

The Week

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS

Vol. 8 No. 23. Dec. 7 1967

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IMF demands Budget cut

ALL OUT UNEMPLOYMENT-NO! ON SOCIALISM-YES!

DEC 12TH

SUPPORT DECEMBER 12th LOBBY OF
PARLIAMENT AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT AND
FOR SOCIALIST POLICIES

ASSEMBLE PARLIAMENT SQUARE, 2.00 p.m.

71 Onslow Gdns., London, N.10. Subscription: £2 per annum & pro rata

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IMF

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UNEMPLOYMENT-NO!
SOCIALISM-YES!

ASSEMBLE PARLIAMENT SQUARE, 5.00pm.
FOR SOCIALIST POLICIES
PARLIAMENT AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT AND
SUPPORT DECEMBER 15TH LOBBY OF

ALL OUT

ON

DEC 15TH

Subscription: £5 per annum & post paid
VI, Gower Street, London, W.10.

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AT LAST - A VOTE AGAINST: NOW FOR A FIGHT

This journal has been very critical of left M.P.s since the Government decided upon devaluation, with its subsequent cut in the standard of living of the British people, and no fight was put up. We are, therefore, doubly pleased to learn that some 18 Labour M.P.s opposed the Government over the question of the letter of intent. We hope that this vote will be followed by others. What we are concerned with is not the size of the Government majority but the effect of a stand being made upon the consciousness of British workers. It is vital for two reasons that there be seen within the Labour Party a focus of opposition to the Government. Firstly, this will stimulate opposition in the Labour Movement. Secondly, it will help to reverse the drift away from the Labour Party by left wingers and others.

But more needs to be done than voting against the Government. Michael Foot spoke in the House of Commons of fighting for an alternative policy and an alternative Government. Very good! but to do this one needs an army, and sad to say that army will not be found in the House of Commons. But a potential army does exist: in the C.L.P.s, in the trade union branches, in the factories, etc. The left wing M.P.s must, therefore, link up with the rank and file movements of opposition to the Government. They must completely identify themselves with such actions as the December 12th lobby of Parliament. They must support all industrial actions against the Government's policies. They have made a start by voting against the Government; we hope they follow this by storming up and down the country, calling upon workers to resist the Government. It is not too late to reverse the tendency for the traditional left to lose its significance.

ALL OUT FOR DECEMBER 12TH

Despite a last-minute clumsy attempt to sabotage the December 12th lobby of Parliament by the leaders of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, every ^{thing} indicates that the demonstration is going to be highly successful. According to incomplete information several hundred official delegates have been elected by unions from all over the country. It is certain that many more will come without being formally elected. Also we expect many thousands of people to turn up to support the lobby on the actual day.

To publicise the lobby we have produced a special sticker (one is enclosed in this issue) Any reader wanting additional copies can obtain them free of charge (although donations will be welcome). Just a note of warning, however, we would point out that it is illegal to put these up on people's property without their permission.

The December 12th lobby, if it is very big and very militant, can help to re-enthuse and mobilise trade union opposition to the Government's wage freeze policies. We pledge ourselves to do everything we can to that end.

The end of the NUS council at Margate a week ago saw a large number of individual unions present at a meeting to discuss disaffiliating. How strong these demands to get out of an introverted union are, will remain to be seen but it is clear that the mood of disillusion and confusion sweeping through the ranks of progressive students at Margate cannot be ignored.

The structure report - the result of a year's work by a structure commission under the chairmanship of Jack Straw of Leeds University saw the emergence of a simplified structure. The majority of proposals with the exception of the one council a year were supported by the radical element. The NUS executive had put amendments to all the major changes as all these needed a 2/3 majority, because they involved a change in constitution, there was a chance for people to block proposals by not letting them get the necessary majority and so maintain the status quo. This is exactly what happened over the voting system.

