

BECAUSE OF production changes at some of the Ford plants many of the firm's workers may face sackings in a year's time.

This vicious bombshell was dropped when leaders of 22 unions were told of these proposals at the company's national joint negotiations committee. The management politely termed the situation as 'conditions of surplus labour'.

Three main centres are involved but the number of redundancies has not yet been disclosed.

WORK MOVED

A lot of the work at Dagenham will be moved. The foundry is to be closed and re-opened on a new site on Thames-side. Tractor production will be taken from Dagenham to Basildon, Essex, and transmission work to Halewood, Lancashire.

Union leaders have been offered a nationwide redundancy agreement which has already been tried by the Ford management when workers were sacked at Southampton because of a production switch.

NEW JOBS

The men are offered a week's pay for every year of service with a six month qualifying period.

Of course, Ford bosses do not say where the workers will get new jobs from or what they will do when the 'pay-off' money runs out.

The management are too busy ensuring bigger and quicker production to bother about the hundreds of workers who may be thrown on to the dole queues.

**Victory over
colour bar**

COLOURED PEOPLE will not be refused service at 'The George' public house, Brixton, South London. The publican, Mr. Charles Westcott gave an undertaking last Monday to licensing magistrates that he will serve all his customers.

This statement was a victory for the Lambeth Trades Council who have campaigned against an alleged colour bar in Westcott's saloon bar.

Many coloured workers have been insulted, refused service and told to drink in the public bar, it was stated in court.

Arrests

During the campaign 11 people were arrested outside 'The George' in Raiton Road, Brixton, and charged under the Public Order Act 1936. A successful fight was carried out against the Brixton police when the court dismissed all the charges.

Five witnesses gave evidence on Monday of racial discrimination practised in the pub. Mr. Westcott claimed that he only refused service to 'prostitutes and troublemakers'.

It was described how service was refused in the saloon bar last June—a month before the campaign began. The barman said: 'Outside you.' Other witnesses spoke of the shock and anger at being told to go round to the public bar when they only wanted a drink.

Temper

To the end Westcott insisted that he had not discriminated against anyone because of their colour. But under cross-examination he nearly lost his temper and started to say: 'I had to turn two blacks away yesterday,' but he stopped quickly.

The clerk of the court said that he was in a difficult position, if his white customers did not like coloured people coming into the saloon. The defence stated that if certain people were dissatisfied 'there are other pubs that they can go to'.

Westcott gave the undertaking not to discriminate. If he breaks it now, no doubt he will hear from the Lambeth Trades Council again.

AXE FOR 1000 ENGINEERS

EDITORIAL

**Cyprus —
withdraw all
forces now!**

SWIFTLY and inexorably the politics of President Makarios, Dr. Kutchuk and Mr. Sandys are pushing Cyprus towards a reactionary and bloody settlement of the communal problem: partition. Already the northern half of the island from Lefka to Famagusta is under virtual Turkish domination, while the south and central region remains under Greek control.

The physical separation of the Greeks and Turks has been virtually accomplished within a few months. Out of 106 villages of Turko-Greek composition today there are only 23.

The bloody clashes, the barbaric atrocities and the brutal expropriations perpetrated by both sides have left deep wounds and bitter memories which will take generations to eradicate.

It is only a matter of time before the reactionary scheme of Dr. Kutchuk is recognised juridically. There is little doubt that neither Whitehall nor the Security Council of the United Nations will do anything to obstruct such a move.

Instead of being a united nation Cyprus is now faced with the hideous prospect of two separate administrations patronised by two mutually hostile foreign powers, and based on two unviable economies.

Instead of communal friendship and solidarity there will be a continuation of the fratricidal struggle now going on.

The 'independence' of Cyprus, already hamstrung by the presence of thousands of British troops, will cease to have any meaning.

The responsibility for this situation rests on the Tories. As in Pakistan and Ireland, they have skilfully utilised the weakness of the existing regime to manoeuvre it into a position where partition seems the only way out.

The Tories have always worked their foreign policy on the assumption that, where diplomatic skulduggery fails, military coercion usually succeeds. That is the real reason for the despatch of marines, paratroopers and infantry regiments to Cyprus.

Anybody who thinks that British troops are in Cyprus to forestall a mutual blood-letting is thinking nonsense and when Labour MPs give shameful support to this action, they are actively helping to perpetuate communal discord and bring about partition.

Is it necessary to recall the experience of Suez where Britain intervened ostensibly to 'separate the combatants' but in fact to protect the canal from nationalization?

The labour movement must demand of the Labour Party now that it cease participating in this filthy fraud and fight with all its power for the immediate withdrawal of British forces from Cyprus—and an end to partition politics.

A single anti-imperialist gesture from British labour will do more to bring about communal amity than all the diplomatic missions and peace-keeping formulae devised so far.

'Projectiles' moving to North East

Management follows Tory government policy

ONE THOUSAND people are to lose their jobs when Projectiles Ltd. close their Battersea, London, engineering factory in two years time. The company is moving to a 'development' area in the North-east.

The closure was announced at the week-end in a shock letter to the 1,000 Amalgamated Engineering Union and Transport and General Workers' Union members and office staff.

Shop stewards were called to the managing director, Mr. C. Tuff's office on Friday, and stayed there until after 5 p.m. when the works closed for the week-end.

Production was nearly brought to a halt on Monday and Tuesday as workers gathered to discuss the closure.

In spite of Mr. Tuff's statement that 'the company recognises its responsibility to assist in reducing unemployment in one of the development areas, in line with government policy and the trade unions,' many workers are not fooled.

Job-hungry

It is obvious to many who have carried on a militant fight in the factory that the company will be able to offer work to the job-hungry of the north at any wage it cares to offer.

The company could easily impose a non-union shop on workers who will not want to return to the dole queues and allow less militant men to take their place.

But what action will the unions take to protect their London members?

The Newsletter understands that the shop stewards' immediate response was to talk of compensation.

Will the AEU clamp down

on its shop-floor members who want to fight the sackings?

All Projectiles workers should unite against ex-convenor Tuff and the company to prevent the sackings.

There have been other closures in Battersea recently. Jobs are becoming scarce. Other firms will refuse to take on many of the older and semi-skilled workers.

No hardship

Mr. Tuff's letter said it is the company's intention to 'minimise personal hardship'. He hopes he can 'rely upon your loyal and valued services for the remaining period of operations at Battersea'.

This is a slap in the face for workers who will receive 'severance payments', knowing full well that firms taking industry to development areas receive large grants from the government.

The AEU and TGWU must act immediately to protect their members in London, unemployed workers in the north, and themselves from the company's effort to boost its profits at the expense of wages and conditions.

A mass meeting of Projectile workers will be held on Tuesday.

Trades Council leads fight against fascists

ACTION AGAINST fascists, who have started street corner meetings and sales of racist propaganda in Brixton, has been taken by members of the Lambeth Trades Council and other working class organisations.

A number of white and coloured trade unionists, Young Socialists, members of local Labour Parties, the Communist Party and the Young Communist League have held meetings at Rushcroft Road, Brixton, in the past two weeks. This has prevented the fascists from using the pitch.

