

THE

Week

**A news analysis for socialists**

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# THE WEEK

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS

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### Advertisement

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## EDITORS' LETTER

This issue of the Week will be the first that many Young Socialists have seen. We should first explain that our journal is intended as a news service to socialists and not, as a 'do-it-yourself' dispenser of absolute truth. There are enough of the latter on the market already. We believe that we can provide quite a useful service for Young Socialists in particular. Owing to the structure of the Y.S. and its lack of a weekly press, not to mention the factions, the Y.S. movement is atomised. The Week will be pleased to do its mite in overcoming this by publishing reports of activities, campaigns, opinions, etc. sent in by Y.S. correspondents. A report sent into the Week will ensure that what has been a local issue will become known throughout the country in a few days. We also welcome the use of our material in other journals.

LABOUR AND YOUTH

The fact that an official lobby of Parliament by Young Socialists is taking place is a victory for the Y.S. and the Labour Party left. It is also symptomatic of a different atmosphere in the party— such a lobby would have been unthinkable whilst Gaitskell was party leader. No one has any illusions about the effect of the lobby on Tory M.P.s - they know perfectly well what the results of Tory policy are for young people. The lobby, however, has the virtue of bringing into political activity - and political discussion - large numbers of young people.

Young people are especially hard-hit by the employers' desire to be as 'efficient' as possible (at the expense of the working class). The young people who have not yet started work cannot combat closures or speed up. The policies of 'last in - first out' and allowing 'natural wastage' to reduce the pay roll hurt youth more than adults. The introduction of automation is cutting the number of traditionally skilled jobs open to young people. Rationalisation of distribution and the service sectors reduces the number of jobs for young people. It is not just a question of Tory policy: these factors are intrinsic to capitalism. That is why most advanced capitalist countries have a youth unemployment problem - even the mighty United States. That is also the reason Young Socialists not only fight the Tories but fight for socialist policies within the Labour Party.

The other great question for young people - conscription - also demands a socialist solution. Whilst there are politicians who see Britain's (i.e. British capitalism's) economic salvation in the exploitation of other countries' resources, British youth will face the threat of being <sup>sent</sup> out to impose this exploitation by force.

Because young people are attracted towards a socialist solution of the problems of society they come into conflict with the 'powers that be' - and not only in society in general but in the Labour Party, too. In its short period of existence the Young Socialists' movement has been under continuous threat of disbandment. Each Y.S. annual conference threatens to be the last. There are special reasons for thinking that this year's annual conference could very well be the last. Whilst within the Labour Party leadership there is a genuine desire to avoid splitting the party, this feeling will cease to be so strong after the election. Indeed, if this year's Y.S. annual conference goes on record, as it has at others, for left-wing policies there will be many voices in the party's higher ranks calling for disbandment,

After the election a basic discussion will be on the agenda: will labour attempt to run British capitalism more efficiently, or will it seek to introduce socialist measures? The majority of the active Y.S. will plump for the latter, and, sad to say, it seems likely that the majority of the functionaries, etc., will want the former. Because the Y.S. will become a spearhead in the fight for socialist policies the left must be against any attempt to restrict the rights of the Y.S. On the other hand the Y.S. must integrate themselves at all levels within the Labour Party to make any punitive action more difficult.



CONTEMPT ORDER SERVED ON UNION OFFICIAL from a legal correspondent

There has been a quick aftermath to the ruling given as to the illegality of the Lightermen's union action in boycotting the barges of J.T. Stratford & Son Ltd. Although the union's executive decided on February 5th to lift the embargo because of the court ruling, the following day, Bill Lindley, the union's general secretary, was served with a contempt of court order. This Order alleges that Mr. Lindley failed to obey the court injunction.

1,000 TO BE SACKED IN BELFAST? from Pat Jordan

200 workers from International Computers and Tabulators' factories in Belfast lobbied the Northern Ireland Parliament on February 6th. They were protesting against the plans to close 2 of the firm's five factories on the Castlereagh industrial estate. Andy Barr, Northern Ireland president of the Confed. said on the previous day that it was feared that half the total work force (or 1,000) would be sacked in 2 month's time. The works committee secretary, Mr. S. Ewart, was even more pessimistic. In view of the fact that the two factories to be closed are the most modern ones, it seems likely that the firm intends to close all its works on the estate.