The commission had recommended that the Single Transferable Vote system (STV) be used in elections at NUS, rather than the present Multiple Transferable System (MTV) as at present. STV allows for representation of minority groups and tends to counter the 'ticket system', which has been a recognised part of NUS elections in the past. After two members of the Executive on the Commission resigned over the technicality. They then went back to the platform to speak against the STV Council and were subjected to the usual blasting from the Executive over the "danger" of allowing political "extremists" to run NUS. The vote showed that 60% of the Union wanted to change to STV, but once again the 2/3 majority was narrowly missed. Thus we have the ridiculous situation where the majority of the union want the present voting system changed but a small minority can block progress.

The council also decided to stay in the Dutch-based International Students' Conference, despite the disclosure by an executive report that some of this body's finances used to come from the C.I.A. Here again, the executive were able to sway the unaligned by stressing that to leave ISC now would be a cowardly act. The unfortunate aspect of the whole ISC debate was that so few people knew much about the background of the ISC. The claims of those, who as usual, wanted to "talk about Education" failed to see that by staying in the ISC they were only prolonging the issue to another council.

The remainder of the council meeting was occupied by the usual debates on student housing, examinations, etc., etc. The debate on grants was interesting because the Council had put to it, for the first time, the proposition that students should be paid a wage or a salary. Although the proposer, Digby Jacks of Woolwich Polytechnic, did not expect the adoption of the wages system by the Government in the near future he wanted it to be adopted as long term policy. Even though the idea was heavily defeated, mainly on the grounds that it was unworkable, it is encouraging that a motion such as this can even be discussed on the floor of council. Perhaps the idea that students have a right to be treated like other young people will come to be expected from now on.

Was there anything to be encouraged about at the council? The radicals may not have been victorious in actually having motions accepted by the Union, but they certainly were not defeated. As long as unions which feel strongly about the reform of the NUS stay in and prepare to fight then there is a chance that our union can become representative of all student opinion. Disaffiliation is not the answer.

INDUSTRIAL NOTES from John Leonard.

Ban on Overtime by Bus Crews.

Overtime and rest day working is to be banned by Derby corporation bus crews from next Sunday. This was announced after two open meetings on Monday at which it was also agreed to withdraw all trade union representation from the bus departments works and schedules committees. Jim Taylor, Derby district organiser of the T&GWU said a fund has been set up to assist those suffering financial hardship because of the decisions. "The ball is now squarely in the employers' court. We are asking them to sit down with us and talk." An immediate offer of £1 a week on the basic rates followed by discussions on the busmen's charter would ensure a lifting of the sanctions and industrial peace. The current militancy among busmen is also in evidence in Nottingham, Cardiff, Southend and Luton. The strikes in all of these areas are aimed at further control of the conditions of work by the employees as well as at wage rates. In Southend the men are attacking the hire of private coaches during a work-to-rule, in Nottingham the reinstatement of a sacked shop steward is demanded together with a local agreement on wages and conditions of work, while in Luton the bus workers are protesting against the suspension of a driver and two conductresses because of a disagreement over meal times.

Massive Vote for Bank Union

The recent strike action by members of the National Union of Bank Employees is already showing returns in the form of offers of recognition from Barclays, Williams Deacon's and the Yorkshire Bank. However this recognition from individual banks has not caused the union to abandon its strike plans which are aimed at having the union accepted by the Committee of London Clearing Bankers. The union has been greatly encouraged by a ballot of 2,000 staff employed by Williams Deacon's Bank asking whether they wanted the NUBE to represent them on negotiations and arbitration with the bank. The result among the lower grades of staff was overwhelming, and even among the managers over one third voted for the union. The full results were: managers and senior staff - for recognition of NUBE, 35 per cent; against recognition, 62 per cent; ballot papers not returned, 3 per cent. Other staff - for recognition, 93 per cent; against recognition, 3 per cent; ballot papers not returned, 4 per cent.