Meeting

On Wednesday, the Trades Council held a well-attended public meeting where plans for a future campaign against the fascists were discussed. It was agreed to support the Rushcroft Road meetings.

A conference of the local trade union and labour movement will be organised to launch a powerful fight against racialism and for the repeal by the next government of the Tory Immigration and Police Acts.

The Immigration Act and the recent acceptance, in principle, by the Labour Party leaders of a control on people coming into the country, was attacked by speakers.

It was pointed out that the Act aims to place the blame for

the housing shortage, low wages and unemployment on to immigrants, especially coloured workers. In this way attention is diverted from the Tories, the

● Cont. on back page, col. 5

SALES GOING WELL—KEEP IT UP

WE HAVE done it again—10,000 sales last week and a further £30 regular monthly guarantees through bankers' orders.

With one more week to the end of February, can we reach the £100 a month bankers' orders?

We need another £30 and we will be halfway towards the £200 necessary each month to keep The Newsletter moving forward.

Efforts to increase sales are most encouraging. The North London branch of the Socialist Labour League plans to double its weekly sales from 70 to 140 copies.

The West London branch, beside a pledge to increase sales has organised a campaign for bankers' orders. Clapham branch has already sent in £5



These militant workers will lose their jobs

Picture by L. Oakley

TGWU dockers reject New Deal proposals

No confidence in local official

ALL Liverpool branches of the Transport and General Workers' Union dockers section have rejected the port employers' 'New Deal'.

There is great resentment against the trade union leaders who have been assisting the employers' attempts to bulldoze the scheme through.

The majority of Transport union branches have coupled their rejection of the New Deal with a vote of no confidence in Mr. P. J. O'Hare, the union's district secretary.

SECRET

Discussions between some of the union's leaders and the employers remain secret, but there are rumours that tentative agreements have been reached on drastic cuts in manning scales.

According to the Dock Labour Board figures, Merseyside dockers earn an average weekly wage of £15. However, the majority of dockers in that area earn well below that figure.

by
Peter Kerrigan

Included in the Board's calculations are weekly dockers who continually work long hours. These are the very small minority of dockers who take home the wages quoted by the Board.

According to 'The Guardian' a docker in a busy port can earn well over £1,000 a year. The report declared that dockers were now 'in the middle class'.

The true story is that there are thousands of Merseyside dockers who go home every week with a wage of £9 9s., less stoppages.

MEASLY

Their net wage totals £8 10s. Of course, the smart journalists have never come across dockers who may have to pay £2 a week rent and £1 10s. bus fares out of that measly wage.

Dockers received their last

increase in pay in May 1962 when, under a threat of strike action, the employers handed out 8s. 3d. This brought the pay up to its present total.

It becomes clear that the only people who have gained anything from the last two years' negotiations over decasualisation are the employers. The tactics of the port bosses have cost the dockers at least two wage increases.

SECURITY

Militancy on the docks is at a higher level now than at any time during the past ten years. The general opinion of the dockers is that to expect genuine security from the employers under the guise of decasualisation is a waste of time.

The possibilities of national solidarity were demonstrated at the recent big meeting of dockers in Liverpool when four ports—Hull, Manchester, London and Merseyside—were represented.

There will be big support for the demands raised by Dick Barrett, general secretary of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers. Dockers want £15 a week regular pay and an immediate increase in the 10s. pension that is paid to retired dockers.

DEMANDS

They want a one call day, a 40-hour week, and the present sick scheme which operates for 16,000 weekly workers to be extended to the daily registered dockers.

If leaders of the Transport union are not prepared to fight for these demands then the rank and file, in conjunction with the Stevedores and Dockers' Union, must build a national port-workers' committee.

In 1954 50,000 dockers supported the demand of the Transport union rank and file and the Stevedores and Dockers' Union that overtime on the docks should be voluntary.

If they were successful in that dispute then a stronger national link-up in the present dispute could most certainly bring the dockers victory against the employers.

Unions and the Law

Employers' High Court action endangers labour organisations

THE labour movement cannot afford to ignore the implications of the court's ruling in the recent case against Mr. William Lindley, general secretary of the Watermen, Lightermen, Tugmen and Bargemen's Union.

It was decided by the judge that the officials of the union had 'resorted to unlawful means in seeking to get the hirers of Stratford and Sons Ltd. barges and the Port of London Authority to break their contracts'. He granted Stratfords an injunction against the union to lift a ban on the firm's barges.

He also ruled that the union officials were not protected by section three of the Trade Disputes Act 1906 which states:

'An act done by a person in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute shall not be actionable on the grounds only that it induces some other person to break a contract of employment.'

It is clear that in the case against the Watermen's union, the plaintiffs—Stratford and Sons—found it important to prove that there was no trade dispute between themselves and the union. The onus was then on the union to show that there was a dispute but the judge found that they had not done this.

Conditions

The history behind the court case goes back to 1956 when the Watermen's union approached Bowker and King Ltd., a subsidiary of Stratford and Sons Ltd. to discuss an agreement covering the working conditions of five union men working with the firm.

Within a fortnight a reply was received expressing surprise at the request as no complaints had been given to the firm.

The matter was dropped until five years later the Watermen's union and the Transport and General Workers' Union sent a joint letter to Bowker's requesting agreements on working conditions for members of both unions. Negotiations were started but they fell through in 1962.

However, by October 1963, the Transport union came to an agreement with the firm.

Two weeks later the Watermen's union decided to make no further approaches to Bowker's and issued an instruction that no union members should service or tow barges owned by J. T. Stratford and Sons Ltd.

Stratford and Sons do not employ any WLTBU members and Bowker's now have only three. In these circumstances the judge found that there was no dispute between Stratford and the union.

Ruling

It is clear that such a ruling is correct, for the union do not appear to have had dealings with Stratford's at any level during the negotiations.

The union 'black' the wrong firm, but the judge stated, even if they 'black' Bowker and King, the right firm, an injunction would have been granted because no trade dispute existed.

What then would have constituted a dispute? Another judge is reported to have stated: 'In my opinion a dispute cannot exist unless there is a difference of opinion between two parties.'

The Trades Disputes Act states that:

'The expression "trade dispute" means any dispute between employers and workmen or between workmen and workmen which is connected with the employment or non-employment or the terms of employment or with conditions of labour of any person and the expression workmen means all persons employed in trade or industry whether or not they are in the employment of the employer with whom the dispute arises.'

On that basis it would seem that a firm's refusal to negotiate

represents a difference of opinion with the union which wants to negotiate. Whether the dispute is trade or not has to be decided on from the facts of the disagreement.

It should be noted that the large Transport and General Workers' Union was able, eventually, to come to an understanding with the firm, which had previously rejected both the approach of the Transport union and the Watermen's union.

Does this suggest a pattern for the future? What will be the position of the small union in industry if employers can virtually reject them as bargaining powers and then obtain legal restraint?

Predicament

How far will the leadership of the large unions move to protect the smaller ones?

Will the Transport union in the light of its relation with the Blue Union merely close its eyes to the predicament of the Watermen's union?

The refusal of the right-wing union leadership to intervene makes it yet again a job of the rank and file

membership to force action from their unions on the Watermen's case.

It cannot be assumed that because of the close ties between the leaderships of the Labour Party and the trade union movement that corrective laws will be passed when they get into power at the next election. The last thing the Labour Party bureaucrats want is active, militant unions.

