

The Newsletter

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RAILMEN - BEWARE

NUR SELL-OUT

Bus strike likely in London

Newsletter Industrial Reporter

A MAJOR strike by London busmen against the plans of the Transport Executive to introduce modernisation plans with completely unacceptable wage increases may well be called next Wednesday.

Discussions between LTE officials and busmen's leaders reached deadlock on Tuesday this week. The immediate bone of contention is the move to introduce 64-seat Routemasters to London garages in the near future, followed shortly by giant 72-seaters, special buses carrying 35 standing passengers and one-man-operated vehicles in certain areas.

Wouldn't Budge

On Tuesday, the LTE refused to budge from its offer of 42½ per cent of the savings from the introduction of the new buses going to the busmen. The unions are standing out for 50 per cent.

After the meeting, Mr. B. H. Harbour for the LTE told a press conference that the executive could not possibly make any further concessions to the busmen. He considered it the LTE's 'inalienable right' to introduce new types of buses whether or not the busmen gave permission.

He said that the LTE would operate 64-seat Routemasters from Edgware and Harrow Weald next Wednesday and the drivers would start training this week.

'No Intention'

At these garages, however, busmen said that they had no intention of turning up for training. A rank and file busmen's leader said on Tuesday that the situation looked like developing into the most serious one in the industry since the official strike of 1958.

LTE proposals to date amount to an increase of 2s. a day for Routemaster staff and a reduction in hours equivalent to 6d. a day. Busmen have been fighting the proposals on the grounds that the new plans would mean a 10 per cent cut in services, fatigue for bus workers would be greatly increased and they would ultimately receive less pay for more work.

Part of Drive

The LTE's plans are part of the drive for efficiency in all sectors of the transport industry at the expense of the workers. Because of this basic cause, it is clear that an alliance of all transport workers is the only means to defeat the Tories' plans.

Mr. Cousins has promised to tell his busmen to support railway workers. He must be held to this promise; it must also be a reciprocal agreement between all transport unions.

A major transport strike can cripple the Tory government. In this important and far-reaching struggle, the busmen must not act alone next week but must immediately seek the support of all other transport workers.

Secret talks on lay-offs

By ALAN WEST,
Our Labour Correspondent

LEADERS of the National Union of Railwaymen have been engaged in secret talks with the Tories' hatchet-man Dr. Beeching this week. Sidney Greene and company have shelved their plans for an extended national strike until the outcome of these talks are known.

Despite the hush-hush nature of these discussions, it seems clear that they have centred round the need for better redundancy terms—more settlement pay, with the sackings spread over a lengthier period.

Blackmail

Dr. Beeching, who is quite willing to step up redundancy payments in order to avoid a showdown with railway workers, is indulging in some judicious blackmail to buy off the militancy of the rank and file.

On Wednesday he said he would put the NUR case to the government—if the strike was called off.

After the 'success' of Monday's meeting, the Ministry of Labour felt sufficiently encouraged to call formal talks with all the interested unions.

The issue is now clear to all railway workers: the NUR leadership is fighting a narrow battle on the subject of the best possible terms for redundancy.

The rank and file must organise to defeat this move, which can only result in victory for the Tories' plans and mass unemployment for rail workers.

Oppose

The task of the NUR leaders is to oppose completely the Marples-Beeching economy measures. Although the unions are not against modernising the railway system, they must fight the attempts to push through the Tory brand of modernisation which, in effect, means smashing the system as a social service to better aid big business, thus throwing thousands of workers on to the streets.

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Riots flare in Brussels

Newsletter Correspondent

SUNDAY, October 14 was a day of violence in Brussels. A march by tens of thousands of Flemings clashed with French-speaking counter-demonstrators in the city centre.

A bomb was thrown at demonstrators and many were injured in the ruthless attempts to clear the crowds by police. Over 40 people were arrested.

The police were aided by 4,000 gendarmes equipped with tear-gas rifles and sabres. Barbed wire barriers erected around the city centre were broken down by angry counter-demonstrators.

The aim of the march was to demand more political rights for Flemings and to protest against the transferring of two towns, formerly under Flemish administration, to Wallonia.

