

The Week

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS
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- ADEN—AN APPEAL
- MONOPOLY GROWS
- NEW PARTY IN BELGIUM
- NEW LEFT CHALLENGE
TO SCARBOROUGH
LABOUR PARTY
- CHE GUEVARA'S
LETTER TO CASTRO

SOCIALISTS AND LABOUR

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A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS
Vol. 4, No. 12, Dec. 1967



- THE CURRENT STATE OF THE PARTY
- THE CHALLENGE TO SOCIALISM
- FACTORS IN BRITAIN
- ECONOMIC PROBLEMS
- SOCIALISM AND THE FUTURE

SOCIALISTS AND LABOUR

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CONTENTS

Page	1	Editorial.
"	2	Briefing 1965.
"	3	Trade union news.
"	4	Why I resigned from the Labour Party - by Mr. Chapman.
"	5	Scarborough Labour Party.
"	6	The wage stop.
"	7	Immigration advisors criticise White Paper.
"	8	U.S. bombs hospitals in North Vietnam.
"	9	Aden - an appeal from <u>Arab Revolution</u> .
"	10	Socialist Workers Confederation formed in Belgium.
"	11	Monopoly grows in British industry.
"	12	Che Guevara's letter to Castro.

SOCIALISTS AND THE LABOUR PARTY

Last Thursday, at a packed meeting in London, Bertrand Russell tore up his Labour Party membership card, after more than half a century of allegiance. To judge by the prolonged applause which greeted this action, Bertrand Russell carried at any rate a substantial part of his audience with him, in thinking that many of the Government's present policies are totally insupportable. It gives us no joy to comment on these happenings. We are proud to have Bertrand Russell as one of our sponsors, and we are compelled to agree with all he says in repudiation of Mr. Wilson's foreign and colonial policies. At the same time, we are dismayed that he, and hundreds of other fine people, some of the most creative spirits who have ever given their talents to the Labour movement, now find it necessary to resign from it. This erosion of the support of many of our best people is itself a terrible indictment of the logic of Government policy. Demoralisation, fragmentation, disillusionment are the direct product of violations of principle.

We, however, will not be resigning from the Labour Party. Although we find its present course immoral and debilitating, we cannot simply leave it over to the uncontradicted blandishments of the present front bench. Besides Mr. Wilson, Mr. Gunter and Mr. Stewart; besides the gassing of children in Aden, the craven complicity in genocide in Vietnam, the colour-bar bill and the attacks on the unions, besides these things Labour has another aspect: the aspect of a million members of the Transport and General Workers Union, of thousands of honest, loyal and dismayed activists, of all those for whom Labour's past pledges and aspirations are not negotiable for dollar loans. While they remain, we shall fight at their side.

But we cannot equivocate in order to do so. All the telling points which Bertrand Russell has made, we shall make again and again, until everyone can understand them. We shall fight the union-tamers, the racials, the empire-defenders who at present monopolise office. We shall not fall silent or pretend that things are not as they are. They stink, and we shall say so loudly. And we shall try, constantly, on the basis of our vision of socialism, to group together all those people, whether they have felt they must leave the Labour Party or not, for whom humanism, political honesty, devotion to socialist principle, are not expendable qualities.

What is needed is a political focus for the whole left, in which policies can be co-ordinated and developed, and through which we can jointly fight for the conscience of the whole labour movement. Such an organisational focus will

BRIEFING - 1965 (the introduction to the composite Briefing pamphlet)

When the project of issuing a daily bulletin to delegates at the Labour Party conference was first mooted we had no idea of how successful the project would be.

In view of the way most of the voting went at Blackpool, the fact that we claim success needs explaining.

