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The Week

- YOUNG SOCIALISTS
- THE BAKER'S CASE
- THE MAN FROM THE NATIONAL ASSISTANCE BOARD
- THE WHITE FLAG
- BLOODY NEWS FROM VIETNAM

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS
Vol. 4, No. 14. 14th October, 1965

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LABOUR— WHAT NEXT?

THE GREAT POST-BLACKPOOL DEBATE

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54 Park Road, Lenton, Nottingham

Subscription: £2 per annum and pro rata

CONTENTS

Page	1	Editorial.
"	2	The bakers' case.
"	3	Bloody news from Vietnam.
"	4	Lancaster students' lodging victory.
"	5	Young Socialists' "discussion" documents.
"	6	The man at the National Assistance Board.
"	7	" " " " " " " " " "
"	8	Plessey profits up over £2 million.
"	9	Blackpool 1965 - two views. I: Ken Coates.
"	10	" " " " " II: Walter Kendall.
"	11	Labour now like Democratic Party - Co-op News.
"	12	Whose victory?

RHODESIA, THE UNITED NATIONS.....AND ADEN

The present "crisis" over Rhodesia is nothing if not educational. The United Nations has deliberated on both: our Government is ^{to} defy it on both issues. What is left now of the policy of "making the United Nation the cornerstone of British foreign policy"? Why are there two entirely different standards applied?— When a Prime Minister comes here and openly declares his intention of committing "treason" he is asked to change his mind. When the puppet Government of Aden refused to condemn "terrorists" it was dissolved, troops brought in, strikers threatened with imprisonment and people gassed daily in the streets. One is tempted to say that it is merely a question of colour, but this is not the whole explanation. No doubt, if one acts like an imperialist one will have some of the ideological trimmings. Mr. Wilson almost certainly feels more at ease with white Mr. Smith than he would ^{with} Brown Mr. Mackawee. However, there is another factor: Mr. Smith is the custodian of up to £200 million of British investments in Rhodesia (Financial Times, October 9th, which says this is "intertwined" with South African and local capital); the poor of the Crater district of Aden have nothing and they might even be tempted to take over British assets to help repay British imperialism's debt to them.

Thus we have the possibility of a British Labour Government being involved (and on the wrong side) in two Algeria-type colonial wars. For let us not kid ourselves: if the Rhodesia crisis results in war the logical conclusion of Mr. Wilson's position is that he will intervene on the side of law and order to protect British interests." Added to the Malaysian fiasco this could only mean disaster. Disaster for the peoples of Aden and Rhodesia, disaster for the standards of living of the British people, disaster for Labour's image and conscience, and disaster for anyone who failed to fight this policy. Have we learnt nothing from the twenty years since the end of the second world war? The rot must be stopped - we must reverse these policies, imperialism under the guise of Labour must be fought; the least we ^{must} do is to show in an unmistakable way, to the world, that there is another side to British socialism. Labour must leave Aden and impose a one-man, one-vote solution on Rhodesia: that is the only battle-cry we can have.

CONGRATULATIONS ERNIE: Ernie Roberts, one of our original sponsors who is currently on a visit to China, has been re-elected Assistant General Secretary of the A.E.U. by a spanking majority (42,242 to 26,637). Ernie has won his increasing popularity with engineers by being a fearless and outspoken champion, under very difficult circumstances, of every progressive campaign in the British labour movement. He is a lesson to all: principles pay off!

The situation could be divided into two issues, one in relation to the Distributive side, and the other in relation to the Productive side.

As far as the Productive side is concerned, we have for some considerable time been to the National Joint Committee in view of the technical changes that have taken place in our industry, requesting that our National Agreement be revised in the light of the changes already taken place, and for new techniques that are now operating in the industry, and for this purpose, the Sub-Committee has been set up to consider same.

We have also submitted to the employers a four-point application on the basis of trade union membership, that the present basic wage rate, 5/9d. per hour, be increased to 7/6d. per hour, i.e., £15 for the 40-hour week, and the present extended annual holidays on the basis of service, be amended to provide a third week's holiday after twelve months service for all employees, and for annual increments for female workers until we reach the question of equal pay for female workers.

