

Cops Smash Savoy Picket

The official strike at the Savoy Group of Hotels enters its third week as we go to press. Since this is the first strike involving a considerable number of workers which has been organised, recognised and supported by the National Executive of an important Union, it is of exceptional interest to organised workers.

According to the ballot paper, on the basis of which a large majority of catering workers employed at the Savoy and organised in the N.U.M.G.W. voted for strike action, the strike is a reply to the alleged victimisation of Frank Piazza, a waiter formerly employed at the Savoy Hotel and seeks to compel the management to respect the decisions of the negotiation and arbitration machinery.

The strike is fully supported by the London Trades Council, which, in addition to instructing its 650,000 affiliated trade unionists to observe the picket line, has been active in helping to organise 24-hour pickets. Workers of all trades and tendencies, and of all political creeds and opinions, have responded to this appeal, and to their credit, a number of students from the London University have also been on the all-night pickets.

The strike started off to a bad start, due to the confusion created in the first few days by the Union Executive, who, even at the last moment, sought to delay strike action on the plea that the Minister of Labour had set up a Court of Inquiry to investigate the cause of the dispute. The action of the management in giving an ultimatum to the strikers to return or consider themselves sacked, forced the Executive to declare the strike official.

Action Of M.O.L. Management

The workers are incensed at the action of the Minister of Labour in stepping in at the last moment with a Court of Inquiry, instead of supporting such an inquiry many months ago. They feel that the action of the Minister at that stage was of assistance to the management, confusing the issue at the decisive moment.

They bitterly remark that the Minister is eager to step in when a strike may involve the comfort and well-being of members of the ruling class who frequent the Savoy Group of Hotels, but is very reluctant when the well-being of the workers is at stake.

At the Savoy Group of Hotels which include Simpsons Restaurant, Claridges and the Berkeley Hotel, a prize crop of European Kings, Queens and other aristocratic gentry, including Princess Elizabeth, have crossed the picket line to be served by scabs and blacklegs.

An Appeal to Trade Unionists

Comrade and Fellow Worker,

As you are aware, the workers at the Savoy and its associated hotels, Claridges, the Berkeley and Simpsons, have been in conflict with the management since last October, 1946, when the great strike of catering workers took place. For the past months a struggle has been going on with the management over the alleged victimisation of a waiter shop-steward, Frank Piazza, and the workers came out on strike again on November 7th for trade union principles.

The "Socialist Appeal" stated the case for the workers as reported by Trade Unionists and Trade Union officials in an article written by an active trade union militant employed at the Savoy—Marion Lunt—who has since been sacked on alleged grounds of redundancy.

As a result of that article, the Savoy bosses have entered a libel action against the "Socialist Appeal" claiming damages. The Savoy Hotel Ltd., the most powerful of the London catering employers, has secured an injunction against the "Socialist Appeal" which effectively silences it from commenting on the background of the workers' struggle until the case is heard in the High Court.

The "Socialist Appeal" has a proud record in speaking for the interests of the workers whenever they have fought the capitalist class. This is a clear case of Big Business versus the voice of militant Labour.

A case of this kind is very expensive and we rely upon the support of class conscious trade unionists to fight it to the end. We ask you to raise the matter in your Trade Union Branch with a view to sending a donation to the Fund, and to get the maximum financial contributions from your members on a subscription list. All funds for this purpose should be sent to: SAVOY CASE, 256, Harrow Road, London, W.2.

Fraternally Yours,
JOCK HASTON,
General Secretary, R.C.P.

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SWING TO THE RIGHT Revealed in Election

Only a Bold Socialist Policy Can Change Trend

BY JOCK HASTON.

A SWING TO THE RIGHT WAS REVEALED BY THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS WHERE THE TORIES SUCCEEDED IN STAGING A COME-BACK. THEY HAVE REGAINED GROUND, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE MIDDLE CLASS.

The total vote increased by over 2 million over the election in 1946. The Labour vote actually increased by half a million, but the Tory vote increased by a million and a half.

In the key industrial City of Manchester, the Labour vote increased by 27 per cent., but the Tory vote increased by 77 per cent. The Communist Party lost the nine seats they previously held.

All this is an indication of the rightward swing in British politics.

