LABOUR'S MARCH FORWARD by John Fairhead

PEOPLE plan their summer holidays. They decide where they want to go and how to get there. They travel with friends. And they take with them only the luggage which they need.

It is otherwise in politics. Many men and women in the Labour movement have not been accustomed, until now, to planning ahead. In many of its constituent bodies, delegates are selected and resolutions submitted only (as statutorily required) two or three months before the Party meets in conference. The delegates, once chosen, treat each other unselectively as comrades. Their intellectual baggage is either too light, or weighed down with a confusion of good intentions.

This year, things must be different.

RIGHT WING PLAN

Gaitskell's "fight, fight" speech was a signal for the Right to go into organised action. The Right has done so, favoured initially by two advantages: its leaders understand their objective, to destroy the socialist programme and working-class base of the Movement, and they have the leadership to do it. The movement has not been united by the lack of a committed rank and file. Their organization is top heavy, and their local people are not, in general, equipped to fight politically, preferring crude organizational methods. In the branch rooms, the right wing is making a stand.

Spurred to action by the leader's defiance of Party discipline and the voice of Conference, the Left is hitting back. Its strength and weaknesses are exactly the opposite. The ranks are willing and able to fight; but the leaders are uncertain of their direction except in general terms.

All socialists who mean business thus have a big job. They have to start now to build, in an organized and campaign manner, towards Conference. And this in turn means that they must treat the conferences of the unions, co-operative organizations and Federations of Parties as battle grounds in preparation for all-out war.

FIGHT TO THE DEATH

This is the beginning of understanding: that compromise is not to be desired. Overtures have been made (from Crossman, Wilson and even Brown) and more will follow. It is to be expected that among the terms offered will be the renunciation of Gaitskell in return for the retention of most of his programme.

The answer to these peacemakers should be a kick in the teeth. The fact is that last year's Conference took decisions which the Party is entitled to see carried out. Those who disagree with the decisions have the right to remain and seek to win a majority for their views, and they must be protected against expulsion for advocating those views (as left-wingers have consistently been expelled in the past). But they must be removed from positions where they can sabotage the Party's wish. And if, as in the Young Socialists, they use the machinery of the Party against the declared will of the Party, they must be fought to the death.

The departure of Gaitskell the individual will mean nothing, unless it signifies the defeat of Gaitskell's ideas.

GO FORWARD

The Left's first task is to define policy, especially in parliament. By now there can be hardly a trade union branch or ward organization which has not discussed the Scarborough decisions and resolved the question of who stands where. Not one person who has declared, in speech or by vote, for the Left majority must remain unorganised.

Every organization, beginning with the London Labour Party in February, must be faced with the demand that the Scarborough decisions be taken to the working people, and public meetings, held under the official auspices to explain them.

Victory for Socialism, the Clause Four Campaign and the supporters of the Cambridge "Unity" manifesto must be brought together so that the fight can be properly waged. There must not be a single constituency Party or trade union in which the supporters of Party policy are working haphazardly or at cross purposes.

The fight on defence must be deepened and extended. Deepened by carrying forward the fight for unilateral renunciation of the Bomb to its next stage: a demand for withdrawal from NATO and the American alliance by a future Labour Government, and a continued on page six
TU COMMENTARY

BUREAUCRATS

by J. Ellis

At the very moment when organised labour faces the threat engendered by a sick capitalistic economy, the leadership have embarked on a drive against workers' elected shop floor representatives. We, the workers, must oppose this vigorously and decisively.

Working class struggle for power is never easy, but it is made doubly hard when the bureaucrats attempt to tie one's hands behind one's back.

Look clearly at your organisation. Mark where the REAL leadership exists. Stand to the defence of the shop organisations and spread the demand for UNITY against the bosses.

* * *

George Wake, Secretary of the National Committee of Shop Stewards in Electrical Supply, is no martyr and no worker. He is a bureaucrat. But he was elected by fellow workers, as was the committee itself, to do a job. The job which the so-called leadership had burked for more than a year, now dare not be done. The elected workers' powers' committee is outlawed by the AEU Executive.

Electrical supply workers rank among the most productive sections of industry. For years electrical supply was pitifully short of labour.

NO LEADERSHIP

Remember the London Power workers' strike? Not the workers involved, but the leadership! Out of strike and actually withholding labour, have the electrical supply workers won any sort of justice.

What about the national union leadership? Sitting on its rump, bleating about "disciplining the unruly members", really calling the shop-stewards movement "werrawolves".

First the M&GWU leaders announce their hate campaign against shop stewards. Then the EGU turn turtle, and condemn rank and file committees, now the AEU, through the Carronites, moves smartly forward to DO THE DIRTY WORK OF THE BOSSES.

ONLY THE WORKERS

The TUC (once so correctly described as the most conserva
tive body in the land) is praised by the employers for holding an enquiry into the behaviour of shop stewards. (Times, Jan. 9th, 1961).

No matter what steps the union "leadership" take now to "close the gap between them and the rank-and-file" (current obsession of the leadership), their pitiful record on behalf of organised labour remains.

Only the workers' abundant sense of loyalty keeps the bureaucrats from being thrown out on their ears, that and no sharp conflict with the ruling class.

But we know, instinctively, what to do when it is needed. Let us not fail. We are serving on the Knights of Smith Square,—lay off the rank-and-file movement!

ENGINEER'S WAGES

by Karl Dunbar

"By settling for substantially below the average percentages, the engineering employers have squeezed the positions of employers in other industries where negotiations are uncompleted. Thus the employers' friends in Fleet Street greeted the news of the "cease which has been made" that leading shipbuilders had made and which now gives engineering workers the bonus of £5.15.2d (skilled) and £4.4.10d (labourers) as their basic wage.

