

# The Newsletter

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## De Gaulle prepares anti-union laws

# NEW THREAT TO FRENCH WORKERS

## Fords: the big betrayal

By Our Industrial Correspondent

**T**HE settlement of the Fords dispute agreed last week between the Company and 22 union leaders was an outright betrayal. 42 of the most militant workers, shop stewards and branch officials remain sacked, including works convenor Kevin Halpin and shop steward Bill Francis, around whom the dispute centred.

It is no good trying to soften the blow as the *Daily Worker* did on Tuesday by claiming 'a partial climb down by the company'. Fords have made a serious breach in the trade union front and established a dangerous precedent, which will encourage other motor and engineering firms to follow suit.

The reinstatement of 18 of the original 70 who were sacked and the increase in *ex gratia* payments from £7 10s. to £11 per week is a small price for Fords to pay for such a victory.

The failure of the shop stewards to give any lead independent of the trade union leaders must be laid squarely at the door of the Communist Party.

In face of the clearly stated intentions of Sir Patrick Hennessy and the Ford bosses to get rid of the 'troublemakers' (i.e., the Communists), the Communist Party has made no attempt to prepare its members to face such attacks.

There has been instead a steady retreat, culminating in the Executive Committee refusing to back up its members at Fords by working for a strike against the victimisations.

### ESCAPE CLAUSE

The old escape clause 'to put the maximum pressure on the officials' was used to avoid any serious struggle.

Even worse are the statements being made by some leading Communist Party members in the London area that 'we cannot defend all the silly things that Ford stewards have done in the past'.

This is the same technique for withdrawing from the struggle which King Street used in the Electrical Trades Union debacle.

It is not surprising that members, sick and tired of being made scapegoats for King Street's opportunism, are looking elsewhere for leadership in the struggles in which they are involved.

Many are demanding to know

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## C.P. fails to get mass support

by Tom Kemp

**T**HE first stage of the elections to the French National Assembly shows gains for de Gaulle's Union for the New Republic (UNR). He has not, in fact, scored a major victory. His henchmen won about one-third of the votes cast, but, owing to the bias of the electoral system, they will have a bigger share of the seats.

While the UNR looks like being the largest single party, with a working majority, it will still be far from the mass party which is needed by the ruling class to consolidate the Fifth Republic under de Gaulle's eventual successor.

De Gaulle's rule has rested so far on the support of the old-line parties, the discredited politicians of the Fourth Republic.

### EXTINCTION

Those who have wavered from this support now face slow electoral extinction. Their whole existence was bound up with the constitutional supremacy of parliament, which now no longer exists.

Gaullism means a strong state with an elected assembly which does no more than conceal the naked power of absolutism. The old parties will have to accept that or go.

There was a high rate of abstentions—only one in three entitled to vote did so. Many electors realised that little would be changed, whoever obtained most votes.

The abstentions reflect also the policies of compromise and tacit support for the regime practised by the 'Left' parties, including the Communist Party.

### TAIL-PIECE

Although the latter has conserved its electoral strength, it went into the campaign as a tail-piece to the capitalist parties; its leaders have desired nothing more than to reach an electoral alliance with these parties.

By their vote for the Communist Party the workers express not approval of these policies—whose real significance they have not yet understood—but a desire for radical change.

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## How not to defend Cuba!

'Zorin exposed the concoctions about the so-called "finding of Soviet rocket bases" on Cuba, thought up by State Department officials.'

'What was real, Zorin said, was an order to find a pretext to justify aggression. The rest was the job of quick-minded officials.'

'They had to find the pretext. And so, the claim of some "irrefutable proofs" of the presence on Cuba of Soviet rocket bases, "proofs" which were obviously false, appeared in the statement by President Kennedy and in Mr. Stevenson's letter.'

'Quite clearly from the very outset, the Soviet delegation, above all, officially reaffirms the statement already made by the Soviet Union in this context, that the Soviet government had not shipped and is not shipping any offensive weapons to Cuba,' Zorin said.

'"What is the value of these photographs?" Zorin asked. "A man who has lied once will not be believed another time."'

'He went on to remind the Security Council of the Soviet government's statements that there was no need for the USSR to station its powerful rockets and rocket-carriers in other countries, such as Cuba, for instance, in order to ward off a blow by an aggressor.'