We consider that Briefing was successful for the following reasons:

- Briefing united sections of the left, in practical work, which had different ideas, backgrounds, appreciations of the way to work and attitudes towards the Labour Party leadership. Anyone familiar with the fragmentation of the left in recent years will know what an achievement this was. The idea of supporters of the Voice of the Unions, New Left Review, The Week, Labour Peace Fellowship, Tribune, the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, Labour C.N.D., Socialist Register, International Socialist Journal, Views, and others, working together in almost complete harmony would have seemed utopian a few months ago. And yet it happened! Differences which arose were calmly discussed and where, on rare occasions, a complete line could not be found both sides were presented. This is a lesson to the left, one which it must learn in the hectic days that are coming.
- Briefing showed that the left could organise. It was no mean feat to bring out a daily bulletin commenting on all aspects of the conference in time to intervene in the discussions. Sometimes the writing of the articles could not begin until 10.00 p.m., yet without any exception it was there each morning waiting for the delegates as they went in at 9.00 a.m. This again is a lesson for the left - how many times in the past has it been said that the left remained ^{un}organised whilst the right had an elaborate machine.
- Briefing demonstrated that there was still a principled socialist wing within the Labour Party. Despite all the sneers of the capitalist press about the "left's lack of leadership", and of its "insignificance", we were able to show to delegates from all over the country that not everybody had been mesmerised by Mr. Wilson and demoralised by the failure of Barbara Castle's and Tony Greenwood's socialist conscience. Somebody dared to say "Emperor Wilson has no clothes" without becoming a leper.
- Lastly, Briefing was successful because it was popular, because it was sought after and attentively read. We are not exaggerating when we say that every morning numerous delegates asked for copies of previous issues and that considerable disappointment was shown when we ran out of copies. Delegates showed their respect for and support of Briefing by donating very generously when we had the opportunity of collecting money.

It was for these reasons that we decided to embark on the venture of bringing out this composite issue of Briefing. But Briefing is more than a comment upon the day-to-day events of the conference. It is an invaluable collection of arguments for use in the great post-Blackpool debate which is still going on in the Labour Party. When we say that every Labour Party activist should read it we literally mean that. We ask those who have bought copies to make sure they do. If we are to ensure that next year's conference goes on record against trade union legislation, against the American war in Vietnam, against the White Paper, etc., we must prepare now.

Representatives of 2,000 Southern Region locomen, meeting on October 18th, gave the British Railways Board one further meeting with leaders of their union, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, to settle their long delayed bonus claim. After hearing reports from Mr. Ray Buckton, ASLEF assistant general secretary, and Mr. Bill Williams, an executive member, the delegates voted overwhelmingly against calling an immediate unofficial work-to-rule. Then, by 25 votes to one, they gave warning that unless a solution was reached at the meeting with the Board expected later this week they would call another meeting of Southern Region branches to consider what action to take.

Speaking after the meeting, Mr. Buckton said: "The men are in an angry mood. The delay is their real concern. But they are remaining loyal to the union." Confirming this, Mr. Jack Harmer, chairman of the London Bridge branch which called the meeting, said: "If the Board would only say that any settlement would be back-dated to September 29 all pressure would cease." On that day the report of a Court of Inquiry into the dispute said that only one further meeting between union and management was needed to reach a settlement. That meeting was held last Friday. Afterwards it was stated that a further meeting was necessary. We have looked in vain to see any press denunciation of the attitude of the Rails Board.

TANKER DRIVERS TO HOLD 48-HOUR STRIKE from an industrial correspondent

Tanker drivers employed by Shell-Mex and B.P. and other oil companies are planning to hold a 48-hour strike "in the near future" to protest against delays in negotiating a new pay structure. A meeting held last week end at Smethwick took this decision. There were drivers from all over the country present. The drivers want a five-day, 40-hour week with a substantial basic wage. Spokesmen of the 100-strong meeting said that they could count on 99% support from men employed by the big oil companies.

Mr. Stables, secretary of the North-West drivers' committee, said at Preston on Monday, October 18th, "This has been going on for two years. We are averaging 20 hours' overtime a week to make a decent living wage." He added that the drivers had been given a 7s. pay increase and an hour's reduction in their working week as an interim measure and later rejected as inapplicable a bonus incentive scheme. The strike decision is to be reported to a series of area meetings at which drivers will be asked to pledge support for the 48-hour strike. Most of the drivers are members of the TGWU.

NUPE NOT TO CO- OPERATE ON HOSPITAL WORK STUDY from a NUPE reader

Meeting earlier this month, the East Midlands area of the National Union of Public Employees passed a resolution calling on hospital staffs not to co-operate in work study schemes until they can share in any financial savings which arise from increased productivity. The union feels that some boards are merely using the schemes to cut down staffs with no corresponding benefits for the workers.