The "responsible" (Carrington) of the Union reports to have delivered these stirring and momentous words to the eager press boy. "We would sooner have had all we asked for, but the employers were very difficult this time.

Just to put our great leader's mind at rest, let him be assured that the million workers who by the action of the employers "cease which has been made" have been of "difficult employers" will do "difficult employers" work. It will break a record in the coal industry. 17,000 Coventry car workers know about the "difficulties" of their company, the time they're on the dole, or short time. Shop stewards know when the names go on the black list.

Old age pensioners know, tenants too. Miners and bus-workers, railwaymen and dockers, they all know this, so Carron of the AEU is not making an easy bet.

But, unlike Carron and company, all these workers who know the truth have and are doing something about it, they are fighting against the employer-Torysqueeze.

Since July 1960, the wise "leaders" of the Confederation have made not one single move to prosecute the wages claim which was unanimously carried at the Llandudno conference of that year. Any anxiety about the claim sprang from the workshop and the branches. But the isolation of the "leadership", ready as always to attack the shop stewards movement, as they did in the case of the power workers' national shop stewards movement, but incapable of leading a fight to save that industry.

What has this little exercise in "leadership" taught you? To me, one simple lesson emerges. We have, under the conditions of the trade union bureaucracy, the more we place our trust in the union bureaucracy the more defeats we are likely to suffer. I believe the working class movement is strong at the roots, but as weak as a pint of watered beer at executive level.

O UR TASK

Our task is plain, to strengthen the real leadership in the workshops and branches. To support workers whose roots lie deep in the soil of the movement, whose class interests are clearly defined, who seek not to further the ends of the "cult of leadership" but rather strive always to build a thinking, acting, class-conscious movement. More power to the factory and workshop organisations must be our demand in the present battle for progress.

LEADERS?

by Les Bennet

We appear to be enjoying a glut of trade union leaders at the present time, leaders in practically every direction, left, right and centre. Unfortunately we don't appear to have many representatives: the people whom we elect to represent us. The disease is assuming the right to lead among trade unionists appears to arise from the assumption that the individual has secured a majority of votes in a particular election. Democracy is then abandoned apparently until the next election is due, when we are informed by the candidate that he sat this time and attended the meeting, that he has the hundreds of thousands of "have-nots" been represented at all: has our candidate taken cognisance of our views?

How often has the trade union membership been consulted, before the elected officers of the various unions have appeared on television, or given press interviews, following the break-down of a wages claim or the fight for the 40-hour week.

SNUBBED RANK AND FILE

There can be no doubt today about the widening gap between the rank and file and the Executive Councils, especially in engineering, where today demonstrators outside the bosses' headquarters are referred to as "no-gooders" by our so-called leaders.

Is it not time some of them were recalled to spend a few years back in the factories and ships, to see for themselves how little the employing class has changed?

T HEY ARE 'ALL RIGHT'

Redundancy is still the same as the sack and the sack today is still as bad as ever it was.

On the other hand, our leaders have never been in such a bind. With increases in their pay packets, pension funds, expense accounts, and payment for time off when sick, it isn't difficult to behave like a leader or even like a lord.

SOCIALIST REVIEW

A MILITANT LEAD

by R. Thomas

Last December the London Regional District Committee of the AEU asked all branches to forward resolutions for the 1961 National Committee Conference. In his request, the Acting President, Secretary stressed the grave problems facing engineering worker, with growing unemployment, short time working, the Rent Act and the general Tory squeeze. He particularly stressed the need to "make our resolutions really militant, a fighting policy is needed.

With this in mind, one AEU branch forwarded the following resolution to D.C. "This National Committee, conscious of the growing threat to the living standards of our members, declares its full support for the following policy:

1. A shorter working week without loss of pay.
2. Extended annual holidays to 3 weeks.
3. Pay for work done on all overtime.
4. Full maintenance for all unemployed.

The full strength of our union be used to force these demands from both the employers and the Government.

6. That an intensive propaganda campaign be launched, putting forward these 5 points, so that all our members are aware of the union's determination to fight against the attacks of the Employing class and their political representatives in the House of Commons.

That was the resolution, sent in December, to which there has yet to be an acknowledgment from the D.C.

There may be a good reason for the tardiness of the reply. Let's hope that the resolution hasn't gone in the waste-paper basket.

What do fellow trade-unionists think of the resolution? It would be very interesting to know what one branch, as a reflection of the general feeling amongst factory workers.

ELECTIONS IN AEU

by 1. Hanna

The latest fat volume to arrive at AEU branches is the 1961 YEARLY REPORT. Without a doubt it is well presented and merits close study by all trade unionists. The first half of the book contains financial reports which few of the members understand; the second, which they understand only too well. Election returns reflect branch attitudes towards the District Office with 55/ of votes cast going to the winner, Bro. R. Birch, the other 45% supports what the other 82% think of the organisation.

The returns in the election for Asst. Gen. Secy, are interesting: the branch that never seemed in any danger of losing his place (and he was returned continued page 3
with a massive majority) but our interest is aroused by some of the lesser fry and local hero
esses. One such known was Bro. Grahame from Belfast. We read his address at the time of the 
election, but a red flag was waving, giant killing affair and it worked! Bro. Grahame fetched in whole branches in many parts of England and Wales as far apart as Oldham and Stoke Newington, Oldham and King- ston, and Aberdare and Dundee plus one branch in Sydney, Australia! A gallant effort but that is not how to do it in the AEU.