The parliamentary system in Belgium is arranged in such a way that neither the 5 million Flemings nor the 4½ million Walloons can obtain a majority in either house. The balance is always held by the bilingual Brabant area.

But it was not a dispute over the electoral system which really caused this march. As Louis van Geyt of the Political Bureau of the Belgian Communist Party said recently: 'Such a march can have only one outcome, that of playing the game of the worst enemies of the working people: the Belgian financial powers and their reactionary allies.'

This chauvinistic demonstration by the Flemings has the same effect as the race riots in the

USA and the growth of the fascists in Britain. It is a deliberate attempt by the Belgian capitalist class, which has been in a state of crisis since the Congo disturbances, to split the workers along racialist lines.

Homeless numbers grow in London

THERE are now nearly a thousand homeless families in London, it was officially stated this week by the LCC.

This is an increase of more than 50 per cent during the last 11 months. The chairman of the LCC housing committee stated that 991 families—4,638 persons—were in welfare accommodation.

He said that the possibility of using temporary camps for homeless people had been studied but had proved impracticable.

The statement was made at the same time as the new Tory Housing Minister, Sir Keith Joseph, was touring slum housing in London and making vague promises about improving the situation in the next few years.

Observing a tenement in Southwark, South London, Sir Keith observed that 'they were doubtless the best in the world when they were built 100 years ago, but they are thoroughly unsuitable now'.

Cuba: pressure steps up

By ERIC NEILSON

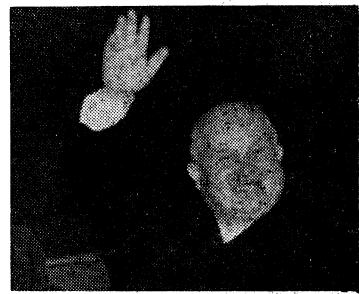
ON Sunday a Cuban patrol boat was attacked and sunk by a large exile ship thought to be operating from the island of Cay Sal. At least two Cuban militiamen were wounded.

Serious though such an attack may be, it is not these small groups of counter-revolutionary exiles that threaten the Cuban revolution, but rather the strength of American imperialism.

US big business now intends to starve out the revolution by imposing heavy sanctions on Western and Russian ships trading with Cuba. This brings it into sharp conflict with the British and Scandinavian shipping interests.

The opposition of the European ship-owners to the plan is not a result of any love on their part for the Cuban revolution. They are simply concerned about the loss of business which the cessation of trade with Cuba would involve.

This could seriously affect countries such as Norway,



Khrushchev: thin disguise

'whose economy leans heavily on the shipping industry.

Just as the American imperialists are stepping up their campaign against the Cuban revolution, the Soviet bureaucracy has shown its readiness to compromise with them. Delegates to the United Nations have been informed that it is willing to adopt a 'more moderate course' in Cuba, if the US is prepared to do likewise in Berlin. In other words, Khrushchev's 'defence' of Cuba is just a thin disguise for using the country as a useful bargaining counter in his bid for a deal with imperialism.

This compromise could mean that Khrushchev is considering cutting off the supply of arms to Cuba, arms vital to the defence of that country against US imperialism.

Any such compromise must be firmly opposed by all those who claim to support the Cuban revolution against the reactionary forces which now threaten it.

An open letter to a member of the ETU

This important contribution starts on page 2

An open letter to a member

Dear Jack

I HOPE you are not too disappointed by the decisions of the Rules Revision conference. They were very much related to the events of the past 15 months, not only in the ETU but in the trade union movement as a whole.

The witch-hunt against the old leadership of the union seized upon what has been described as 'ballot-box fiddling' in order to attack the militant traditions of the ETU and weaken it as a force within the Labour movement.

There is really nothing secret about all this. Members of the union work in essential defence industries; since the union was led by members of the Communist Party, the employers and the government were eagerly looking for a way to change this leadership.

The witch-hunt against Haxell, Foulkes and their colleagues was, in fact, part of the Cold War.

Without in any way agreeing with the serious breaches of union rule, which it was alleged were engaged in by these men (Frank Foulkes denies knowledge of these breaches), the Socialist Labour League consistently opposed the witch-hunt. We maintained that Byrne, Cannon and Chapple, when given the opportunity, would do their utmost to take away some of the democratic rights already enjoyed by the ETU membership.