NORTH WEST RAILMEN TO DECLARE LINER TRAINS "BLACK": Meeting on Sunday, October 17th, the Manchester district council of the National Union of Railwaymen passed a resolution stating that railwaymen in the area were prepared to declare black any liner train run without the approval of the union executive.

Before the last election, while I was working 5 evenings a week for the Party, I found time to read an account of the pre-war minority Labour Governments. In this account, to illustrate fluctuations in support of the various parties, by-election figures were given. Looking at these figures, I tried to imagine what would be represented by them - say Labour 13,650. I tried to imagine how Party workers kept going, why they kept going, working to get these votes out in support of a candidate who would probably have supported Ramsay MacDonald in Parliament. How did the whole Party hang together and how did it keep functioning? I believe I can now see why, although I find it difficult to explain. I have seen Party members carrying out activities - for example, selling "Go-Ahead Britain" - which must help to keep Wilson where he is. These same members (in the bar afterwards) would not have a good word for hardly any of the Government's policy. And why did they support Wilson by their actions? A loyalty to the mere letters L-A-B-O-U-R - a force of habit, skilful invocation of the old-pals act by Party officials, and a self-rationalisation that "I'm stopping in to fight this."

I keenly feel the betrayal on immigration. I worked at a vacation job (while a student) in Smethwick at the time Griffith's little friends were running their campaign against the "coloureds". I made myself unpopular by arguing against them - and I know what the Government is surrendering to. I have been disappointed by some of the Government's actions, but I never expected a very socialist Labour Government. I knew this before the election: I was willing to work for socialism inside the Labour Party while accepting and supporting a moderately progressive Labour Government. However, the Government has not only turned its back on what I would call a socialist policy, but also on a principle that I would regard as merely one of human decency. The Party backed the Government in this!

I am, perhaps, a little out-of-date, a little Edwardian, perhaps, but when I promise to "accept the constitution, principle and policies of the Labour Party" I believe the statement means just that. On a policy that involves an absolutely fundamental attitude I am in disagreement with the Party. I only hope that I will one day be able to rejoin a better Labour Party than the one I left; until then I will try to fight for what I believe in any way I can.

* Mr. Chapman was formerly chairman of the Birmingham Federation of Young Socialists. He resigned on learning that the Blackpool conference went on record for the Government's policy. We are not, of course, advocating that people emulate this action; however, we feel that our readers will be most sympathetic to Mr. Chapman is his dilemma: that of how to remain in a Party with which he has fundamental disagreements. Moreover before anyone jumps criticise Mr. Chapman they should place the blame for his resignation (and how many more?) where it rightly belongs; at the doorstep of 10, Downing St.

TORIES "LIVING ON BORROWED TIME" - BORROWED FROM LABOUR!

Robert McKenzie, writing in the Observer, October 10, said; "It must never be forgotten that the Tory Party, with its overwhelming upper and upper middle-class leadership, has in a sense been living on borrowed time for at least a century since the enfranchisement of the urban working class in 1867. The working class probably constituted $\frac{3}{4}$ of the electorate in the late 19th century and it still composes $\frac{2}{3}$ today. It is a major historical anomaly that it should be a party of the right rather than of the left which is the normal majority party in this country."

SCARBOROUGH: LABOUR PARTY AND LEFT CLUB TO HOLD TALKS

Now that the combined membership of the Scarborough New Left Club and the Young Socialists is almost treble the active membership of the Scarborough Labour Party, certain senior members of the Executive Committee are now in favour of holding discussions with the two socialist organisations, with a view to co-operating in the General Election campaign. This has become necessary because it is felt that the adjacent Labour marginal seat of Cleveland is vulnerable. At present the Scarborough Labour Party has less than £16 in the bank and cannot hope to put up any sort of a show at the election. If Cleveland is to be held this constituency must be fought vigorously by the Labour Party.

All socialists living in Scarborough and district must be heartened by the fact that for the first time since 1945 it is possible that a vigorous Labour candidate will be standing for election backed by the two socialist groups.