In the old traditional working class strongholds, Labour retained its support, but there was a clear lack of enthusiasm on the part of Labour workers. It was mainly in the new areas won by Labour since 1945, and especially where the middle class vote played a decisive role, that the swing back to the Tories was pronounced.

The polling in the elections was the highest for many years, in some areas reaching from 60 to 70 per cent. against the normal poll of 30 to 40 per cent.

Among the middle class previously sympathetic to Labour, and also among sections of working class housewives, a growing hostility to the Labour Government is to be discerned. What are the

reasons for this trend?

The masses, who turned hopefully towards the Labour Government in 1945, expected a very rapid change in their immediate conditions of life. But, despite the various concessions in wages, hours, working conditions and in social services, the standards of the masses have remained on a level. And since the ending of the American Loan, the tremendous gap in the balance of trade has resulted in the Government cutting further into those standards, particularly in food.

The Tory press has conducted a powerful demagogic campaign against the Labour Government, utilising the shortages, which they

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COMRADE MARION LUNT PICKETING OUTSIDE THE SAVOY.

Comrade Lunt was among the 21 pickets arrested outside the Savoy while attempting to prevent oil being delivered by scab labour, escorted by a squad of police. She has played an active role in organising the Catering workers in London.

French C.P. Leader Admits 'Grave' Mistakes in C.P. Policy Since 1935

PARIS CORRESPONDENT—

In view of the sharp polarisation of social forces here, the new turn of the Communist Party must be appraised realistically. There is no doubt that the De Gaulle victory has shaken up the whole Stalinist Party—the ranks of the militant workers as well as the bureaucracy, which, more than anything else, feels the crumbling of its great patronage machine.

At its Central Committee meeting, Thorez declared:

"The fact that in Paris and in the big cities the R.P.F. . . . has succeeded in dragging into its tow important sections of the petty bourgeoisie, discontented and unstable, underlines the grave danger threatening the Republic and the working class. It would be wrong to underestimate this danger."

But there must have been a good deal of questioning in the ranks as to how this danger was permitted to arise, with the C.P. occupying such powerful positions since 1944. Thorez, therefore, indulged in a "self criticism" much sharper and more devastatingly self-revealing than has been the case in the past with such bureaucratic comedies. It entailed a review of Stalinist policy since the beginning of the People's Front in 1935, going through the "National Front" of the war years and the Committees of National Liberation. The trouble in this whole course lasting a dozen years, Thorez declared, was that agreements had been arrived at only at the top and the movement had not been based on genuine participation of the masses.

"PEOPLE'S FRONT WAS IMPOTENT"

"Because of the exclusive formula of agreement at the top we admitted into the People's Front individuals who thought only of betraying the movement on the first occasion, such as Daladier and Paul Faure. That's why the People's Front was impotent against 'non-intervention' (in Spain), and against the 'pause' in which Leon Blum and the Socialist Party took the initiative. That's why the People's Front was impotent against the treason of Munich perpetrated by Daladier with the approval of the Socialist leaders. That's why the People's Front disintegrated little by little and collapsed completely with the outbreak of the war."

Then, going on to the resistance movement, Thorez became even sharper:

"GRAVE MISTAKE IN RESISTANCE"

"It must be considered as a grave mistake that we tolerated

in the organisation and conduct of the resistance, the same faults which were fatal in the People's Front, and which were revealed to be just as pernicious for the movement of national liberation. More or less camouflaged behind the groups adhering to the Committee of National Resistance (C.N.R.), more or less whitewashed by or rehabilitated by the C.N.R., the men of the Reaction regained their courage and got into the saddle once more. . . . Today, assembled around de Gaulle, the reaction is pushing on its offensive against the working class and the Republic.

BANKRUPT POLICY SINCE 1935

A more clear-cut avowal of bankruptcy is hardly possible. Thorez admits, black on white, the complicity of the Stalinists in breaking the revolutionary upsurge of 1936, which preceded the war, as well as that of 1944, which led to the rise of de Gaulle. Undoubtedly, there must be serious disturbances in the ranks. But does this devastating self-criticism mean a real change? What does it mean?

