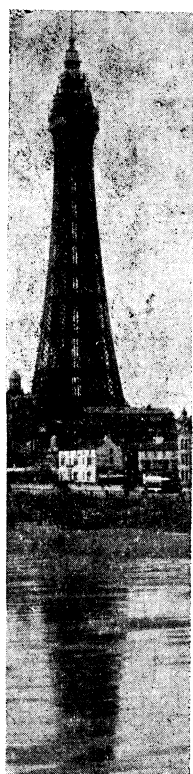


The Newsletter

WEEKLY JOURNAL OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1962

H. L.
OCT 17 1962

COUSINS AIDS TUC

SELL-OUT Streamlining to suit monopolists

Blackpool, Wednesday

THE Trades Union Congress, meeting at Blackpool, has been bulldozed by the slick manoeuvring of the General Council into supporting the most reactionary proposals for 'streamlining' the trade union movement in order that it may become a more efficient and bureaucratised part of the State machine.

Mr. Frank Cousins, hailed by the Tory press this week for his 'statesmanlike' qualities, has played a leading role in this shabby sell-out of the interests of the Labour movement.

Mr. Cousins has this week trodden along the familiar and well-worn path travelled by so many 'Lefts' in the Labour movement, notably the late Aneurin Bevan.

It was Cousins who moved the resolution on 'fringe benefits' for trade unionists, which dealt with health, safety and security provisions. He said that in many ways such benefits were now as important as demands for wage increases.

So, in the removed atmosphere of the Congress, Mr. Cousins speaks of Utopia—while Beeching and Robens prepare for mass redundancies on the railways and in the mines and while hundreds of thousands of young people join the lengthening queue for jobs.

Wages Policy

Cousins moved on Wednesday the motion calling for more economic planning, which is interpreted as meaning that the TUC should have its own 'wages policy'.

The adoption of a 'wages policy' by the TUC will threaten the gains made by the large sections of the working class during the post-war years.

The bitter experience of the past has shown rank-and-file trade unionists that sacrifices made for promises of a bright future are in vain. The mechanics of capitalism ensure that any such sacrifices can only enrich shareholders at the expense of the workers.

Disregard

So the idea of a wages policy has to be 'sold' to the workers. In order to do this, Frank Cousins, a trade union leader sufficiently influential to carry delegates with him, is given the job of proposing such a policy.

The 400-word composite resolution debated by Congress contains much phraseology that is capable of an elastic interpretation but there is no ambiguity about that part of the motion which states that it is necessary to 'recognise

Frank Cousins was quick to assure delegates that the General Council supported it.

'We must not be prepared to sacrifice principles,' he declared. He certainly wasn't thinking of his own association with NEDC.

Congress went on to discuss, and defeat, the composite motion opposing participation in NEDC, moved by George Doughty of DATA (the draughtsmen's union).

Defeated

'In view of the government's partisan wages policy and refusal to plan for economic expansion, this Congress is of the opinion that the trade union movement should not participate in the National Economic Development Council. It deprecates the view that wage rises should be related to production only and condemns this Tory conceived Council as an attempt to destroy the sovereign bargaining rights of individual trade unions. It has no confidence that the Council will be beneficial to the working people and therefore urges the General Council to withdraw their representatives.'

NEDC arose from a crisis of free enterprise, said Doughty, and the basic policy of the Tory government could not be removed from it. This policy is primarily the restraint of wages and salaries.

Blair, speaking on behalf of the Electrical Trades Union opposed the motion, and Woodcock replied for the platform. He said it was too early to condemn NEDC. The motion was a motion of despair. 'What is wrong,' he asked, 'with the Tory government seeking to influence the trade unions? We are seeking to influence the Tories in NEDC. We have got to discover where we can change the Tories.'



Cousins: well-worn path

the need for the trade union movement to examine the whole of the implications of economic planning'.

Such wording reveals a complete disregard of the political realities so far as the working class is concerned. It accepts the position that there can be effective economic planning in a capitalist framework which is not injurious to the real interests of the working class.

Woodcock

That unions should subordinate their claims on the instructions of the General Council as part of a grand economic plan would involve a massive loss of rights of the rank-and-file worker. Such a policy could materialise once it is agreed to co-operate in the interests of a national wages policy.

George Woodcock set the tone of Wednesday's debate with a conservative speech full of empty phrases like: 'It is not setting the people free that is needed but finding the practical limitations of regulations to which we can all subscribe'.