SOME other trade unionists have been making a noise lately, namely Bro. Vic Feather of the TUC and Bro. H. Collinson of the Agricultural Workers. Here again turned away in fine print, but this time the fine print of the New Year Honours List, in other words the brothers have "arrived".

CRISIS IN CAR INDUSTRY
by T. L. ROGER

HOW bankrupt sound the fine words of "more "You have never had it so good", but instead the hard-faced reality of the boss-class with their instructions to the workers: tighten your belts. Tighten our belts, brothers; draw our dole, but not they theirs.

In the Midlands 71,000 car workers are being made redundant. The "working week" is now becoming a bad joke in the industry. As in Birmingham open 2 days a week, Morris Motors, Cowley, 21 days and 2 night shifts; Fords, Dagenham, 3 days, and Vauxhall at Luton, apart from mass sackings (1,500 in the past two months) now operate on 4 days. BLSL of Acton, the Rootes group subsidiary, are also on 4 days.

The inability of capitalism to offer any kind of stability, any real future, for our class, is thrown clearly into focus. And workers are not blind to this.

Reduction of the purchase tax on cars and a general easing of the purchase restriction terms could give some help to the industry. Again a cut in car prices by squeezing out some of the fat profits of the industry could help somewhat to enlarge the market for cars. Reductions in freightage and tax could be another.

Trade with the under-developed countries—assisted by generous credit from Britain (a much more useful exercise than wasteful "defence" expenditure)—and trade with the countries behind the "Iron Curtain", could also help.

STUGGLE

Above all, and immediately, what is needed is a struggle against sacking with a pitance for compensation. This struggle should be combined with a demand for the 40-hour week without loss of pay and three weeks' annual holiday, followed by a progressive reduction of working hours.

The industry urgently needs planning. Notwithstanding Gaitakell and Co. the instability of the industry shows that capitalism continues to be a system of insecurity. Capitalism is支 here to stay and the order of the day. Ford, who pays something like 2s. an hour less on the average than wages paid in the Midland firms, are set on their bid. Clause 4—defending the public ownership of industry—should now be translated into action.

A campaign of the whole labour movement should be launched for the nationalisation of the car industry under worker's control. Socialist planning should be the answer to capitalist anarchy.

"Redundancies" and dismissals... it is a fact of the motor industry has never had it so good, reaping its highest- ever profits, working conditions and guarantees have never been better. In spite of the persistent claims by the manufacturers for easier hire-purchase terms, the failure in the industry is due to more basic causes.

SOLD OUT OF BUILDING WORKERS
by W. Cullen (NSP)

As from October, the building trade worker is to receive an increase of 6d. per hour, with a working week cut from 44 to 42 hours.

A glance, this would appear to be a great stride forward, but on closer examination with the employers and the T.U.C. leaders can be seen to have perpetuated an amazing piece of chicanery on the building workers.

Most of the workers have been aware of the negotiations for the shorter working week, most have known too of the proposed increase but few could have known the real value, not that which they would receive, but what they would have to pay for it.

The precious tea breaks, con- cessions won after years of bitter struggle, of stoppages and sack- ings, have been abandoned—one can be sure to the great satisfaction of the employers. For this they offer 6d. per hour, an increase and 3d. for the lost two hours on the working week. And here the chicanery is exposed.

MORE SWEAT

The actual increase, compar- ing October 1960, 44 hrs. and October 1961, 42 hrs., is a non-starter. The actual increase on time amounts to 1/4d. per week (the amounts quoted here are London rates). Any in- creases in productivity obtained, will not be due to the tea break being given up, although no doubt after 12 months without tea breaks, the employers will proudly point to the rise in productivity. This rise has been showing itself for some years now.

The Labour correspondent of the Times (January 13th) quotes Mr. Peter Trench, director of the building Employers Federation, for some employers the change would meet up to two-thirds of the cost of the shorter week, the rest of the total cost would be met by an increase of 4/ in productivity, most of which should be achieved before the concessions on pay and hours come into effect.

It is difficult to imagine what in the minds of the T.U.C. leaders should the employers succeed in their break- through, and when the majority of the building workers realised what has been tricked, the T.U.C. should have some un- imaginative answers ready when questioned.

They never had it so good

The rise in wages and share prices in 1960 compared with 1953 is shown in the following percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Wage Increase</th>
<th>Share Prices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>301</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>288</td>
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<tr>
<td>W. Germany</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>544</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>165</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>109</td>
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(For a table showing the International Financial Statistics, November 1960)

They too...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
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<th>men's earnings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oil refining</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>£. s. d.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>51.0</td>
<td>15.4.1</td>
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<td>49.2</td>
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<td>1511.9</td>
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Table showing "emoluments" of directors (Full and Part-time)

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Table showing "emoluments" of directors (Full and Part-time)
THE BELGIAN GENERAL STRIKE

The little country of Belgium, with its nine million people, witnessed one of the mightiest battles of the international working class. Whatever the outcomes of the strike, and at the time of writing things do not look too bright, this chapter on working class history will live on.

The present article will try to pinpoint some main outlines of the strike and draw some lessons from it applicable to Socialists everywhere.