Attempted "Ban" on Unemployment Lobby

The National Executive of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions has ruled out of order the mass lobby of Parliament planned for Tuesday, December 12th by 300 Tyne shipyard and engineering workers. The lobby has been organised by the Tyne district committee to protest at the widespread redundancies among local shipyard and engineering workers. Support has since been received from trade unionists all over the country who are disgusted at the Labour Government's programme of planned unemployment. The executive said that the district committee must withdraw its support as a procedure already exists within the industry to deal with the present situation. Feelings among Tyneside workers are already such that this bureaucratic decision will only serve to encourage them in their planned demonstration of the rejection of Wilson by the rank and file worker.

THE I.M.F. WANTS ANOTHER £400 MILLION LOPPED OFF BUDGET By John London

The economics editor of the Sunday Times Business Review did us a service last Sunday when he explained in very comprehensive terms exactly what the International Monetary Fund wants from the Government. He explained: "Another £400 million in additional taxes or reduced Government spending will have to be found next year because of our commitment to the IMF. This would be over and above the £400 million savings already announced in the devaluation package - withdrawal of SET premium and export rebate, defence spending and other promised cuts." (our emphasis)

I.M.F. officials in Washington took a sceptical view of Roy Jenkins' claim that there were no conditions to the support for the pound. According to Mr. Crawford: "There will be 'constant surveillance' of the British economic situation by the I.M.F. so long as British drawings from the fund remain above \$1,220 million. This scrutiny will begin next year. According to Washington sources, the I.M.F. will not wait for the Government's promised £200 million balance of payments surplus in the second half of next year, but will recommend tax increases or spending cuts well before then..."

The I.M.F. officials have made it clear that what they are most concerned about is the level of the Government's internal expenditure: "The I.M.F. has extracted from the Government a commitment to cut its domestic borrowing requirement to £1,000,000 in the financial year 1968-69. This compares with the £1,400-£1,£00 million, which is expected now after allowing for the spending cuts already announced." (emphasis in the original)

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"Possible tax increases are already being studied by the British Government! Officials are already pretty sure that further resources will have to be diverted away from home demand next year (irrespective of conditions to this effect imposed by the I.M.F.) though they are not yet sure how much. The most likely tax increase will take the form of applying purchase tax to items now exempt." As is well known, indirect taxation of this kind tends to hit the lower paid and poorer sections of the community more than others. The list of candidates for adding to the purchase tax list confirm this: "Detergents, washing powders, and bleaches.." Mr. Crawford also expects "An increase in some rates of purchase tax.."

A by-product of the Government having a ceiling of £1,000,000million to its domestic borrowing requirement is that long-term interest rates will increase. A major reason for this is that "the Government will have to sell gilt-edged stock heavily in the markets next year..." Thus, quite apart from the imposition of the 8% bank rate, the ^{by} cost of housing, education, hospital building, etc. will all be pushed up/this policy. Not only will there be less money for these things, but the money will pay for less.

EVENING STANDARD REPORTER ON AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE from a London reader

Those who only buy the late editions of the Evening Standard may be missing some of the best reports to appear in that paper. I have noticed that Peter Fairley's reports tend to ^{be} much reduced in later editions. A recent mid-day edition of the Evening Standard had this interesting comment: "Every time I go to America I become more convinced that one of Britain's finest assets is the National Health Service. An English friend of mine has just left hospital..As he walked past the desk a voice said brusquely: "You owe us 2,000 dollars. He was not allowed to leave until he had paid. He had been in hospital exactly three days in a grubby, tiny room."

CORNEJO CHAVEZ, A PERUVIAN SENATOR SPEAKS FOR CHE.

A candidate for the Presidency startled the Peruvian Senate by thundering, "Che Guevara has fallen, a hundred others are ready to take his place, this is not my planning but the force of history!" (This followed the lament of the "Young Christian Democrats" and the reactionaries attack on them).

He continued: "There are men like Guevara, who have different ideas for Latin America, and who are capable, not only of leaving their professions (Che was a doctor of medicine), families and even triumphs already gained to start again the fight of a Quixote.

"Can we really say that the soldiers, officers and even leaders have really been defending our country?--or were they merely instruments of oligarchical groups who in all Latin American countries have taken advantage of their political power, to entrench their own selfish interests.