Far from exposing the government's success in holding down real wages, he appealed to the Tories for recognition. 'I wish for goodness sake,' he said, 'the government would try to listen to the TUC instead of making us the scapegoats of their failure.'

Moving the composite motion,

Tories can change you

He was replying to Bro. Macgregor of the Scottish Painters who ended his speech by turning to the platform and saying, 'We cannot change the Tories but they have a good chance of changing you.'

This has been a disastrous week for trade unionism, but out of this disaster can come a new clarity, a new determination, a sharpening of the struggle.

Smooth Talkers

The rank and file of the movement must see through the smooth talkers at Blackpool who, with the aid of fake militants, are attempting to turn the movement into the efficient tool of capitalism.

The battle of Victoria Park

NEWSLETTER REPORTER

SUNDAY, September 2 began quietly enough with the anti-fascist Yellow Star movement occupying the grim and tatty entrance to Ridley Road, Dalston, to prevent the British National Party holding a meeting there. From early morning to evening a stream of speakers addressed a large crowd, a strong body of police and press, and watching television cameras. The fascists were successfully held at bay—although later in the day they attempted to hold a meeting nearby and were chased away by workers and young people who caught three of them in the Ballspond Road and clearly demonstrated to them their opposition to fascism.

But in place of the fascists at Ridley Road came an almost continuous stream of reactionary rubbish from the Yellow Star platform—priests, rabbis, disguised CPers and an 'ex' Empire Loyalist—who all came out strongly for government legislation, praise for the police, who were doing a difficult job courteously and well, for inter-church union and strongly against working-class action to defeat the fascists.

The chairman, Olga Levertoff, implored the few Young Socialists and SLL speakers who managed to get to the platform not to be 'sectarian' or to plug a socialist line, as that was 'not what we are here for'.

FLABBY

The crowd stayed and listened and showed its determination to oppose the thugs of the far Right but they became visibly more bored as the day wore on. A flabby speech from a Labour MP had posed the question: 'How is it the fascists are allowed to be active again?' A SLL speaker who declared that it was precisely because people like him came along and made

speeches like that, received an enthusiastic response from the audience and there was a brisk increase in the sales of The Newsletter.

It is evident that Yellow Star is providing a platform not only for genuine anti-fascists but for anyone who likes the sound of his own voice and is prepared to jump on the bandwagon, however idiotic or reactionary his views. This is a dangerous movement, for it holds back and dilutes the determination of the Labour movement to defeat the fascists and attempts to stamp on working-class action and replace it with appeals to parliament and votes of thanks to the police.

BATTLE

Just how deserving the police are of the thanks of the London Labour movement was demonstrated that evening at Victoria Park Square, Bethnal Green, where the Ridley Road crowd began to drift at 6 o'clock to combat the meeting at which Mosley was planning to speak. The Yellow Star officials had pleaded with the crowd to stay away from Bethnal Green, but few of them took any notice.

By 6 o'clock, Victoria Park Square, a narrow road alongside (Cont. p. 2, col. 2)

Cuba: new aggression plans by U.S.

ONCE again the Cuban revolution is threatened with aggression from US imperialism. All sections of the international working class must come to the assistance of the Cuban people in every way possible.

In an appeal for support, the Cuban Embassy lists 12 camps in Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama where counter-revolutionary forces are being trained with the aid of the US Intelligence Service. Others are in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

In Washington, both Republican and Democratic Congressmen are pressing for military action to be speeded up. Senator Capehart, a Republican member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said that President Kennedy thought 'it was a good idea to invade Cuba a year ago and he failed. I want to do it now and make it stick'.

Senator Strom Thurmond, a Democrat, sent a letter to his constituents last week saying: 'The longer the United States waits to expel communism from Cuba, the more difficult will be the job.'

(Cont. p. 3, col. 2)

IN THE 1930s THE BRITISH RULING CLASS MAINTAINED ITS POSITION WITHOUT A RESORT TO FASCISM

IN the period between the wars large sections of British industry were in the grip of stagnation and depression. These were mainly the old staple industries—coal, iron and steel, shipbuilding, textiles—concentrated in what became the 'distressed areas'.

Loss of competitiveness in overseas markets was the root cause. A vicious circle was set up—loss of markets discouraged investment, technique thus fell increasingly behind and so did the prospect of recovering the old place in the world market. Yet, using old equipment, large sections of British industry remained profitable.