THE ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The Liege Socialist Party paper, Le Monde du Travail, (December 32, 1960) published an article called Belgium, the "Sick Man of the Common Market." It referred to the fact that the rate of economic growth in Belgium was lagging far behind that of other members of the Common Market. Then the rate of growth of industrial production between 1953 and 1959 averaged annually 2.94 per cent in Belgium and 4.57 per cent in the Common Market. Belgium was producing only 11 per cent more in 1958 than it was in 1928, twenty-four years earlier; while the figures for other countries of Western Europe were 30 per cent. The Belgian industry is facing severe competition. Approximately 40 per cent of the output of its industries is exported (OECC, Belgium-Luxemburg Economic Union, Paris, 1960, p. 32). These exports depend largely on foreign demand for its steel products and textiles. The nature of total world demand for industrial exports has changed radically over recent decades: a shift of emphasis has taken place in Europe from products needing relatively unskilled labour—such as textiles and steel—towards highly finished capital equipment and a wide range of new industries.

In Belgium the necessary change has proceeded much more slowly than in the other countries of the Common Market, for a number of reasons. First, Belgian industries suffered much less from the destruction during the war than those of some other countries, notably Germany, which were by this fact compelled to re-equip with the most modern machinery. Secondly, the acute demand for primary products immediately after the war and during the Korean boom blunted the necessity for developing new types of production. And lastly, Belgian capital found it more profitable to divert its capital to foreign fields than to invest at home.

To add to its troubles, Belgium's main raw material, coal, is produced under extremely bad conditions. It is true that in all capitalist countries the consumption of coal has declined in recent years. In Belgium the affect of the general coal crisis was even more acute than elsewhere, as Belgian coal deposits are thin and irregular and the pit equipment extremely backward. Coal production is some 10 per cent more productive in the Common Market countries as a whole than in Belgium. The result: closure of pits on a mass scale over the past few years. "The number of underground workers declined by 33 per cent between January 1, 1958 and September 4, 1960 (according to official notes of the High Authority of the Coal and Steel Community) and the reduction will no doubt reach 50 per cent at the end of 1961." (La Gazette, 26 November, 1960).

In an effort to soften the blow, the sacked Belgian miners were given a subsidy by the European Community for Coal and Steel. This was planned to terminate in October 1959, but was extended to September 30, 1960.

One result of the stagnation of the Belgian economy and the decline of traditional industries is a large pool of permanent and structurally unemployed. Since 1949 the rate of unemployment has been a constant 8-12 per cent of all wage earners. (Le Monde du Travail, December 22, 1960). (This compares with 2 per cent in Britain at present.)

THE CONGO DEBACLE

To add to the difficulties of Belgian capitalism came the Congo debacle.

One should not overestimate the weight of the Congo in the balance of Belgian economy. In 1959 Belgian exports to Congo were only 2.7 per cent of her total exports, and imports 8.8 per cent of total imports. The National Bank of Belgium calculated that a complete rupture of all economic and financial arrange- ments with Congo might initially cause a reduction of 6 per cent in the gross national product of Belgium and in her tax revenue, 5 per cent. Congo was quite important for balancing Belgium's balance of payments. However, exports from Congo were much larger than her imports, the difference largely helping Belgium. The aggregate surplus on current transactions in the 7-year period 1953-1960 amounted to 1,660 million dollars, or nearly 3 per cent of the gross national product of Belgium. Congo also helped to cover up the actual deficit in the Belgian budget.

Had the Belgian economy been growing at the same rate as the French, Italian, and British, German 7-8 per cent a year—the loss of the Congo could have been absorbed, but with a rate of growth of only 2 per cent...

Above all "the Congo debacle served. It was far more to put the country in the right mood to accept drastic action." (The Economist, December 31, 1960).

Actually, when Eyckens came to power in June 1958, he already had in his pocket a plan similar to that of the loi unique, but "nothing substantial was done" about it. (Ibid.)

To drag Belgian capitalism out of the rut two complementary measures were proposed by the Government: 1) plums for the capitalists, 2) a cut in workers' standards.

PLUMS FOR THE CAPITALISTS

These are given to Belgian and foreign—mainly American—capitalists to persuade them to invest in industry: "The Belgian technique of attracting them is to offer a number of temporary fiscal exemptions, including what amounts to 130 per cent deduction allowances for new machinery and plant installed during the development period. In addition to this, there are capital subsidies in certain cases, and finance is made available on very advantageous terms by loans which may be as much as 4 per cent below market rates." (The Statist, International Banking Supplement, December 17, 1960).

The result is that "the American industrialists who build a factory in Belgium will, in fact, be bringing to the country one only a comparatively small contribution to her foreign exchange reserves. He will be buying a large proportion of the machinery locally, and using the cheap interest rates provided by Belgian Government subsidies which have been offered to him as part of the inducement. This, of course, presupposes that Belgium will be able to keep the necessary little to provide the capital funds required."

"The effect of this is that the Belgian system will have found a great deal of the new capital funds, financing the new Americans and other investments on her territory." (Ibid.)

Above all, as a source of larger capital funds a cut in the workers' standards was sought.

ATTACK ON WORKERS' STANDARDS

In the Common Market area, Belgian workers enjoy wages second only to those of the French, being considerably above the West Germans, some 40 per cent above the Dutch, and some 50 per cent above the Italians. (The Economist Intelligence Unit, Britain and Europe, London, 1957, p. 31).

The aim of the loi unique is to cut these standards, and to make provision for the introduction of a hash means test which certificates the unemployed benefit for an indeterminate number of months. Secondly certain pension rights are to be abolished, affecting public employees—railwaymen, postmen, teachers, local government workers. The pensionable age is also to be raised. Thirdly, there is to be a sharp rise in indirect taxation, the result of this being a fall in the broad masses.

The Belgian Socialists estimate that the workers will thus lose about 3000-4000 Belgian francs (212-28) a year in cash and suffer of the loss of the loss of the loss in kind amounting to a cut of 10 per cent in their standards. That is why the strike.

