

The Newsletter

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Labour Must Unite to FIGHT GAITSKELL

RECENT decisions of the National Executive of the Labour Party should leave no one in doubt as to what is to be the future of the Left wing under Mr. Gaitskell. Even the most reactionary correspondents of the capitalist press were forced to admit that the meeting was almost entirely preoccupied with the issuing of bans, proscriptions, expulsions and threats of expulsion.

That very fact alone emphasizes the incurable crisis of the Labour Party. Gaitskell, Brown and the gang of hardened right-wing MPs who support them, work might and main to sever the Labour Party from any vestige of socialist policy.

Scrapping Clause 4

It is not just a question of the H-bomb. Gaitskell's non-nationalization assurance to ICI, only weeks after the Courtaulds grab, reinforces everything that the Socialist Labour League has said about the Right wing being nothing more than the tools of monopoly capitalism.

The campaign to get rid of Clause Four has been translated from theory into hard fact. At a time when the monopolists are preparing for a cut-throat trade war under the guise of the Common Market, Mr. Gaitskell assures them that he has abandoned nationalization.

Western European right-wing Social Democracy is today following closely behind the infamous Guy Mollet. It is more and more adapting itself to the monopolies at a time when they are preparing to destroy the Labour and trade union movement in the capitalist countries of Europe.

Lowering Tariffs

Capitalism has entered a period of grave crisis. After the pay pause comes the threat to lift the tariff barriers against industries which grant more than a 2½ per cent increase in wages. After the Rootes show-down with the Acton shop stewards comes the Ford threat of all-out struggle against the trade unions.

Meanwhile, the rate of profit continues to drop alarmingly. The capitalists face the Common Market with inadequate reserves to equip the new industries which will be required to meet the competition in automation and electronics.

Because of the rapid modifications and changes which have constantly to be made, capital investment in these industries is much greater than in the old heavy industries. This is the



nub of the problem facing the Tories and the employers.

4% from wage-cuts and speed-ups

Profits are falling, heavy industry stagnates; the working class, powerfully entrenched in trade unions, are stubbornly defending wages and working conditions. This state of affairs has to be changed, and the only way is for the trade unions to be defeated so that wage reductions and speed-up will once again begin to fill the coffers of the monopolies with fresh reserves of profit.

At this moment when the economic crisis grows sharper, the right-wing trade union leaders hasten to combine with the Tories and agree to an all-round 4 per cent increase in production. The capitalists know very well that such an increase is impossible on the basis of the present state of industrial relations.

Collaboration

Like Mr. Gaitskell, the right-wing trade union leaders snuggle up more closely to the monopolies at a time when they should be preparing to fight them. Whilst they talk at the conference table, the monopolies are busily preparing behind the scenes to take on the trade unions in a decisive show-down. Gaitskell's adaptation to the monopolies and the right-wing trade union leaders drawing closer to the state are two sides of the same coin.

It is a similar development to that which took place in the pre-Hitler period of the Weimar Republic. Whilst fascist reaction is not yet a serious threat to the Labour movement in Britain, the climate for its development is now being created.

Witch-hunt

These are the considerations behind the Radcliffe Report and the stepping up of the witch-hunt in the Labour movement. Trade union militants, anti-H-bomb campaigners and young socialists must be rooted out of the Labour Party if it is to be

made safe for the H-bomb and the monopolies.

It is all right for Gaitskell to discuss with President Kennedy, the leader of Wall Street imperialism, but it is impermissible for Lord Russell, leader of the Committee of 100, to discuss with the leaders of the Soviet Union in Moscow.

It is all right for George Brown to talk to the reactionary officer caste in BAOR, but it is impermissible for Canon Collins, leader of CND, to join Lord Russell in the visit to Moscow.

It is all right for right-wing chiefs like Woodrow Wyatt to write as much as they like in the capitalist press and broad-

by Gerry Healy

cast as much as they like on radio and television, but it is impermissible for a group of Young Socialists to produce the monthly newspaper 'Keep Left'.

It is all right for Gaitskell and Brown to break every decision of the Scarborough conference, but it is impermissible to defend the decisions of that conference today.

This is the Labour Party under Gaitskell's leadership.

Whether they like it or not, even the tamest of left-wingers cannot continue for long in such an atmosphere. They must either shut their mouths and conform to Gaitskell's dictatorship, or risk expulsion on the flimsiest of pretexts.

CND Enters a New Stage

CND is now entering a stage where its proscription from the Labour Party is high on the agenda. In fact, it is practically proscribed now.

