?", "Now you are a naughty girl. You mustn't cadge." Could the nurse be talking to the woman of 40 I'd come to see? and why, anyway, was she reduced to "cadging"? Eventually I got around to finding out why.

It seems that if you're on National Assistance when "outside" you cannot claim anything, except a rent allowance when you are "inside". No, not a prison! You've just been sick enough to get yourself into a mental hospital. If you have a fractured leg, appendicitis or tuberculosis you're entitled to 13/6d pocket money when you go to hospital (which may, of course, be sick pay or failing that, National Assistance) but if you're, dare I say it, mentally sick, you are not.

I railed against what seemed to me the inhumanity of such a decision thinking again of Mrs. B., whose children were in the care of the local authority, whose daughter had almost driven her from her home and whose husband had deserted her. True, she wasn't much to look at with her scarlet lipstick splodged over her toothless face. When she was sick she'd drive us all mad with her daily demands for attention. Her intelligence was lowish and her two main enjoyments were smoking and wearing red! But why did she also have to suffer the indignity of being penniless too?

At some point I realised with a shock that this could also happen to me. I am one of those late developers, a woman who started a career long after it was worthwhile to pay the full National Health Insurance contribution. Once the sickness period of six weeks was over (my employers' liability to care for me) I too could be on National Assistance and if the sickness were mental, I too could be at the mercy of...who or what agency?

It seems however that we, Mrs. B. and I, need not be too downhearted for if we are fortunate enough to go to hospital A we are immediately assured of 13/6d from the hospital exchequer account. If we go to hospital B on the other hand, we may have to wait for a week or two when we may receive 7/6d per week (because the hospital hasn't revised its scales).

In most hospitals if we are well enough to work we may earn a little. If, on the other hand, we are not well enough we may in hospitals C and D receive something called "destitute money" or "indigent patients" allowance and this can vary from less than 5/- to 13/6d. If we refuse to work we may receive nothing at all. Who decides? and what grounds?

It appears (and this fact may well be known to everyone but me) that Regional Hospital Boards and the National Assistance Board have a national agreement to delegate to management committees of mental hospitals to pay pocket money to patients. With this delegation it seems that the National Assistance Board has given over to the hospitals the right to whether or not an allowance should be made to a particular patient. The same block grant has to cover money paid out as incentive to work and "destitute money". If there is a great demand for work then there's less for Mrs. B. and for me, that is if we can't or won't work. On the other hand, if there are more Mrs. B's then there is less left to buy carrots to dangle before the
continued over/

Who decides? continued/

more active or co-operative patients. It seems a sad business and I for one am trusting to be able to cope with my neurotic symptoms well enough to stay outside.

Mrs. B. in Ward X is locked in. I doubt if she'd ever have the initiative to run away and she is certainly not violent. She has to eat hospital food at the time laid (and even the staff say it's not good). She gets up when told, gets bedded down pretty early. She goes to Occupational Therapy when told, wears hospital clothing (inscribed with the name Jennie, which isn't her name). Gets bathed when it's her turn. She even sits out, as a bundle of clothing on the lawn, when advised to. Where does she have any choice, except perhaps in the spending of 13/6d each week?

But someone, somewhere in that vast sprawling hideous place may have already decided that she is not fit to have any, or that she is not co-operative and shall have only 2/6d, or that if she works in the laundry washing the underwear of neurotic and soiling long term patients she may get 10/- or 13/6d. There is a vague disease in some hospitals about this national agreement between the Regional Hospital Boards and the National Assistance Board, but since I am told that it works fairly well, no-one wants to complain (or maybe nobody knows how to complain). No one, that is, except Mrs. B. and me.

Advertisers' announcements

BLACKPOOL BRIEFING, 1965 1/6d from 54, Park Rd., Lenton, Nottingham.

This 36-page pamphlet contains a very wide range of articles about the Labour Party and the problems facing the left wing.

They include: an authoritative article, complete with facts and figures, on how Council Houses subsidise investors;
an explanation of the Geneva Agreements and how Mr. Wilson and his team are not adhering to them;
What are we to do with the Public Schools, written by leading educationalists;
an article posing the question: Was George Brown's incomes policy compiled by the gnomes of Zurich?, backing this speculation by very quotable extracts from the Wall Street Journal;
Several articles on Vietnam which provide a complete answer to the arguments of Mr. Stewart;
an exposure of The party within our Party, which explains how the principle of the unanimity of the Cabinet is destroying inner-Labour Party democracy;
and over 50 other items.

Blackpool Briefing, 1965, will remain the arsenal of facts, figures and arguments for the left until we produce the 1966 edition.