On December 14th a half-day demonstration strike was called by the Socialist Party and the trade unions. This was a resounding success. On December 20, the day on which the debate on the loi unique began in Parliament, there was a general strike of municipal workers was officially launched. Next day the whole of the Black Country came out on strike, the day after the Liege region, and within the next day or so the whole of Southern Belgium and beyond.

TRADITION OF GENERAL STRIKE

Belgium has a long tradition of mass industrial strikes. In 1886 a strike by 30,000 workers in the neighbourhood of Charleroi, then in Liege and over a large part of the Belgian provinces. The mass demand was universal suffrage; but there were economic issues as well. Then in May, 1891, a mass strike of some 125,000 workers in Brussels and the provinces. This was the most important in the electoral system. In April, 1893, another strike, embraced 100,000 workers, broke out for a similar demand. The outcome was universal, but unequal. Strikes, the votes of the rich and "cultured" counting for more than those of workers and peasants. The workers, dissatisfied, carried out another mass strike two years later, and launching a complete revision of the Constitu-

Features of the earlier strikes indicated a very high rate of participation. In 1902, and again in 1913, another general strike took place in Brussels and Charleroi involving all the capitalists a four-hour and paid holidays. In 1950 a general strike led to the abdication of King Leopold.

In 1959 the coal-miners of the Borinage spontaneously began a general strike not merely for wage demands but for the nationalisation of the mining industry.

BELGIAN TRADITION OF "SOCIALIST"-CONSERVATIVE COALITION GOVERNMENTS

There are, also other traditions in the Belgian labour movement—coalitions with conservative parties. As early as 1902 the Socialist Party, in the midst of the general strikes, flirted with the conservative party. In Belgium the Liberals and the Catholics, with 189 and 19 Belgian cabinets, in 11 of which the Socialist Party partner-

To give theoretical justification to this mania for compromise, with the right wing of the Belgian Socialist Party, Du Maurier de Maizière and the ideas similar to those of Anthony Crosland some two decades later. In his Plan du Travail, adopted by the
SOCIALIST REVIEW

Socialist Party and trade unions, he proposed the revision of the Socialist programme by putting forward the idea of a mixed economy, with emphasis on control and not on ownership. He tried to attract the middle classes, and the left wing of the Catholic Party. He did not succeed in attracting either the Catholic Party or its trade unions. (By the way, in 1940, when the Germans overran Belgium, de Man dissolved the Socialist Party and remained in Belgium as the King’s "advisor" under the Nazis.)

After the Second World War, the policy of coalition with the conservatives was tried again and again. In the very midst of the present mass strike, the same compromising 5% policies were put forward. On 29 December, Leo Collard, President of the Socialist Party, declared: "The Loi unique cannot be the basis of a solution. The Government has conceived of this law as an organic whole... we cannot see how a compromise could be reached by amending its details. We are struggling quite simply for its withdrawal." (La Wallonie, 30 December, 1960). However, a few days later, Achille van Ackere, ("Socialist" Prime Minister during 1954-8) approved in Parliament the Government effort "to maintain order" and supposed new negotiations to review the law, instead of rejecting it in toto.

UNCOMMON SOCIAL-Democratic PARTY

With all this right-wing leadership, the Belgian Socialist Party is quite unique among the parties of the Social-Democratic International. Where else would one find Social-Democratic parties again and again launching by courtesy of Agitator-New Generation

Again, two short items from the strike: the Minister of the Interior issued an order to all mayors to report to local government employees absent from work. Socialist mayors of Charleroi district met and unanimously decided "to refuse to obey the injunction of the Minister of the Interior" (La Wallonie, December 27, 1960). Socialist mayors in other districts followed suit.

A few days later the paper announced that Socialist MPs, mayors, etc. in Liege district decided to hand in their salaries during the strike period over to strike funds. (Ibid. December 31, 1960).

Above all, who in this country would dream that Labour Party rooms and the rooms of the Young Socialists would become quarters of strike committees all over the country? STRUCTURE OF THE BELGIAN SOCIALIST PARTY

One reason for the militancy of the Belgian Socialist Party compared early in the strike is its unique structure.

Unlike the Social Democratic Party, the 45 MPs of the Socialist Party, the Belgian Socialist Party is made up of not only individual members, but also affiliated trade unions, co-operatives and mutual aid societies. In this respect it is similar to the British Labour Party. But there are also basic differences. The British trade unions include all eligible wage and salary earners without difference of politics. In Belgian workers who oppose the Socialist Party from the right belong to unions affiliated to another party—the Catholic party—called Christian Socialist Party—or unions independent of both. At present the Socialist trade unions have 692,000 members, the Catholic 742,000. Similarly there are co-operatives and mutual aid societies mainly Wallonos and conservatives, mainly Flemish, aided and guided by the Catholic Church.

This intimate relation between the trade unions and the Party makes for less of a barrier between politics and economics in the movement, especially as those more right-wing workers who do not approve of the close bond between the two wings incline to belong to another trade union organization under the auspices of another party.

Again, unlike the British movement, the Party and the unions are much less centralised, much more federative. The Belgian equivalent of the TUC—the Federation Generale de Travailleurs Belges (FGBT) is made up of over a score of semi-autonomous regional organisations, each comprising the representatives of various trades and occupations in a given area. Each regional federation has its centre in a co-operative society building or Maison du Peuple, which serves as a general meeting place for all sections of the labour movement. Each Federation enjoys substantial autonomy in its own industrial affairs and allows a large measure of autonomy to the regional organisation of the Socialist Party. Thus Liege can pride itself on having a daily Social-Democratic paper, Le Monde du Tarval, while a militant Liegeois is very familiar to the national daily, Le Peuple, issued in Brussels by the central leadership. Liege also has a trade union daily, La Walonie, edited by Andre Renard, the joint Secretary General of the Belgian trade unions. And Liege has a smaller population than Nottingham....