When George Brown declares that CND is being infiltrated by members of the Socialist Labour League and Communists, he is simply preparing the ground for the organization of local witch-hunts by full-time right-wing officials.

The plight of MPs who support CND in the House of Commons is becoming untenable. The five MPs who have been expelled from the Parliamentary Labour Party have been driven on foreign affairs such as Laos more and more into open opposition to Gaitskell.

Several other Left MPs who support them cannot hold out much longer within Gaitskell's party. The threatened expulsion of Lord Russell is bringing things to a head with breakneck speed.

What are these MPs going to say in their coming general election statements about their opposition to the H-bomb? If Gaitskell and Brown won't permit them to speak out in the House of Commons is there any reason for believing that they will give them the right to speak to the electorate?

We should say that the chances for the endorsement of Michael Foot and Sydney Silverman as Gaitskell candidates seem extremely remote.

Rising opposition

There is good reason to believe that by the time of the next general election there may well be a sizeable number of Labour MPs who will be refused endorsement by Gaitskell and thousands of loyal CNDers and Young Socialists will find themselves driven out of the Labour Party.

An essential feature of the crisis is the continuous growth of opposition to the Right wing on the fringe of the Labour Party. CND has played a progressive role in this respect.

Over the past few years it has demonstrated that it is possible for a movement turned towards the Labour Party with members both inside and outside that party to initiate such great changes as the Scarborough decisions.

Whilst the lack of determined leadership against Gaitskell from the Left lost many of the advantages of Scarborough, it has not destroyed CND or disillusioned it in relation to Labour.

All the attempts of sectarian tendencies to persuade the CND to adopt its own candidates in

the coming general election have failed.

No more fakers!

The movement, in turning towards the Labour Party and the trade unions, has in fact become a nightmare for Gaitskell as well as the pacifist MPs. Some of the MPs who today are threatened with expulsion because of their association with CND managed to remain members of the Labour Party right throughout the Second World War.

They joined the CND believing that it would be similar to the pacifist movements of the past. They overlooked the powerful influence of the tens of thousands of young people being drawn annually into the fight against the H-bomb.

The pacifist MP is trapped in this situation. He would like to twist his conscience in a way that would conform to Gaitskell, but he is unable to do so because his every action is watched by thousands of people both inside and outside the party.

A New Force to Change Labour Policy

This growing movement on fringe of the Labour Party must not be confused with the idea that another party is emerging, like the ILP in the 1930s. On the contrary, this movement despite the bans and the proscriptions can and must form itself more and more into a political movement to change the policies of the trade unions and the Labour Party.

Unite for action!

The fight for nationalization of the basic industries and against the H-bomb is today inseparable from the fight against bans and proscriptions.

What is needed is the building of unity in action of all those forces which want to fight

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● Gaitskell

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Gaitskell on the basis of such a policy.

This force will include the CND, the Socialist Labour League, the Communist Party and all those who are going to be expelled now or in the future from the Labour Party.

Counter-attack!

There must be an all-out offensive from the Left against the witch-hunters on the Right.

You cannot fight Gaitskell by supporting the witch-hunt in any form whatsoever. (The Communist Party and the 'Daily Worker' have adopted a shameful silence in relation to the proscription of the Young Socialist paper 'Keep Left'. They have not made a single protest on this matter.)

Counter-organize

Those members of Parliament who are expelled from the Parliamentary Labour Party should be assured of full support in their electoral struggles against the Gaitskellites.

Such support would be part of the fight in the Labour Party. If Brown and Gaitskell will not permit loyal members of the Labour Party to fight them inside the party then the struggle must go on from the outside and be conducted 'illegally' on the inside.

Forge a new leadership . . .

British politics is no longer the humdrum affair of the last 20 years. New forms of struggle are imperative if the Left is to defeat the Right.

More important still, a new leadership must be built.

This leadership cannot drift along in the slap-happy way of 'Tribune' and the ex-Bevanites after Scarborough.

. . . with a plan to defeat the Tories!

Such a leadership must begin to fight Gaitskell in the trade unions. They must prepare and organize successful strike action against the Tories and the employers. Such action can only have one political solution and that is the nationalization of all the basic industries.

Every successful trade union struggle against the employers is a victory in the fight against the H-bomb. If we weaken the employers in class struggle, then we will weaken their war preparations.

The new leadership must be a Marxist leadership. Here is the goal of the Socialist Labour League. More and more members of CND, trade unionists and Labour Party members are beginning to associate with the Socialist Labour League because they can now see the correctness of our policies since the formation of the League in March 1959.