The reasons for the closures can be gleaned from the firm's Chairman's annual statement to shareholders. Sir Edward W. Playfair, K.C.B., said that last year had been unsatisfactory financially. This had led to a narrowing of margins (a mere £2,147,000 net profit after taxation, as against £2,283,000 in 1962) and was caused by the swing away from tabulators to computers. The latter earn a lower rate of profit, at least in the initial stages. To meet this the firm's directors propose to cut overheads - hence the closures. However, anyone having shares in ICT can stop worrying because: "The directors have decided to recommend that the total ordinary dividend for the year should remain unchanged." (interim 4 1/6% and final 7 1/12%).

GUIDING LIGHT SMASHED BY..... FIELD MARSHALS

Whilst the average increase in service pay, pensions and allowances announced by Thorneycroft on February 6th is within the 'guiding light' figure of 4% per annum (being 7 1/2% over two years), senior officers did much better. Field Marshals got a £20 per week increase bringing their annual rate up to £7,026 or an increase of over 17%. A Lieutenant General's pay goes up by an extra £712 a year to make £4,836, also over 17% up. The excuse given for this disparity is that the senior officers got no increase in 1962 at the last review of pay. However, if 'incomes restraint' is so much in the nation's interest, surely those most patriotic of all people - the military chiefs - could set an example?

OFFICIAL AMNESIA?

by Dave Ablitt (West Nottm. Y.S.)

The Labour Party's Chief Youth Officer seems to be suffering from loss of memory. A letter in the correspondence columns of New Advance (Jan. '64), looks like opening the debate on the relationship between the Labour Party Annual Conference and the Party's Parliamentary Group. The Week No. 5 carried extracts from the letter, but failed to comment on Reg. Underhill's reply. The basis of Mr. Underhill's answer was the General Secretary's statement to the 1960 Party Conference. He quoted it at great length to prove that Conference decisions should be taken "as expressions of opinion." But he conveniently forgot the resolution which was passed following the debate from which he enjoyed quoting suitable extracts.

The resolution clearly stated that Conference was the final authority concerning policy and that on matters involving principle, the P.L.P. should follow the line decided by Conference. It does, however, concede the right of the Party's M.P.s to plan the day-to-day tactics employed by them in Parliament. Of course, some M.P.s seem to place such issues as nationalisation, conscription, foreign policy, etc., in the category of "day-to-day tactics". The task facing socialists is that of swelling the ranks of those members in the House who are able to differentiate between a socialist principle and a "day-to-day tactic."

LONG EATON SCHOOL ON EDUCATION

from George Powe (Long Eaton U.D.C.)

The Long Eaton Labour Party is to hold a school on Sunday the 23rd of February, commencing at 2.30. It will be held at the Labour Hall, Lawrence St., Long Eaton and tea will be provided at a reasonable price. There will be two sessions and the speakers will be Ben Johnson (N.U.T. Executive) and David Wood (well-known educationalist), the chairman will be Peter Price, prospective Labour candidate for Mapperley ward). All L.P. members and the public are invited.

CLAMP DOWN ON Y.S. IN NORTHERN REGION

The February issue of Young Guard quoted from a newsletter put out by the Northern Regional Youth Officer, Geoff. Foster. This stressed that (1) Y.S. members could not visit other branches unless invited by the C.L.P., (2) that there could be no independent political activity by a Y.S. in its own constituency, and (3) that there could be no advocating of views in public which did not represent party policy. The Gateshead and Felling Y.S. magazine, Left, has also been under fire for criticising members of the party and publishing articles which were too frank about sex. Certain Labour Councillors are said to have threatened to withdraw their daughters from the Y.S.

FENNER BROCKWAY TO SPEAK IN WEST BRIDGFORD

from Peter Wyncoll (W.B. L.P.)

Fenner Brockway will be speaking at a public meeting to be held on 28th February, at the South Country School, Exchange Rd., West Bridgford. The meeting will start at 7.30 p.m. Also speaking will be Bill Back the prospective Labour candidate.

LABOUR MAYOR NOT TO HAVE PRAYERS

Alderman P.J. Warren, who is Labour's mayor designate for Cambridge and who holds agnostic views, is to defy tradition and the bigots by banning prayers before city council meetings. He has said, however, that he will go to church in the course of civic duties if called on to do so.