No longer developing the productive forces, such sectors of capitalism could nonetheless still make profits. At the same time, new industries, such as motors, the electrical trades and many consumer goods industries and trades, continued to expand and prosper.

Cheap imports of food and raw materials kept down costs. The plight of primary producers and the income on past investments kept British capitalism going, despite much unused capacity and heavy unemployment.

When the depression struck after 1929, by abandoning the Gold Standard and Free Trade—two pillars of Britain's former position in the world economy—its worst effects were avoided. Lower interest rates helped to maintain business profits. Even before rearmament began on a large scale a limited recovery had begun—certainly by 1934.

★

The British ruling class, thanks to its continued accumulations at home and abroad, and not without some skilled political manoeuvring, was able to maintain its position without a resort to desperate measures such as fascism.

Certainly the reserve army of labour reached excessive levels. Idle labour power on such a scale meant so much surplus value going to waste. Less surplus value, less incentive to capitalise what was being extracted, slowed down technological advance. Monopoly control over many sectors of the economy was strengthened. Often with State support, production was cut to keep up profits.

The decay of capitalism seemed obvious because of the high level of unemployment, the monetary chaos and the bitter struggle for markets waged with every protective device known which characterised the '30s. The crisis itself was often subsequently to be identified with these symptoms—it was forgotten that the same crisis could show itself in quite different ways.

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The relative ease with which the British capitalists were able to face up to their difficulties before the war encouraged the complacency which went back to the days of their world monopoly. Protection of the home market, state help, monopolistic devices to maintain prices and profits all obscured the need for more thorough changes. Relatively, technical efficiency did not improve.

The old structures continued to reign supreme in many fields. Productivity fell behind in vital industries. Mechanisation, use of electric power, economies in power and raw materials,

modern factory layout all tended to be less developed in Britain than in the other major capitalist countries.

The war of 1939 blew the supports away from under this set up. After the war a serious crisis was evident. The prestige of capitalism reached its lowest ebb. Entire industries were revealed as grossly inefficient by world standards. Vital sectors of the economy, such as power and transport were desperately short of capital investment.

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The earning capacity of British capitalism had fallen well below its current needs to keep the wheels of industry turning. The economic apparatus had to be put in order by drastic methods involving state support and nationalisation. The yawning payments gap was only bridged with the help of American dollars. Internal reconversion and reconstruction of industry was undertaken by the Labour government elected in

The battle of Victoria Park: from page one

the park, overhung by trees and occupied by flats and a territorial army building, was filling up with police and demonstrators—but mainly police. Mounted police and dogs were ready in the next street if needed. Many anti-fascists stayed in the park and as Mosley's lieutenant, Hamm, began the meeting at 6.30 the demonstrators were heavily outnumbered by police.

YOUNG PEOPLE

The demonstrators, almost without exception young people—Young Socialists, YCLers and YCNDers—began to shout 'Down with Mosley'. The police immediately swept them back up the street, leaving a 30 yard clear gap around the Mosleyites. Although it was obvious that the demonstrators were quite unable to break through and stop the meeting, the police arrested a dozen or so of them and dragged them off, bent double, arms forced up behind their backs almost to breaking point, to the waiting vans.

As Hamm ranted, almost inaudible to all but his followers around the Union Movement lorry, the demonstrators moved

The Crisis of British Capitalism: second of a series by By Tom Kemp

1945. Coming to power without plan or purpose, its leaders placed themselves at the service of British capitalism, giving it the breathing space and the direct assistance which it needed to face the future.

Able to hold back the organised workers and spread illusions through nationalisation and social welfare legislation, there is no doubt that the Attlee government performed an invaluable service for the ruling class.

★

In the meantime, the more or less rapid revival of world capitalism, albeit on a narrower geographical base, thanks to American aid and support, provided the basis for expanding exports and bringing the balance

of payments problem under control.

By a fortunate combination of circumstances expansion became the order of the day. An expanded market was found in the growth of exports, following on the needs of post-war reconstruction.

★

The build up of arms production to record peace-time heights added further opportunities for realising surplus value. The new expansion, accompanied and made possible by a whole range of new technical discoveries, took the form of increased profitability, encouraging investment and keeping the demand for labour power at a high level ('full employment').