Extracts from the speech by V. Zorin at the UN Security Council (Soviet News, October 26, 1962)

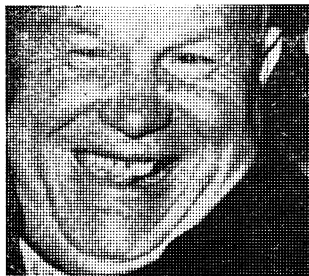
'The weapons in Cuba which you have mentioned and which, as you say, alarm you, are in the hands of Soviet officers. Therefore any accidental use whatsoever of those weapons to the detriment

of the United States of America is ruled out.'

N. Khrushchev to President Kennedy October 27, 1962 (Soviet News, October 29, 1962)

'The United States is demanding that military equipment which Cuba needs for self-defence should be removed from Cuban territory—a demand which, naturally, no state that values its independence can meet.'

Statement by the Soviet government October 23, 1962 (Soviet News, October 24, 1962)



||No laughing matter for Cuba

'Premier Fidel Castro today again gave proof of his desire to obtain a peaceful solution to the Cuban question by agreeing to the withdrawal of the Soviet IL-28 bombers, which are here to help defend Cuba against the threat of American aggression.'

Daily Worker, November 21, 1962

'President Kennedy said tonight that he had ordered the lifting of the blockade of Cuba. The Secretary of Defence was instructed to remove naval units, he said, after Mr. Khrushchev had informed him today that all Soviet bombers would be withdrawn from Cuba in 30 days.'

The Times, November 21, 1962

# All out to build the League!

**T**HE building of the Marxist party and the strengthening of its roots in industry was the main theme of a vigorous area conference of the Socialist Labour League held on November 17 and 18. The conference covered branches of the League in Yorkshire and the North-east.

Opening the conference, Gerry Healy, SLL National Secretary, said that the reformist and Stalinist bureaucracies had left the working class prostrate.

The Right wing were deliberately putting off any struggle over the Fords victimisation, while the Communist Party's theory of 'peaceful co-existence' left its members open to defeat by the employers and the trade union leadership.

The Communist parties today were parties of fear. They were afraid of discussion, afraid of ideas.

The prevailing tendency inside the Communist parties is towards reformism and liquidation. The craven capitulation of the Indian Communist Party was the worst example of this.

At the same time, the intensified witch-hunt which Transport House has launched against the youth movement is also an act of fear and desperation, Gerry Healy continued.

In the present situation of heightening class struggle it is possible to defeat both these reactionary bureaucracies and to build a revolutionary party within the real living movement of the working class.

The conference then gave particular attention to work in industry and the trade unions, to recruiting and building the League and to educating and training branch leaders.

Workers in the engineering, electrical and clothing industries discussed the building of Trotskyist groups inside these industries, while plans were laid for a campaign against unemployment in the area.

Students present discussed the growing interest in Marxism in the Universities and the possibility of big recruitment to the Socialist Labour League.

This work is of key importance for the training and development of future Marxist leaders and thinkers.

The conference considered that it was necessary to pay more attention to the development of THE NEWSLETTER and the literature of the League. More reports and articles were necessary from the area as well as an extension of sales and finance for the paper.

Practical ways were discussed of using League literature in order to extend influence and build the organisation.

The experiences of the last few weeks in Cuba, India and in Britain have verified the Trotskyist position on the absolute necessity of a revolutionary party which can embody the historical experience of the working class, generalise theoretically on these experiences and give practical leadership in every aspect of working class struggle.

This area conference was part of the fight to create such a party.

**K**HRUSHCHEV is preparing further concessions to the Kennedy administration, following his agreement to withdraw the rocket bases from Cuba.

His statement that he is also willing to withdraw Russian aircraft from the island provided certain conditions are accepted is a further indication that the Soviet bureaucracy will do everything it can to effect a deal with Western imperialism.

Meanwhile, Khrushchev justifies sending MiG fighters to India where they can be used against Chinese troops because of the existence of a trade agreement with Nehru.

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This is almost the same explanation as that given by Stalin when the Soviet Union supplied petrol to fascist Italy for use in its war in Abyssinia and during the Spanish Civil War.