Another reason for the Socialist Party being more amenable to workers’ wishes, and for its officials, especially the local and lower echelons being more tractable—like the proverbial wheelbarrow going as far as it pushed—was the early and lengthy prolonged struggle of Parliamentary reform.

STALEMATE OF PARLIAMENTARY REFORMISM

The strength of Catholicism in the Flemish half of the country confronted the Socialist Party with a situation in which the winning of a Socialist majority in parliamentary elections looked most unlikely.

Traditionally Belgium has been divided into two halves—French-speaking, conservative, Catholic, agricultural North and the French-speaking, Catholic, industrial South, or Wallon area. (Actually Flanders, with some 40% of the population, is little over half the population). It is true that over the last few decades the North has ceased to be purely agricultural, but contains centres of new industries. However, in the Flemish areas of industrial centres, in the Flemish areas are not free of Catholic influence, the bulk of the population, or anything resembling to the Catholic Trade Union Federation. (It is true that in some cases, in the industrial field only, the Catholic trade unions have been quite militant. This showed itself clearly during the 1954 Van Ackere Government, when the Socialist trade unions played the role of direct agents of the Government in trying to avoid “labour conflicts that embarrass the Government”.)

Thus then the causes of the differences between Wallonos and Flemings and the differences between sections of the working class can be explained by differences in traditions and different levels of development. But largely it is also a question of the influence of industrial workers and conservative agricultural interests.

The immediate effect of the national and religious split was to prevent the Socialist Party from forming a complete slave of parliamentarianism. Whereas in elections one Wallon worker has equal power to one conservative Flemish farmer, in the economic area, the former is incomparably stronger than the latter.

This national and religious split probably also aided the federalists. This resulted in long struggles between the unions and the Socialist Party. And this situation dominated non-parliamentary forces in the labour movement. THE INFLUENCE OF SYNDICALISM

An influential factor in the labour movement of France and also Belgium has been Syndicalism, a mixture of anarchism (without its individualism and with a much exaggerated emphasis on organisation) with trade unionism. Its roots are in the soil of industrial backwardness and lack of concentration. It gives a strength to the movement (by betrayal) of the right-wing Socialist parties, which developed among workers a natural suspicion of all political activities. Syndicalism identifies the general strike with the Socialist revolution rather than looking upon it as only one important element of modern revolution. However much the Syndicalists or syndicalists influenced people to overlook politics, politics catches up with them in the last analysis during mass strikes. The political aims of the capitalist class—the state with machine and laws—are more blatantly present during such struggles. Therefore, without any political threats with no political perspective, syndicalism leads to an ideological, ad hoc measures; hence it.

ANDRE RENARD

An extreme example of the mixture of syndicalism and nationalism is shown by Andre Renard, the dynamic and militant leader of the movement. He is the General Secretary of the FGTB, and the most prominent leader of the Socialist League.

Demonstration in Liege, the day before the royal wedding. A poster expresses solidarity with republican Spain.

general strikes? What would our Catholic or our Communist say to the use of industrial action for political aims? For electoral reforms as in 1886, 1891, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1912, 1913, or against the King (1950), or against the government's hunger law (1961)?
The Chartist Convention

BY HENRY COLLINS

"YOUR..." demand is for Universal Suffrage... a right of which no human power can rob you or cheat you which you must regain at any risk...priceciously, if you may, forebodingly."

The first manifesto of the Chartist Convention, published in the Chartist, February 17, 1839.

On February 4, 1839, fifty three delegates to over the Convention of the Industrial Classes met at the British Coffee House, Cockspur Street, Charing Cross. They were from the middle class—magistrates, editors, clergy, men, doctors—and all was described by their first secretary as "shopkeepers, traders and journey- men". The word "Chartist" was not very conspicuous in this gathering, yet it begins the period of the Chartism as a national movement and Chartism has rightly been called the mass movement of the working class in history.

The first Chartist Convention, as the body came to be called, was dominated by London and Birmingham, both centres of small industry and small production. The two cities were also by the standards of those days, prosperous. The artisans and petty producers who made up such a strong element in Chartism, especially in its early months, were discontented men. The Reform Act of 1832 had enfranchised the shopkeepers and business men, but given the mass of the people nothing. The Poor Law Reform of 1834, with its brutal workhouse test outraged the conscience of every decent person in the country. The economic crisis, which struck Britain in the Spring of 1837 and lasted for over two years, brought the working people to the verge of a revolution, and the Convention of the Chartists, in 1839, is the first great event in the history of the Chartists.

MANN'S MOVEMENT

But the first Chartist Convention contained other elements as well. Delegates had been elected at mass meetings in Manchester, 300,000 in Manchester, 150,000 in Glasgow and 70,000 in Newcastle. Here the handloom weavers, ruined and starving through competition from the power looms, miners and factory workers. Their spokesmen was Feargus O'Connor, an Irishman, revolutionary. He was alive to the evils of industrial capitalism and the factory system. He saw the solution in terms of a land reform which would cover the country with prosperous smallholdings. He advocated insurrection in principle while opposing it in practice. Also represented at the Convention was a small but vigorous socialist wing led by Bronte O'Brien. With George Julian Harney as a promising young recruit. It was private property, said Bronte, particularly useful utilities, which lay at the root of poverty and exploitation. The power of the bourgeoisie had been established, in England and France, through social revolution. A new revolution would establish the power of the workers and put an end to oppression and inequality. In his theories of exploitation, class struggle and historical development, Bronte anticipated some of Marx's most important conclusions. But he failed to develop a comprehensive analysis of capitalism or of the emergence of a proletariat. The decline of the working class, after 1845, he took to repeating himself and led his small sect into the political wilderness.