Legislation

If the next Labour government legislates at all it may well be as a part of a contract between the government and the trade union leadership.

The time for action on the legal position of the trade unions is now. At every level of union activity the fight to reverse the decisions made in court must be started. The union leaders must be left in no doubt about their membership's demands.

Harold Wilson must have no room for manoeuvring after this election. The Labour Party must make its position clear now as to whether they will legislate under the next government.

A SERIOUS battle is raging behind the scenes in the Tory Party over the proposals of Minister for Trade, Mr. Edward Heath, to abolish resale price maintenance.

This conflict, although not of overwhelming importance itself, is indicative of the acute problems facing British capitalism and the splits it is causing in the Tory ranks on the eve of a general election.

At the moment about 40 per cent of all goods retailed in Britain are governed by resale price maintenance. These include cigarettes and tobacco, many electrical goods and a wide range of medicines and pharmaceutical products.

By intensive advertising, firms attempt to establish a 'mystique' around their products to make consumers believe that they are indispensable.

Fixed price

They are able, therefore, to charge a price which is considerably higher than their costs of production.

Manufacturers not only fix the price to their distributor, but insist that the retailer sells the product at a fixed price throughout Britain.

If a retailer attempts to cut prices, the manufacturer will either cut off his supplies or even take legal action against him.

The Tory move to abolish this legislation is an attempt to inject a feeling of more ruthless competition into the economy in order to reduce costs and prices. It becomes clearer to the party leadership that Britain is falling behind in the competitive race with Europe and North America.

High costs

The weakness of British capitalism shows itself in the high costs of manufactured goods which impose a severe

Tory split on Resale Price Maintenance

by Peter Jeffries

barrier to the attempts to step up exports.

'The Times' (January 20) spoke forcibly on these matters when Heath's proposals were first made.

'The whole purpose of abolishing price maintenance is that the inefficient shall be hurt. They must be hurt to the point of making themselves efficient or, if that proves impossible, of going out of business. This may seem harsh. The facts of modern economic life are harsh.'

Exclusion

The need for efficiency was all the greater with exclusion from the Common Market.

'Her entry had been counted upon to do many things more or less painfully for the Government. Outside pressures... were to include competition, make private enterprise more enterprising and the trade unions more reasonable.'

Some Tory leaders hope that the abolition of resale price maintenance will bring a fall in prices which will make it easier to impose wage restraint upon the unions. They can promise trade union leaders big price drops in return for a policy of wage freeze.

Big supermarket owners have put pressure upon the Tories to abolish resale price maintenance.

Self-service trading has grown rapidly in Britain in the last few years, following American trends. There are over 12,000 self-service outlets in this country, which includes over 1,000 supermarkets.

The National Economic Development Council estimates that self-service will account for 48 per cent of the food trade in 1966, compared with about 15 per cent in 1961, and the volume of trade will reach £300,000,000.

As with capitalism generally, this sector of the economy has been over-expanded in the search for higher profits. The rapid expansion of supermarkets has not kept pace with economic demand. This has led to difficulties for some branches of the trade.

Difficulties

Allied Suppliers sales of £160,000,000, Fine Fare (£50 million) and Premier (£8 million), are all reported to be in difficulties and losing the competitive battle with their rivals.

Manufacturers are worried by Heath's proposals. They fear trading concerns will put pressure on them to reduce prices once the retailing battle warms up.

Manufacturers depend on the small trader as their main outlet, but resale price maintenance threatens to wipe out a whole section of middle-class shopkeepers, traditionally the bulwark of the Tory party at election times.

Counting these people and their dependants, over 1,000,000 people face hardship at the hands of the Tory party and big business. This fact emphasises the crisis that the Tories face.

Disillusioned

With the abolition of resale price maintenance the basis is laid for this completely disillusioned section of 'petty-bourgeoisie' who are likely to support ginger groups such as those led by Edward Martell.

It is important to recall that Hitler came to power on the basis of a middle class ruined by inflation, and the high rate of unemployment amongst youth.

But the middle classes need not necessarily give their support to the forces of reaction. Given a determined fight for socialist policies inside the labour movement, these sections could become strong allies of the working class.

MARKET

Each collective farm tends to be more of a unit than before, so that differences in welfare and income between one and another tend to increase. Within the farms there is more emphasis on individual incentives; moreover, the produce of the 'private plots' represents an important element in the income of the peasants.

In order to increase deliveries to the state, prices have been made more favourable for the producers. More emphasis is now placed on the market and the state's role in directing the course of production has diminished.

The collective farm system is thus shot through with contradictions. It now contains elements of individualism which could give rise to a capitalist development in agriculture.

Opposition to such trends—which the bureaucracy has short-sightedly encouraged to resolve short-term difficulties—can only come from a higher level of consciousness combined with increased mechanisation. The contradictions cannot be resolved by the bureaucracy itself.

PRODUCTION

Collectivisation provides the basis for great advances in agricultural production, for the reduction of the proportion of the population needed on the land and the improvement in the lot of the peasantry.

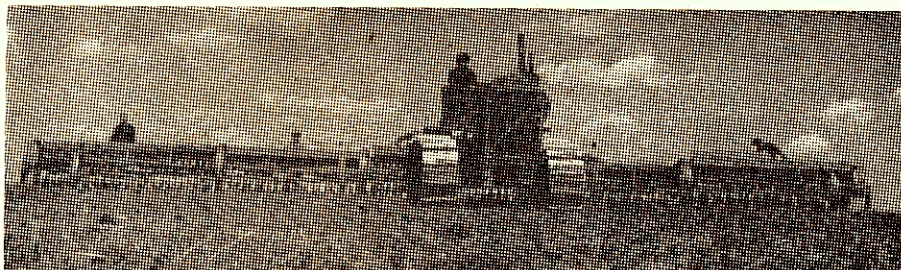
Marxists aim to bring this about by abolition of the distinction between town and country in the era of communism. From the above brief account it can be seen how far the Soviet Union stands from such a goal.

The peasantry still makes up 35-40 per cent of the Soviet population. Average

Khrushchev's farm policy on trial

In this, the second of four articles on the economic crisis in the Soviet Union, Tom Kemp deals with Khrushchev's agricultural policy.

Grave shortage of farm machinery



DESPITE all Khrushchev's efforts since 1953 to remedy the mistakes of the Stalin period, his agricultural policy is now on trial.

The crisis in food supplies, which has led to the Soviet Union buying large amounts of grain from the capitalist world market, is just the latest sign of long-standing difficulties in this policy.

As Khrushchev pointed out in 1953, the reality of the collective farm system was very different from the way it had been depicted in Stalinist propaganda which had falsified crop returns to give an impression of greatly increased output.

Industrialisation had been carried through by compulsory deliveries of farm produce to feed the growing town populations. This meant an all-round low level of food supplies and severe rationing at times.

By regimenting the peasants into collectives, Stalin destroyed much of their incentive to improve cultivation, except on their private plots. At the same time, not enough resources could be spared to raise agricultural productivity.

TRACTORS

There were not enough tractors and farm machinery, and they were often wastefully used. Supplies of chemical fertilisers and such things as pesticides, farm buildings and equipment were all inadequate.