In the course of our negotiations, we have stressed to the employers that the industry recognise that the basic wage rate is (in)sufficient, and consequently, the need for overtime is part of the built-in structure of our industry; and we desire a revision of working arrangements with the object of reducing overtime working, and the earnings being transferred to build up the basic wage rate.

During the course of negotiations, we have had the report of the National Board for Prices and Incomes, which has made certain recommendations.

We have tried to get the employers to agree to the principle of the £15 as a basic wage rate, and from that standard to review the National Agreement in relation to our industry. We also suggested that this could be implemented from a given date, 1st December, and for both sides to work towards this object. The employers however, were unable to concede this, particularly in view of the National Board for Prices and Incomes report, as they alleged this would necessitate an increase in prices.

However, in view of the failure to get an assurance on the immediate issue of £15, we have decided to re-call our Conference to consider the present position, particularly in the light of the further meeting which we have held with Mr. George Brown, Minister of Economic Affairs, and a further meeting which is being held by the Minister of Labour.

*This article was written especially for The Week, in answer to a request, by Mr. A.E. Halliday, General Secretary of the Bakers' Union. We are sure that all readers will wish the Bakers' Union every success in achieving its aims, and that they will explain the Bakers' case throughout the movement.

STEREOTYPERS' UNION LEADER WARNS LABOUR from a printer

Mr. A.J. Buckle, general secretary of the National Society of Electrotypers and Stereotypers, had this to say in the October issue of the union's journal: "The right of trade unions to negotiate freely the wages and conditions of their members has received a check from which, unless my reading of events is badly at fault, they will never break free....I have a strong feeling that the Government has gone too far and too fast.." The Government would apply sanctions and "this usually means fines and imprisonment. Mr. Buckle said that in the next few months the Government had "better be right or else" in thinking it could solve economic problems by its present policy.

MORE BLOODY NEWS FROM VIETNAM

by Chris Farley

In the last week of September, there were again heavy casualties in the war in South Vietnam. According to a Reuter dispatch from Saigon, the National Liberation Front ('Vietcong') was estimated to have lost 1,067 killed and 144 captured. During the same seven days, the 'Government of South Vietnam' - as the U.S.-directed and financed dictatorship is called in some quarters - lost 229 killed, 566 wounded and 68 missing. At the same time 22 Americans were killed, 64 wounded and one missing. Considering that no estimate of N.L.F. wounded or of civilian deaths and casualties can be made, and that the constant U.S. air attacks on South Vietnam leaves trails of dead and dying behind them every day, a conservative estimate of casualties all round in the war in the South is several thousand dead or maimed every week - nearly all of them Vietnamese.

The Pentagon has tried to keep the Saigon puppet army at between 500,000 and 600,000 - from a population less than that of South-East England. It has been able to find cannon fodder in the past in two ways: people joined to escape the general economic misery or - even worse - to get out of the concentration camps ('strategic hamlets'). With the collapse of the U.S. Staley-Taylor plan for 12,000 concentration camps in South Vietnam, the American-held cities in the South have been ransacked for draft-dodgers. According to military sources in Saigon, more than 8,000 Vietnamese reluctant to be conscripted have been picked up off the streets of the capital in the past four months. Saigon authorities have frequently admitted in the past that desertion from the puppet army is a major problem - Vietnamese desert by the hundred at a time. The Free World doesn't seem so attractive to the Vietnamese as it does to President Johnson or Harold Wilson.

Meanwhile in North Vietnam the Hanoi Government several weeks ago claimed its 500th U.S. aircraft shot down since the Americans started bombing the North. The American economy is reliably reported to be moving rapidly into its healthiest condition since the Korean war.

U.S. SPENDS MORE ON POISON GAS

from an American reader

Records published by the Pentagon on October 9th show that total purchases of poison gas amounted to \$607,112 during the fiscal year 1964 and about \$800,000 in the fiscal year 1965. So far in this fiscal year, which began on July 1st, the total procurement has amounted \$1,021,746, or \$200,000 more than the whole of the previous year. The U.S. Defence Department has openly admitted that the bulk of the poison gas is for use in Vietnam.