ADVISORY

The Rules Revision conference has proved us right. Formerly, the union had an annual policy conference, but this has now been changed to a biennial event which,

in any case, will only be advisory insofar as the powers of the executive council are concerned.

The Right wing did their best to foist a full-time executive, elected for five years, upon the conference. Although the proposal was withdrawn, it will be brought up again in the near future.

Byrne, Chapple and Cannon will not rest until they have the union bound securely to the policies of the Right wing.

How have these serious events come about? We think that it is little use blaming individuals like Foulkes and Haxell. They are men who have spent almost a lifetime in the working-class movement and the Communist Party. They joined that movement as men who wanted to see socialism established in Britain.

SCAPEGOATS

It is impossible, we believe, to separate the actions which led to the court case from the policies of the Communist Party. All the Party has done so far is use Haxell, Frazer and others as scapegoats to avoid a political explanation of what happened. After all, you are one of those who have to bear the brunt of the witch-hunt.

We believe that the political reason for the events in the ETU is the growth of opportunism in the trade union work of the Communist Party. This opportunism is part of the legacy of Stalinist miseducation and training.

The British Communist Party accepted the theory of Stalin that it was possible for the Soviet

Union and the Communist Parties to live at peace with the imperialist powers.

This theory rejects the Marxist conception of the irreconcilable nature of the struggle between the working class and the capitalist class—that is the Soviet Union based upon the working class, and the imperialist states such as Britain and America, which are based upon the capitalist class.

The leadership of the British Communist Party is unable to publish the history of the Party (promised for over five years) because they do not want to correct the mistakes of Stalinism. In short, they still apply his policies to the situation in Britain.

Reformism, the term which describes the opportunism of the right-wing leadership of the Labour Party and trade unions in this country, bases itself on the need to preserve peace between the working class and the capitalist class.

COMPROMISE

The theory behind this is, of course, Fabianism, which substitutes the evolutionary for the revolutionary road to socialism. In practice, Fabianism engages in constant compromise with the ruling class. It forms the theoretical roots of the right-wing bureaucracy, which acts as a buffer between the capitalist class and the working class.

Although on occasions this bureaucracy negotiates inadequate wage increases, it always leaves the working class leaderless in times of a serious conflict with the ruling class.

The members of the Com-

munist Party who work in the ETU and base this work on 'peaceful co-existence' with the imperialists have been inevitably forced to proceed along a road similar to that of the right-wing reformists.

If, in your trade union work, you reject the Marxist theory of the development of the class struggle as the basic factor in the struggle for socialism, then you become a prey to all the reformist pressures that surround the bureaucratic apparatus of trade union organisation.

CONFIRM

You have, in fact, decided to conform to the main requirement of the ruling class, which is that the working class should be left without a Marxist leadership.

That is what happened to Haxell, Foulkes and their immediate supporters. Having gained control of the ETU, they were drawn into the reformist atmosphere of the trade union movement, as a result of the 'peaceful co-existence' policy of the Communist Party.

It is no wonder that they failed until the last minute to alter the constitution of the union, giving full powers to annual conference. But by then it was too late.

The annual conference, which brings together delegates from branches, should be the highest body in the union. But under the old constitution it was purely advisory. All that Byrne and company have done is to retain the advisory nature of the conference as laid down in the rules and make conference itself a biennial event.

CHANGE

Why didn't the Communist Party advise Haxell and Foulkes to change the union constitution and make annual conference the highest body?

Such a reform was urged on many occasions by Trotskyists, who were slanderously denounced for their pains as agents of Catholic Action, etc., etc. We again pressed for this immediately after the court action and then suddenly it became clear to Haxell, Foulkes and others that the reform was essential.

It was agreed to at the December 1961 Rules Revision conference. Then the Right wing hit back and a successful court action nullified the decisions of this conference. Had Trotskyist policy been adopted during the years when the union was under the control of the Communist Party the situation would be entirely different today, because the rank and file would have much more experience of how to control the leadership.

WITHSTAND

Had the reform been initiated then, the union would have been in a far better position to withstand the present attacks of the Right wing. At the same time the activities of Haxell and Foulkes would have been under closer surveillance by the rank and file which, in turn, may well have prevented the serious breaches of union rule that took place.