# LIFE'S BETTER WITH THE CONSERVATIVE



## YOUNG SOCIALISTS WANT SOCIALIST POLICIES

The resolutions for this year's annual National Conference of the Y.S. (the 4th) show that despite all the efforts of the Transport House appointed full time youth officers the Young Socialists remain well on the left of the party. The organisation resolutions have, as usual, the main emphasis on democracy. Walton on Thames and Bootle both call for the right to formulate policy and for Y.S. control over its press and officers. Kingston on Thames wants Y.S. National Committee to run its National Conference, and South East Ham calls for democratic control of New Advance. On the humorous side there is a call for a change of name by the Party to Social Democratic Party by Kings Lynn in order to be "more attractive to the middle class."

Ten resolutions appear under "United Nations" and another calls for support of UNA, and 3 ask for Labour support for a United Nations International Force. Three are critical of National Committee members who have 'failed to reaffirm support for UNO' - Huddersfield, South Bedfordshire and South Ealing. Two link the call for support of UNO with admission of China - from Norwich North and Stowmarket. It appears likely that certain elements hope to split the left on the issue of UNO at annual conference. Many left wingers in face of Tory hostility towards UNO feel that to criticise UNO puts one in the same camp as the right wing of the Tory party. Those on the left who consider that, in general, UNO is an instrument of U.S. foreign policy - witness Korea and the Congo - will have to combine political explanation with sticking to principles.

Conscription brings forth the next big batch of resolutions - eight (see page 14 for details) showing both the concern and opposition which the overwhelming majority of Y.S. feel on this matter. Orpington wants to go back to Malthus when it calls for underdeveloped countries to introduce legislation on birth control. A more healthy note is struck by the three calls for the Labour Party to take action against the South African Government from Ayr, Hastings and Gloucester. Crewe urges people not to take their holidays in Spain and Portugal, and Dumfries demands the release of political prisoners in Aden.

Fourteen resolutions appear on Immigration, 13 of which condemn the Tory Colour Bar Immigration Bill, but one, from Barons Court Young Socialists(?), calls for the restriction of immigration. Six condemn the Parliamentary Labour Party for not opposing the renewal of the Tory Act: Wigan, South East Leicester, North Hammersmith, Brentford and Chiswick, Farnworth and Wallasey.

to be continued/

HOUSES COLLAPSE IN GLASGOW

Tony Southall (Glasgow)

In Woodside, Glasgow, during the past week two tenements have collapsed. A 78-year-old woman was trapped semi-conscious under a pile of rubble in one incident. This week the City's Deputy Master of Works admitted that there were 33 properties in a dangerous condition, and that accommodation was not available for the families living in them. Meanwhile the Tory press has been angered at rumours that the Corporation may veto the handing over of Pollock Estate, a 1000-acre open space, to the National Trust, because the area might provide rehousing space. The ostensible reason for the anger is that that this would make the housing of the Burrell Art Collection in Pollock House impossible. But the Glasgow Herald says: "The object of pre-emption...was certainly not to provide the Corporation with land which had been denied to private builders".

The low rents policy of the Corporation continues to be used by the Government as a reason for refusing additional aid to Glasgow's rehousing programme. Yet out of last year's Glasgow housing bill of £9m, more than £7½ m went on servicing the debt. There are well over 100,000 slums in the City, and last year only 5,900 new houses were built. A common price for a room and kitchen in a tenement is now £1,200. In the Gorbals 30s to £3 per week is charged for a single room (share lavatory and running water with five other families).

SCHOOL STREAMING REINFORCES SOCIAL SELECTION     an Education correspondent

The suspicion that streaming in schools exaggerates class discrimination in education is further confirmed by an article in last week's New Society by J.W.B. Douglas, director of the Medical Research Council of the LSE, dealing with primary schools. Even before attending school, he says, middle class children enjoy an advantage, having learned to use words with precision at home, whereas working class children receive less stimulation. Even after ability has been tested according to this biased system there are still 11% more middle class children in the upper streams than would be expected, and 26% fewer in the lower; that is, these children are in the "wrong" stream even under the present method. "It was rare for children to change streams; over the whole three year period (of a special survey) the annual rate of transfer was 2.3% and approximately the same numbers moved up as down", it is stated.

In addition "the children in the upper streams improved their scores by an average of 0.71 points and those in the lower streams deteriorated by 0.49 points". It was also apparent that pupils of the upper streams showed a smaller range of performances than those of the lower - in the upper streams the lower-rated pupils tended to move toward the standards of the top pupils, but this did not happen in the lower streams. In the group surveyed 12 low-stream pupils should have gone on to grammar schools but only one did so. In secondary schools 82% left at 15, compared with an expected 76%, from low streams. Upper-stream pupils in secondary schools fared differently. The expected figure was 46%, but the actual number leaving at 15 was 39%.