U.S. CORPORAL SICK OF KILLING "WOMEN AND KIDS"

An Associated Press dispatch of September 30th from Wichita, Kansas, quoted the following from a letter by Corporal Ronnie W. Wilson, who is in Vietnam, to his mother: "There are so many Cong here that in three days we captured 12 VC and killed 33. Mom, I had to kill a woman and a baby. We were sweeping the jungle and all of a sudden the Cong opened up on us. People were falling and Cong were clipping 81 mortars on us. The lieutenant had us move out toward the firing. We killed eight Cong and about 30 got away. Anyway we were searching the dead Cong when a wife of the one I was checking ran out of a cave and picked up a sub-machine gun and started firing at us. I shot her and my rifle is automatic, so before I knew it I had shot about six rounds. Four of them hit her and the others went in the cave and must have bounced off the rock wall and hit the baby. Mom, for the first time I felt really sick to my stomach. The baby was about two months old...I swear to God this place is worse than hell. Why must I kill women and kids? Who knows who's right? They think they are and we think we are....."

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' LODGING VICTORY from a Lancashire reader

The Sunday Telegraph of October 10th reported:

"Lancaster University students have won the first round of their fight against increased lodging charges of 10s. a week agreed by the university authorities and the landlords. After a meeting between representatives of the Student Council and the Senate on Friday it was agreed that the whole question of lodging charges should be reviewed. Students are to be represented on the lodgings committee. There are to be talks on differential rents. The students are to withdraw a ban on paying lodging charges which they claim has been nearly 100% effective. The terms of the agreement are expected to be approved at a general meeting of students tomorrow.

"Students beginning their second year last week were asked to pay £4 a week instead of £3. 10s. The University newspapers Carolynne and John O'Gauntlet, produced a broadsheet condemning the charges. The broadsheet also demanded student representation on the lodging committee and urged first-year students to withhold payment of the new charge. A major complaint of the students was that two men sharing a small room with no facilities for study elsewhere in the house were paying the same amount as those who had individual rooms, or who shared a bedroom with a sitting-room."

JAPANESE GRADUATES FACE UNEMPLOYMENT

from Hsinhua

50,000 out of the 170,000 university graduates in Japan will be jobless by next spring, as the threat of unemployment looms larger and larger over the country. This estimate, widely held to be underestimate, was given by the Japanese Labour Ministry. The newspaper, Asahi Shimbun, has predicted that the problem of providing jobs for the fresh university graduates next spring should be a knotty one, as the great majority of the big enterprises have informed the universities that they will take none of their graduates next spring. Others have decided to hire only two-thirds of half of the number they employed last spring.

Many of the university students are spending much of their time looking for jobs instead of studying. It was reported that one student of Chuo University had sat in examinations for new employees given by three different companies, and failed each time owing to keen competition. He then went home to Miyazaki prefecture and sat in the examination for new middle school teachers. To his amazement and anger, he found that there were 150 job-seekers contesting the five vacancies.

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY VIETNAM TEACH-IN

from a Manchester reader

Under the sponsorship of the Manchester University Union, and Professors John Cohen, Dorothy Emmett and M.J.M. Mackenzie a teach-in on Vietnam has been organised. It will start at three in the afternoon and last until midnight on Thursday the 21st of October. It has been organised by a committee comprising representatives of all four political clubs: the Labour, Liberal, Conservative and Communist. The committee feels that the attitude of the Labour Government should be represented, that the debate should be balanced and that the Australian and American Embassies should send speakers. The teach-in will be organised on the lines of a logical progression of main topic headings, ranging from a historical background right up to the latest moves. The general public and the press will be given every facility to attend. For further information please contact: Terry Lacey, 22, Goulden Road, Withington, Manchester 20, Telephone ARD 4334 (day) and DID 7123 (evening)

The discussion documents presented by the N.E.C. for the Young Socialists' National Conference have emerged. After the bludgeoning received by the patient at Blackpool a sedative has been prescribed. Only organisational resolutions have been allowed and two major debates have been scheduled to run on the papers: "Rebuilding Britain" and "Industrial training for Youth."