The consequence of this policy was that in the USSR there were too many people producing too little food and raw materials from the land.

The industrial successes and the rapid rate of growth concealed shocking deficiencies in agriculture. Workers were producing more but without being able to buy more and better food.

When Khrushchev took over responsibility for agriculture in

1953 radical changes were necessary. However, his policies lacked consistency and represented no fundamental break with the past.

For instance, in the last ten years he has tried to increase production by taking more land into cultivation rather than by more intensive cultivation of the land already in collective and state farms. Hence the 'virgin soil' project.

This required a vast effort to colonise and cultivate remote areas of the country which had low and unreliable rainfall. This gamble has evidently not come off. Drought has struck, yields have fallen and little permanent improvement in total output has resulted.

YIELDS

In a modern industrial country agriculture should absorb constantly shrinking proportions of labour and resources. This means constantly rising yields per acre.

Yields from Soviet farms have not risen very appreciably because industry has not supplied them with the means for intensive cultivation.

All Khrushchev's policies have been trying to avoid the real issue. He has now been forced by events to change his tune.

At the recent meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union emphasis was laid on the need to increase mechanisation and irrigation. By implication it could be understood that in the past there have not been enough tractors or machines on Soviet farms.

According to this meeting there are 2.6 million tractors

on the farms, but these are calculated in 15 h.p. units so that, a 30 h.p. machine counts as two. Some estimates suggest that the number of acres per tractor is 15 times that in England.

The Central Committee admitted that milking was only 26 per cent mechanised and that water supply of cattle farms was only 50 per cent mechanised.

A milkmaid with a bucket and another with a pail of water seems to symbolise the present level of Soviet dairy farming!

Yezhevsky, responsible for farm mechanisation, reported that 'the level of power consumption in cattle breeding is still exceedingly low'.

In short, Soviet agriculture is still a long way from attaining the standard of mechanisation now normal in the advanced capitalist countries. It will take many years, and a vast investment effort involving the bringing up to date of existing branches of industry and the establishment of entirely new ones, before the Soviet Union can catch up.

Russian history—a letter

Dear Editor,

In the February 8 issue of The Newsletter, it was noted that the first issue of 12 volumes of a new official Soviet history of Russia had appeared in Moscow.

As the article stated, all socialists will await with great interest the final volumes to see how it deals with the Stalin period, the great purges and the fight of Trotsky's Left Opposition. The ruling bureaucracy and its apologists cannot, of course, permit a Marxist analysis of that period; they fear the truth.

Such a scientific analysis can only be the work of Marxists fighting to politically re-arm the Soviet working class with its own programme, and party for the overthrow of the bureaucracy.

However, the article could give the impression that the volumes on very early Russian history are obscure and of little interest to Marxists. For example it says:

'Reviews in the Soviet press state that it is now known that the old town of Lubech was built of wood and not stone.'

'But neither this nor any of the other enthralling items which the book includes seem to have resulted in riotous scenes at the bookshops as Soviet citizens clamoured to buy a copy.'

☆

The word 'enthralling' is apparently meant to be sarcastic, since the reviewer has not read the 'History' and therefore doesn't know how its contents could improve him.

Nor has anybody suggested that scholarly histories are best sellers in the same way as, say, the Denning Report.

Marxists are, of course, very concerned about such questions as the nature of pre-historic settlements and technical development in man's control of his environment.

The battle for socialism takes place on apparently remote theoretical questions of philosophy and history as well as in industry and politics.

The working class has to accomplish the most difficult and all-embracing tasks of human history: the complete abolition of classes and the conscious building of the conditions of freedom.

For this task there is required the most detailed and subtle understanding of every aspect of social life and development, to enrich our grasp of the laws of historical change.

☆

'Blue Notebook': Film story of Bolshevik Party

FRESH evidence that pressure is increasing for an objective history of the Russian Revolution is the preview of the Soviet film 'Blue Notebook', held in Moscow on February 12.

The film, based on the story by Emmanuel Kazakevich, hinges on the conflict between Lenin and Zinoviev on the prospects of a successful uprising by the Russian working class in 1917.

As is well known, Zinoviev opposed the majority decision of the Bolshevik Central Committee to organise for the insurrection and with Kamenev, publicly criticised the party leadership for what he considered to be political adventurism.

A full article on the film will appear in next week's Newsletter.

L.F.

Rent strikes, school boycotts in New York

Negroes and Puerto Ricans organise

MANY thousands of New York's Negro and Puerto Rican workers are now involved in an organised fight against bad housing conditions and segregation in schools.

The police have now moved into the rent strike which has been growing in Harlem since the beginning of the year. On February 7, a tenant was evicted by a massive force of police. Attempts to move him back were blocked by a fire which mysteriously broke out in the empty flat.

The Community Council on Housing, which is leading the rent strike in Harlem had this to say in a leaflet:

'The police department in Harlem is here to protect the slumlord, not the tenants. The facts clearly show why:

1. When the slumlord is guilty of no heat, no hot water, and the rats are biting our children, the police department does nothing. This goes on year in and year out.

2. When tenants are being robbed, or when apartments are broken into, where are the police? Somewhere drunk? In some woman's apartment? In a garage asleep? Collecting graft and payoffs from prostitutes or dope pedlars?

'But when it is time to illegally evict a tenant for a slumlord, the whole police department acts with great speed. We must act now to protect our homes.'

Eviction

The Council says that the eviction was illegal. The tenants have been paying their rent into a court account. No warning had been given of the eviction, as required by law. When police broke into the barricaded flat they took furniture to the city storage.

The Harlem rent strike is linked with a similar action in Lower East Side, largely involving Puerto Rican workers. A student helping the Lower East Side Rent Strike Committee has been arrested on a trumped-up charge of 'attempted robbery'.

Negro writer James Baldwin, himself a Harlem man, has spoken in support of the rent strike movement. (His book 'Notes of a Native Son' contains some powerful descriptions of life in a Harlem housing scheme.)

Meeting

At a meeting last month he said:

'The landlords, the city and the state are responsible. Things can be corrected but only if we force them to act. They will never do it otherwise.'

'In the South, for example, we see some changes have been made. I'm not being cheerful about this. I'm not a liberal. . . . But we know the situation in the South was precipitated by the Negro people in the streets.'

'If not, the situation would be exactly what it was 50-60 and a hundred years ago. It is because the people couldn't wait for Mr. Charley to give them their freedom. . . .'

'This is a revolution. It is going to be harder and harder and harder because the revolution has got to revise the entire system in order for us, as Negroes, to live and in order for the country to survive.'

'It connects with the condition of black and dark people all over the world. One must be bold enough to see and say this. . . .'

What is needed now in this situation is a political party to draw the working class organisations into these struggles. This leadership can only come from a Marxist movement with a conception of transforming these local struggles into issues involving the whole labour movement.



Police hover in background as school is picketed

Children picket schools

WHEN THE New York Committee for Integrated Schools called for a boycott of schools in the city on February 3, 365,000 children stayed away. Now similar demonstrations are being organised in other parts of the USA.

The organisations leading boycotts in Chicago, Boston, Cleveland and several other cities are co-ordinating their work with the New York committee. An important feature of the movement is the joint action of Negro and Puerto Rican communities.