Peter Baines

SCARBOROUGH LEFT CLUB ISSUES A CHALLENGE

Scarborough New Left Club recently issued a leaflet on the Scarborough Labour Party. The leaflet reiterates the charges which have become a national scandal. To quote the leaflet: "...the Scarborough Labour Party functions only as a form of social club, serving the needs of compulsive bingo players, petty groups and those who aspire for reasons of self-aggrandisement to sit in the council chamber. Indeed the chairman of the branch, Councillor George Cowburn, has said that "The Scarborough Labour Party is run more like a club" and that "Applicants for membership must be vouched for by a senior party member." The leaflet gives as reasons for applicants being turned down: writing agitational (anti-Tory) letters to the press, being in arrears with rent, being involved in a divorce case, and not having "two pennies to rub together."

The leaflet quotes leading members of the Scarborough Labour Party as asking "What has socialism to do with the Labour Party?" and similar statements. It ends by making this challenge: "The Scarborough New Left Club is willing to book a hall in order to make good its charges. The Club is prepared to nominate One speaker to oppose any Four speakers nominated by the Scarborough Labour Party. The New Left believes that the 'leaders' of the Scarborough Labour Party do not have sufficient moral fibre to defend their actions in public. The reactions of Messrs. W.H. Smith, W.C. Wilkinson, G. Cowburn, T. Pryce, G. Jones, R.W. Grant, R.H. Leadill, L. Woodhead and Jack "Call me Colonel" Longbottom are awaited with interest!"

ADVERTISEERS ANNOUNCEMENT

"British Political Fringe" by George Thayer is just out and describes the spectrum of minor political parties today. 30/- from your bookseller or plus 1/6d postage direct from the publishers, Anthony Blond Limited, 56, Doughty Street, London W.C. 1.

THE WAGE STOP

by Margaret Croucher

The National Assistance Board suffers from administrative schizophrenia. The duties the Board are expected to fulfill are not compatible with one another. As seen by Beveridge and the subsequent social security legislation, it was expected that the Board would be an instrument used less and less as time went on. This was because it was thought that the level of benefits, both for sickness and unemployment, as well as pensions, would keep pace with the rising cost of living. As these benefits regularly increased so the number of recipients of Assistance would reduce down to a small hard core of people needing help. The Board would be able to deal with emergency demands and would be able to meet the need of those seeking help. The general level of social benefits would ensure people a reasonable standard of living while the N.A.B. would cover the need of a few people not eligible for any other form of assistance.

This proved to be far from the truth. Everyone is aware of the galloping increase in the cost of living and the corresponding small and infrequent increases in benefit. The numbers of people receiving assistance has risen year after year and it is estimated by sociologists that there are many more, mainly old age pensioners, who would receive help if they applied. The scales used by the Board to determine how much money an applicant should receive is the amount the Government feels should enable a person to exist. This is called 'subsistence level'. Very complicated means are used to determine how this figure should be reached for it should deal only with the necessities of life and not the luxuries - which, after all, is what most people live for.

But, and it is a big but, the Board operates what is known as a wage stop. This device is to ensure that a man and his family do not receive more money through assistance than they would if the man earned. If a man's wages were £12 per week, his assistance would be less than this. The actual amount, £11.10. or £11, is entirely up to the discretionary powers of the Board and these may be decided in a very arbitrary manner. If pressure from a social worker increases his money from, say, £11 to £11. 10s on the basis of the need existing in that family back payments would not be paid although need existed prior to the increase.

Further hardship is not difficult to find. Suppose this same man earning £12 has a high rent and a large family, His scale as laid down by the Board may be as high as £16 or so yet he will still only get his £11 or £11. 10s. The need of the family is great, after all, they are living at several pounds a week less than the amount laid down by the Government as "subsistence." The very instrument authorised to relieve need is the body imposing the need - hence the schizophrenia. What does this mean in every day terms to the family suffering from such a wage stop? A family I know with nine children, only one of working age, receives £13. 15. 0d per week (including their family allowance) which is a wage stop of nearly £5. This is how they distribute their money:

Rent	£4.	6.	11d.
Fuel	1.	5.	0d.
Gas and Electricity	1.	5.	0d.
Clothing clubs	12.	6d.	
Milk	6.	6d.	
Bagwash	9.	0d.	