The new prosperity was not without its symptoms of crisis. The international position was particularly precarious. The gold and foreign exchange reserves were far below the safe level consistent with Britain's involvement in world trade and

finance. The balance of payments remained a major weak spot.

It required very little to produce a drain on the reserves which could only be met by restrictions on home demand which tended to kill the expansion. The activity of business tended to pursue a zig-zag course; government policy was haphazard. Every two or three years a run on sterling was followed by crash measures which rudely disturbed business confidence.

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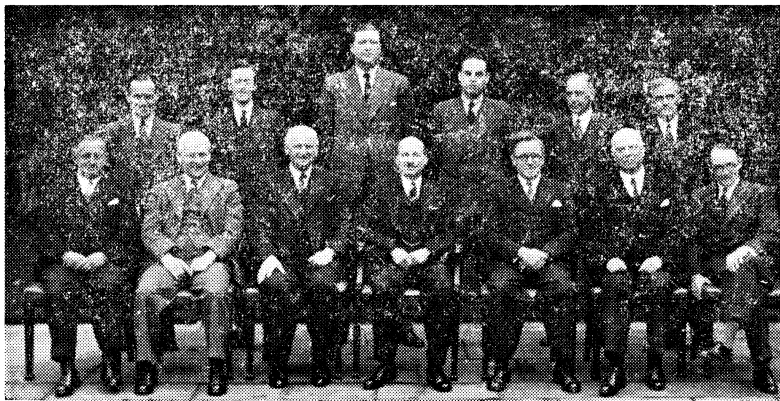
Nevertheless, capital exports were resumed as a new adjustment was made to the need to grant political rights to the national bourgeoisie in former colonies. No fundamental change had taken place in the inner drives of capitalism.

What had changed steadily, through all the ups and downs of the period since 1914, was the capacity of Britain to shape the course of world economic events. Her share in world trade fell more or less continuously. Even in the prosperity since the late '40s no fundamental re-adjustment has been made to changing world market needs. Only the expansion of world capitalism as a whole prevents even more serious deficiencies from showing themselves.

★

In investment, production, productivity, national incomes, Britain's rivals have gone ahead at a much more rapid rate. Britain's relative position in the capitalist world market had thus continued to deteriorate.

It is this which causes the concern in capitalist circles today. The signs that increasing competition for the world market are imposing narrower profit margins, as well as that an even more intense competition lies ahead, are visible to all.



The 1945 Cabinet: 'The Attlee government performed an invaluable service for the ruling class.'

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Jack Hendy, The Newsletter and the ETU

My note concerning the unfortunate outcome of the relationship which once existed between the SLL and Mr. Cannon appears to have attracted far greater attention than I expected — mainly, I observe, because I prefaced my remarks by suggesting that in general I disagreed with the Newsletter since I thought it exhibited those defects criticised by Lenin in 'Left Wing Communism'. I thought it fair to make that comment; I think so still. I trust that in the near future I shall find time and opportunity to explain as simply as I can why I hold that view.

It was, however, not my intention at the time of writing to spark off an ideological controversy between two schools of thought which have contributed more than a little towards the fight against the Right wing domination of the trade union movement, a fight which is even now reaching a critical stage in the affairs of the Electrical Trades Union.

Though I would never shrink from vindicating what I understand to be the standpoint of the Party of which I am a member, I think it would be most unfortunate if, at this juncture, energies were spent on any task other than the speedy overthrow of the Right wing nominees of the capitalist press who at present assert control over the affairs of that union.

I regret to say I think the remark by John Crawford, in an otherwise thoughtful article, that '... the SLL while fighting against the witch-hunters in the ETU, condemns the way in which the CP industrial department conducted the work of its electrician members' is one which contains a slanderous innuendo, a Right wing gibe which has been refuted more than once already. This kind of remark is best left to the Charles Pannels of the Labour Party.

The CP is not the only organisation which has found a few people unworthy of its further confidence. Lenin himself, as he tells us, found a police spy on his committee — and, as my previous communication pointed out, even the SLL got 'caught' by a renegade. Fortunately, the Left as a whole can never be corrupted, and as the forthcoming conference will prove, those in the ETU will show how to conduct the struggle.

J. HENDY

John Crawford replies:

I am very glad to hear that Comrade Hendy is going to elaborate on his views about the Newsletter and 'left-wing' communism.

Far from conflicting with the task of getting rid of the right-wing employers' stooges, the understanding of these questions is essential if we are to complete that job. Such controversy in no way prevents the closest collaboration in common work on many issues.