European Diplomacy Tries New Line-up

GREATER uncertainty prevails in diplomatic relations between the major capitalist countries than at any time since the end of World War II. The twists and turns of recent months; the establishment of the Paris-Bonn axis; the strained relations between its members and Washington; the concern in London, which is intensified by the hard bargaining around entry to the Common Market; all reveal the divisions which lie behind the facade of 'the Western Alliance'.

The real contradictions in relations between the capitalist states are becoming more and more obvious. The common front against what they call 'Communist aggression' has been accompanied by incessant manoeuvre and intrigue for a dominant position in that front.

Both Germany and France, strengthened by economic expansion, are ruled by men who look with bitterness at the special relation which exists between London and Washington. They seek greater independence in the determination of policy.

They fear a political deal between Kennedy and Khrushchev and see, in any case, in continued Anglo-Saxon ascendancy in the Western camp the end of any possibility of German unity and permanent second-rank status for their own countries.

Close economic ties now exist between Germany and France. Monopoly interests in these countries on a number of issues come into collision with their competitors in Britain.

While some French and German politicians believe that an independent nuclear striking force is indispensable, if only to prevent an Anglo-Saxon deal with Russia, others remain wholly committed to American policy. The latter are the most active advocates of European unity and accepting complete synchronization into US strategic plans.

At present they form the loyal opposition—the Social Democrats in Germany, the MRP and 'Socialists' in France. No doubt they are tied in with the State Department as pressure groups on their own governments.

The Gaitskell-Brown leadership in the British Labour Party plays a similar role. While the Macmillan government is servile enough when it comes to accepting American dictates in South-East Asia, it seeks to conserve the outward trappings of independence and even 'leadership' in Europe.

This is done through the anachronism of the independent nuclear deterrent—the last symbol of national sovereignty for those steeped in the diplomatic methods of the 19th century.

Now the Labour leaders—especially since Gaitskell's last trip to the USA—are for surrendering full control, with just a few symbols left to preserve appearances, in matters of war and peace to the President of

the United States. The idea is supported by a section of Conservative opinion.

For this school, which undoubtedly represents the shape of things to come, it is important to prevent France,

dangerous.

It is, of course, upon such currents that Soviet diplomacy depends and, indeed, draws what strength it now possesses. Having long ago ceased to operate on lines of international

by Tom Kemp

Germany or any other country possessing nuclear striking forces of their own. The Western 'deterrent' must be solely an American affair—the rest must join a 'non-nuclear club' and hitch their fate to the Pentagon juggernaut.

At the same time, the basic proposition that the Soviet Union is bent upon world domination is maintained, at least for popular consumption. That there are no positive signs of this, and that wherever there are strong Communist parties—whether in France and Italy or India and Indonesia—they are bastions of the status quo, are facts which are conveniently kept out of the argument. But only for the moment.

There are ample signs of sections of the ruling class, as well as of the loyal oppositions, in the capitalist countries, which are ready to come to terms with the Soviet Union.

In fact, however, these diverse trends are not agreed about the nature of those terms, so that the prospect of a deal plays its part in the jockeying for position which goes on inside, and between, these countries.

Thus, in Germany, the Kroll affair showed the existence of a 'Rapallo' tendency ready to reach an agreement with Russia on terms which would not be acceptable to Washington.

Likewise in France there may be those who hope, by reviving the Franco-Soviet pacts (made by Laval in 1935 and by de Gaulle a decade later), to reduce a dependence on Western Germany which they think

class solidarity or socialist policy, it sees in the development of contradictions between the Western powers the best hope of preserving the conditions for a quiet life for the present rulers of the USSR.

The policy of the national Communist Parties, as arms of this diplomacy, talks much about the existence of a peace-loving bourgeoisie. It is upon none-too-scrupulous deals with

such elements that the Soviet bureaucracy hopes to perpetuate the conditions for its rule.

No doubt it would prefer to deal directly with Kennedy, as representative of the bastion of capitalist power and would no doubt be prepared to put into the scales Cuba, Laos, Berlin and perhaps other morsels.

The ways of diplomacy are as murky and tortuous as ever. But it should never be forgotten that foreign policy is designed to serve the state interests of the ruling stratum, not to manifest high principles.

The deep cleavage between the capitalist states and the Soviet bloc is, in fact, too wide to be permanently bridged by any treaty; but that does not make impossible even the most extraordinary line-ups and concessions on one side or the other. The present flux in diplomacy reflects all the contradictions and dangers of our epoch.