"No, Mr. President! No real hero of ours was ever knowingly a servant or instrument of the "oligarchy"! They were heroes who gave their lives without knowing that the land they fought for was going to be fleeced by the very rich. All this is happening again to the simple soldiers - peasants brought from the distant jungle and mountains and given a uniform (cannon fodder). Do these poor men who die fighting their brothers have anything in common with the ruling oligarchy? - No!

"Those Peruvian police who died in guerrilla warfare (against Hugo Blancos, Ricardo Gadeas and Lobatons) as well as the many men who died fighting freedom fighters in Cuba, Venezuela, Colombia and Bolivia are people who have not been fighting for their own interests, but on orders which merely enriched the rich."

This report was translated from La Prensa, Lima and sent in by the Secretary of "The Committee for Solidarity with the Victims of Repression of Peru."

DRUG-DART GUNS TO DEAL WITH RIOTERS from an American reader

One of the things exercising the imagination of the American establishment just now is how to deal with the growing opposition in U.S. cities from Black Power and anti-war movements. A certain Dr. James Connor, of Emory University, Atlanta, believes that he has the answer to what the newspapers here call the growing anarchy of the cities. The answer of this resourceful defender of the American way of life is the use of dart gun^s, loaded with tranquilliser drugs. Doctor Conner has tried his idea out on medical students. With a modification of the dart-gun used by big-game hunters to capture animals for zoos (an element of unconscious humour can be discounted) he fired projectiles containing three c.c.s of a new drug - Cl 581. This has the effect of rapidly subduing a violent person and sending him into a comatose stupor for half an hour or more.

Doctor Conner claims that the only after-effect that the students felt was the feeling of a hangover. He has also stated that he is experimenting with a quick-acting form of morphine. I have been unable to verify a rumour that Mr. Conner is to sign a contract with the American Embassy in London to supply these darts for the next demonstration in Grosvenor Square.

History shows that boot-licking as a rule does not pay. The latest example of this was illustrated by a confidential report that Chapman Pincher of the Daily Express made public on December 2nd. This revealed that the Suez Canal remains closed, at the expense of at least £20 millions per month to Britain's balance of payments, at the insistence of the U.S. administration.

The explanation is very simple: "The U.S. Government, the only Government capable of exerting enough pressure on Israel to get the Canal opened, now prefers it to remain closed for two strategic reasons. The first is that before the Arab-Israeli war the Canal was being used by the Russians to ship arms from Odessa, on the Black Sea, to Vietnam. Now that winter is about to block Russia's northern ports, Soviet supply vessels can reach Vietnam only by the long route around South Africa so long as the Canal is shut. Any improvement in the Vietnam situation is top priority for President Johnson.

"The second reason is that the closure of the Canal blocks Russia's route to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean where Britain has just left a power vacuum with the abandonment of Aden....For these reasons, which the Foreign Office fully appreciates, but cannot admit, Washington is putting no pressure on Israel to withdraw from the canal. And so long as they have U.S. blessing, the Israelis are determined to stay there for military reasons. Nasser has moved his MIG aircraft back nearer Cairo because his airfields west of the Canal are now in the range of Israeli artillery. But from these new bases his planes do not have enough range to make surprise low-level attacks on Israeli cities.

"Further, by defending the Canal at the only points where Egyptian tanks could attack, the Israelis have a defence line one-third the length of their former desert border. So the Israelis intend to hold on to their Sinai gains, permanently if possible. And Nasser has reaffirmed that he will not open the Canal so long as they are there....."

So there we are: No one could have been more faithful to Johnson than Wilson has been over Vietnam, but these are his thanks. It would pay Wilson, even from his own point of view, to stand up to Johnson and change his position on Vietnam. Maybe he hasn't the courage!

DIAL "H" FOR HATEbased on an Associated Press report

If you dial a certain number on the Washington telephone exchange you can hear an anonymous, crisp voice, speaking for the John Birch Society accuse Senator Robert F. Kennedy, Democrat, New York, of treason. The recorded voice assails Senator Kennedy as the backer of "liberal and revolutionary.. ..Chinese-oriented Negro groups," the employer of Negro Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King, and the financial angel of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). The voice suggest CORE is dedicated to "killing white people to accomplish its aims." Without any reference to time or place, the voice says that Senator Kennedy once avowed he would be "willing to give his blood to our communist enemies in Vietnam."