My remark about the CP industrial department and the ETU should not be seen as a 'slanderous innuendo'. It is our opinion, stated on several occasions, that the events which led to the present situation in the ETU must not be blamed on a few individuals.

Talking of innuendo, what does Comrade Hendy mean by his comparison with the police spy on Lenin's committee? Does he refer to those who had been involved in work in the ETU? This smells like the method, very familiar to Trotskyists, of covering up political

Algerian crisis deepens

New OAS terror in France

By ERIC NEILSON

WHEN the proprietor of the Europcar garage in Amiens gave information to the police about a fascist who had rented a car from him, the OAS were quick to make a reprisal. A large plastic bomb exploded in the garage. The owner was unharmed, but the following day he received this letter:

'1,500 kilogrammes of plastic for informing is nothing much; next time it will be a bullet in the back of your head. Commande Brutus, du Petit-Clamart.'

While buildings and vehicles are daily set on fire all over Paris, the law is acting very leniently towards the terrorists. Of eight students in Lille found guilty of plastic bomb offences, only three were given prison sentences. This is only to be expected from a regime which imprisons soldiers who have formed anti-fascist committees in their regiments.

It is the attacks on trade unions and left-wingers which show the real target of the OAS. At the end of last week fascists ransacked the CGT Union office at the Paris-Electricité centre. They left a letter threatening to kill Marcel Paul, general secretary of the CGT Federation and Raymond

Ripoteau, an official of the Paris-Electricité CGT union. In the letter they confirmed their solidarity with the activist Berthier whose factional intrigues at the beginning of this year provoked widespread protest among the Paris-Electricité workers, which finally led to his dismissal.

A petrol bomb was exploded on the doorstep of the Communist deputy mayor of Malakoff, Santuc; fascists also set light to the Communist Party headquarters in Bordeaux.

The French Communist Party, while condemning the regime for its tolerance and complicity towards the fascists, at the same time calls upon the regime to punish the fascists and to purge them from the army and the police force. This can only serve to confuse the French working class, as it is no less than a vote of confidence in the ability of the regime—which laid the basis for fascism in France—to get rid of it.

No true communist should place any confidence in the representatives of the capitalist system to solve the problems of fascism—the only solution is through the independent action of the organised working class, action not only against the fascists but also against the system which breeds them.

Cuba: from page one

ning to repeat its attempt of April 1961 to overthrow the Cuban revolutionary government. At the US naval base of the island, at Guantanamo, there are constant provocations.

Socialists must support the decision of the Soviet government to send arms to Cuba. Whatever our disagreement with the policies of Castro or of the Communist Party, we know that a defeat for the Cuban revolution would be a blow at the working class everywhere.

The US State Department, which tries to run the Western world and bribes and bullies the governments of the entire American continent in particular, has the impudence to accuse the Cubans of 'interference' in the affairs of other South American states. This expresses the terror of Wall Street at the prospect of the spread of revolution to the

American mainland.

The Socialist Labour League has urged the despatch of financial and material aid from the Labour movement to the Cuban people in order to help to break the imperialist economic blockade. This policy has been proved correct by the present situation, for food and medical supplies can be as important as arms in the defence of the island.

The true friends of the Cuban Revolution are not the 'radical tourists' flying back and forth across the Caribbean, but the working class movement throughout the world.

Socialists and trade unionists must exert every pressure they can to stop the imperialist aggressors' plans. We must demand that the British Labour leaders, Kennedy's friends, break their shameful silence on this issue.

errors by finding scapegoats.

What happened in that union can only be understood as the consequence of certain political policies. The responsibility for these must be laid squarely on the doorstep of King Street.

If the rank and file CP members were left to carry the can, the real culprits would escape. And this would mean that the political lessons would not be learned, which could prevent such things happening again.

This, after all, is the main point of Lenin's work. The history of the workers' movement contains many mistakes, defeats and betrayals. It is only by frank discussion of these and the attempt to grasp their true significance, that victory will be achieved.

Clashes between Wilaya 4 and Ben Bella

By OUR FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

THE Algerian crisis has entered a new stage with the outbreak of armed clashes between troops supporting Ben Bella's Politburo and Wilaya 4 forces. The extreme nationalists in the leadership of Wilaya 4 continue to accuse Ben Bella of 'seeking a policy of alliance with neo-colonialists and feudalists', and of setting up a parallel organisation against 'those who fought against the Paras and the Legionnaires'.