# LIFE'S BETTER WITH THE CONSERVATIVE



ADVANCE OR RETREAT ON THE FRENCH LEFT?

by Perry Anderson

The nomination of Gaston Defferre as candidate for the French Presidency by the Socialist Party in France faces the French left with a testing choice. Defferre is the Mayor of Marseilles - a rich man with a record of competent anti-Communist administration behind him, who voted for De Gaulle in the critical days after the Algiers putsch of May 1958. It is an open secret that the Americans have been backing him as their chosen candidate to unseat De Gaulle at the next Presidential elections. Defferre has been careful not to upset Washington in any way, either by following De Gaulle in a policy of French aggrandisement abroad, or negotiating with the Communists on a common platform at home. His tactics have been so rightist that Guy Mollet, secretary general of the SFIO, has hitherto opposed them. Defferre is now bidding for the support of the whole left, as the united candidate of the opposition. The Communists have so far been reticent, confining themselves to stressing their own indispensability to a left victory. Thus it seems likely that Defferre as De Gaulle's major rival, fighting on a platform which is an amalgam of Gaitskellite and US Democratic platitudes.

De Gaulle has consolidated massive popular support for his genuinely independent foreign policy. Nothing could be more futile - even from an opportunist viewpoint - than for the left to rally behind a candidate chosen by Washington, fighting on a programme well to the right of the Labour Party. It would certainly be repudiated by wide section of the working class if it did so. It is now important that the other forces on the French Left should openly attack Defferre's policies, making clear that they stand no chance of defeating De Gaulle.

CHINESE COMMUNES

by Chris Arthur (Oxford)

In a recent article in The Listener Joan Robinson contradicts Western propoganda on the Chinese communes. Contrary to reports, she states, the system fosters and protects family life. Far from breaking up during the recent bad years, it was "the communes that made it possible for the authorities to see the country through without the famines and massive deaths from starvation that were common in the old days, and to keep the price of foodstuffs steady. (By the way I think it was a more remarkable achievement than any great leap to have come <sup>through</sup> this period of severe shortages without inflation.)" One thing that had to be dropped was the idea of giving everybody rations regardless of labour days worked. But in addition to giving members food, clothing, shelter, medical care and funeral expenses (revolutionary in Asia), a commune would also offer a welfare fund, a hospital, clinics, primary schools, and opportunities to leave for college training.



### 500,000 BOYCOTT NEW YORK SCHOOLS

An American correspondent reports: "In the biggest civil rights protest demonstration since last summer's "freedom march" on Washington, half a million New York school pupils and teachers boycotted their classes on February 3rd. They were protesting against the de facto segregation in the city's school system. Like other cities in the northern part of the U.S., New York operates a system which results in Negro and Puerto Rican students attending inferior schools. The New York Board of Education has promised to redraw the school district boundaries but the leaders of the civil rights campaign say they are dragging their heels.

"The boycott was organised on the opening day of the new school term. Picket lines were set up outside some 300 schools and braving bitter weather, more than 3,000 parents, teachers, and pupils took part in a march. Chanting integration slogans such as: "end Jim Crow in our schools", one hundred demonstrators picketed State Governor Nelson Rockefeller's office and another 900 picketed the city hall. Leaders of the movement warned that unless school segregation were speedily ended the boycott would be repeated. Although the demonstration was completely peaceful, 2,000 extra police were on duty and another 6,000 were 'standing by."

### 10,000 CIVIL RIGHTERS ARRESTED IN 1963

Giving details of the scope of the civil rights movement in 1963, Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, said that nearly 2,000 civil rights marches were held in 40 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. 10,000 people, mostly Negroes, had been arrested at these demonstrations.

### POLICE FIRE ON STUDENTS - 3 INJURED

College students in Jackson, Mississippi, demonstrated on the evening of February 3rd against the beating up of a Negro girl by white men. The police broke up the demonstration and set up barricades to try to confine the students to the campus. However, the students broke through and continued their demonstration in the town. The police then retaliated by throwing tear gas bombs and eventually opened fire injuring three of the students. More demonstrations followed.

MEAT FRAUD ALLEGED: Irish meat exporters are worried by a report that 70 tons of Mexican horsmeat has been sold as Irish beef in Baltimore. A meat factory employee noticed slight differences in labels which resulted in the discovery of the alleged fraud.



