

The Newsletter

WEEKLY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

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B/OSL FILE

**TROTSKYISM
IN THE
SOVIET
UNION**

Special report by
MICHAEL BEST
See page two

MARCH WITH THE YOUNG SOCIALISTS

**Brighton Oct. 2: Demonstrate against
THE WAGE FREEZE, UNEMPLOYMENT
AND THE VIETNAM WAR**

on the eve of the Labour Party Conference

Demonstration assemblies 1.30 p.m. and will go from the
Palace Pier, Grand Junction Road, Kings Road, Preston
Street, Western Road along West Street past the Conference
Hall, returning to Palace Pier for a

BEACH MEETING: FISH MARKET BEACH 3.30 p.m.

GROWING OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT POLICY

UNIONS SNUB WILSON ON WAGE FREEZE

**Must demand
I.C.I. be
nationalized**

by Robert James

**A BIG snub for Harold
Wilson's economic measures
is expected at the Blackpool
Trades Union Congress**

Already unions whose policies have ranged on the 'loyalty to Labour' fringe ever since the October 1964 General Election have tabled motions and amendments strongly deprecating the anti-union laws and wages standstill.

Wilson's visit to the TUC to plead for his policies will be a last-ditch stand with the union if the delegates' actions speak as loud as the militant motions forced on the union leaders by their rank-and-file members.

With the deepening crisis of capitalism, events often overtake intended action, and many of the TUC motions now seem strangely outdated.

The government's economic measures—so closely connected with its wage freeze policy, legally enforceable through its Prices and Incomes Act—are wreaking havoc among firms throughout the country.

Extent of measures

Imperial Chemical Industries shock redundancy announcement shows the extent to which these measures affect combine capital, and how they will also be used by the employing class to rationalise their productive forces. (The ENV closure, cut-back in the motor trade and other consumer goods producers are other examples.)

The ICI lay-offs will probably find another expression in lost profits when the firm announces its trading figures. (Peter Jeffries explains this on this page.)

If ICI, the biggest employer and one-time fastest expanding combine in the country cannot manage now, then there is only one demand that workers can make:

Nationalize ICI and all basic industries!
The fight against the wage freeze and the demand for nationalization are inseparable.

If the TUC delegates do ignore Wilson's pleas on his economic measures, then their next step must be an emergency motion on ICI and the growing unemployment caused by these measures.

But the real lead must come from the mass labour movement united around the slogans and policies of the Young Socialists and the Socialist Labour League for a revolutionary answer to the capitalist crisis.

All trade unionists must now decide to join the October 2 demonstration in Brighton outside the Labour Party conference, called by the Young Socialists around the slogans:

- End the wage freeze.
- Against unemployment.

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The Newsletter

*Only rank and file
can beat wages
Bill*

THE FLEET STREET press suggest that the opposition to the wage freeze and the Prices and Incomes Bill may well win the day at the Blackpool conference of the Trades Union Congress early in September.

Prime Minister Wilson is to urge the conference to support the government, but it is not at all certain that he will be successful.

As the fake 'lefts' around 'Tribune' would say, 'the debate continues'. Be that as it may, we are left with an urgent impression. Even if the right wing challenges the so-called 'left' at Blackpool, who in effect is going to defeat the Prices and Incomes Bill?

We say the working class, who are organised in the trade unions, are the ones who will defeat the Bill, and not the leaders who have betrayed them at every decisive stage of the struggle.

Frank Cousins who now claims to lead the fight against the Prices and Incomes Bill spent six and a half weeks in Wilson's cabinet supporting the smashing of the seamen's strike which up until now was the only major action against the Bill.

How can rank and file trade unionists

support Cousins with such a record?

The most important thing, to appreciate about the struggle against the government and its anti-trade union legislation is that it is a political struggle. The trade unions are being legally tied to the capitalist state, which means that they are becoming more and more chained to the big monopolies.

To end this tie-up means to fight the capitalist state, something which the right wing and the 'left' wing trade union leaders will never do. Only the rank-and-file trade unionists working with and led by a revolutionary leadership pledged to overthrow the capitalist state can offer a solution to the present crisis.

Since all major wage struggles are now political struggles, because they involve an open confrontation with the capitalist state these will be resolved not by a reformist trade union leadership but by the building of a revolutionary party.

The fight against the Prices and Incomes Bill will be decided by the rank-and-file trade union movement fighting under a revolutionary leadership against the capitalist state and not by the TUC, even if it decides to oppose the Bill.

**I.C.I.'s
biggest
sackings
since
war**

by PETER JEFFRIES

MONDAY'S announcement that ICI is sacking 1,000 workers at three of their nylon factories underlines the rapidity with which unemployment is now hitting British industry.

ICI shares fell 6d on this news, which coincides with falling profits for this giant monopoly. The 1,000 men are drawn from factories at Doncaster, Pontypool and Gloucester, where 9,000 are at present employed.

The management says that the sackings were due to economic conditions, tax changes and the further deflationary measures.

These redundancies, involving over 10 per cent of the ICI labour force in man-made fibres, are the biggest since the war. They come on the eve of massive expansion plans by this company which were announced as recently as March of this year.

EXTRA WORKERS

Then it was planned, in order to meet what ICI thought would be an expanding market, to take on 1,500 extra workers at Doncaster and 700 at Pontypool. In the event, 600 will lose their jobs at the first plant and 250 at the latter (not counting the 700 at the South Wales plant who are presently engaged on plant extensions and whose jobs are almost certain to go as ICI cut their whole investment plans).

There are several important lessons to be learnt about the background to these decisions.

ICI has dispensed with the old solution of short-time working. This means the management is certain that the present recession will deepen and will last for a considerable period.

In the past, firms have been willing to 'hoard' labour in anticipation of a quick upturn in the economy.

It is clear that this is no 'normal' recession. Other firms are adopting a similar attitude.

Continued page 4, column 4

**'Phased closure' of
ENV plant**

1,500 to lose jobs

NEWSLETTER REPORTER

AN all-out fight by 1,500 Willesden, North London, engineers to keep their jobs is expected following Wednesday's announcement of a 'phased closure' of the ENV factory.

The announcement was given at a works conference by the plant's American manager, John P. Townsend.

Since June, the employers had been attempting to introduce proposals to end the strong union organisation in this factory, which had some of the best wages and conditions in the north-west London industrial belt.

(See page three for full background story.)

SQUEEZE BLAMED

Townsend blamed the closure on the government's credit squeeze.

Commented ENV convenor Geoff Mitchell:

'We take a position of opposition to the closure and endorse the position taken by local officials.'

'We feel that the whole question is linked with the policy carried out by the government at the dictates of the big financiers tied up with Washington.'

The government's economic measures were an attempt to break down organisation and weaken rank-and-file opposition to the government's incomes policy—the ENV shop stewards' committee has, in fact, taken a leading role in the fight against the Prices and Incomes Bill, jointly calling two of this year's four lobbies of parliament.

At Wednesday's conference, the firm presented their statement. After an adjournment, the union side said they opposed the closure and asked if the management would jointly explore the possibilities of keeping the factory open by visiting the Labour Minister, Ray Gunter, and through other channels. This was turned down.

REJECTED INVITATION

The union then rejected the firm's invitation to examine the mechanics of the 'phased redundancy'.

The shop stewards' committee met later to endorse union

action. Later a local conference is to be held for further discussions.

In the meantime, says Mr. Mitchell, action will be organised. Local MPs and the TUC will be lobbied. Workers might join the October 2 lobby of the Labour Party conference organised by the Young Socialists for October 2.