At that time oil tankers were delivering half their cargo at Genoa and the remainder at Barcelona. The Caproni bombers which killed and maimed thousands of Spanish fighters were flown on Soviet petrol.

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The more stupid Stalinists criticise Trotskyist support for China against India on the grounds that we are advocating the export of revolution.

These naive people see no harm in Khrushchev exporting MiGs and rockets but they draw the line at export of revolution—as if revolution could be exported.

Neither Trotsky nor any

# The war danger remains

## K yields more to imperialists

By **GERRY HEALY**

other Marxist has ever advocated such a position. The question of the extension of revolution is based on the struggle to defend it, which in turn depends upon the strength of the Marxist leadership in a given country and the level of working class struggle.

**The peace of the world today hinges upon the international struggle of the working class against imperialism which must be waged in all countries.**

**This must take into account the political consciousness of the Labour and working class movement.**

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The attitude of the Soviet bureaucracy towards Kennedy is reminiscent of the attitude of Molotov and Stalin towards Hitler and Ribbentrop in the autumn of 1939.

The Stalin-Hitler pact, which—according to Communist Party leaders such as Palme Dutt and Gollan—was to preserve the peace, turned out to be nothing

more than a camouflage behind which Hitler prepared for all-out war against the Soviet Union.

The soft-peddling in public by the Kennedy administration of its real attitude towards Khrushchev is a similar kind of smokescreen.

Kennedy and his advisers openly support Khrushchev in opposition to the Chinese, but at the same time they are seriously preparing for a nuclear showdown with the Soviet Union.

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Those pacifists and right-wing Communist Party members, who interpret the overtures as a sign of peace, sow the most dangerous confusion.

American imperialism has decided to destroy the Soviet Union at the first opportunity and the military elements who want a showdown have been strengthened greatly by Khrushchev's hostility to international working-class action and his letters to Kennedy over Cuba.

The dangers of a Third World War are much nearer now than

they were before the Cuban crisis. This is the reason why the Tories feel confident enough to explode their underground nuclear device.

The capitulation of the Communist Party of India to Indian capitalism over the China dispute has greatly strengthened imperialism in Asia.

**Here in Britain, we had the spectacle at a recent meeting of the Glasgow Trades Council of Communist Party members voting for a resolution which said:**

**'The establishment in Cuba of missile bases by the Soviet Union, followed by the decision of the United States to impose a blockade on all ships sailing to Cuba, were actions charged with acute danger to world peace and warranted universal condemnation.'**

*If these people had been in India they would have voted with Nehru and called for an all-out struggle against the Chinese.*

★

The international working class movement must start from the Leninist principle that the main enemy is at home.

The fight against war is international in character. Our contribution to it is to direct all our fire against the Tory government and use every means at our disposal to force it out of office.

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We must continue to campaign and insist that a Labour government, when elected, will abandon all nuclear bombs and tests and by carrying out a programme of socialist demands will lead to the establishment of socialism in Britain.

## Now right wing attacks students

By **Jack Gale**

**A** REMARKABLE document is now in the hands of local Labour Parties. It is a letter from Transport House aimed at preventing students from becoming active members of the party.

The letter states that students who live in an area during term time only should be given no voting rights in the Labour Party in that area and should not be permitted to hold office.

They will only be allowed to attend meetings and, of course, to assist in elections.

Since the large majority of students are at Universities or colleges away from their home town, this proposal is clearly aimed at keeping them out of the party.

The Transport House bureaucrats are terrified of an influx of active young students into Labour Parties, which in many areas have been under the dead hand of the Right wing for years.

They know that there has been a growing interest in socialism in the Universities in the last few years, and in particular an upsurge of enthusiasm over Marxist ideas.

They know also that students—along with YS members—have been in the forefront of demonstrations against racialism and the H-bomb and lately against the threat of war over Cuba.

This latest edict, which will undoubtedly be thrown out by many Labour Parties, is on a par with the witch-hunting of the Young Socialists which has been going on for months.

The Gaitskell flunkies wish to transform the youth into politically silent canvassing fodder. Failing that, they want to keep them out of the party altogether.