The resignation from the Politburo of Boudiaf has been followed by his attempt, together with Belkacem Krim, to 'mediate'. This offer has been rudely repulsed by Ben Bella. Thus the Politburo itself begins to break up.

The postponement of the elections which were due to be held last Sunday, 'until a time when conditions of true peace facilitate the free exercise of legitimate authority', was preceded by disputes about the lists of FLN candidates. Not only were the CP refused a single name on these lists, but many of those selected by the Ben Bellists were regarded by the more radical sections of the ALN as French stooges.

The Wilaya leaders allege that the Politburo is preparing to use French troops to support their power. The danger of French military intervention is considerable as French soldiers remain in the country.

But these leaders are unable to provide any programme which can solve the problems of the Algerian workers and peasants, since they cannot go beyond merely national demands.

They call, in particular, for the immediate convocation of the FLN National Council, without specifying any particular proposals for it to adopt.

CP 'UNITY' CALL

Meanwhile the Algerian CP calls for 'unity'. In a statement in its paper *Alger Republican* on August 27, it says: 'Politics is the art of the possible. To wish for perfection is to enter an impasse, with the risk of ending up worse off.'

The Algerian CP thus refuses to give the slightest independent lead to the masses in the present crisis. It pleads for the holding of elections, but has never attempted to

put its own candidates forward against the FLN nominees.

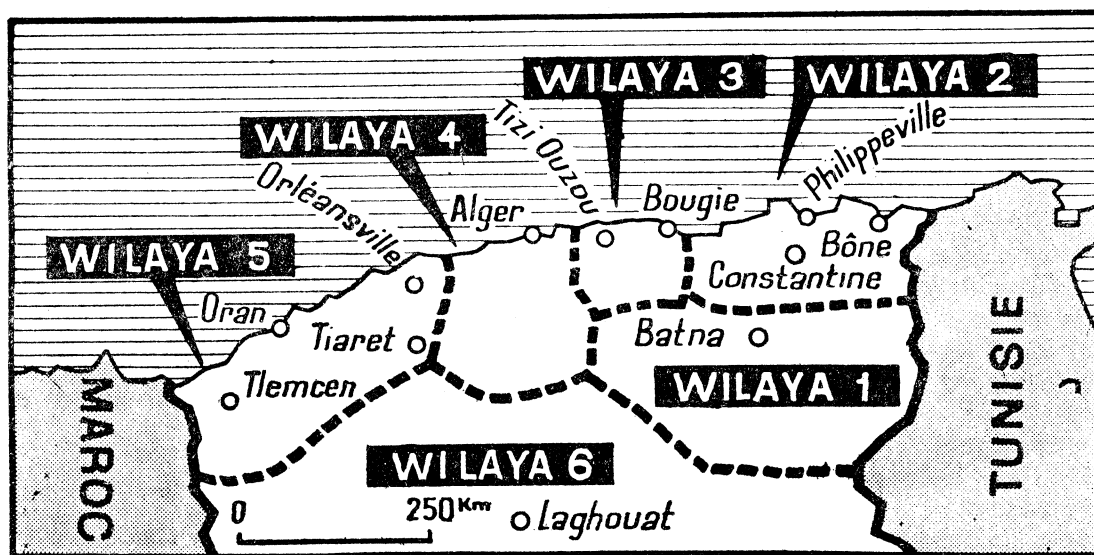
The line of the French CP is, if possible, even more nauseating. A communique from its political bureau on August 31 says that 'the French and Algerian peoples must foil the plans of the Gaullist regime and of all the neo-colonialists who are counting on the internal difficulties of Algeria to take back one way or another, what they were forced to yield under the combined pressure of the Algerian patriots, the French democrats and international opinion.'

But the French CP was, and still remains, in complete support of the Evian agreements which have directly resulted in the present crisis. By giving their blessing to the deal between de Gaulle and the FLN leaders, they prepared the way for the situation in which the fruits of seven years of bloody struggle are being thrown away.

LIMITED POWER

The cries of the masses for jobs and food, at a time of extreme economic crisis, really demand far more drastic social changes than are envisaged by any of the groups in Algeria. But the proletarian leadership is still not available which could press forward the implementation of such measures.