Mr. Mitchell travelled north on Thursday to gain support of the firm's Manchester and Aycliffe, Darlington, workers. Already the Manchester men have told ENVs they will 'black' any work taken from Willesden.

Before he left he told The Newsletter that the Eaton combine—the US-based organisation which bought up ENV in 1962—had produced some production figures which showed that as a concern it appeared to be 'doing very well indeed'.

The firm was simply claiming that the Willesden plant was not paying its way.

But, he claimed, the proposed closure was a breach of faith—the company had given verbal and written assurances

**WAGE FREEZE
STRIKE IN
SHEFFIELD**

NEWSLETTER CORRESPONDENT

LAST Monday night-shift workers at Ambrose Shardlow Ltd., Sheffield, began a one-day stoppage in protest against the government's wage freeze which Shardlow's directors are using in order to withhold increases in piece-work prices. These prices had been the subject of negotiations during the previous nine months.

The day-shift carried through the stoppage on Tuesday starting in the early morning by lobbying leading engineering factories in Sheffield.

This is a policy fully supported by the Young Socialists and the Socialist Labour League who have been consistent in their opposition to the Prices and Incomes Bill and the subsequent wage freeze, having supported all four lobbies of parliament and recommended industrial action.

Factory meetings

Some workers felt that more could have been done on Tuesday—a demonstration through Sheffield and factory-gate meetings should have been organised by the shop stewards' committee.

But this is an important first political step by these engineers, which must be continued in an

extended campaign against the wage freeze and the growing unemployment.

Shardlow workers must unite with engineers and all workers in lobbying the TUC and joining the Young Socialists' demonstration in Brighton on October 2, advertised on this page.

● On page 3 read our correspondent's report of events leading up to last Tuesday's action.

**Soviet
ballet
for Spain**

SOVIET ballet dancers this week began a month's tour of fascist Spain.

The Igor Moiseyev Dance Ensemble will perform in Santander, Madrid, Bilbao, San Sebastian and Barcelona. This is one of the first Soviet contacts with Spain since the Civil War 30 years ago.

On the day that the Ensemble left Moscow, 'Pravda' predicted the gradual collapse of the Franco regime.

Perhaps they are hoping the dancers' 'Dying Swan' will have a psychological effect on the Generalissimo!



Convenor
Mitchell

that in the event of a cut back, the parent company would not carry out work to the detriment of the Willesden plant.

NOT NORMAL

But ENV's action confirms that the government's economic measures are leaving a trail of unemployment, and that what has been considered normal union-management negotiations in the past no longer exist—firm's cannot and will not bend under pressure from militant shop stewards' committees when they have their backs to the wall and know they will have them there for some time to come.

The cut back in the motor trade (see page two) will lead more and more to similar action in plants providing component parts.

The pattern set at ENV could sweep through the north-west London engineering factories—employing some 31,000 Amalgamated Engineering Union members alone—and others throughout Britain.

Action must now be coordinated in mass united demonstrations by all workers at the TUC and Labour Party conferences on September 3 and October 2 where they must demand:

- End the wage freeze.
- End unemployment.
- Nationalize the engineering industry and the banks.

**U.S. prepares to cross
17th parallel**

By MICHAEL BANDA

THE mounting loss of US aircraft in the North and men in the South is forcing Johnson and his co-hawks in the White House to make a re-appraisal of the Vietnam War.

The effects of this new strategy will have ominous and far-reaching repercussions in south-east Asia and will tear to shreds the last remnants of the notorious Geneva agreement.

In short, American imperialism is preparing to invade north Vietnam and crush the revolution at its source, in Hanoi.

What was once inspired guesswork about US policy is now a brutal fact.

This week's issue of the influential US journal 'Newsweek' has reported that Johnson's plans to escalate the war by an amphibious landing above the 17th parallel and by the blockade of Haiphong. This will require a tremendous

number of men—far more than anything US imperialism has in Vietnam at the present.

So while Johnson makes uncut-up speeches about an equitable call-up of US youth, the draft boards are preparing to conscript anybody—including the mentally defective and the physically infirm.

British participation

And if this policy fails, then we can and must expect increased pressure for British participation in Vietnam. (With George Brown as Foreign Secretary we can expect anything.)

Meanwhile the persistent refusal of China and Russia to be drawn into the Vietnam war prolongs the agony of the Vietnamese people and leaves the door open for further acts of imperialist banditry.

The reply of Kossygin to Bertrand Russell, far from allaying the suspicions of Marxists has

in fact confirmed the widely-held impression that Kossygin and Brezhnev are prepared to fight to the last drop of blood of the Vietnamese workers.

However the cynical betrayals of those counter-revolutionary traitors will not prevent the Vietnam from smashing US imperialism and its 'running dogs' in Vietnam.

Liege—three weeks to go

THERE ARE just three weeks to the closing date for readers and supporters of The Newsletter to enrol in the trip to Liege in Belgium on October 15 with the Young Socialists.

This is a very big opportunity for any socialist, trade unionist and apprentice to meet Young Socialists of Belgium and other European countries who will be protesting against the war in Vietnam and against the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

The number of youth joining the trip increases daily with the Young Socialists' two-week campaign, but there is still room for any Newsletter reader who wants to go.

The all-round cost will be £8 10s from Dover to Ostend then Liege and back. This includes a free meal in Liege and dancing on board ship there and back.

For further details write to: Dany Sylveire, Liege Organiser, 186a Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4.

Trotskyism in the Soviet Union

ON the 17th of this month 'Pravda' published an article under the title 'A Rebuttal to Falsifiers'. It was unsigned, but placed in a position where important articles often appear, across the bottom part of page two.

Its sub-title: 'Through the Pages of the Magazine "Problems of History of the CPSU" the apparent intention of 'Pravda' was to draw its readers' attention to certain articles which had been appearing in the above-mentioned magazine, read mostly by party hacks.

The article begins:

'In the present epoch, when the contradictions between the two social systems determines the character of world development, all forms of the class struggle acquire a particular sharpness, among them the ideological struggle.'

Thus setting the scene, it then goes on to tell the readers of the 'rebuttals' to genuine bourgeois



ISAAC DEUTSCHER is used by Soviet bureaucracy in amalgam gimmick.

critics by certain Soviet writers in that magazine.

But towards the end, there comes the typical Stalinist amalgam trick, made famous during the purge trials of the 1930s, when old Bolsheviks were deliberately mixed up with a few genuine spies and anti-Soviet elements in order to give greater verisimilitude to the monstrous charges against the genuine revolutionaries.

Gimmick

The present amalgam gimmick works on the same principle. The genuine bourgeois anti-Soviet critics are 'casually', as it were, mixed up with Trotskyism, in order to 'prove' that it is only just another form of this sharpening bourgeois struggle against Leninism. Here is the quotation in full:

'One other method used by the anti-communists for undermining the theoretical basis and political line of the party has spread in recent years. The essential point of this method consists in the utilisation of the wretched baggage of various anti-Leninist currents, long since utterly defeated by the party. Readers are given the impression, as if the many Trotskyist and such like "ideas" were shared and carried out by the party and by Lenin. The dexterous pens of the bourgeois scribblers have turned the Trotskyists and particularly the right-wing capitalists into the most orthodox of Marxists who, allegedly, had indicated the only correct road for the development of the Russian revolution.'