Schoolchildren

Over 100,000 Puerto Rican schoolchildren took part in the February boycott. The newly-formed National Association for Puerto Rican Civil Rights has joined in the movement behind the school boycotts.

The movement is not merely demanding an end to racial segregation in all American schools. It is also concerned

with improving the appalling conditions under which Negro and Puerto Rican children are supposed to be educated.

Organisers are demanding reduction of the size of classes to 25, and changes in the high school system. They point out that only 230 of New York's 40,000 teachers are Puerto Rican.

Delays

No proper provision is made for teaching English to Spanish-speaking children, with the result that there are long delays in learning to read.

The school boycott movement is another manifestation of the tendency for broader masses of Negro workers to demand much more than the middle-class Negro leaders want, and organising to fight for it. In Chicago, Negro politicians who back the Democratic Party machine have come out strongly against the boycott and its organisers.

Oil found on Somali-Ethiopian battlefield

AS THE Somalis and Ethiopians continue their 'stop-go' skirmish over the Ogaden area, West German experts announce they have found oil there.

This will have the reverse effect of calming the troubled waters. The dispute is in earnest and already many people have been killed in border villages—mainly by Ethiopian bombs.

Both countries claim the Ogaden area. Over 90 per cent of the Ogaden population is Somali, while the area is in the hands of the 'Lion of Juda'; the negus Haile Selassie.

Herdsmen

For many years Somali herdsmen have been taking their animals from their impoverished country to graze in both Ethiopia and Kenya.

Several hundred years ago a culturally more advanced immigrant tribe imposed their rule on a whole variety of indigenous tribes. The greatest amongst these were the Somalis.

This area was later divided between French, Italian and British imperialism. But since the country gained independence in post-war years Somali leaders have pressed for a greater Somalia through national self-determination.

Feudal

This is a progressive demand but has naturally met with strong opposition from the feudal lord of Ethiopia. Now comes news of the oil find in the disputed area and once again the situation can be expected to be further complicated by the machinations of rival imperialists.

The Soviet Union and the United States have ploughed money into Somalia—the poorest state on the African con-

tinents. It is now likely that both will send more aid, hoping to win favour with Somalia.

The United Nations has already intervened through U Thant in this battle. The United States will strive to use this organisation to obtain a settlement in its favour.

Political arrests in Algeria

IN A RECENT press statement of the provisional secretariat of the Front of Socialist Forces claimed a wave of political arrests of their members has been started by Ben Bella.

They say the Algerian government has been aided by Colonel Mohand Ouelhadj and a group who signed an 'agreement' with Ben Bella in November last year.

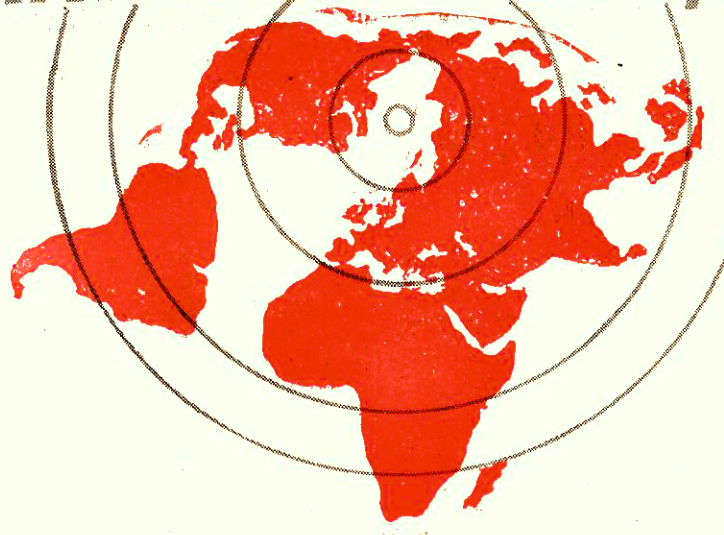
On January 29 Ouelhadj arranged to meet members of the Front. He did not turn up, but the police did and arrested Madjid Ben-Moussa, Ahmed Ouarek, Amar Ben-Tobbal, Larbi, Mokhtar, and Rachid Ait-Ahmed (nephew of Hocine Ait-Ahmed).

These members were officials of the Algiers Five zone who had refused to sanction the 'agreement' reached by Ben Bella, Ouelhadj and his friends (whose list of election nominations were made public recently in a communiqué).

Ait-Ahmed managed to escape from the police and inform the families and friends of those arrested. But since then they have not heard any news.

The Front say that through these denunciations, Ouelhadj and his friends have completely 'integrated' themselves into the Ben Bella regime.

World News Round-up



Civil war looms in the Congo

GUERRILLA WARFARE is raging in the Congo's Kwilu province, as rebel elements attack the central government of Cyrille Adoula.

Followers of Pierre Mulele, a former colleague and supporter of Patrice Lumumba, have been fighting armed government troops with spears and bows and arrows.

While this has meant heavy losses for the rebels, so far they have held the field against the troops.

The uprising comes as a surprise for the Adoula regime since Kwilu province apparently offered the least prospect of trouble. Industry in the area was prospering and local government machinery of more than average efficiency had been set up.

MINISTER

Mulele served as Minister for National Education in Lumumba's government. After the murder of Lumumba, angered by the state's refusal to release Gizenga, despite massive parliamentary votes in favour of his release, Mulele went back to Kwilu and started the patient work of forming local organisations in opposition to the regime.

They are called the 'Jeunesse' (youth) and now enjoy widespread support from local tribal leaders.

Their plan was to take over progressively more and more land as their organisation increased in size.

They were immediately labelled terrorists and were accused by the press of wanton destruction such as the burning of villages.

TERRORISM

In fact the worst record for terrorism and destruction is held by the authorities. Last September troops of the Congolese National Army, accompanied by police, marched on Mulele's village in Lukamba, hoping to arrest him and his chiefs of staff.

But the rebels had been tipped off about this move and had completely vanished when the troops arrived. Having failed to trap their quarry, the troops razed the entire village to the ground regardless of human life.

Now the government is moving in again, ever anxious to protect foreign interests that are 'threatened' by Mulele's activities. Crawling before their European masters, the authorities are trying to rescue the Unilever palm oil plant at Leverville from its present state of complete paralysis.

News in Brief

EGYPT—The UAR has signed a £9,820,000 agreement with the Pan-American Oil Company (American International Oil Company) for oil exploration under the Gulf of Suez. The UAR gets 75 per cent of the profits and a minimum of 20 per cent of the income.

USA—Mr. Nelson Rockefeller, the Governor of New York State and a candidate for the Republican nomination for President, said today that if elected he would be prepared to use force against Cuba.

PORTUGAL—The trial opened

of Joaquim Amaro, labourer, and Elias Ramos, engraver, on charges of subversion, being members of the illegal Portuguese Communist Party, forming a party cell in the Lisbon naval shipyards, meeting party officials, distributing subversive literature, and using fictitious identities.

VIETNAM—One American was wounded by a grenade thrown at a United States military vehicle, two others were killed and 49 injured by a bomb in a cinema. A marine Guard was shot dead. Incidents in the past 10 days have now claimed five dead and 78 wounded.