"Rebuilding Britain" balances chunks of turgid prose reminiscent of a White Paper for the E.S.N. and vigorous, with-it campaign slogans from last year's election leaflets. We are told that "The New Britain will be one offering everyone the chance to live more abundantly." The blue-print for this radical upheaval in capitalist society is indicated, together with the far-reaching reforms undertaken. "...the trade section of our U.S. Embassy now operates from New York, not Washington D.C." and "Agricultural grants to crofters have been stepped up by £75,000 a year."

The "Public Ownership" section sets out boldly "The further extension of public ownership will play a crucial part in the achievement of the Government's economic and social aims." We are bumped down to reality in the very next sentence which articulates the extension: "Only by taking the major firms into public ownership will the Government be able to ensure that this" (sic) "virtual monopoly industry will serve either the public interest or the interest of steel production itself." The change from the general to the particular comes suddenly. After genuflections to the Post Office and the Railways the section peters out.

The document on the "Industrial Training for Youth" enables observers to get an impression of why these pamphlets have been prepared. There is nothing wrong fundamentally with giving Conference documents to debate. NALSO has often used this method; the difference being that individual clubs or NALSO EC write the documents and that the conference can vote on them. It is well known that the general problem of apprenticeships has been of interest to the Young Socialists, but instead of discussion this conference is channelled into the side-waters of discussing a marginal aspect of the problem.

The document itself, coming as it does so soon after Crosland has imposed at least ^a6 monthshalt on further education expansion and, in some areas, an actual re^{so}ution in expenditure, does not inspire respect. The reality clashes a little obviously with such high flown platitudes as "The Government believes that human needs and economic necessity, both ignored for so long by the previous administration, present an irrefutable case for immediate action."

In 1918 it was decided that day release should be given to all under 18. The 1956 White Paper called for a 100% increase in day release and five years later an 11% increase was found. The solution to this was compulsory release, or block release, so that this educational opportunity did not remain the whim of a philanthropic employer. The 1964 Act still refused to apply compulsion and the Labour Party did not divide the House, all of the document records and white-washes.

At best these two publications are a disastrous mistake and at worst a deliberate provocation to the Young Socialists who are angry enough at the virtual disbandment of their movement.

(Editorial note: This article, and two other articles which will follow, have been written by social workers and are based upon their professional and personal experiences. These experiences strengthen the argument for the NAB to be integrated into a Ministry of Social Security, and illustrate the urgency with which the Government should approach the establishment of this ministry proposed in the Labour Party's "New Frontiers for Social Security.")

"Will you write an article outlining what the National Assistance Board needs....". "Blowing up" I thought, as he continued, "....to improve or change it?" The man asking the questions had a round kindly face which wasn't in the least like "the man from the National Assistance Board". His question had sent my mind back to the day when I saw "the man at the National Assistance Board" office some six or seven years ago. I shall never forget his face, it was deformed by bitterness and hatred.

I was a plumber, unemployed and broke. I had been on the dole before. Come to think of it, it wasn't the first time I had been skint. This was Liverpool and the lot of the casual building worker. But this time it was different. I was in Liverpool and my wife was in hospital in London. "Fill in a B.I. and take it to the National Assistance Board, they may help you to visit your wife" suggested a sympathetic clerk at the Employment exchange. So I did.

My depression deepened as I entered the waiting room where I saw row after row of grey faces that seemed to fuse into the drab green walls. I panicked at the thought that they were 'people' and I was one of them. I wanted to run. I clenched my fists, sat down and stared at the worn green linoleum. I felt ashamed. Ashamed of being there and yet ashamed that I had thought I was different from the people around me. God, how worried I was, perhaps I did not look like them or maybe they were more worried than me. Children cried and my thoughts crowded and blurred the faces. A crackling voice from a loudspeaker called a name which I couldn't understand and an elderly man shuffled towards a door and went through into the 'Inner Sanctum.'