That it means no fundamental change in policy is clear. Thorez finds the root of the error only in the form of organisation—"agreements at the top"—not in the policy itself: that of class collaboration. His solution is confined to an organisational one: broad committees must be formed in all factories; leaders and leadership must be elected, etc. But insofar as policy is concerned, it is summed up by him, in the aim set:

"A Government which will defend with energy the Constitution and the Republic against the R.P.F. and all the plotters grouped around de Gaulle."

In other words, the policy of collaboration with the class enemy, of the defence of the bourgeois Republic, of the Constitution which consecrates private property and colonial oppression—all this is to remain the same. The form is to be changed, there are to be elected committees—which the Stalinists hope to control because of their present powerful forces—but in order to continue the same nationalist,



M. THOREZ, FRENCH C.P. LEADER WITH J. DUCLOS.

class collaboration line. Indeed, the accent of the whole policy is to be more than ever on chauvinism, on "defending the national sovereignty of France", this time, directed against the United States, in accordance with the line laid down by the Kremlin for its Belgrade Bureau.

In one of the more ludicrous sections of his "self criticism", Thorez flays himself for not realising that the Stalinists were forced out of the Government last Spring under Wall Street pressure, or in his own words, "under American orders." The Belgrade Conference had to disclose this to him.

In line with the declaration of that Conference, the whole tactic described by Thorez centres round "greater orientation towards the masses." He quotes the Belgrade declaration which says that the greatest danger for "the working class" at present is the under-estimation of its own forces and the over-estimation of the forces of the opposition camp. But just as on the international scale, the declaration written by the Stalinist spoke-man, Zhdanov, continues to lay stress on the bureaucracy's belief in "peaceful cohabitation between socialism and capitalism", Thorez continues to lay stress on his belief in national unity. More specifically, national unity with the capitalists in the

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Trotskyists Protest Outside Mosley Meeting

L.P.—C.P. Leadership Fail to Give Workers Lead

Members of the Revolutionary Communist Party and the "43" Group, demonstrated outside the Memorial Hall in Farringdon Road, London, when Mosley addressed his followers in London, recently.

More than a hundred policemen on foot and some score of mounted police aided by fascist strong-arm gangs, were used to protect Mosley.

Despite this, vigorous attempts were made by militant anti-fascists to rush the meeting. Further angered by the provocations of the fascists inside the hall, who dropped missiles onto the heads of the demonstrators, time and again the anti-fascists rushed the doors determined to teach the fascists a lesson. Only baton attacks by the police, aided by fascist "stewards," prevented the workers there from carrying this determination into full effect. One comrade of the Revolutionary Communist Party, Comrade Jock Milligan, received a blow on the eye from a brick thrown by one of the fascists three floors up and had to have treatment at the hospital.

Despite the fact that the Communist Party leaders knew of this intended "secret" Mosley meeting, only a few individual members of the Communist Party participated in the anti-fascist demonstration. Why was Mosley allowed to organise and hold such a meeting without the Communist Party

leadership mobilising its powerful apparatus and support in London to organise a militant demonstration against this piece of fascist insolence?

Prior to Mosley's meeting, the "Daily Worker", in two consecutive issues published details of the "secret" arrangements for the meeting. But no lead was forthcoming from the C.P. and Y.C.L. leaders calling upon their members and supporters to demonstrate against the meeting and teach the fascists a lesson!

The "Daily Worker", in its Monday issue following the Mosley meeting, made a miserable attempt to depict the demonstration that did take place (by the "43 Group" and members of the R.C.P.) as if the lead had come from the Communist Party. They attempted to give the impression that large numbers of their membership participated in it. The truth is that the Communist Party and Y.C.L. were conspicuous by their absence.

Every rank and file militant of the C.P. must demand an answer to the question: WHY WERE THEY NOT GIVEN A LEAD TO RALLY AGAINST MOSLEY'S MEETINGS?

Interim Budget

How it Affects the Workers

BY G. NOZEDA

The "Interim" Budget, despite the much publicised doubling of the Profits Tax, exacts no real sacrifice from the capitalists. The main burdens fall on the working class and the constringing public generally and the workers are now beginning to realise how seriously it affects them.