## FRANCO'S NEW TRADE DEALS

by R. Fraser (London)

As reported in the last issue, Spain, partly because of her difficulties in getting into the Common Market and because of US "niggardliness" in the recently negotiated aid agreement, has been looking for new trading partners, notably the USSR. Now, in open defiance of the US, Franco is planning a ships-for-sugar deal with Cuba, worth a reported £10m.

Looking across the Mediterranean, Franco is turning to Algeria where his minister of industry recently had talks with Ben Bella before signing a commercial agreement. Spain will buy natural gas from Algeria, which in turn is this month sending a trade mission to Madrid to discuss imports from Spain. Franco, shrewdly prepared to follow any policy that will maintain his position, may well see himself as the Iberian De Gaulle. Such a posture would appeal to anti-American falangists, big business seeking an insurance against failure to get into the Common Market, and even liberalisers who see any move as a step away from the immobility of the past 20 years.

Meanwhile the Paris L'Express reports that Salazar, worried by the Moscow-Madrid negotiations and the possible <sup>loss</sup> of one of his few remaining allies, is testing the wind to the left even of Franco: a recent editorial in the Diario de Lisboa maintained that co-existence was perfectly possible between China and Portugal.

## PRICES RISING IN MARKET COUNTRIES

based on a Financial Times item

Latest economic notes from the European Economic Community warn that prices have been rising disturbingly in member countries over the past weeks. French government measures are having a stabilising effect on the inflationary spiral in that country, but a fast rise in Italian prices continues. The Commission describes Dutch price increases as "remarkable". Inflation gathered momentum in Belgium towards the end of last year, and in Germany there are signs that an upward movement is beginning. Higher world prices for imported raw materials and palm products are responsible, says the Commission - this development contributing to the deterioration of the Community's external trade balance.

# THIRD WORLD WEEK



## STUDENTS OPPOSE U.S. INTERVENTION IN CYPRUS by J. Holman

After the U.S. government proposal for a 10,000 strong NATO 'peace-keeping force for Cyprus', there have been demonstrations in both Cyprus and Greece in protest against NATO's intervention in the internal affairs of Cyprus, a protest which was endorsed by Archbishop Makarios when thousands of student demonstrators passed the Parliament buildings on their way to the U.S. Embassy in Nicosia.

In Athens more than 9,000 students and teachers from the University demonstrated outside the American, British and Turkish Embassies and distributed leaflets accusing NATO of trying to enslave Cyprus, and in Northern Greece more than 7000 members of Salonica University marched through the main streets of the town and delivered protest notes to the British and American Consulates.

## SUPPORT IN ZANZIBAR FOR NEW GOVERNMENT based on Zanews report

Cables and letters expressing warm support for the new Zanzibar government and readiness to work for the building of new Zanzibar have been sent to President Abed Karume by various mass organisations. They include the Federation of Women, the Government Teachers' Union, the All-Zanzibar Students' Union, the National Union of Zanzibar and Pemba Students, the Arab Association and the Indian Association. The All-Zanzibar Students' Union and the National Union of Zanzibar and Pemba Students expressed their determination to defend the Republic and demanded that the U.S. withdraw its military base.

## DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST POLICE BRUTALITY IN PERU

20 peasants were killed and many injured when police opened fire after they had occupied an estate near Sicuani City, Cuzco Province. Some of the peasant leaders, workers and students were arrested, and the following evening the government suspended constitutional guarantees in Cuzco for 30 days and sent in army and police reinforcements. On February 4th 15,000 peasants from Sicuani City marched towards Cuzco, the capital of the province, in protest against the brutal measures taken. The Peasants' Federation, the Federation of University Students and the Workers' Federation of Cuzco Province have demanded the immediate release of those arrested.

DEVELOPMENTS IN ALGERIAN SELF-MANAGEMENT from Tom Wengraf in Algiers

Out of the original 900,000 French of Algeria only an unimportant 100,000 are left. Events have shown that the Algerians who wished to take their place have not been strong enough to inscribe their will into government policy. Not only did the agricultural workers take over the vast abandoned estates but in October 1962 the government was sufficiently sure of its position to annul all property transactions that had taken place since independence (it was in this period that the nascent Algerian bourgeoisie acquired property from the fleeing French at bargain prices). In March 1963 the de facto occupation of the land by the workers was ratified by the March decrees. The "vacant properties" became the "socialist sector", and the socialism was not that of Soviet-style state farms, but autogestion - direct control by the workers.