Share Crash: Distress Signals for Capitalism

By CYRIL SMITH

MONDAY'S crash on the New York stock exchange is a warning to the international labour movement and a reminder that we live in a society whose economic basis is uncontrollable.

'Wall Street Slide Puzzles Experts', said the headlines. For, while production reaches new heights, no one could explain why investors suddenly lost their nerve.

The stock exchange is an institution where capitalists can buy and sell the right to extract profit from the labour of different groups of workers. When there is a danger that less profit is going to be made, the prices drop.

The pressure on profits which has made itself felt for some time and the fear of a coming recession, have caused a drift downward in stocks since December. On Monday, the drift

on Wall Street became a tumble. Capitalists in London, Zurich, Paris, Tokyo, caught the fever.

United States industry can produce the apparatus to send a human being into space, but capitalism cannot organize this ability.

Geared to the drive for profits, this lunatic system must be eliminated if the tremendous power of modern science is to be harnessed for the benefit of mankind.

The livelihood of millions of working people throughout the world is threatened by coming changes in the economic climate. Those misleaders of labour who preached the possibility of making the profit system work must be removed if the working class is to face the new situation.

The reorganization of an international Marxist leadership is the only answer to the Wall Street panic.

THE 'Financial Times' Industrial Ordinary Share index lost 11 points last week, the biggest fall for over seven months. The index is now at its lowest since October 1959.

Financial 'experts' find all sorts of reasons for the decline in this economic indicator. Favourite among them is Selwyn Lloyd's recent speech in which he gave warning of fiercer credit restrictions if there were further breaches in the Tories' 'incomes policy'.

Whatever happened behind the scenes, one thing is clear about the role of the government in the dockers' dispute. It did not speak with one voice. There were those who wanted to take a tough line and those who, for the moment, were for a policy of moderation.

The 'tough line' exponents have their echoes in the financial press. There is much talk of the limitations of democracy so far as 'the nation's interest' is concerned. There is even strong criticism of Tory policies and new recipes given for successfully repairing the economy.

One of these, is to reform the 'guiding light' policy of restricted wage increases in industry. Where labour is scarce, that is in

City Slants by colin chance

'growth' industries, attract it with higher wage rises. In other industries, presumably the mines, railways and basic services where a huge number of workers are employed, restrict wage increases to a 2½ per cent maximum.

Set one group of workers against another. Favour some

£ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £

No golden recipes

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and discriminate against others.

Actually, the causes of stock exchange slump cannot be explained solely by the presence of credit restrictions, Selwyn Lloyd's speech or any other transitory event. They are much more deep-rooted and do not only affect the London Stock Exchange.

Share prices are declining everywhere in Europe and America. Lower and lower profit margins, not necessarily accompanied yet

by falling production (certainly not in Europe), are the order of the day.

In the last decade an enormous amount of capital investment has gone into new plant, machinery and factories. Consequently though productive capacity has increased, in a competitive economy, profits as a percentage of capital employed, have decreased.

It is widely believed that the Tories can provide favourable economic circumstances for their return to government at the next election. But this viewpoint may be too naive.

Big business has had its experience of a too intensive capital expansion programme. The banks, at the moment, have complied with their special deposit obligations and have money to lend, but those capitalists who could have overdrafts for the asking are not taking them up.

There is nothing scientific about the mechanics of capitalist enterprise. It is not surprising that in the long run, profits and productivity are incompatible.

Education Crisis Hits Teachers

ACCORDING to a report just published by the National Advisory Council on the Training and Supply of Teachers, there will be 51,000 teachers short in 1965, 70,000 in 1970 and 140,000 in 1975. These last two figures assume the school leaving age is raised and that junior classes are kept at a 30 maximum.

However, the figures take into account an increase of 24,000 training college places by 1966 and the growth of the university population to 170,000 by 1971.

Clearly there is a crisis in the education programme and even with the increased numbers being trained there will still be an acute teacher shortage.

AUXILIARIES

The present government's answer is to provide auxiliaries with 12 weeks' training, and teachers on short-term commissions with two years' training.

The government will approve of these two-year trained women with sub-standard qualifications teaching for 5 years, and then they must take another one-year course to teach for another period.

This is farcical. Someone is either qualified or not qualified. It was only two years ago that the Tories lengthened the training college course to three years, for both primary and secondary teachers.

The auxiliaries would be acceptable if their duties kept them outside the classroom.