We slowly propelled ourselves along the wooden forms, our bottoms leaving the wood only when we moved up a form, as the interviewing clerk behind the grill shouted questions to decide who was eligible for Assistance. "He's a bastard" I thought and I clenched my fists again as I heard him growl to a young white girl with two babies "He's coloured is he? And you're not married. Who's the father of the kids then?" What right has he - but my thoughts stopped as I looked straight at the face of the man behind the grill. He had half risen from the chair as he was shouting to the girl that she was "not entitled" and I could see his face above the grill. He was fast approaching sixty, with steel grey hair and a face that had been moulded into the most ugly, frightening shape, by hate? fear of us? frustration? overwork? or was it an overwhelming responsibility? as the girl argued with him and he began raising his voice, the rest of the waiting room became anxious and restless and began to talk loudly and some shouted abuse at the clerk. The man stood up and leaning over the grill shouted to those waiting to "shut up or get outside." I felt angry and sad. What right has he? But I, like the girl, was helpless. I felt sadness for the girl, the clerk and all of us in the room. We seemed trapped. Trapped by other men or by ourselves colluding with other men? Who knows, I mused.

continued over/

The man at the National Assistance Board continued/

Nudged out of my reverie by the man next to me I heard the clerk shout "Next" and stumbled forward. I handed him the B.I. form from the Labour Exchange and he began shouting questions for all to hear. Anger welled up inside me, but I answered him quietly and calmly, telling him about my wife in hospital and that I needed the fare to London. He continued asking questions whilst he was, presumably, writing the answers on a form. Within a few minutes he told me curtly "You're not entitled" then shouted "Next!" I was furious. I shouted and demanded a "discretionary payment". Whether it was because I shouted or my knowledge of the Assistance Act which made him more angry I will never know, but he told me to "leave or I will call the police." "Bring the police or the manager" I shouted angrily. This retort immediately calmed him and he told me to sit down and he would arrange for me to speak to the manager.

I sat down amidst subdued praises from the waiting applicants. "That told the bastard." "It's about time." "He's been getting away with it for years" and so on like a humming top in my ears. But the old lag who I now found myself sitting with was not a bit impressed with my apparent success. "You won't see him yer know." "Who?" I asked. "The manager" he replied. "You're being given the treatment, by the time they call you the manager will have gone home." If this was true I was to be allowed to cool off and then sent packing.

It was then 3.00 p.m. and I had been in the "Outer Sanctum" since 2.10 p.m. At 5.15 p.m. my name was called through the crackly loudspeaker. I entered the "Inner Sanctum". I was directed into a large room with a huge semi-circular counter divided into at least a dozen interviewing booths. A young woman called my name, I sat down and she began asking me the questions I had already answered. I explained that I had requested to see the manager. She looked surprised and told me that the manager had left the office. Christ, the old lag was right! After I explained again the reason for my application, the clerk, who was very pleasant and sympathetic, suggested we complete another form. This we did and for a second time I was told that I was "not entitled" and "no" I could not have a discretionary payment.

The following morning, after discussing my experience with a friend who sat on a N.A.B. Appeals Tribunal, I went back to the Board but this time entered by the staff entrance. I found the manager's office, knocked and entered. This man had never been the 'front man' in the 'Outer Sanctum'. He had a pleasant face and an engaging manner. I explained my entry, told him about my experience the day before and that my friend (naming him, of course) had confirmed that I could be considered for a discretionary grant. He immediately agreed and suggested he should see if my application was filled in correctly. When he returned he placed the train fare to London in my hand, apologised for the way I had been treated and told me he hoped my wife would soon be well again.

I now know that the Board employs many different types of people. Some dedicated civil servants, others striving to understand and be fair to people, and there are many quite unsuited to handling people with problems; in particular there are those frustrated failures from other Government departments who transfer to the National Assistance Board in the hope of finding success.

Now that I have released my repressed feelings about the Board I think I might manage to write objectively about it. The theme? ABOLITION!

GLASGOW VIETNAM MARCH

from Tony Southall

The Glasgow and West of Scotland Council for Peace in Vietnam are holding a torchlight procession on October 15th, International Vietnam Day, starting from North Claremont Street at 7.30 p.m. It is hoped to have as large a turnout as possible to demonstrate solidarity with our American comrades who will be protesting the same day.

GUYUANA SYMPOSIUM

from West Indies News Bulletin*

On October 23/24 a Guyana Symposium will take place at Africa Unity House, 3, Collingham Gardens, London S.W. 5. This will be a study conference. A committee, whose secretary is Buddy Poole, has been working to organise the symposium. Papers have been prepared and other documents will be circulated. The widest possible participation will be necessary in order to promote the confrontation of ideas and opinions. Interested persons can contact: Buddy Poole, c/o, 3, Prospect Place London N.W. 2.