The recording identifies its sponsor as "Let Freedom Ring," of Fairfax County, Virginia, across the Potomac River from Washington. It urges callers to send 35 cents to a Florida post office box for "Facts on Bobby Kennedy." The John Birch Society once labelled Eisenhower as a communist dupe.

VIETNAM SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

from David Robinson.

This week the V.S.C. photographic exhibition is at Leicester University. The university Communist Society, which is sponsoring the exhibition, is also showing the film made by Roger Pic and Wilfred Burchett, "Living Under the Bombs" and has a bookstall with a variety of literature on Vietnam. This exhibition is available on loan from the campaign, there is no charge for the hire but the organisation sponsoring the exhibition must pay the cost of transport. Universities or other associations which are interested in the exhibition in the early part of next year should contact us very quickly; already it is booked during January and February to visit Kingston College of Technology, Swansea University, Bedford College (London) and West Ham College of Technology. At most of these the exhibition has been arranged to coincide with a Vietnam week with films, meetings, special leaflets and the intention of forming a V.S.C. branch at the university.

In the advertisement below for our next London members' meeting you will notice that the speaker is Dr. Steven Rose. Dr. Rose is a bio-chemist at Imperial College and is very concerned over the extent of the research in British Universities into chemical and biological warfare. A conference of scientists is planned for next spring. A group of these scientists are willing to speak at meetings and teach-ins at universities on the subject of the increasing dependence of British universities on military research. Anyone interested in organising a meeting of this kind should get in touch with Dr. Rose through V.S.C.

Two weeks ago a flag day for the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign Medical Aid Fund was held in the small South Wales town of Pontypridd. Over £13 was collected and a great deal of interest in Vietnam was aroused. This form of activity is especially suitable for areas without a large number of V.S.C. supporters. About half a dozen people selling flags and giving out leaflets in strategic points can help greatly in developing interest in V.S.C. in the area.

VIETNAM and the WAGE FREEZE. We need help from all those in the London area who will not be working next Tuesday (December 12) afternoon between 2.30 p.m. and 5.30 p.m. to leaflet the unemployment lobby of Parliament with details of our continuous meeting at Central Hall, Westminster which will be taking place at the same time. A film on Vietnam will be shown, there will be a bookstall with publications both on Vietnam and the Labour movement and speakers will include Pat Jordan, John Palmer and a number of prominent trade unionists.

V.S.C. MEMBERS & SUPPORTERS MEETING

Thursday, December 14th - 7.30 p.m.

Toynbee Hall, Commercial St., E.1.

Dr. Steven Rose will be speaking on military research in British universities with special reference to materials used in Vietnam. Future V.S.C. activities, including our concert on December 22 and an international demonstration early next year will be discussed.

V.S.C., 49, Rivington St., LONDON, E.C.2. Tel. 739 6951.

A recent survey in the Financial Times gave an interesting account of how U.S. big business had got a hold of North Sea gas resources. The theme of the article was that we should be grateful for the massive American investment because without that the necessary development could not have taken place. Actually what the article proved was that lack of public investment had led to a vital natural resource being controlled by U.S. big business. The article commenced:

"The most striking example of U.S. investment in this country is the American contribution to the North Sea search for oil and natural gas... The only all-British group with a major stake in the venture is British Petroleum...the Gas Board and Shell have gone in with British partners. BP is in fact one of the most successful companies in the world at finding oil and gas, and was the first to do so in the British controlled section of the North Sea. But there is a limit to the amount that one company can achieve, and the combined efforts of the American companies with their British partners are now much greater. At the end of September BP's total amounted to ten wells, including one discovery and five production. The total for all the companies involved in the search was 74, including 12 discovery, 14 appraisal and five production....."