**Added to this, of course, is the real fear that an influx of young intellectuals with a grasp of Marxism will expose what passes for 'intellectualism' amongst the Right wing as the shoddy rehash of bourgeois ideology that it really is.**

However, these efforts will be defeated. Despite the moans of some pessimists, the witch-hunt is not an unstoppable steamroller crushing all before it.

On the contrary, it is the act of desperate and frightened men.

The Gaitskellites are thrown into a panic by the sound of determined socialist youth—workers and students alike—pounding on the door of the labour movement.

## Down in King Street something stirs

By **JOHN CRAWFORD**

**A**BOVE the bustle of Covent Garden Market can be heard the sound of knives being sharpened. It is the comrades in King Street preparing for strife among the top leadership of the Communist Party of Great Britain.

Not being able to discuss the political questions in the CP and YCL ranks in an open way, the protagonists are finding more subtle methods of struggle.

### Russian historians

Consider, for example, the following quotation from *World News* of 10/11/62, in an article entitled 'John Reed—Chronicler of Revolution' by two Russian historians:

**'Despite Lenin's high opinion of its worth, *Ten Days that Shook the World* was banned during the period of the personality cult. It was re-born again after the XXth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party.'**

It will be recalled that when *Ten Days* suddenly reappeared in this country at the beginning

of the year, Mr. R. Palme Dutt got himself entangled in a controversy in the correspondence columns of *Tribune*.

A *Tribune* reviewer had explained how John Reed's classic had been suppressed in this country for 30 years.

Dutt, rushing in where more cautious Stalinists feared to tread, denied the allegation that the *News Chronicle* had been stopped from serialising the book in 1937.

The *Chronicle* had found it impossible to expunge the names of Trotsky and other defendants in the Moscow Trials, as the CP leaders demanded.

### Proved correct

Letters followed which proved the story to be quite correct, with Brian Pearce quoting J. R. Campbell in its support. Dutt only escaped more severe punishment with the aid of Andrew Rothstein, who was able, with customary skill, to steer the discussion on to another tack.

The editor of *Tribune* also helped by stopping any further letters from a Trotskyist standpoint being published.

The admission in *World*



Palme Dutt: rushed in

*News* that *Ten Days* was banned in the USSR is thus another blow at Dutt from some hidden hand in King Street.

The Cuban events and the failure of King Street to take a stand in support of China against India are being connected in the minds of many rank and file militants with the failures of the CP leaders on industrial problems.

### Find a road

The exposure of the lies told by Dutt, Rothstein and company about Party history should help these workers to find a road to a correct Marxist view on how to build a Communist movement in Britain.

## De Gaulle threat

from page 1

The lack of a fighting policy by the main working class party, betrayed by its bureaucratic, Stalinist leadership, prevents it from winning support from all those elements in the working class and peasantry who are opposed to Gaullism.

The betrayals by the CP leaders will have far-reaching effects. They mean that the workers now face new blows from the regime with only a minimum of defence.

The press-ganging of striking Metro workers shows that the government is ready to use tough measures to tame the workers' organisations.

Next on the agenda is likely to be general anti-strike legislation

and a policy of streamlining the unions into the state.

By a policy of class compromise, not only in relation to de Gaulle's Algerian policy but also on industrial questions, the Communist Party has shown itself ready to deliver over the working class, bound hand and foot, to its enemies.

How else can we explain the presence of officials of the Communist-led CGT sitting placidly on the various boards set up under the Economic Plan (which was a model for the British NEDC)?

Unless serious preparations are made for struggle a great disaster can lie ahead for the French working class.

# Cease-fire exposes Indian CP

**Evian: the aftermath**

## Misery for Algerian masses

By ERIC NEILSON

IN recent months THE NEWSLETTER has criticised various Left groups for their support for Ben Bella and for fostering illusions about the nature of the Algerian state. Subsequent examination of events in Algeria, since the first excitement over independence has died down, has confirmed our criticism.

The Ben Bella government, the aims of which have always been of a bourgeois nationalist variety, has devoted its time not to building socialism but to solving the acute problems which face Algerian capitalism.

At the time of independence many people were enthusiastically supporting the new government for the agrarian reforms it said it would make. Ben Bella, however, has come out against taking any 'hasty measures' and the government's present activity on this point is confined to 'making a study of the question'.