'These manoeuvres have also been exposed in the magazine. "Trotskyism a Bourgeois Imperialist Propaganda"—such is the title of the article by N. P. Mikeshin. The author points out that for I. Deutscher, L. Schapiro, G. Sheyer and other solid "Sovietologists", Trotskyism often serves as a point of departure for their stand in the fight against the Marxist-Leninist teaching. They make particular free use of the Trotskyist "theory of permanent revolution" with the aim of "refuting" V. I. Lenin not only on the possibilities of the victory of socialism initially in one country alone, but also the Leninist plan of building a socialist order in the USSR. "The anti-communist ideolo-

gists have counted upon using the criticism of past mistakes, at the XX and XXII Congresses of the CPSU, in order to rehabilitate Trotskyism and make null and void the history of the party's struggle against him. "But such attempts," the article says, "did not and never would achieve this aim. Our party's condemnation of the personality cult by no means signifies a rehabilitation of anti-Leninist currents."

Thus, not only is Trotskyism linked with all genuine bourgeois attacks on the Soviet Union, by people who are not designated as 'Trotskyist'; but people like L. Schapiro, a genuine bourgeois 'Kremlinologist', who really does talk a lot of drivel about the Soviet Union, are also linked with Isaac Deutscher, author of 'Stalin' and the Trotsky trilogy. But the great significance of this article is not in the fact that the bureaucracy has rejected the idea of rehabilitating Trotsky. That is not news and is not surprising.

What is significant is why 'Pravda', the most important and most widely-read paper in the Soviet Union, should wish to give the widest publicity not to Deutscher, Schapiro or any other 'foreign ideologist of anti-communism' whose writing in any case the Soviet citizen never had a chance to read, but to the 'rebuttals', which had appeared some months ago.

Why should 'Pravda' recommend to the widest possible readership Mikeshin's wholesome articles on how the Trotskyists—all abroad, of course—faithful servants of world imperialism, are at it again, propagating the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, all with the aid of Trotsky's diabolical theory of permanent revolution?

Wider audience

Why should a wider audience be informed of these articles, unless 'Pravda' thought that there also existed a wider audience, which normally does not read the magazine, but which has nevertheless begun to get ideas about Trotsky?

And the answer, of course, is that such a wider audience does now exist inside the Soviet Union.

Of course, so does an audience for real bourgeois ideas exist.

The bureaucracy, broadly speaking, is fighting on two ideological fronts. On the one hand, there is a growing bourgeois influence, created mostly not by Western capitalist broadcasts, but by a far better quality goods that have penetrated into the Soviet Union through the sight of what tourists wear and what Soviet seamen bring from abroad or from parcels received from relatives abroad.

A politically more backward section of the Soviet public, with its base in the countryside, dissatisfied with the state of the country, as 90 per cent of the population is, believing in the bureaucracy's claim that it is pursuing a true Leninist policy, saying: if that is Leninism, then it is no good, and they turn their minds to the West. The bureaucracy, in its own interests, has to fight this genuine anti-communist current.

On the other hand, there is a broad section of Soviet citizenry, socialist to the core, with its base in the industrial towns and cities, also dissatisfied with the state of the country, but who find themselves opposed to the bureaucracy because they sense that it is NOT pursuing a Leninist policy.

I say 'sense' deliberately, because despite the fact that Lenin's works are published by the millions in the Soviet Union and the Lenin personality cult is practised to absurd lengths, it is incredible how poorly educated in Lenin's writings the vast majority of Soviet citizens are.

Everybody there knows about Lenin, but as to the solid ideas he stood for, there is only a general idea in most people's minds. This is chiefly because the bureaucracy is constantly changing and rearranging Lenin's image.

Far from trying to adapt itself to Lenin's true image, they constantly change Lenin's to make it appear close to their own. Since co-existence with world imperialism became chief policy, for example, Lenin has been presented more and more like a defied Minister of Trade, with everything he had ever said about the importance of trading with

the capitalist West quoted daily, and out of context, of course.

So the bureaucracy has also to fight against this essentially genuine Leninist current, but of course pretending all the while that it is anti-Leninist. That is the purpose of this amalgam.

Does such a current, strong or weak, for the rehabilitation of Trotsky, really exist in the Soviet Union today, if only as an historical figure?

Why does 'Pravda' find it necessary to declare that Trotsky will not be rehabilitated, so there! unless there is a live current inside the Soviet Union favouring it?

Not being able to take a national opinion poll on the subject, we can only guess about its strength, but that it exists, there can be no doubt. The extra publicity indicates that clearly.

The Soviet people's collective memory of Trotsky has always existed, dimmed by the Stalin years of reaction, but never extinguished—despite all the Orwellian, 1984 methods.

Light up

And now, this memory is beginning, has begun, to light up again, and the bureaucracy has begun to worry.

We do not delude ourselves by jumping to the conclusion that the mass of the Soviet population has now turned towards Trotskyism. Far from it.

But at the same time, it would be equally wrong to accept the official pretence that there is no Trotskyist current—or even a tiny stream—inside the Soviet Union today and that all 'Pravda' is concerned with—while all the signs have already appeared that the new five-year plan, like all the previous ones, is once again coming up against the age-old, destructive, inevitably wasteful bureaucratic mismanagement which is a built-in feature of this regime—is to tell its readers that the anti-Leninist current of Trotskyism will never be rehabilitated.

The 'Pravda' article gives us greater encouragement to believe in the existence of this current. What is more, the objective conditions for a revival of Trotskyism are more favourable today than they have ever been before and, paraphrasing Voltaire, we

can state that had a real Trotsky never existed, current, living Soviet history would now have to invent one.

In the days of the first five-year plans, the idea of building socialism in one country alone, in such a vast underdeveloped country like the Soviet Union, with such great potentials, might have seemed plausible to most.

But precisely today, after the Soviet Union has made such vast progress, has taken such giant steps in the production of steel, coal, engineering, aviation, atomic energy, and of course in space exploration, the impossibility of building socialism in one country alone is becoming more and more apparent.

You can see it in the growing dependence of the Soviet economy on the world capitalist market; you can see it in the disarray of Comecon, where each unit finds it increasingly impossible to get economic satisfaction from within this even wider economic community; and you can see it from how the political needs of the bureaucracy make it impossible to introduce inside the Soviet Union real socialist democracy which alone can mobilise the creative energy of the people, the best, the only guarantee of growth towards socialism.

These factors are beginning to stare into the face of the now better-educated young Soviet workers.

An ever-growing number of them must begin to wonder if Trotsky was not right, after all, in saying that one cannot build socialism in one country alone.

If in the inconceivable circumstance, the bureaucracy were to succeed in suppressing the fact that Lenin, too, did not believe in this essentially petty-bourgeois, chauvinist, Great Russian nationalist idea; were such a circumstance at all conceivable, then it would inevitably result in a discrediting of Lenin's name, but it would not hold back the dam of a growing working-class consciousness in the Soviet Union, that in order to build socialism inside the frontiers of the Soviet Union, it would first require the overthrow of the capitalist social order in several advanced capitalist countries.

To this end we in Britain can make our own contribution.

Fewer seamen on ships since strike

FROM BILL HUNTER

WHAT are the conditions on the ships after the seamen's strike? What are the feelings of the men and what is the future for struggle in the seamen's union? These are some of the questions asked by The Newsletter of seamen waiting around the 'pool' in Liverpool.

The answers made clear that since the strike there has been a cut-down on labour. Fewer seamen have been employed, particularly in the catering departments of the passenger liners.

The August issue of 'The Seaman', monthly journal of the National Union of Seamen, reports that the recent meeting of the executive council discussed the under-manning of ships.



DASH: 'No unofficial action.'