It was the political line of the Communist Party which guided Foulkes and Haxell to work within the right-wing framework of the old constitution. Thus the policy of 'peaceful co-existence' led to adaptation to the trade union bureaucracy.

The two things are inter-related. Since the rank and file of the ETU remained disfranchised because the annual conference had no powers, it followed that the executive was the all-powerful body and this provided considerable

cover for the irregularities which took place. Inside an executive dominated by members of the Communist Party, Frank Haxell, as a leading member of its national committee, reigned supreme.

If the Communist Party had been advocating a Marxist line, then their first consideration on assuming control of the ETU would have been to change the constitution to enable the rank and file to develop and throw all their creative energies behind making the union a powerful industrial and political force in the trade union and Labour movement.

There are members of the Communist Party who even today call the Trotskyists agents of Catholic Action. But who, may we ask, permitted John Thomas Byrne to continue as 'lord of the manor' in Glasgow for so many years?

NO ASSISTANCE

Anyone who has any contact with ETU militants in the Clyde area knows that they fought Byrne for a considerable period without any assistance from the Communist-dominated leadership of the ETU.

Haxell and company refused to take the side of the militants against Byrne and thereby allowed him to carry on much as he pleased while he was full-time official of the Engineering Confederation.

Leslie Cannon was educated by the Communist Party and singled out for exceptional praise by Harry Pollitt.

Frank Chapple, also a member of the Communist Party and a violent anti-Trotskyist, learned his politics in collaboration with King Street.

All these men found it possible to work with the Communist Party because they found in the Party the opportunist methods which eventually led to the present situation.

SHROUDED

There was nothing principled about the decision of these men to leave the Communist Party. Personality differences shrouded conflicts which were basically differences about the opportunist future of the ETU.

The Trotskyists opposed all these methods. For this we were violently attacked by Haxell and Co., just as we are by Byrne and Co. today. To say that Trotskyists are the agents of Catholic Action is nothing more than a shameful slander by people whose role in the fight against Catholic Action is open to question.

There are at this moment die-hard Stalinists working with the Communist Party leadership who are anxious to do a deal with the ETU Right wing and get rid of the Trotskyists in the ETU.

DEAL

It is important that you, as a member of the Party, understand the political reasons for all the happenings which have led to the setbacks in the ETU. If you don't, then mistake will be piled on mistake and it will be impossible to defeat the Right wing with such wrong methods.

The fight to establish internal democracy in the ETU is part of the struggle being waged in the trade union movement as a whole.

When George Woodcock, secretary of the Trades Union Congress, talks about streamlining the trade union movement, he is talking about the establishment of a super-centralised bureaucratic control over the unions and not the introduction of more democracy for the rank and file.

He is, in fact, one of the guiding

A view from the left

An occasional column by TOM KEMP



Ben Bella's Socialism

ANYBODY who still thinks that Ben Bella is a 'socialist' should take note of a statement made by a close collaborator of his who has important responsibilities for the Algerian economy. This is what he said to a journalist from *France-Observateur*.

'We are in a privileged position for undertaking agrarian reform, for, after seven years war carried on by the people, above all by the peasantry, everybody, even our big landlords, accept the idea. We shall proceed by stages. From 1963 we shall have at our disposal several million hectares of nationalised land which belonged to French owners.

'It is here that we must fight against oversimplified notions, for our peasants often imagine that we are going to give them little pieces of land. In reality, we must organise these millions of hectares of nationalised land, in order to increase agricultural productivity, not to reduce it.

'... We have petrol and gas which belongs to the State. But apart from that I do not think that nationalisation would be useful: on the contrary, we need foreign capital and we must naturally ensure its profitability.

Tukhachevsky

THE Soviet Union's leading pre-war military leader, wantonly put to death by Stalin, ostensibly because he was a spy

for Germany, is to have a biography. The writer Lev Nikulin, a friend of the Marshall's, has been entrusted with the task. Perhaps he will explain why he could not have written such a book before. It is to be hoped he will cast more light on this famous frame-up case which was referred to by Khrushchev at the 22nd Congress of the CPSU.