There are special rates for bulk copies. We would urge readers to order quickly so that they have copies for the report-back meetings.

When the Foreign Secretary addressed the U.N. General Assembly on October 7th, he put forward some proposals about Vietnam which sounded deceptively reasonable. They included a firm guarantee against attack on both South and North Vietnam, and eventually a situation in which both the Governments were able "by their own free choice to determine their relationship to each other."

These proposals are based upon a rejection of the Geneva Agreements of 1954 which the British Government claims to uphold. At Geneva it was agreed that the military demarcation line between North and South Vietnam was "provisional and should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary". It was also agreed that a general election throughout Vietnam would be held in 1956 and that it would lead to reunification of North and South.

Mr. Stewart's proposals, therefore, attempt to legalise violations of the Geneva Agreements. The British Labour Government clearly sees after the end of the war a permanently divided Vietnam. The temporary demarcation line is to be the permanent national boundary, and the elections (if ever held) are not to lead to/unification. Since these were perhaps the two main points of the Geneva Agreements, it is in order to ask what, precisely, the British Government's support for the international agreements involves.

The Foreign Secretary's proposals are very convenient for the United States because they could allow continuing U.S. domination of South Vietnam without the loss of American lives. Seen in the context of the latest diplomatic activity to help end the war, Mr. Stewart's speech has been delivered at a time most favourable to Washington.

INDIA: RIGHT-WING SOCIALISTS CONDEMN LABOUR

from S.I.I.

The General Secretary of the All-India Praja Socialist Party, Prem Bhasin, has expressed "strong condemnation" of the British Labour Government's decision to suspend the Aden constitution. He said: "This colonialist step of the British Government is a defiance of the U.N. resolution of 1963 on Aden and is a violation of her oft-repeated pledges to give self-rule to the Colony." Prem Bhasin expressed his Party's "complete solidarity with the nationalist movement led by Mr. Mackawee, Aden's Chief Minister and Abdulla al Asnag of the People's Socialist Party". He called upon the Socialist International to intervene in the matter and expressed the hope that the Secretary of the Socialist International, who was recently the guest of the People's Socialist Party of Aden and who was fully conversant with the situation, would move the Socialist International on behalf of the "sister Party in Aden".

MALTA LABOUR PARTY CRITICISES WHITE PAPER

Writing in Voice of Malta, the official publication of the Malta Labour Party, Lino Spiteri said of the Labour Government's White Paper on Commonwealth immigration: "When the British Government reduced the number of Commonwealth citizens allowed to migrate to Britain to 8,500, Malta was given the apparently generous quota of 1,000. But for their generosity, the British Government expected an equally generous yield. The 1,000 chosen will be mostly skilled workers, proficient in the English language and the British way of life. Britain will thus get much-needed skilled man-power with the minimum of problems. Malta, whose skilled man-power by this arrangement will continue to dwindle, is expected to say 'thank-you' for all this egoistic magnanimity."

The workers' control movement in Britain has shown a great deal of interest in the agricultural and industrial enterprises under auto-gestion in Algeria. Yet most appreciations of this phenomenon have concentrated on its forms of organisation rather than its position within the state. This has led many, like Councillor John Spencer (The Week, 25th February, 1965 and Left special edition on workers' control, May 1965), to the conviction that self-management works in Algeria. My own conclusion is that it has ceased to exist in anything but a formal sense.

Algerian independence in 1962 saw the departure of nearly 1,000,000 Europeans who had formed the property-owning, administrative and technical classes. At the level of individual factories and farms this meant that the Algerian workers had to take control and continue production or starve. Nobody, except perhaps the UGTA (Union General des Travailleurs Algeriens) and individual FLN members, made a conscious decision to institute auto-gestion as the possible base for a socialist society. Thus comparisons with Yugoslavia are not valid, as there workers' control was a conscious attempt to combat Stalinist centralism. Also in Algeria enterprises under auto-gestion comprise only 10% of industrial production and 60% of agricultural production - a reversal of the Yugoslavian situation.

The decrets de mars were an attempt to formalise the existing situation in Algeria; laying down general rules on internal organisation and regulating financial and administrative connections between enterprises and Government ministries. It is often forgotten that only the part dealing with the appropriation of property left by Europeans (biens Vacants) was ever passed by the Assembly; the rest was promulgated by the Government and can be altered at any time. Thus since the Boumedienne coup several ministries have arrogated to themselves powers unforeseen in the decrets de mars.

