

International Bulletin

Vol. 1. No. 31

Price Threepence

July 27th 1962.

EVEN WOODCOCK REJECTS TORY WAGE FREEZE COMMISSION

The pathetic attempt by the Tories to create some kind of a new image with the so-called National Incomes Commission is so obviously a mere gimmick to try to keep wages down that even Woodcock, general secretary of the T.U.C. and no left winger, turned it down flat. As Woodcock pointed out, in practice the body far from being an incomes commission will concern itself with one type of income only - that of wages. Thinly disguised is the fact that it will be a propaganda device to mobilise 'public opinion' against wage settlements which have won by decisive action of sections of the working class, e.g., the dockers victory. In this way the Tories, no doubt, would like to give a respectable veneer to the press campaigns on this subject.

In itself this gimmick is likely to be quite ineffective but it could mark a stage in the development of real 'incomes policy', one which would have teeth in the form of legislation against unofficial strikes, etc. 'Public opinion' is of course what the Tory minded press creates through its distortions, and if 'public opinion' impressed upon the Commission that wage settlement after settlement was not in the national interest, the stage would be set under pressure of this same 'public opinion' to legislate. Like every ^{thing} the Tories do it is on the one hand basically in the overall interests of the capitalist class, and on the other is as a result of various pressures on the Government. Just now, while the by-elections have made the Tories want to adopt more 'popular' policies, they had to give an undertaking to the I.M.F. to continue with an incomes policy before the 'stand-by' agreement could be made.

The series of measures and the Government changes will do nothing to solve the crisis of British capitalism or its political expression the crisis of policy inside the Tory Party. Sooner or later the Tories will be forced to take more decisive action - which will boil down to an attack on the working class in one form or another. Either that or make way for a Labour Government which at present the capitalist class is not prepared to risk. No matter what happens the task of marxists must be to help to create a situation where first, sectors of the working class, and then the decisive sections of the working class draw the correct conclusions - and from this a mass socialist consciousness emerges.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS FRIGHTEN POLICE

By J. (Nottingham)

Young Socialists coming out of the "Save the Young Socialists" rally caused a panic reaction by the police. By coincidence well over 200 of them turned out just as Mosley arrived at his H.Q., two doors down from Denison House where the meeting was held, just back from his unsuccessful attempt to speak in Trafalgar Square. The police must have thought that this sudden descent was a detachment from the crowd which had broken up the fascist meeting in Trafalgar Square. Anyway, they started issuing instructions left, right and centre about getting a move on, and were in such confusion that when they sent people along one side of the road, the people were blocked by other police who told them to go back again. Not unnaturally when word got around what was happening, the Young Socialists didn't 'get a move on' and were determined to take advantage of their proximity to the fascist H.Q. to add their voice to the protest against fascism. Things reached such a state of confusion that the police sent for mounted reinforcements. These rode in and out of the crowd in an attempt to enforce dispersion and acted in the typical callous way the police have when dealing with left wing demonstrators. At least one person was dragged off held by four policemen, and if there wasn't a large number of people hurt by the horses it was pure luck. It was altogether and interesting, and for some who had not seen the police in action before, an enlightening experience.

ANTI-FASCIST ACTION IN NOTTINGHAM

Arising out of spontaneous reaction by Young Socialists and others an ad hoc organisation has been formed to organise a meeting of protest for Sunday the 29th of July. Leaflets have been produced, slogans whitewashed and a series of preparatory open-air meetings held. Along with this the Young Socialists have organised a petition campaign in support of Fenner Brockway's Bill to outlaw racialism. The petition also asks for donations which will be given 'to the victims of fascism'. It is hoped to have representatives of the Labour Party, Trades Council, etc. speaking at the meeting.

N.E.C. introduces 'guilt by association' proposal.

Thwarted in its attempt to purge the four sponsors of the Moscow Peace Conference, the right wing struck back by making a proposal to amend the constitution of the Party which would almost give the right wing a blank cheque to expel who they liked. Adopted by 16 votes to nine, the proposal would make 'association with' proscribed bodies a crime punishable by expulsion from the Labour Party. In the broad labour movement of Britain with Communist Party members, and other proscribed organisations' supporters, active in the trade union branches, etc., it is virtually impossible to consistently be on the left without 'associating' with members of proscribed organisations.

The move was opposed by the left, and two attempts were made to modify the proposals by putting in 'persistently' or 'actively supporting' instead of more 'association'. Fred Mulley, right wing member of the Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union proposing the first, and Harry Nicholas of the T.G.W.U. putting the latter. The left wing proposed the reference back of the organisation sub-committee's report and this was supported by Crossman. Indeed, the latter writing in the Guardian of 27/7/62 launched a bitter attack on the proposal under the heading an 'Insulting anachronism'. Comrades should get hold of this article and use the information and arguments it contains to the full.