The debacle of the German CP

STALIN's most colossal political blunder outside the USSR was probably his direction of the policies of the German CP in the years immediately preceding the coming to power of Hitler. Anything which sheds light on the betrayal of Europe's best organised proletariat, particularly personal testimony is worth having.

Despite the general 'Cold War' character of that publication, a contribution in the October issue of *Survey* is worthy of attention. It is in the form of an interview with a member of the Comintern apparatus at that time.

According to him, many of the leading German communists had serious misgivings about Stalin's policy. While Stalin continued to denounce the Social Democrats as 'social fascists' it was clear that only a united front tactic seriously pursued could save the day. (On this Trotsky's penetrating writings of the time *Germany—What Next?* and *The Only Road for Germany* should be studied.)

Demoralised by Stalinism, the German CP was unable to give any effective leadership as the tide of fascism mounted. Many leaders resigned themselves to a Hitler victory, believing that he

would not last long and that the USSR would come to their aid.

According to 'Ex-Insider', Stalin encouraged these ideas—but had no intention of risking Soviet security in real aid to a German revolution. He preferred fascism as a 'lesser evil', which would turn itself mainly to breaking up the Versailles system, thus causing complications with the Western powers and giving the USSR time to prepare for war.

Such a tactic, then, began not in 1939 with the Soviet-German Pact, but back in 1932, or earlier, when it was clear that a Nazi coup was inevitable.

No wonder that emigrants in Russia, the flower of the German CP, were liquidated, as they saw through Stalin's game, leaving only the yes-men like Ulbricht to carry on.

Housing

AS elections loom nearer, the housing crisis, the bitter tragedy of millions of families becomes the snare with which cynical Tory politicians hope to get votes. Promises are made of big slum clearance schemes.

'Has Sir Keith really solved the slum problem?' ran a rather stupid *Observer* headline on October 14. Certainly there is no problem for some as perusal of lush residences for sale in its own columns shows. If you can't manage a house, why not try a flat:

Superb Flat. Luxury block, 2 bedrooms, large double reception rooms, kitchen. C.H. C.H.W. Lift, portage, garage. Rent £835 excl. Carpets, curtains, etc., for sale.

After all, this is the affluent society!

of the ETU

Anti-fascist committee formed in Birmingham

NEWSLETTER REPORTER

FOLLOWING the example of Lambeth, where an Anti-fascist Committee was formed in mid-September, Birmingham last Sunday inaugurated its own 'Campaign Against Fascism' Committee. Aston Labour Party took the initiative by calling a conference of trade unionists, Labour Party members, Young Socialists and members of the CND, to discuss the best methods of combatting fascist and racialist activities in Birmingham.

Unions represented included branches of the AEU, ETU and NUVB; a message of support was also sent by the union of Sheetmetal Workers and Coppersmiths.

Dr. Frank Girling, lecturer in sociology at Sheffield University, explained that the racialism now developing in Britain had its roots in the crisis of capitalism. Rising unemployment and an acute housing and hospital shortage were conditions in which ultra right-wingers were able to incite the white population to hatred and violence against the small minority of Jews and coloured people.

Racialist Feeling

These were not, however, the only racialists, Dr. Girling said. In fact, from the extreme Right wing of the Tory Party to the Right wing of the Labour Party there was racialist feeling in Britain today.

There was a great deal of reluctance on the part of the Labour Party leaders to say anything on the subject, on the grounds that to do so would be 'an electoral disadvantage'.

Dr. Girling said the working class must be mobilised against the growth of fascism. Anti-fascist committees must press for the return of a Labour government pledged to a policy of nationalisation, and should urge the undertaking of public works such as the building of houses, hospitals and schools, to relieve present and future unemployment.

If in spite of all the campaigning which Anti-fascist Committees could do, racialism was still preached, then the working class must organise methods of stopping

these people from speaking.

Mr. Fred White, Secretary of Aston Labour Party, said the 'Campaign Against Fascism' would be quite different from any other campaign in Birmingham in the past. It would be basically working class in nature and policy.

If middle-class people wished to come in and work against the growth of fascism they were welcome to do so—provided they joined strictly on this basis.