'Instances were given of owners trying to reduce the crews below pre-strike manning practice. Such cuts were resolutely opposed by the union and the companies were told: "If you cut down crews, you'll get no NUS members at all". But the report goes on:

'The general secretary [Mr. Bill Hogarth] emphasised that it was the duty of all officials and ordinary members to refrain from touching ships where this cutting of crews took place because of the strike.'

Liverpool seamen questioned said that Hogarth's statement did not help them at all. Ships are sailing under-manned and nothing is being done.

PERFECT EXCUSE

Employers have the perfect excuse for using less men by saying it is not because of the strike, but in the interests of 'more efficient working'—in the end-of-strike agreement the union agreed to co-operate in 'more efficient working'.

One seaman reported how two 'time and motion' experts appeared on the 'Empress of Canada' recently to study the work of the catering department and make proposals as to how the same amount of work can be done by less men.



HOGARTH: Statement does not help at all.

in putting over that agreement. Dash prepared the way by calling on dockers not to take unofficial action in support of the seamen.

Both he and Norris worked might and main to split seamen from militant northern dockers on the demonstration in London on May 25 in support of the seamen and against the anti-union laws proposed by the government.

When militant dockers in Liverpool 'blacked' ships, Roger Woods, CP chairman of the strike committee, kicked their feet from under them. At a meeting of dockers where port-workers' committee members were under attack from the right wing, he refused to take a stand and implied there was confusion, not because of the right wing, but because of the militant port-workers' committee.

ISOLATE

The policy of the Communist Party in practice was to isolate the strike. And this was a strike which was not just a 'seamen's issue', but involved the government's wage-freeze policy; a strike in which Wilson was bringing together all the resources of the state, of propaganda, of the whole ruling class, to defeat the seamen.

Face with a choice of Norris or Hogarth, of course, militants in the NUS would choose Norris. But they should be warned that Norris, because he carries out Communist Party policy, can only carry out an opportunist line that will leave the seamen wide open to defeat in the future.

There is need to build a real alternative force that will develop the seamen on policies of struggle, not just on assurances that the solution lies in waiting to substitute one person for another.

ELECTIONS

Some men are waiting for a change in the union coming from the forthcoming elections.

Communist Party members and sympathisers place everything on this. In nine months, they say, officials of the union can be changed.

But what type of leadership is going to take their place? Seamen had a lesson during the strike of the type of leadership offered by the Communist Party, which assisted the right wing, and helped carry out the sell-out.

The seamen's strike was weakened when an agreement was made between the NUS and the Transport and General Workers' Union that ships could be moved from their berths. Seaman Gordon Norris and London dockers Jack Dash, two Communist Party members, assisted



NORRIS: Helped put over move ships agreement.

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS BEGINS TO BITE

LAST month saw a 21,000 rise in the number of wholly unemployed, excluding school-leavers—this represents three times the rise in unemployment normally felt at this time of the year.

Unemployment has in fact been growing at the rate of 14,000 over the last three months. Unemployed levels are now higher than unfilled vacancies, which last month fell by 23,000.

These figures do not yet reflect the crisis measures announced last month by Mr. Wilson. It is clear that the economy was already on the turn down as they were introduced and when their full effects are realised they must lead to an even sharper increase in the level of unemployment.

Each day during the last week has seen announcements by many firms of sacking and short-time working as the crisis matures.

STEEL:

The Steel Company of Wales has already announced that short-time working is to begin at its Margham plant (the biggest in the country) in September. This cut back is the result of a fall in orders.

This will not be an isolated case.

Over-production of steel is rapidly becoming a major European and world problem.

As a result of the latest technological and scientific developments steel production increases rapidly each month but a stagnation of demand leads to an intensified price war and falling profits.

The steel plants in Britain are too small, outdated technologically, and badly organised and are in no position to meet this gale of competition.

Already this year exports of steel are 8 per cent down on

last year and in June of this year steel imports reached 82,000 tons, more than twice the level of a year ago.

The intensification of the credit squeeze in the fields of motors and consumer durables will further hit the steel industry, sections of which are heavily dependent on these markets.

MOTORS:

Vauxhalls have announced that they can no longer guarantee their workers that there will be no redundancies in the coming months. When they do occur they will be the first redundancies at this firm for four years.

Rootes followed this up with a statement that 3,500 at their Linwood plant will almost certainly start on a four-day week next month.

Dunlops introduced a three-day working week at two of their Coventry plants making suspension units for the BMC Minis, 1100 and 1800 range. A spokesman was quick to deny that this was because of any cut-back in BMC requirements and said it was to allow for 'adjustment of stocks'.

Jaguars have also ceased to take body shells from Pressed Steel for their Mark X model and

Aston Martin have already warned their 900 workers at the Newport Pagnell plant that there will be redundancies amongst production staff. This factory has been on a four-day week for the last two months because of a drop in sales.

By PETER JEFFRIES

CONSUMER GOODS:

There is widespread fear from manufacturers that the measures taken by the government will lead to a severe falling off of demand for a wide range of household appliances.

Thorn-AEI Radio Valves, one of the top two makers of cathode ray tubes for TV has sacked 125 skilled electronics workers at its Sunderland factory, representing 10 per cent of its total labour force.

Mullard, the other leading firm in this field, admit a reduced demand for their goods and admit that the only hope of avoiding the consequences of this is to sell more goods abroad in the highly competitive world market.

Figures for the first five months of this year show that manufacturers' deliveries of electric cookers, refrigerators and washing machines are considerably down on the same period last year: again this does not take into account the severe deflationary measures of July.

Many manufacturers fear that with a stagnant or declining home market, existing capital will be under-utilised, costs will rise, and there will be even greater difficulty in holding on to export orders.

The hire-purchase position has been worsened by the decision of Mercantile Credit, one of the most important concerns in this field, to discontinue hire purchase and credit sales on domestic appliances from October.

OTHER CUT BACKS:

Rank Bush Murphy is to cease production at its South

Shields factory in October and 500 men will be sacked. The significance of this closure is that it occurs in the field of consumer durables which have been badly hit by successive doses of the credit squeeze.

It must certainly mean that announcements by other manufacturers in this field will soon follow.

G. B. Britton & Sons and Clarks, two leading manufacturers of footwear have announced that they will have to lay off a total of 400 men because of the government measures.

These announcements indicate a rapidly worsening economic and employment situation.

The National Institute of Economic and Social Research—the leading non-government forecasting body—in its August 'Economic Review' anticipates that unemployment will reach nearly half a million by next year.

This forecast—itsself more optimistic than that held by the government—is based on the assumption that British capitalism holds on to its precarious position in the world market and that there will be no recession or even slowing down in the world capitalist system in the coming months.

Both of these assumptions are untenable: British industry makes no progress towards the necessary modernisation and re-equipment that would alone enable the ruling class in this country to make up any lost ground.

In fact the 'freeze' on the economy by cutting back investment, forcing up interest rates, etc., will further impede growth and modernisation of British capitalism.

The latest slide on the Wall Street Exchange has brought

stock prices to their lowest level for two years and indicates the instability of the largest capitalist power in the world on which the whole capitalist system depends for its stability and survival.

The Labour leaders have deliberately devised policies to raise the level of unemployment well beyond the half million envisaged by the NIESR.

In fact the spokesmen for the ruling class fear that the present squeeze measures will not lead to a sufficiently thorough-going 'redeployment' (sacking) of labour. They are worried that firms will simply put men on short-time working, hoping that business will soon recover.

This is why 'The Times' last week called for the provision of funds by the government to enable business men to get rid of any labour they did not require.