If the Minister did not intend them to assist in the teaching

programme, why did he mention them in the same context as the teacher shortage. Is this just

By A SOCIALIST TEACHER

another error by a bungling Minister in a bungling government?

The NUT executive have

issued a statement in which they oppose any attempt to introduce teachers with less than three years' training. It will 'resist' the use of ancillary helpers taking part in 'teaching duties'. The executive feels that the only solution to the present problem is to adopt a 'greatly expanded training programme'.

They also feel that if an education authority cannot find

sufficient qualified teachers 'the only reasonable solution is part-time education for some children (e.g., four days a week)'.

However, during the recent pay negotiations we had an example of NUT resistance.

We must not expect too much of Gould and his executive. They did an excellent job of confusing and diverting the rank and file in the negotiating period. This must not be allowed to happen again.

RESPONSIBILITY

Traditionally backward in struggle, teachers need a strong leadership. Socialist teachers must make it their responsibility to meet as many teachers as possible and explain to them the issue involved.

Teachers must be shown how they are being continually betrayed by their reactionary leadership, and that the Conservatives are neither considering them nor the children. Above all we must try and get our message to younger teachers and students.

The Tories won the pay battle; don't let them win this one.

LAOS — Phoumi Rides Again

By Michael Banda

HAVING failed to gain an outright victory against Pathet Lao, the right-wing forces of Boun Oum-Phoumi Nosavan are now banking on the partition of Laos and United States intervention across the Mekong.

While the hand may seem to be that of the Right wing, the mastermind behind the plan seems to be that of the CIA. It was the CIA which masterminded the 1957 coup which overthrew the neutralist, coalition government and gave power to the Right wing.

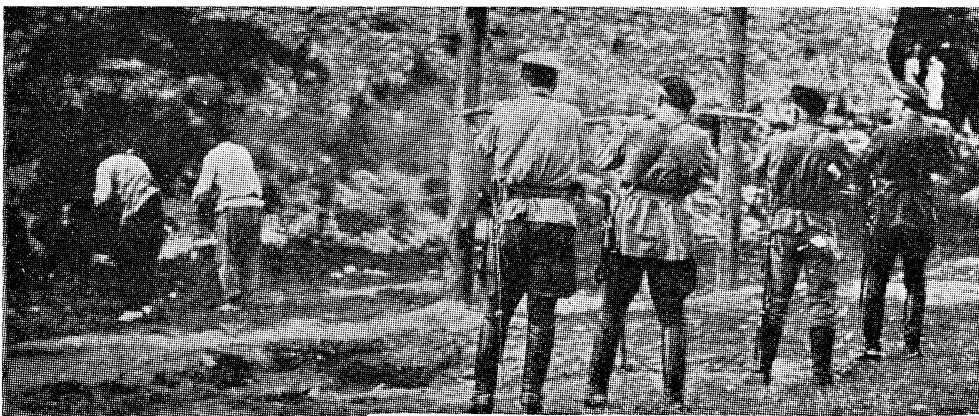
Now once again the Right wing rather than accept the offer of a coalition government from Prince Souvanna Phouma are doing their utmost to sabotage the talks and provoke a situation where the US Marines and British jets would be used in Laos. In this they have the tacit support of the Siamese dictator as well as the Filipino government which has sent its troops to fight in Laos.

The Right wing know very well that not even a coalition government can save them from the wrath of the masses and the

Pathet Lao do not seem to entertain the same illusions they had in 1957. Thus there is no prospect other than the continuation of the 16-year-old civil war and a steadily increasing involvement of the SEATO powers and the United States in this 'dirty war'. The slide in Wall Street and the fear of a slump in US ruling circles may prompt the brasshats in the Pentagon to turn the Mekong into a second Imjin with the same fatal consequences.

Only immediate and vigorous intervention by British and US labour can stop such a move. It is still not too late.

Two versions of the same story—with a difference!



With Lenin in power, Red firing squads began sweeping Russia of his enemies. "We will destroy everything," he said, "and on the ruins we will build our temple."



VIOLENCE

Violence became commonplace. Where the Bolshevized peasants or workers gained control, landowners or employers were robbed, tortured, murdered. Where the Whites kept the upper hand, police or soldiers ruthlessly stamped out Bolshevism wherever found or suspected. (Above): A White execution squad shoots two suspects—then hangs two more.