Any collectivisation Ben Bella might carry out would not really threaten the private ownership of the land.

### CAPITALIST KIBBUTZ

It is a fact that even under the old colonial regime there were plans in hand for a system whereby kibbutzi would exist side by side with ordinary farms.

As yet the government has done nothing about the land, and most of it is still in the hands of the old landowners. These, in their turn, are hesitating to undertake any large-scale agricultural planting or production until they get a guarantee that it will be they who reap the benefits from the next harvest.

Due, therefore, to the failure of the 'revolutionary' government to undertake the socialist reorganisation of agriculture and the concern of the present capitalist landowners with profits, large sections of the population are suffering conditions of extreme deprivation.

### IN THE OLD HANDS

Algerian industry also remains in the hands of the old capitalist class and this too finds itself in a state of deep crisis.

When it became clear that 'independence' would be granted to Algeria, swarms of manufacturers left the country, taking their capital with them. Owing to the huge loss of capital, the banks are now unable to finance the remaining local industrialists to get their production rolling again.

But the key sections of Algerian industry are owned by the big French and European combines who have plenty of money to produce once more at full capacity. These, however,

have, for their own dubious reasons, so far declined to use their resources in this way.

They know very well that if they force the Algerian economy to cry to them for mercy they can then dictate to it their own terms. This stranglehold that the European companies exercise in Algeria clearly exposes those who speak of the Evian agreements as a 'defeat for imperialism'.

It was not only capital that fled from Algeria just prior to independence: large numbers of technicians and specialists also sought refuge in France.

Here again Algeria is completely dependent upon the imperialist mother country, for without these specialists it cannot utilise its means of production properly.

### FAVOUR IMPERIALISTS

The cards are indeed stacked heavily in favour of the imperialists; they own key sections of industry, they own the market and means of transportation for exports, and they control the specialists so vital at this juncture to the Algerian economy.

In the light of this, only a political cretin could say that Evian broke the hold of French imperialism.

Ben Bella has no intention of changing this situation. Despite his left-wing phraseology, his actions prove him to be firmly on the side of the employing class.

His visit to Havana and the warm receptions given to delegates from the East are merely an attempt to support his claim to be a 'positive neutralist' and are used by him to cover up the role he plays for French imperialism.

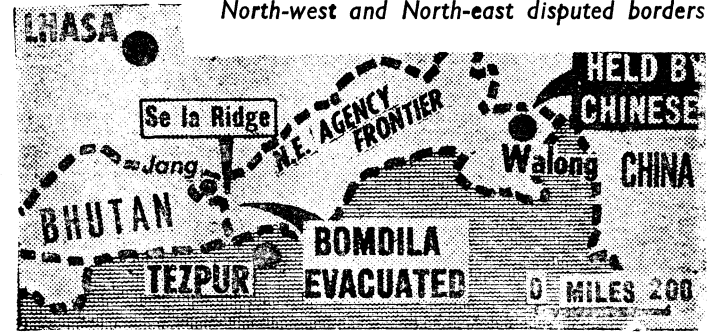
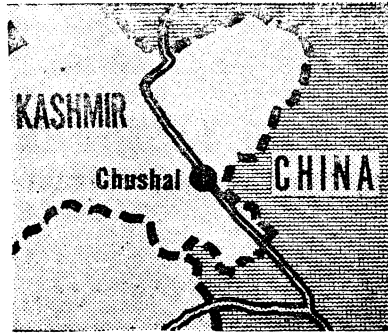
### CP TAKE NOTE

The Communist Party, which supported the bourgeois leadership of the revolution, should take note of the news that Ben Bella is to start a purge of the administration.

His actions over the past months, the witch-hunt against communists and the dismantling of the National Liberation Army for instance, show that it will be the communist and left-wing militants who will bear the brunt of this latest purge.

The future of the working class cannot be entrusted to the representatives of the bourgeoisie.

The solution to the problems of Algeria lies in the overthrow of imperialism by the working class of France and Europe—and not in the actions of Ben Bella, the blue-eyed boy of the French oil companies.