WEAKNESS IN CHARTISM

Socially heterogenous, theoretically immaterial and politically vacillating, Chartism was nevertheless a remarkable achievement. In no other country was there an independent working class movement and on the Continent of Europe, while socialist thinkers denounced penetrating criticism of Chartism, mass movements of the people remained tied to the left wing of bourgeois radicalism. By contrast, led a movement of workers not only separate from the bourgeoisie but isolated in opposition to them.

On the day the first Chartist Convention met, the Anti-Corn Law League began its first national conference. The Chartist leaders defined their attitude to this vehicle of Manchester liberalism and they did so. On February 12 the Convention and supporting Chartist, moved by Bronte O'Brien, which declared that "the people's undivided attention" must be given to the campaign for the People's Charter, "being also convinced that the present agitation for a repeal of the corn laws was intended and actually was to divert the working classes from that permanent object; and being further of opinion that such an agitation as would alone be likely to receive the sanction of the anti-Corn Law agitators, would be rather to the advantage of the rich than to the interests of the poorer classes". While political power remained in the hands of the enemies, in fact, neither free trade nor protection would bring any lasting benefit to the workers, and though, on occasions, local groups of Chartists were involved in supporting Corn Law Repeal as a palliative, the movement as a whole retained its independent of and hostility to the radical, Benthamite, free-trading middle class.

NATIONAL PETITION

The main efforts of the Chartists went into collecting signatures for the National Petition, which demanded universal male suffrage and related democratic reforms. Within the Convention, Harney proposed for a convention as to what kind of action would be taken if Parliament rejected the Petition. The majority, consisting largely of "moral force" Chartists, refused to allow the question to be con- sidered. But among Chartist supporters in the country there was a great deal of discussion and divided views. Some argued for a run on the banks, but they had no money. Others called for a general strike, but there were few trade unionists. Yet others advocated armed uprising, while a few took to the heights of pikes here and muskets there, few believed seriously in its chances of success.

PROVOCATIONS

In May the Convention moved to Birmingham. Faced with increasing provocation, the Convention issued a manifesto stressing the constitutional and legal aims of the movement. "Aware it went on, "your oppressors are moving heaven and earth to bring us into collision with the enemy. They are pouring spies and traitors into your ranks, in order to break up your political practices...Our advice is that you RIGIDLY OBEY THE LAW but at the same time be prepared to make your oppressors likewise obey it. Be upon your guard against spies..." The leaders who warned you to illegal practices, but at the same time bear in mind that you have the same right to arm the victims as the oppressors have...Paradise not your arms at public meetings but keep them bright and ready at home.

PERSECUTION AND ARREST

In July there was a wave of arrests. Meetings were prohibit- ed. A body of police was brought down from London to break up a meeting in the Birmingham Bull Ring. The workers drove the police out of the Ring and it took troops to restore the government's authority. On July 5 Lovett, for his part in the "moral force" was arrested. A week later the Pettigrew, with one over and a number of his lieutenants, was arrested, and was rejected by 235 votes to 46. Now the Convention had to act or dissolve. There was now hope, inspired of, redress from the existing House of Commons. But the workers were powerless to elect another. The Convention therefore decided that the people should work longer after the 12th of August next, unless the power of voting for Members of Parliament for the protection of labour and their rights is presently given and guaranteed to them.

NEW STAGE AND DEVELOPMENT

This ended the first phase of the Chartism. It did not destroy the movement, which, although smaller, was, stronger than ever, during the "Plug Riots" of 1842. Finally, the Chartist movement was defeated but it took another ten years to die it was never again a serious force. But having been defeated, it regrouped, assumed new forms and came back again into the struggle.

continued from page one

Party Left-wingers traditionally have kind hearts. They must

harden them. Officials who try to suppress journals like Keep Left

while wholly intelligible, may be fought to a finish (regardless of

any criticism which can be made of the journal against which action is taken). The supporters of these officials must be hounded unmercifully.

can only be MPs and councillors, who seek publicly to identify the Party with policies which to it is no longer committed, must be harassed and if possible driven out. It should be fought to a finish against them (it is worth repeating) because they hold minority views, but because they seek to identify the Party with them. There must be an end to such a situation.

We dare not leave the next Conference to chance. We have to prepare every step. In proportion as we are strong and politically sound we shall win. But there is no substitute for the Party, will lay the foundations for the next advance against capitalism itself.
It's Rich

'The feeling of "ownership" that a woman develops for the machine on which she works is thought to be one reason why 3,000 women so willingly rise at 5:30 am in Saskatchewan to go to work in the mills of Bradford and Halifax up to 30 miles away.'—Guardian, 18 January.

'The labour scarcity is so acute that, for instance, when a fire broke out recently in a factory of the Ruhr, the manager of a neighbouring plant was on the scene before the fire brigade, offering employment'.—Times, 30 December last.

'. . .the agreed reduction of two hours in the standard working week may therefore amount in practice to an increase of half an hour or more a week for many employees.'—Times comment on recent agreement on hours in building, 13 January.

'The grass round the Lincoln Memorial, browed by the recent long-lying snow, is being dyed green to provide a touch of spring for inauguration day.'—Times report on the inauguration of President Kennedy, 18 January.