In the meantime, the struggles between the various petty-bourgeois tendencies within the former National Liberation Front contend for the power within the limits laid down by the Evian compromise with imperialism.





Railmen march against cuts

Newsletter Industrial Reporter

MORE than 4,000 men from the Glasgow railway workshops of Cowlaers, St. Rollox, with a sprinkling of engineers from the Rolls Royce factories, marched last Wednesday past the offices where discussions were being held with Dr. Beeching over the sackings which are planned to take place from the end of this year.

This was the biggest and most impressive demonstration staged in Scotland so far, against sackings and unemployment. The workshop men came direct from the depots with banners, some of which called for the nationalisation of the industry and the stopping of payment to ex-shareholders and removal of interest for loans to British Railways.

Police preparations were detailed and clearly intended to prevent Beeching being attacked. The marchers were kept moving, their procession was broken into sections and none were allowed to stop in front of the railway headquarters in Buchanan Street where Beeching was.

NO RESPONSIBILITY

In discussion with representatives of the railway unions and men from the workshops, Beeching disclaimed responsibility for the 'human problem'. This, he said, was the affair of the government. His brief was to reorganise the railway services so that they could become a commercial proposition. Non-paying lines and workshops would be closed or run-down 'as quickly as possible'.

Beeching is doing a job for the big monopolies who hope to get fat contracts to supply the reorganised railways with their future requirements for wagons, carriages, and diesel locomotives.

The production and repair of locomotives in railway workshops is to decline 50 per cent by 1965. By 1972, steam locomotives will have disappeared from British railways and the production and major repair of diesel type and electric engines will be handed over to private industry. In the locomotive workshops, 10,143 jobs will be wiped out by 1967. By 1972 the number of men employed by the railways on loco work will be very small although the actual

figures are not available.

Workers on the production and repair of wagons and carriages are equally affected. The cuts here will be 52 per cent and 19 per cent respectively by 1967—a total loss of jobs in the workshops during five years, of over 20,000.

'COMPENSATION'

The unions involved in this reorganisation have so far done very little other than discuss with railway officials the possibilities of 'compensation' and the application of now outdated redundancy agreements under the principal of 'last man in, first out'. There are no indications from the leadership that the opportunity will be taken to campaign for the policy of nationalisation and the planning which would be undertaken by a socialist government to save jobs.

The parliamentary leaders of the Labour Party have in fact endorsed the plans of the Tory government. For George Brown to place himself at the head of the railwaymen who marched in Derby is therefore nothing but cheek. He should have been told to get back to his chair in the offices of the *Daily Mirror*.

CAMPAIGN

The job of fighting sackings has got to be done by the rank and file. Extend the existing campaign to cover all railway workshops and depots in Britain and hammer out a policy which will include those measures of nationalisation which would be undertaken by a socialist government, and call a national rank-and-file railwaymen's conference to fight closures and against all sackings.

Apology

THE Editor expresses his regret to the Joint Negotiating Committee of Whitworth Gloster Aircraft Factory Shop Stewards at Baginton, Coventry, for the publishing of an article under the title 'Redundancy threats grow for aircraft workers' in The Newsletter of July 14 last, which went beyond the bounds of fair comment. The Editor also wishes to make it clear that reprints of that article which were distributed at the factory were produced and distributed without the knowledge or authority of The Newsletter.

Lightermen fight on

Despite leaders' retreat

By REG PERRY

ON the instructions of their Executive Committee, 3,700 lightermen in the Port of London returned to work last week after one week on strike. The return to work was made on condition that negotiations on their claim for the payment of correct overtime rates be immediately opened on the National Joint Council for the port transport industry.

There were many bitter expressions of disagreement with the instructions when the lightermen met last Saturday in Victoria Park. Many of them said that the conditions for a return to work were identical with those which the strike started over. Others feared that this retreat would be taken advantage of by the Association of Master Lightermen, Tugmen and Bargemen in the next few months.

RETRACTION

Speaking for the Executive Committee of the mens' union, the Watermen, Bargemen and Tugmen's Union, Mr. Lindley, the General Secretary, claimed that the men, by their militant action, had forced the retraction of the employers' plan to refer the dispute to arbitration. In the opinion of the EC this represented a magnificent victory.

Speakers pointed out that although it had been correct to take the stand against arbitration in view of the cynical treatment of arbitration awards by the Tory government, this was not the issue over which the strike started and therefore there should be no return.

A substantial number of lighter-

men voted against in the final count.