THE announcement of a cease fire and withdrawal of Chinese forces 12½ miles behind the McMahon line is undeniable proof that China does not seek to annex Indian territory. It offers a basis for a reasonable and amicable settlement of the frontier dispute.

Mr. Nehru, however, is determined to drag India into an all-out war against China—with the active support of Wall Street, the City of London and, of course, the Labour Party loyal opposition.

It might be said that the most important man in India today is not Nehru but Mr. Kenneth Galbraith who has become the confidante and close advisor of the Indian prime minister since the start of hostilities.

### NEHRU'S WATERLOO?

War has its own logic and, if the Se La pass means anything, Mr. Nehru should not be surprised if his Dunkirk in the Himalayan passes is turned into a Waterloo in the Assamese plains.

Not even Khrushchev's MiGs can help avert another and greater military disaster.

Meanwhile the burdens on the Indian workers and peasants continue to grow and the Indian CP continues to crawl on its belly in front of Nehru and the Indian capitalists.

In its latest resolution: 'National Emergency Arising Out of Chinese Aggression' the National Council of the CPI states without a hint of em-

peace-desiring animal will convince few workers.  
The first task of a Communist in a capitalist country is to wish and fight for the defeat of his own government as the lesser evil. This was Lenin's attitude to war. It did not mean sabotage and military conspiracy but an intensive campaign of propaganda and agitation amongst the workers and peasant poor to explain the objects and the class character of the war. This is the essence of revolutionary defeatism. It made possible the triumph of the October revolution.

### BOOT-LICKING

The Indian Stalinists have never desired or fought for the Socialist Revolution. Hence in place of revolutionary intransigence and opposition—we have an opportunist combination of complete subordination and boot-licking and plaintive appeals not to suppress the CPI.

The conclusion of the resolution reads like a death warrant of the Indian CP. It calls for its members to:

- 'Take an active part in the work of the popular committees which are being set up in support of the defence efforts.'
- 'To exert their best to build up the National Defence Fund.'
- 'To work resolutely for increase in production for defence.'
- 'To work for the greater glory of the Motherland.'

This was the same policy followed by Indian Stalinism under P. C. Joshi during the Indian national struggle.

Then the Indian National Congress was depicted as an Axis Fifth Column. Times change—but not Stalinism!

## City Slants by colin chance

interest in that BOC were assured that rival suppliers were kept out of the market.

'A new supplier, who is free from the limitations accepted by BOC, has entered the field in competition with them.' So announced Mr. Erroll as justification for allowing the company to re-adopt price policies which the Monopolies Commission had condemned six years ago.

Actually BOC still control 95 per cent of the supply of oxygen

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### Monopoly

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and acetylene, so that Erroll's explanation is just not valid.

This is the usual pattern. The Monopolies Commission deliberates for years. It produces mild palliatives to restrict blatant monopoly.

The Tories either pigeon-hole the Commission's recommendations or 'ask for certain undertakings' from the offender.

After a reasonable period when

the glare of publicity is no longer focussed on the industry and the Labour MPs have gone to sleep (perhaps because the subject has little political possibilities) the monopoly is back in its former privileged position.

It is easy to understand the monopoly position of BOC. In other industries this is less evident, but is there just the same.

British Insulated Callender Cables, trading through their many subsidiary companies, have the lion's share of all cable produced in the UK.

ICI predominates in the explosives and fertiliser industry both in the UK and in most parts of Africa and Asia.

Seventy per cent of cement production comes from Associated Portland Cement.

Turner and Newall supply practically all asbestos and plaster board and therefore hold a key position in the building industry.

In many other fields too, monopolies exist. The few small firms remaining in these industries are fast disappearing, usually by being taken over by the giants who have nothing to fear from the Monopolies Commission.

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# STRATFORD: sack for railwaymen

## fat profits for big business



Stratford railwaymen demonstrated recently against redundancy

### ETU executive fines Kincardine militants

From BOB SHAW, Our Scottish Correspondent

**I**T is reported that the leaders of the recent strike at Kincardine power station were called before the Executive Committee of the ETU during the last fortnight on disciplinary charges. Despite the fact that some of the men had been without wages due to the strike for as long as 15 weeks, fines totalling £50 were imposed by the right-wing leaders and the men were notified that these sums would be entered on their contribution cards as arrears.