"The largest is the Lemn Bank, which was first discovered by Shell-Esso, and is now known to extend into a block belonging to the Gas Council-Amoco group. Not only is Amoco a subsidiary of Standard Oil of Indiana, an American company, so are Amerda and Texas Eastern, which own the remaining shares. This group was also responsible for discovering the Indefatigable field, which in turn runs into territory under the control of Shell-Esso. Finally, there is the Hewett field, which is shared by the Arpet and Phillips group, both of which are largely made up of American companies. The U.S. companies decided to embark on the North Sea search for two reasons. The first was that the area seemed highly promising after the initial discovery of large reserves of natural gas in Holland, and oil companies are always interested in any promising prospect. But the rush into the North Sea would not have been so great had it not enjoyed such a favourable location. The sea is right in the middle of the fastest-growing energy market in the world, and once the oil or gas has been found there is relatively little difficulty about getting it to the consumer."

But apparently even the Financial Times times recognises there are some snags in this arrangement because...."For well over a year the companies and the Gas Council have been locked in argument over the price at which gas should be sold once it has been brought ashore. When the negotiations began the Gas Council was thinking in terms of about 1.8d a therm, whereas the oil companies wanted about 4.2d. Since then the gap has narrowed slightly and the range is currently believed to be between 2.5d and 3.5d.Precisely what the American companies regard as a reasonable price is unknown, but if they do not receive it some of them are bound to lose interest in the North Sea..." The Financial Times, of course, regards this as a potential tragedy.

It is ironic that we see here a similar kind of conflict between U.S. companies and that which has taken place in numerous under-developed countries. The Labour Government, whilst it can spend millions of pounds to maintain troops in the Middle East to protect British interests in the Persian Gulf area, is unable to put enough to make U.S. investment unwanted.

PROFITS SHOW AN UPWARD TREND

by an economic correspondent

Prices are already shooting up because of devaluation. The Government has told us that wages cannot go up to meet the increase in the cost of living because this would take away the benefits of devaluation. The hypocrisy of the Government's position is shown by their attitude towards profits. Callaghan, at the Labour Party conference, said that he was in favour of higher profits - he should be pleased!

The recent upward trend in profits has continued. Industrial companies reporting in November showed a 3.2% rise in profits, compared with the previous year, giving a net rise of 2.5% for companies reporting in October and November combined. This follows rises in profits of 1.4% and 4.2% for companies reporting in October and September respectively, and compares with an overall rise of 0.3% for companies reporting in the third quarter of the year. Thus profits have shown a rise for three consecutive months.

Dividends of industrial companies reporting in November show an increase, compared with the previous year, of 1.6%, giving a net increase of 1.0% for companies reporting in October and November combined. These increases, though small, are very important. They mark the reversal of a trend - profits have been down because of the slackening of business during the freeze. Also some businesses tend to keep down dividends to make it appear that they are abiding by the incomes policy. Let no wage claim be turned down on the grounds that firms cannot afford it! And these are the published profits - perusal of the books of companies - a demand which should be increasingly made in this period of "restraint" - would reveal even higher figures.

U.S. AID IN BRAZIL "A MOCKERY"

from Megan Sharp

The following article appeared in 'The Guardian' of 1.12.67.

"Rome, November 30 . . . A Brazilian Roman Catholic bishop says that the United States' Alliance for Progress programme is an implicit form of blackmail against the poor of South America. Bishop Helder Pessoa Camara, of Olinda and Recife, in Northern Brazil, says in an interview given to "l'Espresso" magazine that Americans continue to buy their raw materials cheaply in South America and then sell the finished product at a great profit. Americans were taking over his country's best factories, and the Alliance for Progress was not properly called "aid", but the colonisation of South America. The Brazilian Government is trying to improve conditions in the North-east, the bishop says, but the results have been a mockery with the rich getting richer and the poor poorer. "I tell the rich landowners, that if the Church does not open your eyes, if you do not decide to make reforms then the Communists will open your eyes for you. There will be revolution, and anarchy, and you will lose not only your rings and bracelets but your hands and arms as well" the bishop is quoted as saying.