The proposal will need a two-thirds majority to be adopted and it would seem likely that the million odd votes of the T.G.W.U. will be cast against. This gives both the possibility and absolute necessity of defeating this vicious attack on democratic rights. As much noise as possible needs to be made on this question and despite the start of the holiday season no effort should be spared in getting the maximum protest against this move.

"Save the Young Socialists" meeting packed

The room booked at Denison House last Sunday for the above meeting was so well attended that there was standing room only. Will Griffiths was the main speaker (although he seemed to be under some misapprehension as to what meeting he was attending), Dick Clements, editor of Tribune chaired and two members of the National Committee of the Young Socialists (one of whom has been suspended) also spoke. There was also a considerable amount of time given over to discussion from the floor. The audience was predominately Young Socialist with a sprinkling of members from the adult party. The meeting was not really conclusive and such proposals as were made were of general kind, e.g., that the Young Socialists should integrate themselves in the adult party. However, even the following of these recommendations would have a powerful effect in the struggle against the witch hunt as there were comrades from many parts of the country, in addition to pretty well every area of London. It was announced that this was to be the first of a series of meetings to be held up and down the country commencing in the Autumn. A campaign on these lines would be useful and would probably have more effect in the provinces. When leaving, the audience got involved in the anti-fascist activity and a report of this is given elsewhere in the Bulletin.

Merseyside protest meeting against Young Socialist witch hunt by V. (Liverpool)

Readers will know that one of the four suspended members of the Young Socialist National Committee is Liz Thompson, the North West Regional Representative and Secretary of the Merseyside Federation and the Wigan Y.S. A protest meeting arranged by the Federation E.C. was held in Liverpool at the Walker Art Gallery on Sunday July 22nd, the speakers being Liz Thompson herself and Tommy Birch, the Wigan Youth Officer. The meeting was open to all young Socialists and Party members in the North West and about 100 actually attended.

Liz Thompson gave a full account of her grilling by George Brown and his investigating committee and two resolutions were passed. One, calling for the reinstatement of democratically elected representative was carried unanimously by the Young Socialists present. The other, deploring the attack on democracy was passed by the whole meeting with only one abstention. Although called to defend party democracy the meeting developed at one stage into a chorus of praise for the Wigan Y.S. A climax was reached when the principal speaker was interrupted by fervid cries of agreement from her mother who, as it happened, was seated in the front row. A further speaker maintained that Liz Thompson was the only person capable of leading a mass youth movement in the Labour Party. One or two comrades attempted to keep the discussion on general lines, and pressed for a proper delegate meeting; but they were accused of splitting the movement at a time of crisis.

Despite these sectarian aspects, however, the meeting was an advance in the fight against the witch-hunt.

I attended a meeting at the Queen's Community Centre on Saturday, 21st. July in Nottingham, which was addressed by a speaker from the legal division of the Jamaican Migration Department. The speaker started by saying that the Bill is now law, therefore one cannot argue against it but one should accept it. He then went on to say that the Bill was 'humane' and that the British Government had made legal history by accepting a concubine as a wife, i.e., the issue of a voucher to a 'common law' wife whose husband is a resident in Britain. After realising that the majority of people who were in attendance were not interested in his defence of imperialism and its legality, he decided that he would throw the meeting open to discussion and questions.

The first question was about Carmen Bryan - his answer was that he could not discuss it until after Monday, when pressed further, he said that the Bill was quite in order because Britain was a very small place ^{with} 52 million people and there are over 500 million Commonwealth citizens. Did we think it fair to allow such a vast number of people free entry? A member of the audience related this to the number of people who would have free entry when Britain joined the Common Market. The speaker's immediate reaction was that this was something for future discussion. From then on the marxist comrades who were in attendance knew that the discussion must take a political form if the non-political members of the audience were to achieve anything.

The marxist comrades started their argument by denouncing capitalism and the reactionary position that the speaker took. The speaker replied that he was not prepared to accept the marxists' arguments and went on to defend the exploitation of the colonial people by foreign capitalism. One can view this meeting with deep concern because it outlines quite clearly that the struggle for socialism is not just a question of replacing the white ruler in the colonies, but that it is a struggle which needs the unity of white and coloured workers to fight the united black and white capitalists. Thirty odd copies of Carib were taken to the meeting and we sold out - we could have sold more.