STOOGES

But the stooge government of Adoula is facing trouble from other quarters. It has now reached the stage where it cannot be sure of full support from its own troops.

In Leopoldville, the capital, 200 soldiers were imprisoned for refusing to be moved into Kwilu to crush the uprising.

This indicates that the rebellion led by Mulele, far from being an isolated occurrence, is a reflection of general discontent throughout the territory with a government whose first concern is the safety of imperialist interests rather than the welfare of its own people.

Wilson, Home and the BOMB

US or UK deterrent?

STRENUOUS EFFORTS are being made by Labour and Tory leaders to make the H-bomb into a major election issue.

But, on both sides, the argument is a sham one, brought in to divert attention from the real class questions involved.

The dispute does not involve a fight against nuclear war, but whether the British government should maintain an 'independent nuclear deterrent'. Wilson favours reliance on US missiles for threatening the Soviet Union, while Home refuses to give up his very own British bomb.

DETERRENT

The 1964 Defence White Paper states:

'To suggest that the independent deterrent might be abandoned in the interests of non-dissemination overlooks the fact that, if there were no power in Europe capable of inflicting unacceptable damage on a potential enemy, he might be tempted—if not now then perhaps at some time in the future—to attack, in the mistaken belief that the United States would not act unless America herself were attacked.'

'The V-bombers by themselves are, and the Polaris submarines will be, capable of inflicting greater damage than any potential aggressor would consider acceptable. For this reason the British nuclear forces make a unique contribution to the main deterrent.'

'Polaris submarines will be built in British yards and, although the delivery system is American, the nuclear warheads will be British and free from all control by any other power. At Nassau, the Government of the USA agreed to make Polaris missiles available "on a continuing basis".'

Leaving aside the manic logic of nuclear strategy ('unacceptable damage') this argument is technically a fake. The Polaris

submarines are still a long way off and in the meantime the British bomb can only be delivered by the V-bomber.

It is now recognised that missile defences can stop such high-flying, manned bombers getting through. But last week, the Air Ministry announced that the V-bombers could be converted into low-flying attackers.

DEMONSTRATION

At a demonstration at the Wittering RAF base, Air Minister Fraser explained how Victors and Vulcans, at extremely small extra cost, could be used to fire Blue Steel missiles at levels below radar defence beams.

An editorial comment in last week's issue of the aeronautical magazine 'Flight' cast doubt on the feasibility of these plans. Low-level flying implies much greater stresses on the airframe of a bomber at high speeds, and power speeds are impossible if defensive ground-to-air missiles are to be avoided.

'Flight' estimates that a V-bomber airframe could fall to bits in the flying time needed to train aircrews in this type of attack.

V-FORCE

'Far from extending the life of the V-force until 1970 or 1971, as was suggested last week, it could well ensure that we had no effective V-force left by the end of the year,' states the editorial.

So, despite all the election shadow-boxing on the question of defence, there is no real difference between the nuclear war policies offered by Wilson and Home.

British imperialism will be forced to depend on the nuclear generosity of its American 'allies', whoever is the Minister of Defence in charge of spending that £2,000 million this year.

Deported British trade unionist calls for boycott of SA goods

YOUNG TRADE UNIONIST Edward Davoren arrived in Britain last week following his deportation from South Africa.

The deportation is part of the Verwoerd regime's intensive campaign against political opponents throughout the country.

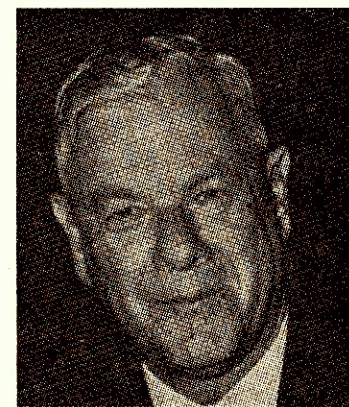
On February 6 the police raided the headquarters of the 'multi-racial', 55,000-strong, South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) in Johannesburg and arrested the 23-year-old Davoren.

Pending deportation Davoren, who went to South Africa early last year, went on a hunger strike in protest against his arrest.

Delayed

His deportation order was delayed by the refusal of the British Consul to hand over his passport to the local immigration authorities until proper diplomatic procedures had been observed.

The action came after an alleged threat by security police during an interrogation about 10 weeks ago that Davoren would be detained under the 90-day no trial law and deported.



Verwoerd: Attacking white opponents

During the interrogation the police are alleged to have told him that a communist cell in the Congress of Trade Unions was responsible for the minimum wage demand of £1 a day for all workers throughout South Africa.

Davoren—a Roman Catholic—denied being a communist, but the security police jeered at him.

In Coventry, where he worked at Massey Ferguson before going to Johannesburg, Davoren said the British labour movement should involve the United Nations in a boycott of South African goods.

'The South Africans have been starving for years, and our buying from that country will not make any difference,' he said.

Detentions

Apart from these latest actions against the Congress of Trade Unions there have been many previous banning and detention orders against officials and members of the organisation. There are already six executive members serving their second round of detention—under the 90-day clause—in solitary confinement.

Such actions are designed to bring the activities of the Congress to a complete halt as do

various other laws which prohibit African workers striking against their employers. African trade unions are not recognised by the government.

Side by side with these attacks the Verwoerd regime is now directing increasing attention to its white opponents in the Liberal Party and the 'progressive' members of the banned Congress of Democrats.

Ban

The Minister of Justice, Mr. Vorster, is busy compiling a list of all the members and associates of the Congress of Democrats in an attempt to ban them under the statutory terms of the Suppression of Communism Act. Already a number of people have been served with banning orders.

Meanwhile the Afrikaner Broederbond, together with other local and foreign reactionary organisations are busy preparing a 'Volkskongress on Communism' to be held next month in Pretoria.

The theme of the Volkskongress is to be 'Christianity versus Communism' and naturally the Broederbond-controlled Dutch Reformed Church, will be taking an active part.

McCarthy-like

Leading figures on the committee of the Volkskongress have already made McCarthy-like utterances against businessmen, liberals and some religious ministers of other denominations.

The presence in South Africa of Sir Oswald Mosley of the Union Movement, Mr. A. K. Chesterton of the League of Empire Loyalists and Mr. Blythe Thompson of the London-based South Africa Society, all extreme right-wing organisations of Britain, as well as their increased activity both in Britain and South Africa cannot be regarded as coincidental.

No death benefit for docker's widow

Workmates fight Pension Scheme clause

Truline seven still out

ANOTHER WEEK has gone by and leaders of the Garment Workers' Union have still done nothing to help reinstate the seven girls dismissed from the Truline factory in Sheffield a week after a union was formed there.

Attempts have been made to dissuade the sacked workers from taking any action on their own and making any press statements.

They are very short of money. Engineering firms in Sheffield promised two weeks ago that £5 a week would be collected for each girl. Nothing has yet been received because the matter has not been put before all the meetings necessary to make these decisions effective.

Reinstatement

Throughout this struggle the girls have consistently refused to take other jobs and as long as there is a possibility of reinstatement they will hold out. But union actions are making them wonder if there is any chance of this at all.