Three of the strike leaders are suspended from holding office in the union for a period of five years. Two others are suspended from office for three years.

Through the Kincardine strike, the liaison between the right-wing leadership of the union, the electrical contracting employers and the organisations of the state (police, courts, etc.), were made absolutely clear.

In his infamous letter to a scab steward on the job, Mr. Byrne, general secretary of the ETU, claimed the right to such liaison by referring to the fact that the strike was 'unofficial'.

The resort to police action was upheld by decision of the court in Dunfermline. For the Right wing this settles the matter.

But the rank and file electricians in the Falkirk area are becoming more and more convinced that the Right wing must be fought and removed.

Right-wing intervention has meant a drop in wages at Kincardine of 1/- per hour.

The damage to the militant wing of workers in contracting goes much further. The electricians have been traditionally the first to fight to improve job conditions and wages. The Byrne leadership aims to reverse this.

Those who participated in the Kincardine dispute are not crushed; they can still fight back. It would, nonetheless, be foolish to suppose that the future course of the fight for democratic control of the union is plain sailing, that



Byrne: infamous letter

it requires nothing more than patience and one or two favourable ballots.

There are indications that the Communist Party is encouraging its members to believe that whereas Kincardine was 'ultra-left', and 'adventurist', the winning of posts in the union is the main objective.

This is no different from the King Street policy which brought disaster in the past.

The CP hopes to keep its image of being a militant anti-capitalist party whilst building up positions of power inside the right-wing apparatus.

There are some important ballots coming up in the ETU in Scotland. The winning of these by the militant opposition is of great importance.

Of greater importance, however, is the need for the rank and file electricians to understand that winning the ballot is not just a substitution for Byrne and company of some other Left clique, but the clearing of the decks for a fight with the Right wing in the TUC and the Labour Party on socialist policy.

### Fords: the betrayal

from page 1

why no attempt was made to call a meeting of the Big Six Motor Combine Shop Stewards' Committee during the Fords' dispute, and why the suggestion made in THE NEWSLETTER to approach Ford workers in Germany and Detroit was ridiculed in Party circles.

It is only necessary to point to the example of the Lockheed missile workers in America, who this week came out on strike against victimisation of trade unionists—and won, to see who was correct in this appeal.

The lessons of the Ford dispute must be drawn by all motor and engineering workers.

If the fight against the attacks of the employers is to be successful they must organise independently of the betrayers of Congress House and the cowardly confusionists of King Street.

● Ford shop stewards on Tuesday evening urged their union executives to reject the compromise plan. They are demanding no victimisation of any workers—a statement which clearly expresses dissatisfaction with the efforts of the union leaders.

### Special Newsletter inquiry by Reg Perry

**F**OR over 120 years the railway industry has been at the heart of Stratford's industrial development. The huge workshops and shunting yards at nearby Temple Mill have provided the bread and butter and industrial training for thousands of its population since the first railways over Bow Bridge were built in 1840, making Stratford the gateway to the east of England.

Now with the threatened closure of the workshops in November 1962, Stratford is in danger of becoming a ghost town of back-to-back houses, built in the industrial developments of the 19th century, and a vast museum of workshop buildings and miles of railway track—a town without a heart.

The 'Save Your Railway Committee' formed at the Stratford works to fight the closures is convinced that the Beeching plan is a gigantic fraud designed to dismantle the nationalised railways and hand them back, remodelled, to private enterprise.

#### Most Modern

John Bushell, an examiner at the works and a member of the committee put it this way: 'Since 1958 something like £750,000 has been spent at Stratford to make it the most modern diesel repair shop in the world.'

'Plant and machinery has been installed and new transformer stations are still being built, although the closure date has been announced. We don't think this is being done blindly.'

Railway workers are particularly bitter over the way lucrative contracts have been given to companies like Brush, English Electric and AEL, which have milked the railways' revenue.

Examples are given of how it is impossible to carry out minor repairs to replace, for instance, worn carbon brushes in cab heater fan units for 1s. 6d. because contracts stipulate that the complete unit must be returned and replaced at a cost of £4 each.

Spares which have been obtained direct from manufacturers

now have to be ordered through these major firms at greatly inflated prices.