The balance of £5. 10. 1d is left. Have you tried feeding a family of eleven
continued over/

Wage stop continued/

on £5. 10. 1d? Of course not, and would think it preposterous to be asked to try. Yet this family have to manage. They are not well educated or very intelligent so clever economical methods are beyond them. "What about going to the pictures?" - not a chance. Make-up for the older girls - out of the question, pocket money - don't make me laugh! There is not enough for food and clothing let alone these luxuries that everyone else calls essentials.

Unless you have seen people living like this it is difficult to realise what it means to them. Not only is it hard financially but other pressures are exerted too. The children are demanding coppers for things to make at school, for pens and crayons, a new cardigan, etc. They want to be like the other children who have nice clothes, pocket money, etc., and not to be faced with the choice of telling lies or pleading poverty. It is hard for the parents to have to deny these things to their children.

Sometimes they take what looks like an easy way out: talley men. A new set of clothes for John and only 5/- a week. But before the instalments of 5/- are complete, the clothes are worn out or John has grown, and by now Jill and Mary need new clothes too. The circle gets more tightly drawn and the parents get trapped by lack of money. Other people may help, but it is humiliating always to be receiving help and never giving it. A most demoralising process. Furniture is second-hand, lino gets worn, paint-work peels and all around is evidence of deterioration and general shabbiness.

What sort of adults ^{will} these children grow up to be? Hardly citizens full of self-respect, aware of their responsibilities and conviction that "they" care for all. This country spends much money on approved schools, borstals, etc., If more money was spent now on the type of family I have described then in ten years time their children may not occupy these institutions. This is partly a solution. What is yours?

IMMIGRATION ADVISORS CRITICISE WHITE PAPER from a special correspondent

One of the first moves of the Government-appointed National Committee for Commonwealth Immigration will be to advise the Government to revise its White Paper on immigration. The committee held its first meeting on October 15th under the chairmanship of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Ramsey. It agreed that some aspects of the White Paper would only hinder the task of helping integration. Members said any control should be non-discriminatory and better provision should be made for immigrants to bring in children over the age of 16. The composition of the committee was also criticised. There are only 3 immigrants on the committee; 2 doctors and a writer. One speaker said working immigrants should also be represented.

Editorial continued/

enable what men say to be examined on its merits, and allow us to evolve, together, towards a condition in which the movement will make its decisions rationally, outside the intrigues and pressures of bureaucratic manipulation, but within the area of serious and dedicated commitment to goal of socialism. For that reason, we cannot today, demand that our sponsors should be in or out of the Labour Party. We can, and do, demand that they should not be compromised, that they should be politically clean. So we are still proud to be associated with the name of Russell. We would not swap one Russell for a thousand Wilsons, Gunters or Greenwoods, in the highest office, but out of their decent minds.

Earlier this year The Week published information about the killing in North Vietnam by the U.S. Air Force of civilians completely unconnected with military or similar installations. Photographs of dead women and children were published on The Week's cover. Further information is now available. It comes from Mr. Pham Ngoc Thach, the North Vietnamese Minister of Health, who is Western-trained and devoted himself to the health of his fellow-countrymen. Shortly before the systematic bombing of North Vietnam began I questioned him at length in Hanoi on many facets of public health there. I found him modest, cautious and concerned for scrupulous accuracy. It should be remembered that every piece of information on the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam which he had sent before has been supported by photographic evidence.

U.S. planes have bombed and strafed hospitals, infirmaries, maternity and medical stations, killing or wounding patients, doctors and their assistants. In the five months preceding July 11, nearly 30 medical establishments - including tuberculosis and leprosy sanatoria - were bombed, burned, strafed or destroyed. These include hospitals in Vinh Linh area, Quang Binh province, Son La and Yen Bai provincial capitals; hospitals in the districts of Quang Trach, Nghia Dan and Huong Khe; sanatoria at Cho Moi, Cua Lo and Ba Don; and many maternity and medical stations.

Certain medical establishments have been bombed and strafed as many as five, seven and even fourteen times, killing doctors while they were still treating victims of the previous attack. U.S. planes have pursued and strafed patients seen limping away on crutches from ruined hospitals.