The current number of the monthly American journal 'Look', which boasts a 7,000,000 circulation, devotes a whole issue to 'The chilling story behind the man who created the Communist threat to our world', the 'evil genius'—Lenin. It claims to be a 'A new pictorial history' and employs the slickest methods of modern journalism—quotations torn ruthlessly out of context, television gimmicks, pictures juxtaposed for shock effect, etc. But the corker of the whole 'job' is the picture reproduced on the right. Its caption reads: 'With Lenin in power, Red firing squads began sweeping Russia of his enemies. "We will destroy everything," he said, "and on the ruins we will build our temple."' Now compare this with the picture on the left which will be found in 'A Picture History of Russia' (First English edition, 1957, p. 208, Arco Publishers Ltd.). This reads: '(Above): A White execution squad . . . ? Need more be said?'

CND Conference Rejects INDEC

THE strong ties which have been established between the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Labour movement are not likely to be easily shaken by the witch-hunting attacks of the Gaitskell-Brown Labour Party leadership.

This was clearly shown at the Annual Conference of the Campaign's London Region last weekend where a score of resolutions supporting independent nuclear disarmament candidates (and INDEC) in Parliamentary elections were defeated by a large vote.

A resolution from Amersham and District CND group which said, 'This Annual General Meeting is opposed to the Campaign putting up independent CND candidates at the General Election or at any by-election,' was carried by an overwhelming majority.

Delegates speaking in the debate constantly reiterated the necessity of continuing the fight against Gaitskell and the Right wing of the Labour Party.

A young delegate from Wemb-

ley received big applause when he pointed out that the attacks which Gaitskell was making against the CND and the Young Socialists, and in particular the YS paper 'Keep Left', were part of his determination to make sure there was no return to the Scarborough decisions.

The delegate insisted, therefore, that the fight must go on in the Young Socialists, the Labour Party and the trade unions.

Other resolutions opposed NATO and also entry into the European Common Market.

Brandt Points the way to Gaitskell

WHILE Gaitskell and Brown push the British Labour Party further and further to the Right, their opposite numbers in the German Social Democratic Party indicate the road they will be travelling.

At its Cologne conference, the SPD leaders have made clear their willingness to join a coalition with the capitalist parties, if Adenauer were replaced as Chancellor. Ollenhauer, the party leader, called

on 'Der Alte' to resign 'in the national interest'.

Willy Brandt, Burgomaster of West Berlin, explained how the SPD's policy on the future of Germany was more in line with the wishes of the Western powers than that of Adenauer. The Federal Republic, he explained, must back those who want to unite the Western community, not those who try to divide it.

Brandt supported enthusiastically the idea of Tory Britain entering the European Common Market. 'We believe Britain belongs to free Europe,' he said.

This man, who recently visited this country for discussions with Gaitskell, is now to be deputy leader of the Party. He typifies the 'new style' social democracy which has taken over the party especially since the adoption of its anti-nationalization programme at the Godesberg conference in 1960.

Basing themselves entirely on the policies of the United States State Department, the German leaders have now abandoned any pretence of standing for social change or of being related to the working class.

Unlike the British Labour Party, the SPD has no organizational ties with the trade unions.

The German Gaitskells have therefore had an easier job turning the movement into a replica of Kennedy's Democratic Party.

Thus the Party formed by Marx, Engels, Leibknecht and Bebel is destroyed. British socialists must understand that the aim of Gaitskell and Co. is in exactly the same direction.

Tories Press Purge Plans

THE Tories have decided to implement the recommendations of the Radcliffe Committee in full. The Committee's report urged a tightening up of security in the Civil Service and made special reference to the dangers of 'subversive' influence in trade unions whose members were employed on government work.

Even the request of the Civil Service Unions that anyone subject to purge procedure should have the right to union representation has been turned down. Trades union representatives are not even to be allowed to testify on the character and background

of possible purgees.

This is because the sources of information on security questions must not be disclosed.

When the Radcliffe proposals are in full operation, officials of unions are liable to be told that the Treasury will no longer negotiate with them in Civil Service wages and conditions, because their political views are suspect.

Another request from the unions which has been rejected relates to compensation. Anyone not entitled to a Civil Service pension will receive no compensation if they lose their job as a result of a political or security purge.

These decisions must be seen as part of the general Tory attack on the unions. They are particularly related to the ETU witch-hunt, since many ETU members are involved in government work, especially in 'defence' establishments.

The Labour Party leaders are in full support of the Radcliffe Report. Christopher Mayhew, indeed, claimed some of the credit for the setting up of the Committee in the first place.