If money was made available employers would not be worried about having to find the cash for redundancy payment and the 'mobility of labour' could be increased.

It is clear that all those who spoke of the crisis as something in the distant future were talking patent nonsense.

The crisis in this country now begins to affect the lives of millions of workers in the most basic way: jobs, wages, rents, cost of living, etc. The depth and speed at which this crisis is now maturing poses new problems for the working class and its organisations.

Traditional leaders are now involved in open collaboration with the employers in their endeavours to ensure that the crisis is 'solved' at the expense of millions of workers.

Now is the time for the working class to strike back and hit the employers: this can only be done under a new Marxist leadership in struggle against the Labour government and all those who cover up for the present betrayals of the working class and its struggle for socialism.

The history of mistakes at the Shardlow factory

THE tragedy behind the action this week at Shardlow's engineering factory in Sheffield is the series of mistakes by the stewards' committee, which the management has used to their advantage.

In a period of short-time working in 1956, the old shop stewards committee adopted a policy of a common 6s an hour piece-work ceiling for the machine shop. This was done and maintained for a period to facilitate work-sharing as an alternative to redundancy.

At a later period the stewards entered into an agreement with the management raising the ceiling by 6d an hour and ensuring 6d an hour revisions on bad jobs that did not reach 6s an hour, to enable this figure to be reached.

In November 1961 there was a change of convenor, deputy convenor and many stewards. Even though there were many subsequent requests for increases in the ceiling—to keep up with the rising cost of living—nothing was concluded until three years later, in November 1964. This agreement is known as the proposed temporary arrangements, machine shop department (standstill agreement).

It worked on the basis that for every 6d increase in average earnings of the shop above 6s 3d an hour, a monthly bonus would be paid on the basis of a certain figure per hour for hours worked in the month.

OBJECTIONS

There were objections to two clauses in this agreement. Even though part of it stated: 'These arrangements include no work study whatsoever, one clause was worded: "The management have included work study as part of their proposals, both for an interim scheme and for their long-term proposals".

The shop stewards' committee already had a unanimous mandate from the shop floor, which had never been repealed, that they would on no account tolerate work study—they knew it would mean time and motion study. It is important to remember this because of future negotiations.

The second clause objected to was: 'It is intended that all piece-work revisions would take place in a planned manner based on intervals of 12 months. As a first stage all jobs which cannot attain 6s 6d per hour piece work will be revised to enable that level to be attained. It is understood in the terms of the standstill that if this extends for over 12 months or alternatively if the negotiations do not produce more beneficial results inside the next 12 months, then the management will enter into negotiations with the stewards on the basis of revising piecework prices, and revising up to a higher level than 6s 6d. We have in mind, dependent upon conditions at that time, revisions up to a minimum of 7s an hour.'

The objections to this clause were based on the fact that this meant a wage freeze at 6s 6d an hour piece-work for the lower paid worker for 12 months—1s 6d an hour behind other workers.

Some militant workers considered that it would have been better to use any benefits derived from a saving on overheads through increased productivity for the benefit of the lower-paid

The Series 'PROBLEMS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL', by G. Healy, national secretary of the Socialist Labour League, will be resumed next week with the third article 'The role of the Socialist Workers' Party.'

worker, instead of a general productivity bonus for all. In spite of objections to these two clauses, the standstill agreement was adopted on recommendations from the shop stewards' committee. A recommended ceiling of 8s 6d per head was endorsed.

On Thursday, April 1, the management tried to introduce a work study engineer on to the factory floor. The shop stewards' committee recommended that this should be opposed and a token stoppage occurred. The engineer was withdrawn.

On May 18 a document was drawn up by the convenor to be studied by the workers prior to two meetings being held in the machine shop canteen.

Shop stewards' recommendations were to be put forward for endorsement or rejection by the night and day shift.

Apart from matters relating to the application of work study, the clause relevant to revisions was 'On the question of revisions the management have agreed that when the annual review falls due in November, 1965, all requests for revisions would be dealt with as new jobs if work study is operated satisfactorily to both sides'.

MANDATE

One would expect from this clause that when old jobs were revised as new jobs they would be based on whatever piece-work ceiling obtained at that time.

In spite of objections from certain militant members on the shop floor that there was already a mandate to oppose work study at any price, this new proposal to accept it was carried on the shop stewards' recommendation and following a statement by the convenor that even though there had been victories over Shardlow's management, now that the firm had been taken over by Guest, Keen and Nettlefold, these people were too big to fight.

Later in the year on the recommendation from the stewards' committee a new piece-work ceiling was again established with, of course, an increase in monthly bonus but no further revisions in piece-work prices on bad jobs.

Thus the difference in wages between the have and have not's was increased, and because of extra productivity, a lowering of hours worked.

A meeting was organised in late June to discuss what action should be taken to force the management's hand in this matter. At this meeting a resolution

was passed to support the recommendation that the management should be asked to agree to a 6s 6d per hour piece-work ceiling for the machine shop. This was done and maintained for a period to facilitate work-sharing as an alternative to redundancy.

At a later period the stewards entered into an agreement with the management raising the ceiling by 6d an hour and ensuring 6d an hour revisions on bad jobs that did not reach 6s an hour, to enable this figure to be reached.

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In many cases an actual lowering in the gross earnings of the lower-paid worker resulted, as well as an increase in the gross earnings of the higher-paid ones.

In November an application for revisions was made according to the terms of the standstill agreement of November 1964 and the work study agreement of May 1965. The negotiations were protracted.

In January 1966 an appeal was made to the shop stewards' committee to support the Lambeth Trades Council in a lobby of MPs to oppose any form of anti-trade union legislation, called for January 26.

This was rejected on the convenor's recommendation that the action was a 'young Trots' manoeuvre to stab the Labour government in the back'.

A recommendation at the end of February for the committee to support the March 1 lobby against the Prices and Incomes Bill was carried.

Following this, a resolution was put in the shop stewards' committee to support a recommendation from the forge department for day-work action to force the management to negotiate revisions on the bad jobs.

This was defeated on the convenor's recommendation that he should re-approach the directors for special consideration on the worst jobs. He was to report back the following Friday. No report back was given. No revisions were obtained.

In May resolutions were put in the shop stewards' committee calling for the committee's support for two lobbies of parliament organised to oppose the Prices and Incomes Bill. The first on May 25 called by the Young Socialists National Committee, the second on June 22 called by five London rank-and-file committees.

NO DISCUSSION

An amendment put by the convenor that the committee support the June lobby but not the May lobby was carried.

The management refused to discuss the revisions of bad jobs because they were not satisfied with the work-study acceptance or the way this was working in practice.

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Two engineering factories — ENV, Willesden, London and Shardlow's, Sheffield—have hit the headlines this week. On-the-spot Newsletter reporters have been looking at the happenings behind the headlines to produce these two reports.

ON THE INDUSTRIAL FRONT

BY ROBERT JAMES AND OUR SHEFFIELD CORRESPONDENT

The Socialist Labour League and Young Socialists have always claimed that leadership in the trade unions must be political leadership.

We welcome the fact that those Communist Party members in Shardlow who previously called us 'splitters' when we raised these questions now have taken strike action on a political question as the only way to show a determined opposition to the Labour government's policies.

This strike is seen by us as a big step in the right direction. The way forward is to fight to get the campaign of opposition to the wage freeze extended in Sheffield and elsewhere.

The campaign from Shardlow's around the other factories in Sheffield on the day of the strike was very limited.