As Ben Bella pointed out in speeches of March and April 1963: "The principle of self-management was already established in the facts of the Algerian revolution by the spontaneous and conscious action of the working masses. The powerful movement of management committees that had spread across the country had only to be legalised."

In October 1963 the movement of autogestion also began to hit the urban scene...and shows no signs of stopping its steady progress. On the agricultural front, a conference of representatives of all farms under autogestion was held towards the end of the year. The peasants demanded reforms in such services as credit, marketing, and seed and equipment furnishing, so as to ensure that the apparatus served instead of controlled. These reforms are now in process. At the moment the government is taking the vital commercial circuits in hand in order to prevent the private merchants and traders from exploiting either the consumers or the socialist producers: socialist pilot shops have been opened in order to bring private prices down, and the government is encouraging the spread of co-operatives in the private sector. With the private sector thus subordinated one may expect important reforms: (tighter control on international and domestic wholesale trade) in the near future. Workers' control is also sanctioned by the lack of anything like the number of trained personnel needed for a centralised authoritarian system. (The March decrees stipulate one state-appointed director on each farm to share authority with the workers' committee: at one point it was estimated that whereas 7,000 directors were needed, the training courses had only managed to produce 1,000. And the more nationalisations there are, the wider the gap!)

Autogestion in agriculture is working. However the crises in the traditional sector and the towns remain. In the towns the flight of the French was not only a flight of proprietors and skilled personnel, but also of capital, and above all, the loss of markets for Algerian industry. Recent disturbances in Oran (over 75% unemployed) indicate the social dangers of permanent unemployment. About 80% of Algerians are rurally based, and for the majority the revolution in the modern agricultural sector does not mean much. Their problems cannot be solved only by a transformation of the property regime - total popular mobilisation is imperative.

A LONG TERM LOOK AT AUTOMATION

from Julian Atkinson (NALS0)

Three basic questions arise from the increasing importance of automation: (1) to what extent will automation effect the social structure; (2) how quickly will it spread; and (3) how much upheaval will be caused by the consequent reorganisation and redevelopment of manpower. These factors must be understood by socialists if they are to work out a long-term industrial policy. Several technical journals, notably the New Scientist and Control Engineering, have recently examined the question and their findings provide valuable reference material for socialists.

Firstly, it must be stressed that very little real automation has actually been put into operation. In 1963 there were only 340 digital computers in use, or firmly ordered, for the control of manufacturing processes. Of these, a big proportion were in the U.S. (237) and only 34 in Britain. Well over a third are in use to control the production and distribution of electricity. Metal fabrication and chemicals account for a large share of the remainder. Computers for these purposes are coming into commission at the rate of about 3 a week. A leading American computing manufacturer forecast that by 1970 there would be 4,000 process-computers in operation.

Estimates vary as to when it is expected that full-scale automation will be adopted by British industry. The New Scientist has given the following estimates: Steel (1969), Oil (1970), Electricity, Gas and Water (1972), Heavy Chemicals (1974), Cement, Paper and Glass (1974-79), and the Motor industry (1979-84). British Railways believe that within 5 years it could solve any technical problem in applying automation to its operations over the next 15 to 20 years. Already techniques exist for running driverless freight trains up to 150 MPH

For some years now, the ratio of office workers to production workers has been rising. One large British chemical manufacturing firm has increased its sales 120% in the last ten years with only 8% increase in its work force. Moreover, the number of manual workers actually declined by 3%, whilst the number of "white collars" workers went up by 40%. However, another development is taking place which will modify or even halt this process: the automation of office jobs is becoming more advanced than that of production line operations. Clerical work can already be done much more efficiently and rapidly by data processing machinery and a more advanced system would probably eliminate the need for many office jobs altogether.

In their drive to cut overheads, large engineering firms are looking at the size of drawing offices. A new motor car needs approx. 15,000 new drawings. Automatic drawing offices using electronic techniques of two and three dimensional projection are not far away and should be in use within ten years. British Railways, having cut their work-force from over 600,000 to 475,000 in ten years, can only carry out drastic reductions in the administrative field. That is why 95% of all rationalisation research is devoted to cutting administrative costs.

to be continued/



## RESALE PRICE MAINTENANCE AND LABOUR

by Tom Nairn

It is not yet possible to say with certainty what the effects of the government's abolition of resale price maintenance will be. Obviously the decision must be based on an electoral calculation. It is hoped that some short-term price-cuts will result soon, while the longer-term consequences ought to be (in the words of the Economist) "to allow rationalisation in the distributive trades to go forward faster and even more generally". But in the same issue it is pointed out that "rather less than 30% of retailers in Britain are significantly affected by resale price maintenance. So its gradual abolition...should not mean any sudden revolution for the shopper." However fast or slowly "rationalisation" of retailing will proceed, socialists ought to define their attitude to the process. Is it to be welcomed, or fought?