* Obtainable from 51, Uplands Rd., London N.8. price 6d.

PLESSEYS' PROFITS UP MORE THAN £2 MILLION

from a Liverpool reader

As a follow-up to the report in last week's issue about the demonstration of Plessey workers at Blackpool, readers will be interested in the following which appeared in the Financial Times of October 9th:

"Record profits were achieved by the Plessey Company....in the year to June 30, 1965, and the dividend is effectively increased by 2% to 14% with a final dividend of 7%. Group turnover expanded from £96,38m. to £104,78m., the profit, before tax, advanced from £13m. to £15.19m., and the net profit, after tax, is up from £7,04m. to £10,09m...." It seems that whilst Liverpool employees of the concern face unemployment and/or loss of earnings through "reorganisation" and "rationalisation" the shareholders and directors are to do better than ever before. A united fight by all employees of Plessey is needed to defend standards and make sure the workers get a bigger share of the cake.

BIG BUSINESS BOSS SAYS WORKLESS NEEDED FOR NATIONAL PLAN

Speaking in Sheffield on October 5th, Sir Eric Mensforth, chairman of Westland Aircraft and of Firth Brown Tools, said that some unemployment was needed to secure the aims of the five-year plan. "When so simple a piece of modernisation as the liner train is baulked at, how great a task we face in adopting new techniques," declared Sir Eric, who is also deputy chairman of John Brown and Co., when he was installed as 342nd Master Cutler in Sheffield. "I believe public opinion is braver than political, and ahead of trade union; and the majority of people, given leadership, are hardworking and will grasp opportunity.....An incomes policy able to withstand bullying will have to be sincerely sought, but, at the same time, we are not in Utopia, and with human nature what it often is there will have to be the sanction of unemployment - I hope small, but enough to make a good job something to strive for. Politicians, while relieving want, must not negate this by eliminating the differential between pay for good work and deliberate idleness....The myths of the right to strike on any pretext and that negotiation means supine capitulation to demands must go. Instead there must be recognition that with privilege goes responsibility."

TRADE DEBT COLLECTIONS BIGGEST EVER

A summary released on October 8th by Trade Indemnity reveals that the collection of debts from businesses has reached the highest ever point. The report blames the credit squeeze for this. The value of company's debt collections this year reached £1,193,000 by the end of last month compared with £1,167,000 for the whole of 1962, the previous record.

Whose victory? continued/

To our comrades out in the field we say: "Keep up the fight, you are gaining ground - and one day you will win." Our immediate objectives are to nationalise steel with workers' control; to prevent legislation against unions; to amend Government immigration policy; to end the Vietnam war; and to bring about substantial arms cuts. We must push these proposals through our branch meetings in November for next year's union conferences, and thus prepare the field for the battles to come.

Enough of this talk of disillusionment and resignations - there's a job to be done and we need every man we can muster.

LABOUR NOW LIKE DEMOCRATIC PARTY SAYS CO-OP NEWS from Richard Fletcher

Co-op News of October 9th carried in its "Political Notebook" - a regular column by Geoffr Rhodes, M.P. - an article entitled "Blackpool Illuminations". The article is a very clear - if unpalatable - assessment. Here are the key passages:

"....Clause IV, already virtually in the coffin, was firmly sealed in. Gone were the resolutions demanding more and more public ownership. Even steel nationalisation was no longer certain to be dealt with in this Parliament. The anti-American rank and file lobby was firmly crushed. The overwhelming majority of the party backed the Government on its immigration policies and had it not been for the Transport and General Workers' block vote the supporters of the critical resolution on immigration policy would have been virtually annihilated. Only on the incomes policy did the Government views look to be in danger and here the Constituency Party delegates, traditionally on the left, appear to have had a decisive majority in favour of the Government." (in fact, it has been calculated that 400,000 CLP votes were cast against the majority)

"....Labour's Left is basically weak - without a national leader of great calibre, with no room for manoeuvre in Parliament, and faced with a Party establishment more powerful than Hugh Gaitskell was ever able to command. The doctrines of the Party have been buried. The rebels are scattered to the winds. The largest social democratic party in the world is pledged to a national plan based on the assumptions of a mixed economy, the bulk of which is run on capitalist lines.