At Stratford they quote the classic example of the Baby Deltic locomotives purchased 18 months ago from English Electric for something like £80,000 each.

Seven of these are now lying for scrap on sidings at Stratford. New projects are purchased in vast quantities by the BTC before sufficient testing has been undertaken.

'If a thorough investigation was carried out it would not take long to trace the 'loss' of £130 million claimed last year by the BTC,' says the committee's treasurer Fred Bint.

#### Interest Rates

'To start with, £110 million was paid in interest rates on the money loaned to buy out the ex-shareholders. That is the first economy which should be made.'

The closures have come as a bombshell to many railwaymen and feelings are bitter against the BTC.

Take Sam Green who started his apprenticeship as a boilermaker 23 years ago at Stratford. In 1959, when the changeover from steam to diesel electrics took place, he and 40 other boilermakers were persuaded to be re-trained as electrical and engineering fitters.

Now as a member of the ETU he is unable to do any electrical work except loco repairs.

'When we accepted re-training we were assured of permanent employment. So I took a mortgage on a house near Southend, knowing I could travel on a railway warrant.'

'Now with weekly payments of £4 round my neck for the house, a wife and two children to support and no prospect of a job in either of my trades in that area, I don't know what I shall do.'

The same fear haunts hundreds of workers, like sheetmetal worker Ted Allen, who live in railway property in and around Stratford. They have so far received no assurances from the BTC that they won't be evicted.

In Stratford the prospects of finding work for skilled workers are discouraging.

At the local Labour Exchange there are 1,181 men unemployed, 449 women, 96 boys and 49 girls. Total vacancies in all occupations are only 630.

Stratford people are also worried because of rumours that the docks labour force is to be reduced under the Rochdale scheme from 27,000 to 14,000. Two of the biggest docks, the Royal Group and East India fall in the borough of West Ham of which Stratford is a part.

There are also a number of closures in local chemical factories in the area.

Fred Dickerson was one of the many I spoke to at Stratford Employment Exchange, who has been out of work on and off all this year. A member of the NUMGW and a fitter by trade, he worked for many years on shipping until laid off last year.

Alarmed at the situation, the local Labour Council has protested against the closure of the workshops and has condemned the Tory government and demanded that the workshop remain open.

'Inside the workshops the men feel they have been sold down the river by the unions—particularly by Sidney Greene,' says Fred Bint. 'We no longer have any confidence in such people who conduct secret talks with the BTC and never inform us what is really happening.'

#### Reject Sackings

Ted Watson, Convenor of the ETU shop stewards complained, 'Instead of discussing unemployment and compensation payments, the unions should be discussing employment and rejecting the sackings.'

The Committee is now preparing a campaign to mobilise support against the railway closures and sackings.

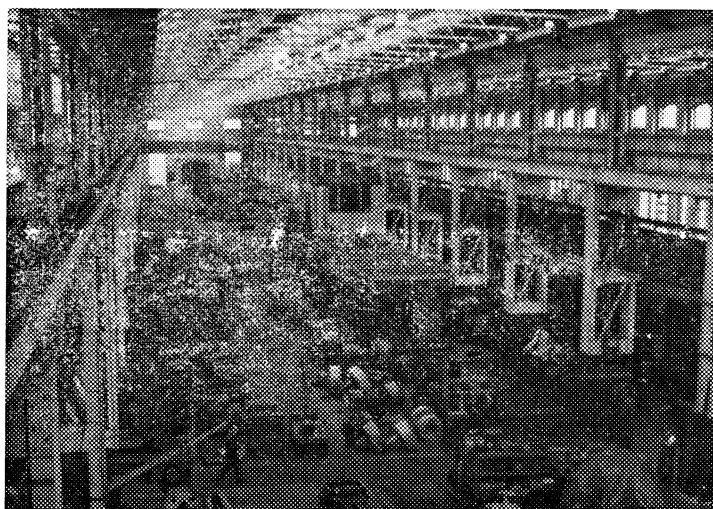
Said NUR member, Tommy Hopkins: 'Already we have done much work but we want to broaden our fight to get the support of all those workshops threatened with closure and the others like Doncaster and Swindon who will be next on the chopping block. The Tories won't stop at 18,000.'

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