Most of the new administrative class are petit-bourgeois who have no conscious identification with the Revolution or socialism. They represent that part of Algerian society that had the educational and financial means to get most posts in the Government departments. The Algerian bourgeoisie has in general moved into the professions and commerce; thus letting the potentially most reactionary class gain control of the state machine. The power of the bureaucrats is not threatened by the private sector but by the existence of self-management in the farms and factories. The process of regaining control for the state has been made easier by two factors: the existence of 3,000,000 (25% of the population) unemployed and the complete lack of education among the workers. So in most cases the state has been able to remove actual independence while retaining the formal structures of self-management, mystifying workers as to their actual relation to the state. The UGTA is aware of this but powerless in the face of a mass of unemployed who will work under any terms. Only through widespread socialist education can the workers be made aware of their actual position. Some of them are beginning to realise how little power they now have but cannot confront a state backed by the army (ALN.)

To regard self-management as working in Algeria is to suffer gross mystification. It is too easy to fall into the trap of thinking that the state in a revolutionary country will be progressive.

* Written by Mr. Clegg on September 25th, 1965, soon after his return from Algeria, where he had made a special on-the-spot study of the question.

STOP THE ROT

by Ken Coates

The overall drift of Government action since October 1964 has been catastrophic for socialism. The effect of the Government's major domestic and foreign policy decisions has been to create widespread apathy and demoralisation among Labour's active workers, considerable discontent in the unions, and a growing sense of apprehension among the party's keener supporters. These things in turn create the acute danger of a Tory restoration, in spite of the apparent personal popularity of the Prime Minister, which is likely to prove transient for a number of reasons.

The deflationary policies of the Treasury, based on a completely anti-socialist reverence for the sanctity of the pound, are likely to lead to a considerable growth of short-time working and unemployment. The imposition of a resounding "stop" on the economy is in direct conflict with all our election pledges. The alternative, of socialist structural reform in the economy, and strict socialist control of financial operations, must be urgently imposed upon the Government. If it is not, then the Government will be compelled to evolve in a more and more technocratic direction, and to attack, more and more openly all the interests it was elected to defend.

In this context, the attempt to give 'legal teeth' to the Prices and Incomes Board can only serve to create alarm in the unions and delight among the big employers and the Conservative leadership. It represents an inexcusable onslaught on trade union freedom, in a situation in which no compensating powers are on offer to the workpeople in order to assist them to protect themselves. It is a measure which will greatly help the Tories, first in the negative weight it will have on the support for the Labour Party in the polls as trade unionists become aware of its implications, and then in the positive assistance it will give any renewed Conservative administration in its attacks on trade union rights. Doubtless Mr. Heath will find ways to hold off the defeat of the Government until after these measures are carried, for these reasons. This means that they must be fought by every socialist, in the most relentless and vigorous way. A socialist incomes policy can only be framed in a context of overall socialist advance, in which it will require stern controls by the unions and the labour movement over the powers of capital, a significant extension of planned public enterprise, and the complete abolition of the practise of preserving 'business secrets' from the workpeople.

On the plane of social welfare provisions, if the Government's record is totally inadequate, its aspirations are even worse. Half a million houses a year is an acceptable commitment for instant action; but it is a derisory offer as a middle-term target figure, such as is set forward in the 'Plan' of the D.E.A. A visit to the squalid centres of our Midland and industrial towns is enough to persuade any rational observer that such a plan is predicated on the indefinite continuance of huge and stifling areas of slumden. Subjection to banking interests has dictated the collapse of Labour's promised housing drive, a prolonged slowdown of educational reform, and a moratorium on other welfare provisions. The fight for a total reversal of priorities in this field is essential if even the most moderate reforms are to be accomplished.

As a result of its failure to face these vital problems, the Government has found it expedient to capitulate to xenophobia in framing its Immigration White Paper. For nakedly opportunistic reasons it has

stop the rot...continued

espoused a racialist control-scheme which offers no solution whatever to the growth of ghettos, but which fans prejudice and xenophobic reactions to a dangerous heat. This inexcusable policy will not win one extra labour vote, since the opposition can always easily outbid the Labour party in the field of racialist demagoguery. What it will do is to convince all idealist, liberal radicals of its apparently unlimited perfidy. This in turn worsens its already appalling electoral prospects. Meanwhile the condition of the immigrants continuously worsens.

In foreign affairs, the Government's policies have quite simply been disastrous. Their 'East of Suez' mysticism has been completely discredited by the breakdown of Malaysia and war on the Indian sub-continent. Complete subservience to American policy has fearfully escalated the new cold war, and prevented any effective solution to the terrible war in Vietnam. All Labour's anti-nuclear promises, including the elementary pledge to abandon the British deterrent, have been shamelessly betrayed. The fight to break Labour from the NATO alliance, for a genuinely independent and non-nuclear foreign policy, is a drastic imperative not only for every socialist but for every human being who wishes to survive. Labour cannot afford to tolerate the Government's involvement in imperialism, whether native or American. Our alignment must be with the hungry peoples of the Third World, against their oppressors.