Fascist groups were numerically small at the moment, but there were activities by other right-wing organisations, not generally known among the workers, such as the strike-breaking activities of the Martell 'Freedom Group'.

The Campaign will hold public meetings in all parts of Birmingham to explain to the Labour movement the truth about fascism. It will campaign from door-to-door and broaden its base by sending speakers to union branches and Labour parties.

Tories send killer planes to Verwoerd

THE government has agreed to the sale by Blackburn Aircraft Ltd. of 30 high-powered strike aircraft to South Africa for a sum reported to be in the region of £30 million. These planes—Blackburn Buccaneers Mark 2—are specially developed for low level flying. They are clearly required by South Africa for use against 'internal disorders'.

They are for Sharpevilles on a larger scale. They are for mowing down Africans in their thousands. They could also be used to assist other reactionaries in Africa—such as Sir Roy Welensky—in their efforts to crush the African revolution.

The Guardian writes about this plan: 'There can be no doubt that it would be a useful instrument in the hands of the South African government for internal security. Both for reconnaissance and ground attack it offers excellent performance.'

On its side, the Tory government has insisted on the South African government acquiring planes that could be used as naval aircraft during a world war.

But it is not in the interests of the British working class to send these planes to South Africa, whether they are to be used against the African workers, or in an all-out war. During the boycott of South African goods many trade union leaders were loud in their condemnation of canned peaches, oranges and wines from South Africa.

Here is something much bigger. The trade union movement should declare black all work on war machines for South Africa.

Nazis sent to prison

FOUR members of Spearhead—the 'elite corps' of the Nationalist Socialist Movement—were sent to prison at the Old Bailey on Monday after a trial lasting 11 days.

Colin Jordan, leader of the movement, was given 9 months; John Tyndall, deputy leader, 6 months; and Roland Kerr-Ritchie, research officer, and Denis Pirie, a section leader, each received 3 months. All four are to appeal.

They were each found guilty of organising, training and equipping Spearhead in such a manner as to arouse reasonable apprehension that they were organised and trained to be employed for the use or display of force in promoting political objectives contrary to the Public Order Act of 1936.

They were found not guilty of organising, training and equipping Spearhead for the purpose of using or displaying force to promote political objects during the same period, between March 1961 and August 1962.

The pattern

REDUNDANCY, short-time working and the transferring of industries to areas with a high level of unemployment where cheaper labour can be employed—this is the Tory pattern.

This week comes news of a call by Birmingham shop stewards to the British Motor Corporation in Birmingham to stop its £49 million expansion plan until 'prevailing short-time working at BMC Birmingham factories' was remedied.

The Ministry of Labour states that the number of workers on short-time at BMC had increased from 3,000 in the middle of September to 13,000 last week-end.

Short-time working has been caused by work being transferred from Birmingham to new BMC plants elsewhere in the country, another spokesman said.

immediately restored. As trade unionists who followed a reformist line they have as good a record as any other trade union leader in the movement and they are just as entitled to their cards as anyone else.

Candidates for office must stand for a militant wages policy against the Tory wage freeze; for a Labour government pledged to socialist policies; for the democratic, elected authority of the union's conference and for a union free of right-wing domination.

SHORT-LIVED

Understandable disappointment over the results of the Rules Revision Conference can be short-lived if we now decide to learn the lesson of what has happened.

The difficulties of the Left wing in the ETU may well be transformed into substantial victories in the near future. If the Left, which includes Communist Party members, Trotskyists and Labour Party members, now decides to learn this lesson, united action becomes possible on a wide basis if there is essential agreement to fight opportunism and opportunists.

FINEST

The ETU does not belong to the Right wing. It contains some of the finest militants in the trade union movement with a high political knowledge. It can still play the role of a powerful force in pushing the trade union movement to the Left along the socialist road.

Let us work together to bring to an end the mistaken policies which have led temporarily to the rule of Byrne, Cannon and Chapple and unite our forces on policies which will lead not only the ETU but the whole Labour movement to socialism in Britain.

Yours fraternally,

Gerry Healy,

National Secretary,
Socialist Labour League

influences behind Cannon, Chapple and Byrne. It is safe to assume that the amendments presented by them to the Rules Revision conference were, in fact, drawn up as a result of talks with members of the TUC and Woodcock.