It is important that other workers support this fight now to overcome the backsliding of the union leaders. Transport workers should 'black' the firm's goods as they promised.

Financial support is essential. So far a tremendous struggle has been put up but money is urgently needed if it is to continue and be successful.

Please send your donations to Mrs. D. Bland, 43 Hartley Brook Road, Sheffield 5.

'BLACKLEG' INVESTIGATION

PORT TALBOT Trades Council has decided to take action against a number of foremen, including two councillors, who 'blacklegged' during a dispute at the Margam steelworks.

Previous attempts to discipline the men through their own union—British Iron, Steel and Kindred Trades Association—were completely unsuccessful.

DOCKERS in Liverpool, who for three weeks have been vigorously opposing the port employers' 'New Deal', were incensed last week by the shabby treatment of a workmate's widow.

Mr. Jimmy Stocks died after he fell 40 feet into the hold of a Harrison Line boat three weeks ago at Bankhall.

He had worked in the docks as a deckhand for 9 years and eight months.

His widow's claim for death benefit from the Dockworkers' Pension Scheme was rejected because of an obscurely worded clause in the scheme which stipulates that a worker must have been in the industry 10 years before he qualifies for the £250 death benefit.

This ruling has come as a shock not only to Mrs. Stocks but also to the majority of dockers in the port.

At a mass meeting outside the dock gates at Bankhall last Thursday, several hundred dockers listened attentively as a spokesman for the 'Blue Union' reported the decision of the pension board.

Petition

They voted, with only one abstention, to immediately circulate a petition throughout the port demanding that the 10-year clause be revoked so that the full benefit becomes payable to the dependants of all dockworkers who lose their life through injury or sickness contracted whilst working in the industry.

The speaker for the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers pointed out at the meeting that his union had been the only one to oppose the pension scheme when it was introduced in 1961. They considered it totally inadequate.

Retirement

Under the scheme 2s. 6d. is deducted from a docker's wages each week by the Dock Labour Board and his employer pays another 2s. 6d. On retirement at 65 he receives 10s. per week. If he leaves the industry before the retirement age his contributions are refunded to him with 3½ per cent interest added.

Mrs. Stocks will therefore receive a lump sum of approximately £20 to compensate for the loss of her husband.

It is only now that the scheme is operating that the anomalies and injustices, which NASD

warned about, are beginning to show up.

At the time of its introduction it was wildly applauded by the TGWU, the national press and the Communist Party. The only abstainer at the Bankhall meeting on Thursday was a leading member of the Communist Party.

Liverpool dockers are determined to campaign in all the other major ports until the scheme in its present form is scrapped.

As one docker told The Newsletter reporter:

'This case has caught many of us by surprise. But we now know what to expect from the port employers under their so-called New Deal. The patriarchal air of benevolence to the docker with which they have surrounded the New Deal proposals has been wiped away by this case.

'We can clearly expect nothing from them in the future unless we are prepared to sell our working conditions in return.'

Militant

Meanwhile in Liverpool docks the campaign against the New Deal proposals has produced a militant mood that is more and more leading to demands for an offensive to be launched to improve wages and working conditions.

Number five branch of the NASD has submitted a motion to the Executive Council calling for an immediate claim to be submitted to the employers:

- a 40-hour week to become operative by June 1 this year;
- £2 4s. 0d. a day minimum fall-back wage;
- one call a day;
- a sick scheme for daily workers equivalent to the scheme in operation for weekly workers; and
- an immediate increase of 10s. per week on the pension scheme.

The branch has also called for a stoppage of work nationally on May 4 and a mass demonstration in London on that day to press the claim.



METAL POLISHERS VICTIMS OF EXPANSION

TWELVE METAL polishers employed by the British Motor Corporation are victims of the company's huge expansion policies—at the moment they are suspended from work, receiving £7 7s. a week.

The company did undertake that the expansion programme would cost no Birmingham worker his job but it is costing these men over £20 a week.

Formerly employed by Fisher and Ludlow—one of the British Motor Corporation's factories—at Erdington, the men were transferred to Longbridge when their department moved to the Merseyside area.

They started work in the car finishing department at the Austin factory and became members of the National Union of Vehicle Builders whilst retaining their Metal Mechanics' Union cards.

VACANCIES

Later the men heard that the department in which they had worked at Fisher and Ludlow was being re-opened and there were some vacancies.

Wanting to get back to their old work they stopped paying subscriptions into the Vehicle Builders' Union. A strike was threatened by other workers and the British Motor Corporation was told that the men should no longer be employed in the section. They were suspended by the company on £15 15s. a week.

The Fisher and Ludlow management were approached by the Metal Mechanics' Union with a request to give the men their jobs back at Erdington. They refused with the excuse that the re-opening of the department was 'only temporary'.

STATEMENT

Neither of the unions involved is convinced of the truth of the management's statement.

The company has shrugged the whole thing off as an inter-union dispute. While the arguments continue, the weekly suspension pay has been reduced to £7 7s.

One man has a wife and six children to support on this meagre sum.

There is a lot of feeling among workers at the Fisher and Ludlow factory that union officials should have ensured, before the men were transferred, that in the event of their department re-opening they would be offered their old jobs back.

In the meantime, Mr. Frank Briggs, General Secretary of the Metal Mechanics says he is prepared to consider supporting one of his members in taking legal action against the Vehicle Builders' Union to restrain them from preventing him carrying on his employment.

This will mean taking advantage of the recent Rookes' judgement, which threatens the right of a trade union to strike in support of a closed shop.

ETU backs power workers

FIVE UNIONS in the electricity supply industry will get full support from the Electrical Trades Union in their fight for a 40-hour week and fringe benefits.

Power workers have decided to call an overtime ban and a work-to-rule in support of their claim.

The electrical union's decision was taken at a meeting held on Sunday when its president, Mr. Les Cannon said: 'We are determined to express in a tangible way the strong feelings of our members about rates of pay in the industry.'

Conference

He said that the executive would call on the unions concerned to convene a national conference of representatives to help organise the ban on overtime and the work-to-rule.

Proposals for a publicity campaign to explain the very low wages received by electricity supply workers, have also been put forward.

Power workers are poorly paid; a skilled electrician in the electricity supply industry may take home as little as £12 a week.

Fascists

From page 1

landlords and big business—those really responsible for bad conditions.

The Act was described as an open encouragement to the fascist and racist gangs now re-emerging.

Such people served big business by dividing and weakening the working class and preventing them from organising to defend and improve their conditions.

Deportation

The case of Neville Allen, the young coloured worker who was recently threatened with deportation for stealing bread and milk was quoted to show how the Act could be used to deter immigrant workers from becoming involved in the class struggle in Britain.

A suggestion that a movement should be formed embracing 'all who opposed fascism' including Liberals, 'progressive' Tories and clergymen was firmly rejected by the meeting.

It is facts like these that halt the lie spread so eagerly by the 'popular press' of the 'pampered' workers in Port Talbot.

Spotlight on the tenants fight

'Rotting floorboards . . . dripping ceilings' in Sheffield

A SHEFFIELD housing company director has refused to repair a large house where six families share a bathroom and toilet.

Some of the residents pay as much as £3 15s. a week rent.

This is only one of the many examples of bad housing conditions in the town. New government legislation has done nothing to solve the problem. Landlords are still free to avoid making any improvements in property.