Typical of these bombings and strafings were those of the Quynh Lap leper sanatorium (July 12 to 22), the T.B. hospital in Thanh-Hoa province (July 8) and hospitals in Yen Bai (July 9 to 11). The Quynh Lap leper sanatorium was on a coastal strip far from populated areas. It consisted of 160 buildings which could accommodate 2,600 patients and was the centre of the final drive to eradicate leprosy. In the past five years 4,000 lepers received treatment there. Hundreds of bombs and rockets were showered on it during the night of June 12 and this was followed by 13 additional bombings and strafings during ten consecutive days. 139 patients were killed immediately and many others wounded. (The ruins of the sanatorium have in fact been visited by several Western observers recently.) The T.B. hospital in Thanh-Hoa province had 600 beds and modern research facilities. It was attacked by 40 U.S. jets which dropped over 100 bombs. At least 30 people were killed immediately (including five doctors) and many wounded. Both establishments were completely destroyed. In Yen Bai provincial capital, on an area less than one third of a square mile, U.S. aircraft dropped, for three consecutive days, hundreds of bombs on the hospitals, medical service buildings, hygiene and epidemiology station, T.B. sanatorium and mother-and-child establishments of the province. 48 people (mostly medical workers, pregnant women and children) were killed.

All these military actions - and much more - were part of a policy which the British Labour Government approved and supported publicly without reservation. All hospital patients in North Vietnam will have welcomed the British Government's recent call for a suspension of U.S. air attacks, muffled and lukewarm though it was - and made for the wrong reason.

INDEPENDENCE FOR ADEN! STOP THE IMPERIALIST TERROR IN ADEN!*

The Aden people are fighting for the right of self-determination, for political and economic independence. This struggle is part of the revolutionary uprising which is sweeping the colonial world to end imperialism and exploitation. The struggle in Aden has been going for years. It is a fight of oppressed and exploited people who are no longer prepared to suffer the rule of the puppets, feudalists and sheiks backed by British imperialism.

The Labour Government is trying to carry out in the interests of British capitalism what Duncan Sandys failed to achieve, some kind of an agreement which will safeguard British interests under the cover of the granting of "independence."

The "Constitutional Conference" held in June, 1964, was complete failure because it represented one side: namely, the British Government and its puppets. So was the second conference called by the Labour Government. These conferences failed because of the determination of the people of Aden to achieve a genuine independence with no strings attached.

The National Liberation Front is the representative of all national anti-imperialist groupings. It is not financed and backed by external forces as claimed by the British Government. The United Arab Republic and other progressive anti-imperialist governments support the NLF because it represents the aspirations of the Aden people. Not even the reactionary Arab governments who support British policy can do so openly because of the feelings of their peoples.

Imperialism always tries to find an external influence when faced with a mass uprising. The Algerian FLN, we were told during the war of liberation, was backed by external forces. We are told now that the heroic people of the South Vietnam NLF are tools of "external aggression" and now we are supposed to believe that the Aden NLF is a tool of Egypt. But not even the former Chief Minister of Aden, Abdul Kanu Mackawee, who was appointed by the British Government, could condemn the NLF because the NLF is not an instrument in the hands of foreign powers but on the contrary, because he knows that the whole people of the occupied part of Southern Arabia are behind the NLF.

His refusal in face of the attempts by the High Commissioner to condemn the freedom fighters led to the suspension of the Constitution and direct rule by the British authorities, supported by the "security forces." The workers and the people of Aden gave a clear answer to these policies by declaring a general strike which paralysed the colony and which led to violent demonstrations. As a reprisal against this the authorities reacted barbarically: hundreds of people have been arrested and are facing charges, hundreds of Yemeni workers have been deported and their schools closed their only crime is their demand for independence.

British Labour policy has nothing to do with socialism; its policy is the continuation of the Conservative's in defence of oil monopolist interests and local reactionaries. We appeal to all our friends, all freedom loving people, above all to the British working class represented in the trade unions and the Labour Party, to give their support and solidarity to the heroic struggle of the Adenese workers and people, to protest to the British Government and demand:

(1) The end of the wave of terror, taking place in the colony, by ending military rule, releasing of all prisoners, including the general secretary of the Petroleum Workers Union; (2) immediate negotiation with the real representatives of the Aden people, including the NLF and TUC, for independence and withdrawal of troops and the base. The Aden people demand their rights and your support is needed.