Kenneth Younger sat on the Committee, and Gaitskell was consulted at every stage.



BMC

Bosses Try To Break Solidarity

Birmingham Industrial Worker

An all-out strike-breaking campaign directed against the solidarity of workers involved in the BMC strike has been waged in Birmingham during the past week by the bosses, the local and national Tory press and television.

The 55 electricians at the Tractors and Transmissions factory, a BMC subsidiary, have been on official strike for a wage increase costing a total of £30 a week, after seven months of fruitless negotiations.

Nearly 2,000 other trade unionists stopped work in sympathy with them when the management tried to get some of them to work 'black' machines. In consequence, by Friday about 21,000 other BMC workers in the Midlands were laid off.

FAKE MEETING

At a meeting on Friday morning there was a reaffirmation of solidarity with the 55. In the afternoon, at a meeting in the factory canteen initiated by the management, it was claimed that 'a majority' of the strike supporters voted to resume normal working on Monday.

Militant shop stewards declared that this vote was unconstitutional, and announced that pickets would ring the factory on Monday morning, to prevent any return to work and persuade those intending to resume to join instead a mass meeting in Ward End Park for all workers at Tractors and Transmissions.

Throughout the week a vicious press campaign had been directed against the strikers, particularly by the local Tory papers. On Thursday an article appeared in the 'Birmingham Mail', quoting the Prime Minister's reference to 'unions arrogant with organized power', and accusing them of trying to 'grab too large a slice of the cake'.

'DEMOCRACY'

It urged that 'some system of compulsory arbitration should be infused into trade union and industrial law', and added significantly 'most competing countries have it'.

It described as 'the negation of working democracy' the fact that 'a mere 55 men' should be in a position to 'cause loss to their employers of something like £7,000,000 a week'.

It quite ignored the fact that by the concession of a mere £30 (out of a weekly £200 saved to the firm by the electricians who had allowed their mates to be upgraded) the employers might have

avoided any such loss.

On Monday morning the factory was picketed without incident. A number of the bosses' stooges, however, made a considerable noise at the mass meeting.

PROMISES

Mr. J. T. Bolas, ETU area secretary, told them: 'The management have never been friends of yours and never will be. Your friends are here; if once you get into a position of not realising that, you'll soon be in trouble.'

'This dispute could have been settled before it came to a strike, if the management had kept promises given to the shop stewards. They went back on those promises as early as last February.'

'The management of the BMC are determined to break this strike in order to demonstrate that they can break any organization at any time they like. If they break up the union at T and T you know what the consequences will be.'

By a majority vote a resolution was passed instructing the shop stewards to get in touch with the management to settle the dispute within 24 hours.

No firm resolution in favour of continued solidarity of all workers was put to the meeting by the shop stewards. By failing to do so they clearly played into the hands of the employers.

FORMULA

After the mass meeting, union officials and shop stewards spent the day going to and from meetings with the BMC executive trying to find a peace formula.

The news 'leaked out' that the management was taking a strong stand about wages, and that the formula would be 'unrelated to a direct improvement on previous pay offers'.

The settlement, when it was finally reached after three hours' negotiations on Tuesday evening, gave an increase of 12s. 2d. to skilled electricians, and an extra 6s. 1d. for mates.

That this is little different from the offer made by the firm at the start of the dispute is largely the result of the lack of any firm answer to the employers and the press campaign by the union leaders.

Although declared official, the strikers and their local leaders were left to fight on their own.

Ford Workers Face New Dangers

by REG PERRY

THE rejection by the Ford Motor Company of the claim for higher wages for its 45,000 hourly-paid workers in Britain faces the Labour movement with a serious challenge. In a statement accompanying the rejection, Mr. L. T. Blakeman, Labour Relations Staff Manager, bluntly declares, 'Under the present circumstance we cannot even afford the present wage level, let alone think of raising it.'

This reveals clearly the critical position facing the whole employing class in Britain. In order to match the competitive prices of its European rivals, productivity has to be stepped up.

This can only be achieved by installing the most modern automated systems and by reducing the wages of the working class.

PROFITS DROP

Since 1956 investment in automation and new plant, particularly in the motor industry has gone on apace.

The statement by Fords points out that last year although they made £22 million profit, they had to spend £35 million in new plant in an effort to reach the production levels of their competitors. But this was still inadequate.

According to Fords not only has the decline in profits of 34 per cent between 1960 and 1961 continued, but this year on passenger and commercial vehicles no profits have been made at all.

Now an attack is to be launched on wages.