"Thus the pattern of political alignment for the next decade has been established. The Labour Party is in effect a Democratic Party of American style, mixed up with traditional British Radicalism....We have got Lib-Labbery firmly established, at the same time as the Liberal and Labour leaders have been busy proclaiming their independence of each other.....The lines of strategy for the next election are becoming clear. If you want to bet on a date, it seems almost certain to take place after the new register comes into force next February. May to October, 1966, is a fair guess - barring accidents. Labour's appeal will increasingly be as a national party, campaigning on the National Plan. The Tories will be attacked for their partisan approach. Labour will appeal to the latent patriotism of the not-so-partisan middle tier of the electorate....."

"If Labour can retain power in such a situation the left wing will have to retreat even further. I would guess that Labour's left will revive only when Labour goes into opposition again - or if Labour were to win by a substantial majority. If the latter were to happen the left would become for a while the only really effective opposition to the Government....."

(original emphasis throughout)

After a major battle a wise general consolidates his territory, counts his casualties as compared with the enemy's, looks to the morale of his troops and starts to plan his future dispositions. How does the field look after Blackpool?

First, some significant advances were made. The left showed itself capable of united and disciplined action. The well-planned campaign on steel - starting with Tom Driberg's courageous lead on Tuesday when speaking on the Government's record, and mounting throughout the week to its climax on Friday morning when the NEC accepted the principle of workers' control in a nationalised steel industry - is going to make it very difficult for the Government to omit the nationalisation of steel from the Queen's Speech.

The campaign on union rights is also gaining momentum. George Brown won 6.6m. votes in April for his policies, 5.2m. at Brighton and only 3.6m at Blackpool! That ASSET, working over some two weeks only, should chalk up 2.5m votes for a motion against the Brown policy - even when moved by Clive Jenkins, one of the most able but unpopular men in the trade union movement - is little short of a miracle. On Vietnam, too, the Government modified its policy considerably under pressure, but failed to win over a minority of some 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ m.

After 13 years of Tory rule, a Labour Government should rightly expect overwhelming, if critical, support at its first conference. The working class movement would never forgive any section of the Labour Party that brought about its downfall. The task of socialists in the Labour Party is to bring the Government round to their point of view. This must be done in three ways: (a) by developing the right long-term policies; (b) by contesting and winning all positions within the party and the unions as they become available; and (c) by building up a militant but broadly-based rank-and-file movement. Committed socialists form an extreme minority of the population in this country. We can only take power by careful attention to the following tactical principles: (1) concentration of effort on agreed objectives; (2) perpetual vigilance to exploit "chinks in the armour"; (3) avoidance of outright defeat by tactical withdrawals; (4) conservation of personnel by avoidance of exposure; (5) consolidation of limited gains; and (6) self-discipline and the avoidance of extremism, hysteria, self-immolation and unilateral action.

What of our attitude towards Harold Wilson? Harold Wilson is the instrument by which Labour came to power - he is undoubtedly the 'best' leader the Party has ever had in terms of parliamentary performance, public image and the conventional dog-fight with the Tories. But he is almost totally irrelevant to the struggle to keep the Labour Party to its socialist principles. As long as he is at the helm, Wilson will steer the ship whichever way the wind is blowing, and it's up to us to see that it is blowing from the left. Effort to "removing" Wilson from the leadership is not only futile, but even at the best would only replace him by Brown or Callaghan, or at the worst by Ted Heath.

The press is taunting the left with lack of leadership: but what is needed is a mass movement at the roots, not another father-figure to solve all our problems. For all his political power and personal magnetism, Bevan was unable to create in the 50's the sort of united action we now find arising spontaneously on the left without any overt leadership. Every genuine movement throws up its leaders when the time is ripe - and we have no shortage of good material. For the time being our leadership must be collective and we have little to be ashamed of. Tom Driberg, Ian Mikardo, Michael Foot, Frank Allaun, Sydney Silverman and many others kept their faith with socialism - Harold Davies and George Craddock sadly fell by the wayside.