FLAGRANT COLOUR BAR IN BRISTOL - MEN SACKED PURELY BECAUSE OF COLOUR OF SKIN

The following report is based upon a confidential report made by a bourgeois social organisation:

The Avonmouth dispute

Thirty to forty coloured people were on shore about 9.00 a.m. receiving goods ex S.S. Telapi on July 9th. The white foreman in charge on the shore reprimanded a coloured man for throwing bananas into the railway van. The foreman said that if the particular gang concerned (about five in number) would not do as they were told they would get their cards. The foreman turned to walk away and received a blow on the back of the head at the left side and another to the chin. He then turned round and hit a young coloured man of 18 years. The foreman then went down on the floor hit by men unknown, in the left ribs. White men pulled him out.

Thirty white registered dock labourers came to see the T.G.W.U. officer at about 9.40 a.m. A supervisor said that he would get the trouble makers removed and they must return to work. The 'trouble makers' turned out to be one (aged 18). When the registered dock labourers got on the berth, however, the supervisor's staff of the Stevedore's firm refused to work with the coloured workers. The supervisor's staff never returned to the T.G.W.U. office.

The Stevedore's firm seeing the attitude of the Supervisor's staff (which appears to have been somewhat emotional) returned coloured people to the labour office at approximately 11.50 a.m. where they received the National Time-worth minimum for four hours work. The T.G.W.U. advised against returning the men on grounds that colour discrimination was undesirable. The Stevedore firm returned all coloured workers (between 80 and 100) to the Labour Exchange on the grounds that the Supervisors wouldn't work with them.

AFRO AMERICANS DEMONSTRATE IN THE DEEP SOUTH - OVER 100 ARRESTED

On July 22nd, Police in Albany, Georgia, broke up a demonstration by several hundred Afro Americans who defied a Federal Court injunction and marched on the cityhall for a prayer meeting against racial discrimination. About 100 demonstrators were arrested and gaoled.

THE UNHOLY ALLIANCE RECEIVED: This pamphlet produced by the M.C.F., the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Council for Freedom in Portugal and the colonies deals with the alliance between such types as Salazar, Verwoerd and Welensky in their attempt to maintain white supremacy in its crudest form. Well-documented and going into matters in considerable detail, the pamphlet is a valuable propaganda weapon and we should push it. It doesn't give a revolutionary answer to the problems but it can do a valuable job in educating Labour Party members and trade unionists.

CHINESE LEADER SPEAKS OF DIFFERENCES WITH RUSSIA

The Chinese Foreign Minister, Marshal Chen Yi, said in Geneva in public that differences existed between his country and the Soviet Union. Speaking at a luncheon given by the Laotian 'neutralist' Prime Minister, Souvanna Phouma, on July 23rd, he replied to a question: "Yes, we have differences. We are two great nations and we have different views on different problems. We are not a satellite nation." This is one of the first times such an admission has been made and is, in itself, a sign that the differences have not been resolved.

RUSSIAN FARMS CANNOT USE FACTORY WORKERS

A very interesting item appeared in Soviet News of July 17th which throws some light on the difficulties Russian agriculture is facing, and of social tensions which are arising from those difficulties. It reads:

"An application by some of the republics for permission to use factory and office workers and students for agricultural work on collective and state farms has been refused by the central committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and by the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R., Izvestia reported on July 13. The Central committee and the Council of Ministers are receiving requests from Union republics, territories and regions to permit them to enlist the population of towns, workers' settlements and inhabited localities in Agricultural districts, and also students and school children, in the work of crop cultivation and harvesting, says the decision.

"The central committee of the C.P.S.U. and the Council of Ministers consider it inexpedient to use town people for agricultural work, since collective and state farms have large quantities of various machinery and a large number of workers and skilled machine operators, who, if the work is well organised and the machinery used to good account, can do all the agricultural work in good time, it is stated."

"HURRAH FOR FRANCO" - SAYS NAZI BONN MINISTER

from G.D.R. report

"We stand on Franco's side!" said Dr. Hans-Joachim von Merkatz, a West German Cabinet minister, on June 24th while on a trip to Madrid. "The Federal Government welcomes warmly the European course of Spain's political line. The great moral and economic efforts of Spain, which promote order, progress and stability in Europe, must necessarily be greeted with satisfaction," he said adding that West German democracy and Spanish authority were not opposites but complemented each other.

Minister von Merkatz, a member of Adenauer's Christian Democratic Union, is in charge of Government relations with the Bundesrat (Upper House) and the provincial governments in the West German cabinet. During the war Merkatz, a former Nazi Party member, worked in Hitler's Ibero-American Institute, which organised espionage in Spain, Portugal and Latin America. He has a long record of backing every reactionary cause he can find.