*An appeal by the E.B. Of Arab Revolution, an Arab language magazine, 7/10/65.

Three hundred and fifty delegates, representing all the main cities and industrial areas of Belgium, met in Liege October 10 at the founding congress of the Socialist Workers' Confederation. They represented the three organisations: the Walloon Workers Party, the Left Socialist Movement of Brussels, and the Flemish Socialist Movement - which decided to unite their forces in the struggle for a socialist Belgium on a federal basis that would grant self-determination to the two nationalities living in the country. The first action of the congress was to respond favourably to an appeal from the Berkeley, California, "Vietnam Day Committee" to join in an international demonstration on October 16 against the U.S. imperialist war in Vietnam.

The great majority of the delegates consisted of youth and factory workers, among them well-known shop stewards and trade union militants from the Liege metal works, the Charleroi metal and gas plants, the Antwerp and Ostend shipyards, the railway workers and the teachers' union. The presiding committee consisted of Robert Nicolas, of Charleroi, Pierre Le Greve, the Brussels left socialist member of parliament, and Frans Vrancks, chairman of the Louvain federation of the Young Socialists and shop steward at Sabena, the Belgian air lines. Vrancks represented the Flemish wing of the movement.

The main reports were as follows: Marcel Slangen (of the Walloon wing of the confederation) on internal policy and federalism, Van der Borcht (Flemish wing) on foreign policy, and Ernest Mandel, editor of La Gauche on social and economic policy. The congress adopted a programmatic resolution stating the goal of the party is to overthrow capitalism, replacing it with collective ownership of all the means of production and workers management of all the plants and factories in the framework of a democratically planned economy. The resolution states that this goal cannot be reached except through conquest of power by the working class, international solidarity among workers, and the international victory of socialism.

The immediate programme of action of the Socialist Workers' Confederation calls for federalism and anti-capitalist structural reforms; namely, nationalisation of the banks, insurance companies, all credit outfits, the mines, power plants, oil refineries and gas works, all of these to be placed under workers' control. The programme calls for workers' control over all important factories and collective ownership of land used for building. It advocates the 40-hour week with no reduction in weekly pay, four week's vacation with double pay, a free national health service, large increases in pensions and social benefits, and so on. It also demands that Belgium leave NATO and radically reduce military expenditure. Solidarity is expressed with all the colonial peoples fighting for their freedom as well as with the struggle of the Negro people in the United States for equal rights.

The Belgian daily press, radio and television gave extensive coverage to the congress, handling it as a major political event in the country. The veteran of Belgian socialism, 94-year-old Camille Huysmans, sent a letter of sympathy to the new confederation and declared his readiness to join it. Huysmans, a social democrat all his life, started to move left a few years ago, especially under the impact of the Chinese revolution and in opposition to the rearmament of Germany. He had recently made an extensive tour of China. In his message of sympathy to the congress, he strongly condemned Foreign Minister Spaak for complicity in the war of aggression which U.S. imperialism continued over/

Socialist Workers Confederation formed in Belgium continued/

is waging against the Vietnamese people, and took a firm stand in favour of the Vietnamese and Chinese revolutions.

The October 16 demonstration against the war in Vietnam, which the delegates decided to help organise, is being backed by a number of left wing organisations. Among them are the Brussels railway workers' union, the gas and electricity workers' union, the teachers' union, the Committee for Struggle against Neo-colonialism and Fascism, the Jeunes Gardes Socialistes, the Communist Youth, the Socialist Students, the Communist Students, and the Committee for the Anti-nuclear demonstration.

The Khrushchevist Communist Party, which is participating in the demonstration, wanted to give it a mere pacifist orientation. However the organising committee, mainly under the influence of militants belonging to the Socialist Workers Confederation, adopted a radical line and slogans so as to clearly express solidarity with the opponents of the Vietnam war in the United States and with the Vietnamese revolution itself.

MONOPOLY GROWS IN BRITISH INDUSTRY

by Andrew Miller

Recently published Board of Trade figures show that the trend towards monopoly in British industry has been increasing since the late '50s.