Workers involved in giving out leaflets explaining the strike said much more should have been done. The shop stewards' committee at Shardlow, they felt, could have organised a demonstration in the city against the wage freeze, and certainly could have held factory-gate meetings to explain their action.

Many workers were asking what one strike could achieve. Our answer is that it is an important step.

The main question now is to campaign to extend the action to lobby at the TUC and to join the demonstration called by the YS on October 2 outside the Labour party conference to oppose the wage freeze.

In the course of this campaign it will be necessary to defend our actions against the attack of the capitalist press and the union bureaucracy—already the AEU executive attacked the action of the Shardlow's workers on the day of the strike and plans to circulate all districts telling them of their disapproval of protest strikes against the freeze.

It is likely that the shop stewards' committee and the convenor will be under attack, not only from the management and the press but from the AEU leadership.

All trade unionists must unite to defend the action of Shardlow's workers and to build in the working class a clear opposition to the wage freeze and the betrayers in the Labour government.

peasants who had not been told the differences between one party and another.

The officer also referred to the mounting hostility between the youth groups and, ironically, reported that many were back in their villages demanding that 'capitalist bureaucrats' be removed. Groups are beginning to take over the houses and shops of the rich which, the officer points out, 'is exactly what the communist youth movement tried to do'.

STOPPAGES

It was following this reply that the shop floor accepted the proposal to have two token stoppages against the government's wage freeze. This was a proposal to take a political strike and to follow this with a lobby of the Amalgamated Engineering Union's delegation to the TUC at Blackpool on September 3 to oppose the wage freeze.

This examination of the developments at Shardlow's over the past nine months and particularly the reaction of the convenor and shop stewards' committee on the two issues of piece-work ceiling revisions and the campaign to oppose the anti-union legislation and the government's prices and incomes policy has very valuable lessons for militant trade unionists.

The question raised is one of leadership in the trade unions. The seamen's strike and now the domestic issues in this factory bring out clearly the fact that issues of wages and working conditions cannot be separated from politics and the government.

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Million Indonesian communists confirmed dead

THE wave of Moslem, Nationalist and army-backed hatred which swept through Java, Sumatra, Bali and other islands following the abortive September 30 'coup' in Indonesia led to the death of nearly one million communists.

A team of university graduates, appointed by the present army leaders, are working systematically through the islands investigating the deaths and confirm that at least 800,000 probably died in the densely populated east and central Javan areas, 100,000 in Bali, as many more in Sumatra and others in the smaller islands.

And the killing continues, if not by the rampaging head-hunting bands of youth, then by a repressive state feeding thousands of prisoners a starvation diet.

The graduates' report, mentioned in last week's 'Economist', says that most of the killing was carried out by militant youth groups belonging to the Nationalist and Moslem Scholars Parties, 'sometimes armed and trained, and always encouraged, by the army'. (Our emphasis.)

(This is doubted by many; both army leaders and western correspondents say that several of the CP's central committee are still alive and that communist forces are regrouping in the mountains.)

Now that the youth organisations have run out of victims—having killed anyone connected with known communists, and, of course, having killed many not even connected with the CP—they are turning on each other in a bid for supremacy.

'The Economist' also has an interesting report taken from an army officer stationed near Banjarmasin in central Java. He describes some of the events following September 30.

Executions began soon after news of the 'coup' came over the radio. The communists were involved, he said, and the Party had nearly 300,000 members in his area.

Animosities between communists and the Moslems heightened the murder lust of the Moslem youths who, with the aid of the Nationalist youth, organised themselves into death squads of 60 to 70 with their own headquarters and operations.

Armed with cane cutters and guns, supplied by the army and civil defence corps, they began taking leading communists from their homes, from the jails and from the hands of the police into nearby fields and decapitating them.

Later their patrols moved from house to house asking each person for credentials. Truckloads of prisoners were taken into the canefields, forced to dig their own graves in the water channels,

and were then executed.

One of the most revealing aspects of the army officer's description is the fact that many communist party members were caught unawares. They knew nothing of what was happening or thought they might be jailed.

'The resistance was so slight because when protection from Jakarta was removed, and the communist leaders were killed, their followers were confused,' says the officer, adding that many of the Party followers were poor

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peasants who had not been told the differences between one party and another.

The officer also referred to the mounting hostility between the youth groups and, ironically, reported that many were back in their villages demanding that 'capitalist bureaucrats' be removed. Groups are beginning to take over the houses and shops of the rich which, the officer points out, 'is exactly what the communist youth movement tried to do'.

Fight against union-breaking ends in ENV closure

ON Wednesday, the American management of the north-west London engineering firm, ENV, announced a 'phased closure' of the Willesden factory. This means that 1,500 men will lose their jobs.

Earlier the management, which claims the credit squeeze has caused the closure, had attempted to introduce proposals that could have far-reaching effects on all engineering workers, if forced through.

These were brought to a meeting—between the management and top union officials, including Sir William Carron of the Amalgamated Engineering Union—called to discuss the growing number of disputes at the firm and its deteriorating profit position.

'Functions of management'—one of the documents—proposed that shop stewards should not be allowed to leave their departments without a pass and that the convenor could not operate in his full-time conciliation work.

Attacks on all present domestic agreements appeared in the second document 'The Interim Agreement'. This outlined three-shift working, time and motion study and changes in the payments-by-results system.

Mr. Townsend has just returned from a briefing at the headquarters of the American firm which owns ENV—Eaton's of Cleveland, Ohio.

The men had already shown their disgust at the management's attempts to impose the original proposals through factory and postal ballots.

The third week in July was a very eventful one for them, with a proposed strike (the management was refusing to negotiate with the stewards), a lock out of certain sections and the chairman of the shop stewards' committee and finally a violent factory meeting.

ULTIMATUM

Returning to work on July 21 after striking over the lock out, the workers found the electricity switched off. They were herded into the canteen where Townsend delivered an ultimatum: accept the proposals, or the factory closes. He asked the workers to vote on the matter.

The ballot was in the hands of the Electoral Reform Society who used old packing cases as ballot boxes. Screens were set up near the doors—guarded by foremen—and each worker was asked to put his cross as he went out.

Shop stewards warned the management and the workers that the ballot was a breach of procedure.

When attempts were made to force the workers to vote, they broke through the ranks of foremen, burst through the doors and threw the ballot boxes down the stairs.

A postal ballot was then arranged, but most of the ballot forms were returned blank.

Geoff Mitchell, convenor at ENV, told our reporter that ballot forms were sent out to all kinds of people; men who had retired, some who had left the firm 18 months ago.

'Some people received two forms. Some others didn't receive one at all,' he said. The ballot was abandoned.

(Mr. Mitchell was interviewed before the announcement of the closure.)

Nobody, said Mr. Mitchell, had ever drawn a line between labour function and managerial function in the factory. But the employers were attempting to impose proposals which would undermine hard-won conditions built up over a number of years.

Some of the methods they wanted to use are used by American bosses. The tenacity with which the workers resist these is international, but in this period of economic crisis, it is particularly British.

American unionists have already been warned that they must not and cannot act like their British brothers if the US economy is not to deflate rapidly.

by the fact that ENV workers had a record for using militancy to get their way. Since 1964, when ENV was bought out by Eaton's, this struggle became even tougher.

Mr. Mitchell says that all the men were involved as their earnings were so closely tied together—some workers had always benefitted from the piece workers' gains.

Pay increases at the firm had been based on average productivity figures produced every three months and time workers received a percentage rise of the piece workers' rise, according to their grade.