Labourers in the sugar cane plantations who try to follow the lessons for the bishop's radio school, usually from transistor radios, or those who have contact with labour unions, are immediately dismissed. Brazilian students may be from well-to-do families but they know the realities of their country. "They tell me I do not have the right to be naive and preach non-violence because I know better than they that without violence nothing will be done in this country."

How naive can the Parliamentary Left get? This question is posed by the speech of James Dickens in his constituency, Lewisham West, last week. He said he voted for the Government in the devaluation debate because Mr. Wilson had stated the stand-by credits "would have no strings whatever" attached.

This shows remarkable faith, not only in Harold Wilson but also in the international banking fraternity. Did Mr. Dickens really think that the Gnomes of Zurich and the sharks of Wall Street had turned themselves into a Benevolent society, anxious only to sustain the Labour Government? Anyway Mr. Dickens soon had a rude awakening. The Letter of Intent sent to the International Monetary Fund the day after the debate by former Chancellor of the Exchequer, Jim Callaghan, revealed that the credits were only forthcoming because the I. M. F. were assured that drastic measures would be taken to cut the living standards of the British workers.

When even the most extreme of right-wing politicians on the Labour benches, Frank Tomney of Hammersmith North, openly voiced his fears of the effects of devaluation on the workers, there can be no excuse for James Dickens and his fellow left-wingers. As Mr. Tomney rightly said, for devaluation to succeed it must be deflationary "and then the prospect of unemployment will face the workers again. . .

The weight of the responsibility would fall once again on the working class and trade unionists. It would be their job to forego their just wage demands in an effort to put Britain on the road to prosperity."

What the Left must realise is that the present crisis is not simply because of the ineptness of Wilson and his Cabinet but arises directly out of their failure to carry out a socialist policy both at home and abroad. The crisis is a crisis of British capitalism but is also symptomatic of a malaise which faces capitalism as a whole.

The crisis demonstrated in an exceptionally sharp fashion the hollowness of the theories expounded by Anthony Crossland, the late John Strachey and others that capitalism has succeeded in overcoming its internal contradictions. The collapse of the British economy had world-wide repercussions, demonstrating how tightly interconnected the capitalist system is. It revealed also the inherent instability of the system for immediately after the fall of the pound, the dollar - symbol of the most powerful capitalism - became threatened and all-out efforts had to be made to save it. The United States is the main prop of capitalism today and a recession there would lead to a world-wide slump.

Even capitalism's most optimistic supporters - and some of them, unfortunately are in the Labour Cabinet - are by no means certain that such a catastrophe is not on the order of the day. At best they have bought a limited period of time.

At such a time it is not for the Left to bolster up Wilson, Callaghan and Co. It is not at all a question of substituting a Tory Government for the present Labour Government. That is how the right-wing leadership likes to pose the issue. The Left's task now is to progress from criticism of Wilson's

After Devaluation - Left Must Act Now . . . continued

policy to actively building a new leadership for the Labour Movement.

There has never been a more favourable moment than this for such a development. The unions are in ferment and the draconian measures foreshadowed in the "Letter of Intent" will stir them into renewed militancy. Conditions are ripe for an alliance of the Labour Party Left and the militant trade unionists. If the Left fails to take advantage of this opportunity they will find the Right cocking a favourable ear at the overtures of Duncan Sandys for an agreed "programme of action to see the country through the economic crisis". We would be well on our way to a repeat of 1931.

The Left M.P.s should get together with leaders of the more militant Trade Unions and call an emergency conference, over the head of Transport House, if need be. This conference should hammer out a socialist programme for Britain and openly challenge the present leadership of the Labour Movement. The alternative is the almost certain return of a Tory government at the next election or - even worse - some sort of collaboration between the Right wing leadership and the Tories.