Industry % share of giant companies (net assets over £25million)
of total assets of companies.

	End 1957 (1)	End 1960 (2)	End 1963 (3)
Food	45	51	66
Drink	29	48	76
Tobacco	89	84	89
Chemical & allied	80	84	89
Metal Manufacture	68	74	81
Vehicles	55	64	70
Engineering	} 34	22	25
(non-elec.)		59	75
" (elec)		18.5	34
Shipbuilding, etc		54	53
Textiles	44		
Retail distribution	54	66	70

Sources: (1) Company Assets, Incomes & Finance in 1957 Board of Trade.
 (2) ditto 1960 " " "
 (3) ditto 1963 " " "

APARTHEID SUPPORTER DOES WELL

from Dave Windsor

Mr. W. Garfield Weston, ex-Tory M.P. and vociferous champion of South Africa's Apartheid system, has had a successful business year. The firm of which he is chairman, Associated British Foods, increased its group sales by £46.9lm. to £260m. and its profit (before tax) amounted to £13.7lm. an increase of £1.49m. Net profit (after taxation and minority interests) was up from £6,882,000 to £7,955,000.

'CHE' GUEVARA'S LETTER TO CASTRO

The following is the complete text of the letter from Ernesto 'Che' Guevara to Fidel Castro explaining why he was leaving Cuba. Castro told the Cuban people the letter had been delivered to him last April to be made public at a time of his choosing. He indicated that it had not been made public until now for reasons of Guevara's personal security and that his present whereabouts would not be disclosed for the same reason. He said Guevara had written other letters to his family and various of his comrades and that they would be asked "to donate them to the revolution because we consider that they are documents worthy of being part of history."

"Fidel, At this moment I remember many things - when I met you in Maria Antonia's house, when you suggested my coming, all the tensions involved in the preparations. One day they asked who should be notified in case of death, and the real possibility of that fact affected us all. Later we knew that it was true, that in revolution one wins or dies (if it is a real one). Many comrades fell on the way to victory. Today everything is less dramatic because we are more mature. But the fact is repeated. I feel that I have fulfilled the part of my duty that tied me to the Cuban revolution in its territory, and I say good-bye to you, the comrades, your people, who are already mine.

I formally renounce my positions in the national leadership of the party, my post as minister, my rank of major, and my Cuban citizenship. Nothing legal binds me to Cuba. The only ties are of another nature; those which cannot be broken as appointments can. Recalling my past life, I believe I have worked with sufficient honour and dedication to consolidate the revolutionary triumph. My only serious failing was not having confided more in you from the first moments in the Sierra Maestra, and not having understood quickly enough your qualities as a leader and a revolutionary. I have lived magnificent days and I felt at your side the pride of belonging to our people in the brilliant yet sad days of the Caribbean crisis.

Few times has a statesman been more brilliant than you in those days. I am also proud of having followed you without hesitation, identified with your way of thinking and of seeing and of appraising dangers and principles. Other nations of the world call for my modest efforts. I can do that which is denied you because of your responsibility as the head of Cuba and the time has come for us to part. I want it known that I do it with mixed feelings of joy and sorrow: I leave here the purest of my hopes as a builder, and the dearest of those I love. And I leave a people that received me as a son. That wounds me deeply. I carry to new battle fronts the faith that you taught me, the revolutionary spirit of my people, the feeling of fulfilling the most sacred of duties: to fight ^{against} imperialism wherever it may be. This comforts and heals the deepest wounds. I state once more that I free Cuba from any responsibility, except that which stems from its example. If my final hour finds me under other skies, my last thought will be of this people and especially of you. I am thankful for your teaching, your example, and I will try to be faithful to the final consequences of my acts.

I have always been identified with the foreign policy of our revolution and I will continue to be. Wherever I am, I will feel the responsibility of being a Cuban revolutionary, and as such I shall behave. I am not sorry that I leave my wife and my children nothing material. I am happy it is that way. I ask nothing for them as I know the state will provide enough for their expenses and education. I would like to say much to you and to our people, but I feel it is not necessary. Words cannot express what I would want to, and I don't think it's worth while to banter phrases. Ever onwards to victory! Homeland or death! I embrace you with all my revolutionary fervour."