After the uproar caused by press reports of Merkatz' statement, West German Press Chief Eckardt stated that Merkatz was not on an official government visit to Madrid. He did not express disagreement with Merkatz' views.

FREE ENTERPRISE - TEXAN STYLE

Texas is renowned for doing things on a big scale and when it comes to "free enterprise" of a rather dubious type it lives up to its reputation as the recent Billie Sol Estes scandal shows. Another scandal is now shaking the state; that of 'directional' drilling. This involves drilling oil wells at an angle so as to reach neighbouring oilfields. The laws lay down that, except in special cases, it is illegal to deviate more than 3 degrees. Federal investigators have discovered cases of wells being drilled at angles of more than 50 degrees off the vertical. This means that for every thousand feet drilled one would be going 750 feet into neighbouring land. So far only small and medium sized operators have been implicated, but those apprehended claim that the largest firms are the worst offenders. The investigations continue, but more than 100 cases have so far been discovered and it is estimated that more \$10 millions' worth of oil per month has been produced from these illegal wells.

IRAN'S PREMIER RESIGNS - BLAMES LACK OF AMERICAN 'AID'

Dr. Ali Amini resigned as Prime Minister of Iran on July 17th and gave as his reasons the failure to balance the budget to cover a \$25 million deficit. This in turn, Dr. Amini explained, was due to the tardiness of U.S. economic aid and a cut in U.S. military assistance "without which we cannot carry on." U.S. imperialism is bolstering up numerous reactionary regimes all over the world, and as its economic difficulties grow, these regimes will face disaster as U.S. 'tardiness' grows. Not even the mighty dollar can hold back history.

The following account was written especially for the Bulletin by a member of the Young Socialists who was recently charged with 'incitement', upon which charge Des Lock received a sentence of 15 months. It is important to be on the guard against this particular charge because its use has recently been extended and has also been used against strikers. Ed. Note.

"The law in this country dealing with incitement to disorder is over 500 years old, it was formulated when boats were wooden and armies fought with spears and bows and arrows. It is still in use today and last week it was used against me.

"It is, however, a thing to be proud of that in the age of apathy the solidarity shown to me by the ranks of the C.N.D. and Committee of 100 was one hundred per cent. I was arrested on the Thursday, and the same night while I was converting two very bored deserters from the army, 20 to 30 campaigners were outside on the Police Station steps on a two hour vigil. Some of them from as far as Derby I had only known a week or so. There was more to come; I was delivered in handcuffs to Brixton prison to spend a rather boring week end in 'clink.' As far as I knew I was defending my own case and did not intend to accept 'binding over' - that until "my group" in Hammersmith stepped in, (the group I had played some part in forming in January when it had no membership. Now it has 150) When I appeared at the Quarter Sessions, low and behold a barrister was defending me, 12 witnesses and 14 of the group in the gallery.

"I was told to be bound over - or else. Even though the evidence proved not guilty beyond doubt, it always seems there is only one verdict where Nuclear Disarmament is concerned - Guilty. I got three years binding over and a further charge of 14 days for failure to pay a £4 fine. Then, although I had not left the court cells, 'my group' was sent round innumerable courts to find me. By the time I got to Brixton again 'my group' had also arrived, and got me my freedom.

" This, I must say was the biggest fiasco I have ever been in, but I am very glad it happened for how else could I have known what wonderful supporters we have got."

THE DISMISSAL OF COLIN JORDAN - A COMMENT

by M. (Liverpool)

Although it is not a major issue, I think Socialists should be aware - if they are not already - that the proposed removal of Colin Jordan as a teacher because of his Fascist ideas has implications beyond his particular case. Too many apparent socialists - including so I am told the Daily Worker - have approved his dismissal. But this type of action is double-edged and could be applied to the whole of the left. No socialist should support this sort of action by the "authorities" - in this case the local educational functionaries.

The way to combat Fascism is by agitation and extra-Parliamentary action, not by supporting 'legal' coercion by the administrative apparatus. In the last issue the Editorial remarked on authoritarianism as a possible culmination of capitalist strategy in this country and Western Europe. This authoritarianism would involve all sorts of "controls", "dismissals", etc. of "subversive elements". It disciplines the lunatic right in order to club the left.

CLIFF SAYS THE MARXISTS SHOULD NOT SET UP A PARTY OF THEIR OWN

Herewith the extract from Cliff's article in the current issue of International Socialism which is referred to in Comrade T.'s article on the demise of the Socialist Review:

".....Marxists should not set themselves up as a party or embryo of a party of their own. They should remember that the working class looks to the Labour Party as the political organisation of the class (and no doubt when a new wave of political activity spreads among the working class millions of new voters will flock to its banner and hundreds of thousands will join it actively). Marxists should never forget that consciousness of the aims of socialism on the part of the mass of the workers is a necessary prerequisite for the achievement of socialism....."