This increase, says Mr. Mitchell, had worked out roughly at 1s an hour each year for skilled workers.

Even if the firm failed to force through their proposals, the government's wage freeze would have taken care of any increase. In any case, Mr. Mitchell claims that a time and motion department had begun working in the factory in preparation for working out time price rates—this is a US method of replacing payment-by-results piece working by a set target and set price for a job; disciplinary action is taken against those who do not reach the target.

'This is a wage freeze,' says Mr. Mitchell, 'there would be no control over earnings through individual or shop bargaining.'

Mr. Mitchell also warned that this could sweep through other factories whose stewards had quoted ENV's high pay rates to their managements when making claims.

ORGANISATION

Union organisation had certainly put this factory at the head of engineering factories in the north London area since a 13-week recognition strike in 1951. There were shop stewards for each section of workers in each department and shop committees in every department. Shop committee representatives were chosen by the stewards.

The shop stewards' committee had been in the forefront of the struggle against the government Prices and Incomes Act.

Warnings of a cut in the labour force had already come from the management. Redundancy would be on the basis of last in first out, though there may be exceptions.

Shop stewards had resolved previous redundancy proposals by fighting for a shorter working week.

The firm also wanted to suspend the domestic overtime agreement, but the workers imposed their own overtime ban following a dispute involving draughtsmen's overtime rates and the introduction of a high quota of apprentices.

There had also been a recent dispute concerning the foremen who were being organised in the ASSET and with CAWU clerks over mobility. This illustrates that the firm was scared of unionism and would take on any section of workers to prevent it.

When they bought a Manchester factory recently, they began taking work from ENV Willesden and Aycliffe (near Darlington) to be carried out by women at cheap rates.

Work to the Manchester factory was blacked and a drive made to unionise the factory. This has succeeded.

Certainly militant unionism had paid off in this struggle to maintain high standards of pay and conditions. But as mentioned previously, the economic measures of the government, and their Prices and Incomes Act, will now prevent individual victories by shop stewards' committees which were possible in the post-war boom period.

Britain's crisis is just part of the quickening, uncontrollable, irretrievable crisis of world capitalism and the misery and death this period can bring goes far beyond the actions of even a giant combine like Eaton's.

The Eaton's of imperialism have to be fought, the redundancy, mass unemployment and wage cuts of the next period must be fought, not simply by militant unionism, but through a political struggle by a united working class ranged behind a political leadership—the leadership now being prepared by the Young Socialists and Socialist Labour League.

Part of this preparation is the October 2 demonstration outside the Labour Party Conference in Brighton organised by the Young Socialists against the Labour government's wage-cut policies. ENV workers would be a welcome delegation on this demonstration.

Rhondda miners reject Coal Board threats

BY OUR CARDIFF CORRESPONDENT

CAMBRIAN COLLIERY miners carried their struggle against the National Coal Board's closure plans a step further last Saturday when they agreed to continue their non-co-operation policy.

The Tonypanyd, Rhondda Valley miners refuse to accept the closure of their famous pit and oppose the transfer of men to other pits.

The meeting of 600-700 miners also decided, with only eight against, not to answer the individual letters sent to each man by the Coal Board.

These letters said: 'If you do not reply, the Board will assume that you have rejected the offer to continue employment, and they may not in that case be obliged to treat you as entitled to a payment under the Redundancy Payment Act, 1965'.

Replies were demanded by the NCB by Monday, even though some letters were only received on Saturday morning.

The decision of the Cambrian miners is the biggest development so far in the struggle against pit closures in South Wales and marks a break from the National Union of Mine-workers' policy of co-operating with pit closures, while asking for talks with the government.

With big increases in redundancy in the area over the last three weeks, miners know that they are fighting for their livelihood.

No Hopes

In the Cambrian lodge's clubhouse—30 yards from Sewing Industries factory closed three weeks ago—miners told The Newsletter how the sackings at the nearby Treforest Trading Estate had destroyed their hopes of alternative employment.

One miner said that he had been in the coal industry all his life and, at 50, could not hope to get a job outside.

The Stalinist-dominated leadership of the South Wales' NUM has undermined the struggle against pit closures in the past. Now that a bitter fight is inevitable, these so-called 'leaders' try to prevent united action. Last week leaders declared that any action was up to the Cambrian lodge alone.

In an interview with The Newsletter, lodge secretary Garfield Rogers said that he felt the NUM had lost confidence in the future of the coal industry and the time had come for a review of union policy.

The union should not co-operate in the closure of pits where there are still reserves of coal.

More Closures

He said the closures were being accelerated, now coming two or three at a time, and miners were being offered jobs contrary to their abilities.

In the setting of the Labour government's wage freeze policy and increasing unemployment, the Communist Party's peaceful pipedreams of 'directing industry to Wales' and putting pressure on Wilson is transparent nonsense.

A leading Rhondda CP member said on Saturday: 'We can no longer hold back severe criticism of the Labour government, and we from the Rhondda must say to them: "Lads, you are on the wrong track, you are putting the people of South Wales on the dole".'

This is not only ludicrous, but smacks of nationalism as well. Harold Wilson's 'lads' must be quaking at this 'severe criticism', which came after a poster parade by a mere 30 people... out of the Rhondda CP's several hundred paper members.

Rank-and-file miners have to take a more serious attitude than the Stalinists and fake 'lefts'.

They can only fight for their futures by fighting for a socialist alternative to the Wilson government and defending the nationalized industries through a programme of workers' control, suspension of compensation and interest payments, and extending nationalization.

Corporation workers' wages frozen

Birmingham wages hit twice

BY SYLVIA PICK

IT seems likely that Birmingham's road sweepers, dustmen, school cleaners and caretakers, and certain other categories of low-paid workers employed by the Corporation, will fight the government's wage freeze.

Many of them are council-house tenants. They have been hit at the same time by a standstill on a rise in their wages, and by an increase in their weekly rent.

They were due for a pay rise on September 5 of between 8s 4d and 11s 8d a week. This in any case would virtually have been swallowed up by the increase in rent imposed recently by the Tory-controlled City Council, in defiance of government appeals for a rent freeze.

As things stand, they must pay twice over. The roof over their heads will cost them more, and they cannot touch a penny of the promised pay-rise to meet the extra expense.

'They're quick enough to stop us getting more in our pay-packets. When the Council want to put up the rent, that's not

stopped,' said one dustman disgustedly.

Another said: 'Rising prices and frozen wages hit all workers but the low-paid worst of all. We don't know where this extra rent is coming from.'

Nearly all these workers are members of the National Union of Public Employees, which recently declared its opposition to the wage freeze. NUPE delegates will vote and speak against the government's measures at the TUC and Labour Party conferences.

Fifteen thousand Birmingham workers are involved in this freeze dilemma. It is to be put before the union as a 'special case', and may well become an important issue in the fight to beat the government's anti-working-class wage-freeze policy.

The struggle in Birmingham is gaining support from another section of workers. The central committee of the tenants' and residents' associations in various parts of the city, has approached NUPE with proposals of mutual support.

RENT FREEZE

This association, which says that 1,400 tenants have refused to pay the higher rents, expressed the view that if there are threats of eviction the tenants concerned should have government support.

One thing most of these council tenants appear to have resolved is that they will not stand for having to pay higher rents out of frozen wages, while interest rates soar and benefit the money-lenders.

Birmingham Young Socialists stand side-by-side with the tenants in this struggle, attending meetings and organising support in factories and among the youth. For the future they urge all tenants to take up the fight against wage-cuts and unemployment by joining the mass demonstration of workers at the Labour Party Conference on October 2.