Everybody in the labour movement should be against intolerance, bigotry and arbitrary dictatorship, wherever they exist. But this opposition cannot become a shield for anti-communism, because it then serves only to intensify the retrograde features of communist regimes, and to encourage forces which inhibit their development towards fully democratic and humanist forms of organisation. At the same time it is obvious their anti-communism produces a hysteria which tends to allow its advocates to support, and even to rely on, absolutely reactionary and oppressive regimes and causes. No honest radical can accept such a position today.

We believe that these principles are of cardinal importance to the future of honest socialist politics, and must be advanced by all socialists.

If such a commitment is to be more than platonic it is essential for the left to find ways to discuss the application of its doctrines, to elaborate an alternative strategy to the immoral and bankrupt course at present being pursued by the Government and to find ways to present it as a viable political option.

This cannot be done if the left is not prepared, at every level from parliament down to the grass roots, to refuse to endorse retrogressive policies, to fight against them, oppose them, and demand alternatives. An organisational focus for the various left opinions must be organised, in which agreement can be reached about where the line of resistance to Government policy is to be drawn, firmly and decisively. No socialist will support the Government's intention to emasculate the unions, its racialist immigration control measures, or its disgraceful foreign adventures. Abstention on such issues will not placate the New Left. From now on we shall say no, exposing the elements of reactionary coalition and posing the alternative of a genuinely socialist policy. In order to do so to the limit of our capabilities, we must join together and begin work at once. To delay is to condone wickedness and court catastrophe.

Is the prospect of socialism in the advanced European countries an affair of struggle over decades? Does "affluence" produce a satisfied working class, and inevitably sap the will to move on to a socialist society? Must trade unions in Western Europe always confine their tactics to partial and defensive battles? A confident and exacting discussion of these problems by the brilliant Belgian marxist, Ernest Mandel, appears in the latest issue of International Socialist Journal (No. 10).

Mandel, after carefully assessing the difficulties posed by these questions, shows how they may come to be given a firm negative reply. "In the same way that the daily experience of the 19th century worker taught him how the net product of each enterprise was divided between wages and profits, the daily experience of the worker in the neo-capitalist period teaches him how the national income is divided between the total of earned and the total of unearned income, and how these mechanisms can only be mastered by the seizure of the means of production - the levers of power of the whole of economic life". In the context of intensified alienation as both producers and consumers, this perception is potentially revolutionary.

Believing that "far from postponing the socialist revolution till the very distant future, neo-capitalism actually brings to fruition a series of circumstances which present revolution as an immediate and urgent necessity demanded by the facts", Mandel is able to discuss the role of the socialist movement itself in a vitally exciting way. He analyses the strategy of structural reforms, showing the dangers that are involved in advocating immediate policies which lend support to neo-capitalism, while showing the need for practical slogans upon which the socialist parties can base their work. This article is an absolute must for every seriously committed socialist. It will trigger off a discussion which will be of the very greatest importance for Labour.

In the same issue of the journal there are valuable articles by Tony Topham and John Hughes, on Workers' Control and Compensation in Nationalised Industries. O'Connor Lysaght contributes a useful feature on Religion and Irish Labour, and Andre Gorz writes on students and skilled workers.

There is also a symposium on planning in which De Santis' article on the Cuban debate, explaining the controversy between Che Guevara and Mora, and providing a summary of the debate, is of key value. From it there emerges a picture of Che Guevara which is little understood in Britain, where he is rightly seen as a heroic figure, but in a somewhat romantic sense. De Santis reveals that Che is also a very profound revolutionary thinker. Here is a quotation from his summary, reporting Che's words:

"We are fighting against misery, but we are also fighting against alienation. One of the fundamental objectives of Marxism is to remove interest, the factor of individual interest and gain from men's psychological motivations. Marx was preoccupied both with economic factors and with their repercussion on the spirit. If communism isn't interested in this too it may be a method of distributing goods, but it will never be a revolutionary way of life."

This brave man is instinctively understood all over the world. Everywhere that men are fighting for freedom, he is reported in action. He has been 'killed' in the Congo, 'arrested' in Peru, 'hunted' all over the Andes, 'reported dead' in San Domingo. But ideas like those which Che has been advocating in this crucial Cuban debate will not die easily.