Because there is such a huge housing shortage in Sheffield people hang on to what little bit of 'home' they have got, knowing that it is just a little better than sleeping out on the street.

THREATS

Rather than carry out repairs, the landlords threaten eviction if the residents dare to complain. A young married man described the flat in which he lived.

'It was a home for us even though the floorboards were rotten and the ceiling dripped water when it rained. Ours is not the only case.'

Sheffield council has remained complacent over this issue for too long. The fact that it has had its eyes shut to the serious housing problems needs exposing.

SCHEMES

Of course, there are housing schemes. The Park Hill housing development has been given great publicity as the way to solve the problem. But there are still thousands of people living in the most wretched surroundings.

Attempts to make investigations into some of the housing companies have met, in some cases, with a refusal to cooperate.

One company refused to show its records and although in another case a man showed records, he refused to reveal his identity or his connection with the company he represented.

APPALLING

Clear and decisive measures are needed to cope with the present appalling housing situation. They will not come from the Tory government and the present policy of the Labour Party in no way meets the needs.

Housing will be a big issue in the next election and no clear policy has been offered as an alternative to the Tories' housing policy.

The evils of landlordism can only be ended by their complete destruction. This means nationalisation of the land and the planning of building with a priority given to housing.

In the next few months MPs and councillors must be pressed by tenants' committees to take up these issues on bad housing.

Leeds tenants protest

ANGRY TENANTS of the 84 Leeds Corporation flats at St. Barnabas Garth, Holbeck, packed into a protest meeting held in their local pub, to express their disgust at the Yorkshire Electricity Board.

Many of them have been faced with bills of up to £43 for 13 weeks' supply.

Last July workmen moved into the homes and took out all coal burning fireplaces as part of a 'modernisation plan', replacing them with electric fires.

A number of tenants expressed the wish for gas heaters but they were refused.

Mrs. Irene Whiteley, a member of the St. Barnabas Garth Tenants' Association, told The Newsletter: 'We are paying more than the average domestic tariff for Leeds.'

Dampness

In addition to having huge bills many of the tenants claim that since going all-electric they have suffered from extreme dampness in the flats.

'The flats are a disgrace, green mildew and dampness everywhere with paper peeling off as soon as it is put on,' one man told the meeting.

'It is worse than living in caves. Some families when flushing the toilet, flush the sewage into the toilet of the flat below.'

The Corporation has advised people to open their windows to eliminate serious condensation. 'Then we can't close them again because the window frames are warped,' explained a tenant.

Representing the council at the meeting Councillor Bernard Atha could only offer a feeble excuse: 'These conditions are not the fault of the Corporation, but of a firm of private contractors from London who walked out on us,' he said.

A visitor from another tenants' association urged the meeting to take positive action and demand alternative heating. A resolution to this effect was carried.

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MEETINGS

GREET THE NEWSLETTER

Liverpool

Sunday, March 1, 7.30 p.m.

Walker Art Gallery, William Brown Street

Speakers:

Mike Banda—Newsletter Editor

G. Healy—National Secretary, Socialist Labour League

Leeds

Sunday, March 22, 6.30 p.m.

Leeds Art Gallery

Speakers:

M. Banda—Newsletter Editor

C. Slaughter

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SHIFT WORK AND SPEED-UP AT SCOW

METHODS used by the Steel Company of Wales to drive workers in the plant to higher production make one man's wages depend on another's work.

Production workers receive a low basic wage and rely on their tonnage bonus to make up their earnings. This means that there is great pressure on the maintenance men to carry out their work with the maximum speed. Time spent on that job is money lost to the production worker.

In the same way a fitter's tonnage bonus depends not on his own work but the production of the hot mill—even for those fitters who do not work in that mill.

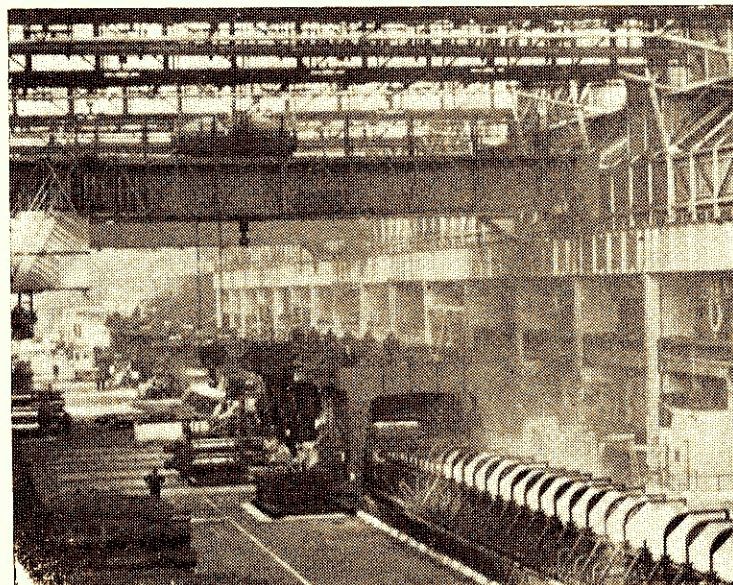
Basic wage

A fitter's basic wage of just over 6s. an hour compares favourably with other industries. But it would be wrong to build a picture of wealthy fitters in Port Talbot on this evidence.

The management give a decent basic wage with one hand but take it away with the other by giving smaller bonuses and shift rates.

'If I were to work the same shifts in any other industry I would be getting one and a half to twice as much money,' a fitter told The Newsletter.

The Steel Company of Wales



Rolling mill at Steel Company of Wales

works a continental system. This means that over a nine-day period a man will work two morning shifts followed by two afternoon shifts and three night shifts then he has two days' rest.

In fact the two rest days work out to be a day and a half because workers go home straight after the night shift. Much of the first day is spent in sleep.

'There's no such thing as a week-end down here,' was the comment of one fitter. 'It's just shift period after shift period. The only

difference is that one period you work three nights, the next you work three mornings.'

'Some day workers work a normal five and a half day week but they are only potential shift workers. They take home £4 a week less than we do. You could say that the cost of a man's social life is £4 a week,' he added.

Canteens serving hot meals in the works are non-existent. There are just slot machines. This means that men who come on a shift at six o'clock in the morning in winter have nowhere

to have a hot meal before work.

The management used to run hot meal canteens but they closed them down because they were not profitable. 'Brickies' managed to get their canteen reopened by striking.

Inside the works the accident rate is high. Steel coming from the hot mill is wound at great speed on to coils. Recently a production worker was killed as a piece of scrap flew off and pierced his chest.

From the coils the steel is levelled, trimmed and cut into sheets. It has to be guided by hand while it is trimmed and cut by the shears.

Serious injury

One man's job is to stack the sheets as they come off the trimmer at high speed. It only needs one piece to be slightly out of place for him to have a serious injury. A few weeks ago a man's hand was maimed on this job.

Fitters working on the blast furnaces have to change doors whilst they are red hot and for this they only get 1s. extra an hour. At one time it was decided by barter with the foremen.

It is facts like these that halt the lie spread so eagerly by the 'popular press' of the 'pampered' workers in Port Talbot.