To fight it, in the sense of trying to prevent it happening and defending old-style retailing, is an untenable position. For this reason Tribune deserves criticism for its contribution to the debate. In a confused piece in its issue of January 24th, it defends the small shopkeepers in the following remarkable terms: "In present circumstances, it is no bad thing that they are secure enough to stock unprofitable goods which people need, and to avoid cutting each others' throats or working their staff to death". In this idyllic image small traders become a band of brothers doing the public a service on a 40-hour week! But the image is not accidental. Tribune wants to attack the government's action, and feels mistakenly that this can be done by siding with the main victim of that action - but the victim is such that it is only possible to side with him on the basis of a totally distorted picture of him!

If we cannot support small shopkeepers who cut each others' throats for profit and work themselves and their staffs to death - must we simply welcome "rationalisation", more chain-stores and supermarkets? Socialists cannot "welcome" this, in itself, because the process is an extension of the power of large-scale capital, the penetration of the big boys to a new level, a consolidation of the system.

What must be seen is that simple opposition or welcome to this or any other essential capitalist development is bound to be wrong. Given the power and logic of the system, an evolution such as this is inevitable. It creates the new conditions in which we will have to fight. Nor are these conditions entirely unfavourable to socialists. If rationalisation appears to reinforce the enemy, it also creates retailing units that could be made more rational in socialist terms - by take-over or by transformation into co-operatives. Trade unionism has some hope of getting into large-scale retailing, in contrast to small shops. We must not try to put the clock back, attempting to defend the indefensible, but move the fight into the new terrain.

CONSCRIPTION

The Secretary of State for War, Mr Ramsden, gave a most vague "assurance" on conscription in the House of Commons on January 15th. After he had told his questioner, Frank Allaun, that the government had no intention of reintroducing conscription, Mr Allaun asked whether the same would apply after a general election. "The government will do their duty in any circumstances without regard to the date of a general election, but the present circumstances do not warrant a reintroduction of conscription" was the reply. No mention was made of future circumstances - particularly in the likely event, under present policies, of further increased overseas commitments.

On January 23rd Frank Allaun opposed Tory MP, Julian Critchley, who put forward the motion "this house believes selective conscription now to be justified", in a debate at the Oxford Union. Critchley said that he was certain that overseas commitments would increase in the future, and that selective conscription of about 30,000 youths a year would be needed.

APPRENTICES

Bill Vester (Loughborough)

Although the numbers of school leavers apprenticed rose between 1950 and 1962, the proportion hardly changed, according to background notes on unemployment issued by the Labour Party in connection with the YS lobby of Parliament. The total who entered apprenticeships rose from 113,500 to 142,800, but expressed as a percentage the rise is merely from 21.5 to 21.73. The notes refer to the fact that it is cheaper to poach trained workers than to initiate training schemes, so far as the employers are concerned. Government training schemes cover 500 school leavers on one-year pre-apprenticeship courses, in 19 centres. In France 200,000 young people attend 800 training centres. Of these one third are girls, compared with 7% in the UK..

But the notes infer a too willing acceptance of the apprenticeship system. More people want apprentice training than get it, because it is one of the few ways of avoiding dead-end jobs. However, most apprentices would receive the news that they are the members of a privileged minority with some surprise. The figures quoted by the Labour Party are useful, as an indicator of how many young people are receiving training, but Labour's plans for youth must include steps which would change the apprenticeship system out of all recognition.

VOTES AT EIGHTEEN

The Votes for Youth Campaign, calling for votes at 18, has been going ahead with its petition. About 4,000 have so far signed, including 19 Labour and two Liberal MPs, and other signatories have included Angus Wilson, Benjamin Britten, Canon Collins and George Clark. Carshalton Young Socialists have been the driving force behind the campaign, but it has not been confined to the Labour Party. Young Liberals, for instance, have been active in its support. The secretary is John M.Horsfield, address: 7 Spring Gardens, Wallington, Surrey.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS  
AGAINST CONSCRIPTION

The following branches have  
resolutions for Y.S. national  
conference against conscription:

Hadleigh and District,

Southend-on-Sea,

Loughborough,

St. Pancras North,

Wandsworth Central,

Basildon,

Rayleigh,

Hawick.