CALLING POLICE — 'dangerous step'

THE use of police in demonstrations was an 'exceptionally dangerous step', Cliff Slaughter told a large meeting following a demonstration by Young Socialist and Socialist Labour League members through Leeds last Saturday.

Recently the local Communist Party had used the police in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent a large YS-SLL contingent from taking part in a publicly advertised demonstration on the Vietnam war.

He also drew attention to the recent similar episode in Croydon, Surrey, after which socialists had been fined.

In the United States, the Communist Party had supported laws which were used to jail Trotskyists opposed to the Second World War, only to be jailed later themselves under the same laws.

UNPRECEDENTED

Now Johnson was preparing to jail opponents of the Vietnam war. With the deepening crisis of imperialism, particularly British capitalism, such events could happen here.

Already the Leeds police have taken the unprecedented step of changing the traditional route and time for political demonstrations in order to keep them away from the large city centre crowds.

A large audience attended last Saturday's meeting and heard the speakers stress the class nature of the Vietnam war and the solidarity with those in the United States opposed to the war.

On the demonstration, marchers had called for a 'Victory to the Vietnam and the defeat of US imperialism'.

The Young Communist League refused an offer from the YS to take part in the demonstration on the grounds that the YS and SLL were 'splitters'.

The YCL failed to break up a YS meeting held on the morning of the demonstration.

FIND NEARY A JOB — UNION TOLD

By Newsletter Reporter

LIVERPOOL seamen are demanding employment for Paddy Neary—one of the leaders of the 1960 seamen's strike and imprisoned during the strike under the Merchant Shipping Act.

For his part in the strike and in forming the Seamen's Reform Movement, Paddy Neary was expelled from the National Union of Seamen. Under the pressure from the ranks, the leaders of the NUS were later compelled to reinstate him.

He is still refused employment by the shipowners. The demand of seamen at the NUS branch meeting last Sunday was that if the union could not obtain suitable employment for Neary within the next few days then they should strike.

The meeting passed unanimously the following resolution:

'That the Liverpool branch of the NUS withdraws its labour until Bro. Neary is reinstated in his lawful employment as a seaman.'

Scottish jobs hit by Wilson measures

From BOB SHAW

THE facts of how the living standards of workers are threatened by Wilson's policies are already apparent in key sections of Scottish industry. Instructions have been given that all municipal building projects other than housing and schools are to be severely cut. All civic buildings and amenity projects will be suspended. The programme for road development will similarly be cut back.

DATA backs YS march

ON SATURDAY (August 20) the No. 1 Divisional Council (Scotland) of the Draughtsmen's and Allied Technicians' Association voted by a large majority to support the call by Glasgow Federation of Young Socialists to demonstrate through Glasgow on August 27 against the wage freeze and the government's anti-union legislation. The decision authorised the carrying of the union's divisional banner on the demonstration.

It was decided to ask the Executive Committee of DATA to send a delegation to the Young Socialists' lobby of the Labour Party conference at Brighton on October 2. The EC was also called upon by No. 1 Divisional Council to organise a delegation or send observers to Liege on October 15 in solidarity with European Young Socialists' demonstration against NATO and the war in Vietnam.

Employment uncertain after Blyth lay-offs

Newsletter Correspondent

SINCE the announcement of the closure of the Blyth shipyard a fortnight ago—when 500 men out of a 1,200 total were sacked without warning during their holiday period—two factories on the local trade estate have announced they are to close.

Of the 500 men who were sacked, a small number have left the area altogether, but most of them seem to have found work in the shipyards on the Tyne, ten miles away.

Seven hundred men are still working at the yard on the remaining ships—a 7,500-ton collier is to be finished completely, two ships are fitting out, but on four ships for the Westminster Credging company work has ceased completely.

It may be that for men in the finishing trades, there may be work for another five months. As for the rest, redundancy could come at any time.

'You don't know when you walk through the gates in the morning what is going to happen,' said one welder. 'Anyone could get their notice at any time. Some of the office staff got their cards last week.'

The closure has taken the local councillors and union men completely by surprise. Although talks between yard stewards and the Lloyd's bank receiver are being held regularly and representations to the Board of Trade are to be held, no one has any idea what the outcome will be.

The union demand for the government to give financial help to save the yard seems to have met with no response.

One Boilermakers' Society official considers that the town should shame the government into doing something by raising a 6d rate and 'refloating' the shipyard at a cost of £500,000!

'Don't Move'

In addition local councillors, union official and representatives of the north-east development corporation are urging skilled men still out of work not to move from Blyth as this will make it more difficult to attract alternative industry to the area.

But as has been pointed out previously, to appeal for help from a government whose very policies are responsible for what happened at Blyth is completely inadequate.

As the recent Geddes-plan mergers on the Tyne and the proposed mergers on the Clyde signify, only large consortiums, concentrating capital, rationalising production and cutting labour costs will be able to survive in the future.

The failure of the union leaders to draw the lessons of the Fairfield yard—where the union rule book was thrown out—and to effectively oppose the Prices and Incomes Act and the Geddes plan means that workers will be herded into a trap of speed up, yard closures and redundancies.

Negotiations over Geddes must be broken off now and a real fight be staged for nationalization of the yards under workers' control.

Building workers know that these cuts mean unemployment; they had it from the Tory government three years ago.

Colvilles have announced that at their three factories in Lanarkshire one of the night shifts is to be suspended. This move affects 2,000 workers and it is not clear how they will be employed if at all.

But steel workers in Motherwell and Wishaw are worried; they have observed Colvilles' current purge of all spare labour. The cut in the night shift they say is a serious threat.

Thousands of car workers at Rootes, Linwood, are on a three or four-day week. Wilson's law prohibits them from taking strike action to demand that they be given the same pay for four days as for five.

The Communist Party on the Clyde demonstrates a paralysis which has resulted in complete inactivity on the anti-trade union law since its campaign of June 22.

Jobless pattern

THE TREND of unemployment in 1966 is following fairly closely that of the Summer of 1963. The pattern is all too familiar to Scottish workers.

On August 8, 58,887 were jobless in Scotland, the press emphasising that this was 4,080 fewer than August last year.

However, the trend of unemployment has been reversed from a general decline in the figures to a steady increase. The number of unemployed workers has increased by 4,000 this month.

Building workers, steel and car workers should join the Young Socialists and the Socialist Labour League in a fight to defeat the attack by the Wilson government.

Make the banks and the employers pay for their crisis, nationalize the building industry, steel and car industries.

Join with the Young Socialists in a demonstration from Queen's Cross, Glasgow on Saturday, August 27, at 3 p.m., and at Brighton on October 2.

Snub for TUC chief

By Newsletter Reporter

THE Scottish Plasterers' Union conference, held in Dumfries a week ago, passed by 28 votes to 17 an emergency motion condemning the wage-freeze and the Prices and Incomes Act.

Following the carrying of this motion there was a speech by James Jack, general secretary of the Scottish TUC. He advised the delegates to accept the government's policy because, he said: 'We are not entitled to doubt the government's integrity because we do not know all the facts.'

This is the same stale argument repeated by the Labour MPs at each lobby of parliament called to oppose the passing of anti-union legislation.

He also tried the old argument of saying: 'We must not make it (the trade union movement), a battleground, nor must we make it an area where people can make partisan political capital out of the position in which they find themselves.'

Jack received his reply from the delegates when an emergency motion moved by a member of the EC that the conference accept the wage-freeze was thrown out and the conference reaffirmed its opposition to the government's policies.

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