THE LAW IS FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS

from Barbara Wilson

Speaking at a Child Poverty Action Group conference in London on last Saturday, Mr. Zander, a lecturer in law at the London School of Economics, described the law as middle-class, remote and discriminating against the poor. Because of the way it functions the poorer sections of the community tend to see it as a hostile maze and fail to use its advice and services. The legal aid scheme, he said, handled a mere 60,000 cases of advice a year, compared with 150,000 by a single newspaper advice bureau. The hundreds of firms of solicitors in London dealt with only 4,000 cases against 2,500 handled by an East London voluntary advice centre operating one night a week.

Only one in ten of those entitled to money from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board had applied for it. Only three-fifths of those entitled to rate rebates had asked for them. Solicitors tend to be concentrated in the middle class areas, he added.

NOT INGHAM VOICE TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETING

from a Nottingham reader

Nottingham Voice is to hold a public meeting in the Old Market Square, Nottingham City Centre, this Saturday, December 9th, at 2.30 p.m. The purpose of the meeting is:

- (1) To promote Nottingham Voice;
- (2) To express solidarity with the busmen, electrical workers, miners and others whose living standards are being threatened by the actions of employers, the Government and the Tory-controlled local authority; and
- (3) To present a socialist alternative to the policies of the Wilson Government.

People willing to speak on any of these topics (either in an individual capacity or on behalf of an organisation) will be welcome, together with volunteers to sell Nottingham Voice.

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B.B.C. REPORTER RETURNS FROM NORTH VIETNAM by Geoff Crossick

Viewers of BBC Television's "24 Hours" programme on 28th November saw a remarkable and savage attack on the American war as it effects North Vietnam - and it came from one of the programmes most respected correspondents. Olivier Todd had just returned from a 57 day visit to North Vietnam, where he was allowed total freedom of movement and activity (except, of course, concerning viewing military activities). Millions of viewers heard him make three forceful, and very bitter, attacks on the Americans.

Firstly, about the bombing. The Americans, he thought, had tried at first to hit strategic targets; but soon after they had begun bombing it was clear that these attacks were having little effect. Ever since, Todd argued, from the areas he had visited of his own choosing, the Americans had conducted terrorist bombing (Todd's words). Within a fifty mile radius on all the roads out of Hanoi, and as far as Haiphong on that road, there was not a stone building left standing. He believed - no, he was absolutely convinced - that the major objective of American bombing was to kill and injure civilians. He spoke of American 'strafing' raids from low-flying aircraft after a major raid had finished.

The second issue was the treatment of American prisoners. He spoke freely to two of them. As they entered, they bowed low to him, as one sees in the photos released by journalists to suggest that the airmen had been brainwashed by the North Vietnamese. They assured him that they were well looked after. Todd was then taken to see some other prisoners. Guards opened the doors of their cells - and the men in them stood to attention. That was all. No bows. But as soon as Todd stepped forward from the darkness, as soon as they saw a foreign reporter, the prisoners bowed low. Todd said he could come to only one conclusion; that American airmen are taught in US training that, if captured, they must bow low whenever they see a camera or a reporter. It is American deception and propaganda at its most cynical.

Finally, he discussed negotiations. Todd had had long talks with Pham Van Dong. From the beginning of the bombing, Todd argued, the North Vietnamese position had been consistent and reasonable - unconditional and total cessation of the bombing, and an acceptance by the Americans that any negotiations would end with American withdrawal. During that time, he said, Washington had put forward wildly changing phoney proposals which had changed 25 times. He considered the Hanoi position a fair one; the American efforts he thought to be mere hoaxes. The climax to the television discussion was an effective one. Michelmore pointed out that this second condition - ultimate American withdrawal - was one the Americans might think unreasonable. Todd's reply was simple; "Yes, but to whom does Vietnam belong, the Americans or the Vietnamese?"

The interview, seen by millions, was of great importance in educating people about just what is happening in Vietnam. Only the remarkable evidence about bowing was new. But millions of viewers saw a hitherto uncommitted BBC reporter return from Vietnam and say just the things that the anti-war movement has been saying for a long time.

UNEMPLOYMENT - NO! SOCIALISM - YES!

**SUPPORT DECEMBER 12th LOBBY OF
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