The statement goes on, 'We are unable to raise our prices because of competition. Nevertheless, we must be in a position where we can utilise the most modern equipment that is available to the industry.'

'If we fail to do this our ability to maintain employment, and the Company, will be jeopardised. It is for these reasons that the whole position of our labour relations must be changed.'

'UNDERSTANDING'

The retreat already being made by trade union leaders like Harry Matthews of the NUMGW, although expected, is positively disgraceful.

Statements which many of them are making to the effect that they understand the difficulties of Fords, should be a warning to all Fords workers. If they are allowed to co-operate with the plans of Fords, not only will the present claim be ditched, but the smashing of the Shop Stewards' Committee will be the next step they take.

Union leaders who today 'understand' the problems of Fords, will tomorrow understand the problems of Vauxhalls, BMC and Leylands.

In Germany and France trade union leaders can also 'understand' the problems of their employing class, and so the working class would be forced to reduce itself to the borderline of poverty in order to maintain the employers' rate of profit.

This retreat, urged on by the national press, who like 'The

Guardian' demand a showdown with the Fords' shop stewards in order to remove the 'poison from industry', can only be defeated by a stand of Fords' workers, backed by the Labour movement.

But such a fight would have to break the Tories' wages policy and from the start would be a political strike linked to the fight for the removal of the Tory government.

The decision against a token strike this week and in favour of an official stoppage was correct, but must now be followed by serious preparation for victory.

NATIONALIZE

The struggle for an increase in wages at Fords is part of the struggle to take industries out of the hands of the employers and nationalize them. A defeat for Fords could greatly strengthen the working class in Britain.

It could help to stop the retreat from nationalization of Gaitskill and the Right wing of the Labour Party, and strike a blow against the witch-hunts in the Labour Party and trade union movement.

These are the first steps needed to seriously fight the employers, bring down the Tory government, and replace it with a Labour government with a socialist policy.

Pipers Call The Tune

Newsletter Reporter

Wednesday

LONDON musicians have given enthusiastic backing to their union's efforts to improve pay and conditions in West End theatres.

At the Conway Hall, last Thursday, they gave the proposal for strike action from June 9 overwhelming support. Later they queued to hand in two weeks' notice at the theatres.

The Musicians' Union has instructed its members to refuse to play numbers from West End shows on radio or TV broadcasts or to record them.

No meeting has yet been held of the Federation of Theatre Unions. It is important to link up the musicians with organizations like Equity, NATKE and ACTT, whose members may be affected by a strike.

Whatever happens at tomorrow's meeting with the Theatre Managers, the musicians are ready for an energetic fight for conditions and pay.

Plumbers' Conference Turns Left

Newsletter Correspondent

AT the Plumbing Trades Union Biennial Conference at Whitley Bay last week, delegates representing 60,000 members went on record opposing all bans and proscriptions in the Labour Movement; for unilateralism and withdrawal from NATO; opposing the Common Market, racialism and the Rent Act; and 'rejecting all forms of wage pauses in any guise'.

Speakers on the bans and proscriptions resolution attacked the NEC of the Labour Party for its witch-hunting meeting the previous day when it proscribed 'Keep Left'.

Said one delegate: 'It is significant that thousands of young socialists who are engaged in a 'Fight the Tory Campaign' have their paper proscribed, and Ernie Roberts, a unilateralist, is refused adoption as an MP.'

'Delegates should ask themselves, "Where is this McCarthyite witch-hunt to end?"'

NEDC RAPPED

On wages, NEDDY's declared policy of increasing production by 4 per cent whilst the government has the policy of holding back wages, received resounding criticism from the conference.

'NEDDY introduces the second round of the wages struggle, and trade union leaders who participate do not serve the interests of workers,' said one delegate. 'The dockers proved the wage pause could be broken by unity,' said another.

Two resolutions pledging the fullest support and protection of shop stewards and militants were overwhelmingly carried. 'Black-listing tactics of the employers were keeping ex-stewards and others off jobs. These must be protected by our union insisting on "labour through the trade union office",' said a delegate.

SPANISH AID

On the last day of the conference a simple resolution pledging support for the Spanish workers was bitterly opposed by the EC. An EC member said, 'You are making the PTU a Communist-front organization.'

It was pointed out that the TUC were supporting the Spanish workers. The conference was not taken in by the manoeuvre of the right-wing dominated EC, and voted overwhelmingly in favour of the resolution.

From the present trend in the PTU, it could be in the forefront for progressive policies.

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