'I have only two superiors above me, first, God almighty, and secondly, the people's representative congress.'—Sukarno, President of Indonesia, reported in the Economist, June 25, 1960 (The People's Consultative Congress has still not been convened).

'Mr Antenor Patino is to lead the Bolivian nationalised tin industry to industrialisation under the condition that the government changes the present law, and so permits him to get rid of his wife'—New Statesman, 31 December last.

'. . .according to the translator all this was about his people's satisfaction with the health services but it is reported that the government changes the present law, and so permits him to get rid of his wife'—New Statesman, 31 December last.

What is a missile, when there's a dog to befriend?—Reynolds News, June 26, 1960.

'With your enormous prestige is it not better to hammer those views out with technical people rather than to make dangerous statements to the emotional millions?'—Sir William Hildred, Director-General of the International Air Transport Association, in a letter to Lord Brabazon of Tara after the latter had demonstrated on TV the dubious nature of I.P.4, the inflammable but cheap fuel favoured by private air-plane operators, reported in the Observer, last Christmas day.

'The Economic Research Council... was able to report that 21 girls got drunk in 1954 as against only 14 in 1953. The "incapacitating conclusion" it declared, was that "not only is the young male indulging in liquor to an increasing extent, but he is using his surplus of earnings to demoralise the young girl as, or before, she leaves school".'—New Statesman, 24 December last.

LANDLORDS’ PARADISE

RENT rises can't be needed to raise the landlords from depths of poverty. They are doing very well, and if their sellers' market is not put under control, are expecting to do even better.

Their profits are known only so far as their accounts have to be published. But what these tell us is true for the undisclosed profits. Since 1957, higher profits are reported in each year—

-London, County and Freehold's report to March 31st, 1960, revealed net profit of £582,270 (a rise of £137,800 over previous year), and dividend 10.83%, i.e. 2½% more.

Artisan and General Profits made over £45,000 more and dividend was 18% (but 5½% the year before).

Greencoat Properties (formerly Improved Industrial Dwellings) made more, too, and declared a dividend of 26% (8½% the year before).

Alliance Property made a net profit of £309,847 (a rise of £125,000), and dividend was 15½%, against 10% (equivalent) in [1958] 99

Raglan Property made a further £15,000, and raised dividend from 7½% to 10½%.

Property Holding and Investment showed a net profit of £163,130, against £116,389 in the former year. Dividend rose from 7½% to 9%.

Regional Properties made £31,000 more and dividend was 37½%, but 30% the year before.

London Midland Associated have just paid a 60% dividend, against 52½% last time, with profits now up to £265,000.

Socialist Review

Fighting Fund

We need £40 an issue

During the last month we have received from:

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THANKS! and KEEP IT UP, COMRADES!

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Letter

To the Editor, Socialist Review

Dear Comrade,

I read with concern Geoff Weston's article in your January issue.

I sincerely hope that his attitude of passive, frustrated pessimism is not shared by the Young Socialists. Maybe New Advance and certain other aspects of YS are up to the expectations of its Left Wing contingent but surely any de¬ spondency at this stage is mistaken. Even Transport House learn by their mistakes and are prepared to give YS a freer hand than its present attitude permits.

May I suggest that Mr. Weston diverts his activities to YS and helps other left-wingers to obtain the type of paper and organisation we want.

Yours sincerely,

Christopher W. Drew
Secretary, Wilthington YS

ANTI POLARIS DEMONSTRATION

On Saturday, February 18th about the time that the U.S. Depot Ship carrying Polaris mis¬ siles is expected in the Clyde, the Committee of 100 will organise a nonviolent demon¬ stration outside the Ministry of Defence in London. Mass support is needed for this demonstration.

The demonstrators will stage a four-hour sit-down to press home their demand for the im¬ mediate scrapping of the Polaris agreement and serve notice on the Government that they can no longer stand aside while preparations are being made for the destruction of mankind.

A declaration to this effect will be signed by all demonstrators and posted upon the Defence Ministry door.

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Opinions of Strikers

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WHAT THE SOCIALIST STANDS FOR

The Socialist stands for:

- The complete nationalisation of the banks, insurance and the land with compensation payments based on a mean test. Industrial nationalisation of all denationalised industries without compensation. The nationalised industries to form an integral part of an overall economic plan and not to be used in the interests of private profit.
- Workers' control in all nationalised industries, i.e. a majority of the representatives elected by national and area boards, subject to frequent election. Immediate recall of unrepresentative and unskilled wage ruling in the industry.
- The establishment of workers' committees to control all private enterprises; the principle of equal representation of all classes of a planned economy. In all industries representatives must be elected on the same basis of regular, secret, recall and receive the same skilled wage paid in the industry.
- The establishment of workers' committees in all concerns to control hiring, firing and working conditions.
- The establishment of the principle of work or full maintenance.
- The extension of the social services by the payment of adequate pensions, the abolition of all payments for the National Health Service and the development of an industrial health service.
- The expansion of the housing programme by granting interest free loans to force authorities and the right to requisition privately held land.
- Free State education up to 18. Abolition if fee paying schools. For comprehensive schools and adequate maintenance grants — without a means test — for all university students.
- Opposition to all forms of racial discrimination. Equal rights and trades union protection for all workers wherever their country of origin. Freedom of migration for all workers to and from Britain.
- Freedom from political and social discrimination and guarantees of equal political rights. The offer of technical and economic assistance to the people of the underdeveloped countries.
- The abolition of conscription and the withdrawal of all British troops from oversea.
- The abolition of the H-bomb and other nuclear armament. Britain to pave the way with unilateral renunciation of the nuclear arms race.
- A Socialist foreign policy, subservient to neither Washington nor Moscow.