The present food subsidies amounting to £32,000,000 a year, or 3/6 per head per week, are for the present, to remain. This is a victory for the organised Labour movement which made clear that it was not prepared to accept any capitulation to the campaign of the Tories for the removal of these subsidies.

However, a heavy burden is placed on the workers by the removal of the existing subsidies of £33,000,000 yearly on cotton, wool and leather. With the abolition of these subsidies, to take effect from next year, the cost of clothing, shoes, and some household goods will drastically increase. It is estimated that utility footwear alone will go up by 8/- to 10/- per pair. Obviously, these increases will not affect very much the higher income groups.

Increased purchase tax, and further taxes on drink will bring in, the Government estimates, about £136,000,000 in a full year. A further £15,000,000 is to be raised from the increased taxes on pools and dog-racing, which further affects the workers.

The new taxation on business, the increase of the Profits Tax to 25%, and the reduction in advertisement allowances, will mean no great hardships for the capitalist, whose profits are on the upgrade. An indication of the trend is given by the "Economist" (15th November 1947), which reports that the total profits of some 2,004 companies for the year 1946-47 amounted to £388,700,000 as against the same companies' total profits of £332,100,000 for the previous year.

The increase in the Profits Tax was not unexpected by the capitalists. Indeed, some financial experts were reckoning on an increase of 30%. Whereas, for the coming year, only about £47,000,000 is levied on profits—less than the increase in profits as a whole during the part year—£151,000,000 is levied on the working class and consuming public generally by the increased taxation and the higher prices of goods that will follow the abolition of the clothing subsidies.

In his speech of November 12th, Dalton announcing a 3% interest charge on taxation arrears over £1,000 owed by wealthy tax dodgers and some capitalist enterprises, revealed that up to March 1946, the total tax arrears owed the Government from these dodgers amounted to no less than £789,000,000! This is more than it would have cost to keep the £33,000,000 subsidies on cotton, wool and leather for the next 20 years!

The extent to which tax dodging on the part of surtax payers and business firms has increased was indicated in the "Daily Herald" on 13.11.47, which reported that: ". . . many wealthy surtax payers and some business firms have been using tens of millions of their tax money to finance gambles in stocks and shares, property, commodities, and so on. They have argued that they

might as well have the use of these millions as the Treasury—and make a tax-free profit on it also.

Businesses, too, have been using the money for expansion—free of interest. Mr. Dalton, in his two previous Budgets, drew attention to the mounting arrears of surtax and the increasing reluctance of rich men to pay their taxes when due.

What tender treatment accorded to these capitalist tax-dodgers in contrast to the lower paid income groups!

The Budget contained not a hint of any cutting down in share speculation and the vast fortunes being coined on the Stock Exchange to day. Indeed, the "Evening News", on the very day after the Interim Budget was announced, reported that the "Chancellor put millions of pounds on to share values on the Stock Exchange today. His budget, the City says, is not nearly drastic enough to dispose of inflation fears, and share prices, despite a double profits tax, soared as soon as markets opened. . . ."

As far as the 25% Profits Tax is concerned, the "Financial Times" in its editorial of September 5th this year, wrote:

"It is fairly evident that since capitalist realisations can always defeat the end of profit taxes, anything which the Government might decide to do could not be a substitute for whittling down the purchasing power of the many. . . ."

What the "Financial Times" means by "capitalist realisations can always defeat the end of profit taxes" is that the capitalists can take some of their profits in the form of speculation on the Stock Exchange, buying shares and selling them, or by selling some of the shares they already have when these stand at a high price. Such profits are reckoned as "capital appreciation", and are not subject to taxation. Just one of the many "legal" ways used by the capitalists to evade full taxation on their profits.

The Interim Budget, we are told, aimed to curb the present inflationary tendency in Britain. Too few goods to be bought, and too much money available to buy them, which pushed prices higher. But the real aim, and the actual effect of the new taxes and the abolition of the clothing subsidies means that it is the purchasing power of the workers which is being cut. The capitalists are but little affected.

It is time to call a halt to the present policy of the Government, a policy which loads the burdens onto the worker. It is time to force the Labour Government to introduce a socialist policy to overcome the economic crisis of capitalism. In this, the first step must be the confiscation of the profits of the capitalists and the incomes of the wealthy. Then, and only then, can we talk about a socialist budget.