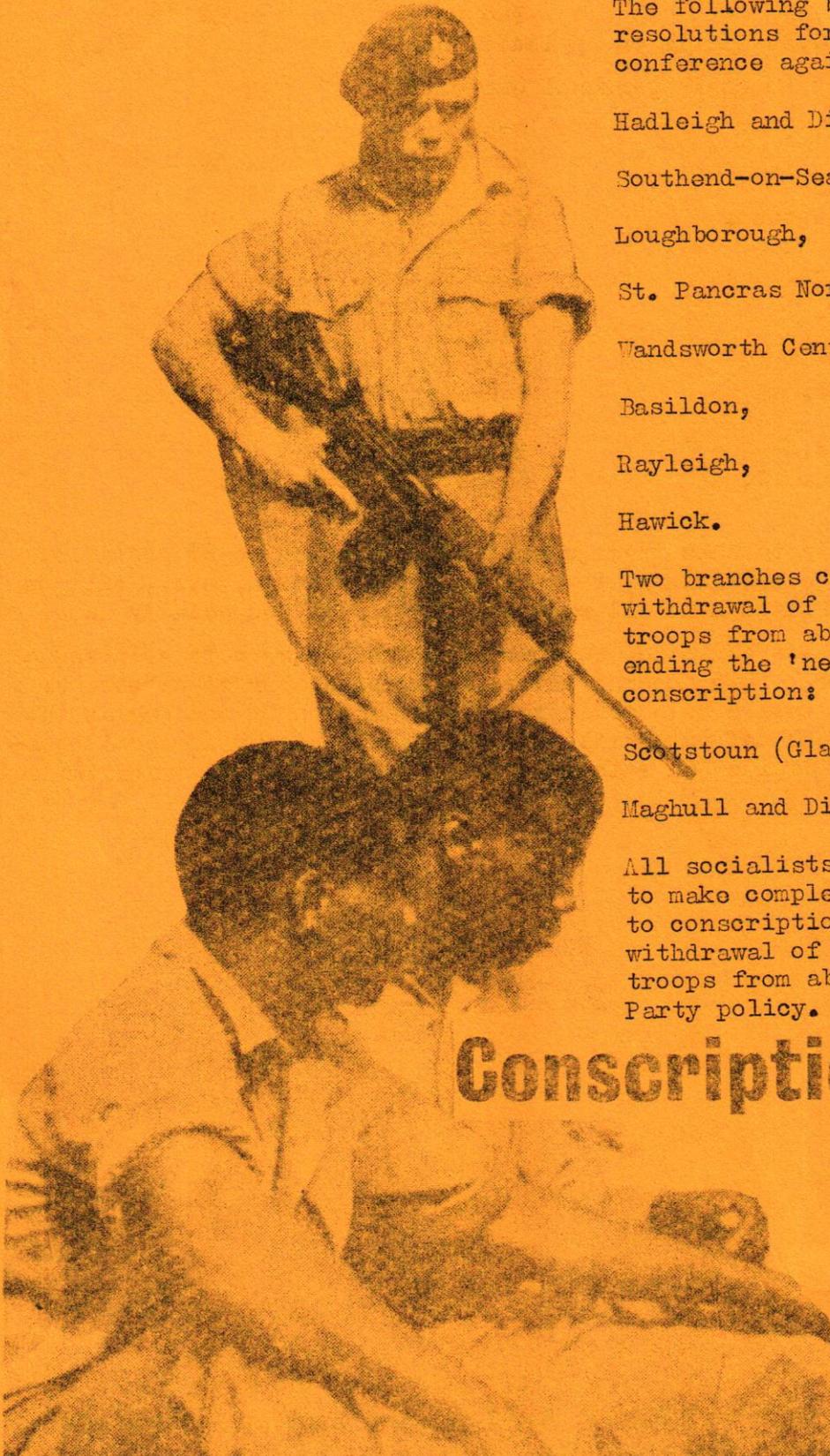
Two branches call for the  
withdrawal of all British  
troops from abroad, thus  
ending the 'need' for  
conscription:

Scotstoun (Glasgow),

Maghull and District.

All socialists must fight  
to make complete opposition  
to conscription, and the  
withdrawal of all British  
troops from abroad Labour  
Party policy.

**Conscription—NO!**



THE WEEK - THE WEEK

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