A 'MISSED OUT' PARA

According to the Newsletter of 21/7/62 the following para was missed out of the resolution of the S.W.P. (and reproduced in the last issue of the Bulletin)

"The majority and minority unanimously commended the invitation extended by the International Committee to the International Secretariat to join in forming a Parity Commission that could conduct a common discussion and explore possibilities for the two main sectors of the world Trotskyist movement to begin working together"

The Editors of Socialist Review issued a statement on July 18th as follows:

During its twelve years of existence, Socialist Review has managed to clarify and promote some of the central themes of revolutionary socialism - workers' control, full nationalisation, independence of both Washington and Moscow. It has done so to such effect that these ideas have been embraced by other journals, such as International Socialism, the Industrial Worker.

Most active supporters of Socialist Review have found work on, and for, these journals more fruitful in terms of spreading within the labour movement the ideas upheld by Socialist Review. Most have come to believe that the movement is too fragmented at present for a single journal however well supported, to flourish. And, since they have found little time and energy to spare for work on SR in addition to their work on these other papers, it was decided at a readers' meeting held in London on 8th July to suspend publication until further notice.

COMMENT; we have asked comrade T. of Birmingham to express his opinion in view of the fact that he was one of the active founders of the Socialist Review, but in addition it is necessary to say that the step represents (1) a move away from the Labour Party, and (2) a move away from any kind of organised activity.

Neither of the two journals International Socialism or Industrial Worker is specifically a journal of Labour Party supporters. The former is a discussion journal, which while it comes down, generally speaking against pulling out of the Labour Party (see the latest issue on I.N.D.E.C.) contains on its editorial board at least one person, Harry McShane, who is diametrically opposed to marxists working in the Labour Party. Industrial Worker aims to embrace shop stewards and active trade unionists from all parties, and indeed, there has been discussion with the I.L.P. for the paper to be an industrial supplement of the Socialist Leader.

As regards organised work, clearly neither a discussion journal nor a sectional paper (covering various political opinions) can be an organising paper. Lastly, the haste with which publication was suspended gives food for thought, especially in view of the fact that there sharp divisions of opinion on the question. No hint of the coming demise of the paper appeared in the last issue of Socialist Review a strange ^{way} of taking what is essentially a political decision. The comrades who have worked around the paper have, no doubt, very sincere reasons for taking this course of action and will continue to do valuable work for progressive policies but we must ask them to examine the evolution of the Shachtman tendency in the United States. To those who reject this, a comrade T. puts it, liquidationist policy we would request them to think out their political ideas and consider whether these steps are an inevitable outcome of the conclusions one draws from the theory of 'state capitalism.' We also offer active collaboration in joint activity and the use of these columns for reports, etc.

Ed. Note: more material on this question will be issued.

The end of the Road - "Socialist Review" ceases publication by T. (Birmingham)

After nearly twelve years of regular publication Socialist Review has finished. Its demise cannot go unnoticed, especially in view of the long article on the Labour Party, by Tony Cliff, in the current issue of "International Socialism. He, as many will know, was one of the leading contributors to S.R. and much more, he was one of the founders of that paper. Indeed it can be said that he was the main theoretical inspirer of the birth of S.R.

Its first issue appeared in November, 1950, an unpretentious duplicated paper giving its reasons for publication as "...presenting useful factual material and objective, analytical articles on current political affairs..." but the reasons went much deeper than this. The Korean war was at its height, and Socialist Outlook, the paper around which the supporters of the Fourth International in this country worked, was more and more taking a pro-stalinist position on that question and many others. Thus Socialist Review was born out of the dilemma of many revolutionaries who neither wished to support imperialism or condone the crimes of Stalinism. However, because of the conditions that prevailed at that time, many of these comrades lost their way, politically speaking, and rejected the concept of the Soviet Union as being a degenerated workers' state and embraced state capitalist theories. It is my firm belief that it was from this that many of the mistakes and conclusions of the Socialist Review stem. The full flowering of this is seen first, in the suspension of publication, and secondly, in Tony Cliff's article referred to above. Implicit in the first and explicit in the second is the rejection of the revolutionary party.

There can be no mincing of words on this, this is liquidationism which will pave the way, despite all protests to an acceptance of left reformism.
Ed. Note: An extract from Cliff's article is reproduced elsewhere in the Bulletin.