All portworkers will view apprehensively the outcome of the negotiations on the disputed item of overtime rates. They are well aware that discussions have once more begun on the decasualisation scheme for dockland which has received the blessing of Frank Cousins. This scheme will result in much unemployment, greater disciplinary powers for employers, and a loss of security (despite more 'perms') for all dockworkers.

SOLIDARITY

The employers are well aware that there will be a big struggle against the implementation of this scheme, and they are constantly probing for weak spots in the dockers' ranks. That is the reason for the fight with the lightermen. They will be shaken by the solidarity with which the men fought them, but heartened by the retreat of the leaders. It is just as necessary for the rank and file also to learn the lessons of the dispute

● As we go to press it is reported that the negotiations are dead-locked.

New moves against militants at Kincardine

By BOB SHAW

SINCE the end of the strike of electricians at the Kincardine power station construction site, the witch-hunt of the militants on and off the job has been intensified.

Messrs. Chapple and Tuck, representing the ETU Executive, arrived on the job to conduct a meeting of those electricians who had been brought on to the job to break the strike. Notices for this meeting were sent out by post only to those men who remained at work during the strike and whose presence on the job during the latter part of the dispute was endorsed by the leadership of the ETU.

The notice for Mr. Chapple's meeting announced it would be held in the Board Room of Messrs. Kennedy and Donkin (the consultant engineers on the site). The letter announced that admission to the meeting would be by contribution card and this letter only.

Escorted Off

The procedure for this meeting so incensed the other electricians on the site, who had stood firmly by the locked out men, that Chapple was forced to admit them also to his meeting. He, however, refused to be present if the locked out men were allowed into the meeting. These electricians were therefore escorted off the site by the police.

The witch-hunt on the site has now extended to the AEU and against one member of that union who was the shop stewards' convenor for the contracting men.

He had given strong support to the locked out electricians and had organised support on the job for the strike. His shop steward's card has been 'temporarily' withdrawn.

There are still 16 electricians locked out from the Kincardine job and without work. They point out that as a result of the defeat of the strike the site money paid to the electricians has been fixed at 7d. per hour; that only a very small allowance is being paid to men who travel in to the job from Edinburgh and Glasgow. The fares to the job for some of the men are as high as £2 per week. The employers have, through the breaking of the strike, been able to cut their costs by the payment of a lower rate.

Encouragement

The strike committee has received encouragement by the response to its appeal to other sections of workers for funds. These funds are still needed to help those victimised. Contributions should be sent to c/o M. Gillespie, 96 Kingseat Avenue, Grangemouth, Scotland.

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Standards workers will fight speed up

Newsletter Reporter

LIKE the other motor combines, the Standard-Triumph Company at Speke, Liverpool (taken over by Leyland Motors Ltd., 12 months ago) are trying to speed up production to bolster a falling rate of profit, meet increasing competition and prepare for entry into the Common Market.

1,500 workers are employed at this factory, making bodies for car model TR4. They are not on piece work, but are paid a flat rate. The management are now trying to introduce time and motion study to get increased production for the same money. Last week they announced they were putting a stop watch on jobs in the factory.

● A barrage of propaganda over the past weeks has been directed against the workers in an attempt to squeeze all energy out of them in order to keep profits up.

In a year the workers have brought up the production of bodies from 320 to 450 a week. Now, they say, the management has told them that production has to be doubled in three months; that they must have the stop watch treatment because some men are 'not pulling their weight'; that increased production is necessary for the firm to finance the new factory they propose to build in Speke.

A week ago, headlines in the *Liverpool Echo* reported that the future of the new factory—which was to employ 4,500 workers by 1963—was in doubt, although the site has already been cleared. Cancellation of this new factory in Speke is now held as a threat to jobs in the factory already working.

Men from the Standard factory complain bitterly that the management has produced an agreement on the use of stop watches, about which they know nothing. Standard's management allege it has been signed by trade union officials. At a mass meeting last week, the men were not allowed to vote on it.

● Said one shop steward, a member of the Transport and General Workers' Union: 'If the men phone the officials they can't get them. If the management phone they are up at the factory in half an hour. We have put a lot of hard work in getting organised up here. Now, instead of going forward, we are taking steps backward.'

But, from his conversation and that of other workers at the factory it is clear that there is a fighting spirit among the rank and file. Their determination to resist the speed up and redundancy can defeat the management.

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