The anti-democratic nature of these amendments is, in fact, a fair description of what Woodcock means when he talks about streamlining the union. The Margate Rules Revision conference was the first experience of the 'streamlining' proposals in practice.

When you have bureaucratic control strengthened in the union it enables the right-wing leaders to elect or hand-pick the people they want to fill the various posts.

The immediate result of the Margate conference, although not entirely favourable for the Right wing, can provide an impetus for the growth of their forces in the union, because they will be able, as the leadership, to encourage the men they want for official positions.

OBJECTIVE

This is why they had the proposal to make the annual conference the governing body, removed by a court action. The implementation of this proposal should be the main objective of the Left wing in the ETU because it would be a big step towards putting an end to the dangers of opportunism in the union.

Communists, Trotskyists and left-wing Labour must unite their forces, to ensure victory for a change in the constitution along these lines.

The only real guarantee against opportunism is to see to it that the rank and file have control over the leadership and that it is impossible for this leadership to handpick its successors under conditions where the membership has no say.

The Communist Party were guilty of this practice inside the ETU in the days of Haxell and Foulkes. Opportunists were selected for positions in the union because it was felt that they would be amenable to the control of the Party.

REJECTED

Militants and Trotskyists were rejected because they had differences with the Communist Party.

There is every reason to believe that members of the Communist Party in the ETU have still not learned the lesson of this serious mistake. There is a tendency to select candidates to oppose the Right wing at elections for top union posts not because they are militant but, as they are opportunists, there is a possibility that they will be easier to direct.

We say that such men, if elected to these posts, would in all probability join Byrne and Co. in a very short time.

You cannot fight the right-wing opportunists, Byrne, Cannon and Chapple, by using opportunist methods. The type of candidate who must be selected for union office of any description must have a record of militancy and loyalty and devotion to the working class.

RESTORED

He must not be frightened to stand up against the right-wing leaders and fight for the reinstatement of the people who have been expelled from the union.

However serious the nature of their misdemeanours, Haxell, Foulkes, Frazer and the others who have been expelled should have their trade union cards

'THE fact that he has done so little—the fact, in particular, that he has done nothing at all to counter the drop in manufacturing investment—is a positively depressing influence in business.'

This sentiment about Mr. Maudling, expressed in the Financial Times leader on Thursday, October 11, was echoed the following day by the Federation of British Industries, who, in publishing their four-



monthly survey of industrial trends, demanded that the government takes measures to 'stimulate the economy'.

There is certainly cause for alarm among the tycoons of industrial big business, two-thirds of whom report that the present level of output in their factories is below capacity.

So gloomy is their outlook that nearly 50 per cent of the capitalists questioned—all representatives of the biggest big business—intend to spend less on buildings, plant and machinery in the coming 12 months.

They are fully aware of declin-

City Slants

by colin chance

ing profits, a decline which is not necessarily attributable to decreasing sales but to the much heavier incidence of depreciation of fixed assets, due to larger capital investment in the recent past.

The largest companies which reported their trading profits (profits before depreciation of fixed assets) in the last quarter, showed an increase of nearly 3 per cent over last year. But, because

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Outlook unsettled

£ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ £ of heavier depreciation and greater capital employed, the gross return on capital is down from 15.4 per cent to 14.1 per cent—quite a heavy reduction in a period of 12 months.

The solution to the Tories' problems was to have been found in substantially increasing exports. Exhortations to this effect, with particular emphasis on the need to reduce costs, was the subject matter of every Tory minister and economic 'expert'.

In fact the FBI report shows that exports are up considerably,

but usually at the cost of low profit margins due to pressure on prices. These increased exports have had less influence on the better balance of payments figures than the vast amount of foreign money which poured into the UK as a result of high interest rates.

But interest rates are falling—and with the decline comes the tendency for foreign money to be withdrawn.

That is why Maudling soft-pedals the sort of measures necessary to resuscitate home demand. For heavy demand increases imports and puts pressure on sterling and thus adds to balance of payments difficulties.

Nevertheless a healthy home market is vital if exports are to be a profitable outlet for the capitalists. Maudling will go as far as he can to placate these interests, but because of the considerations already mentioned, this will not be very far.

Capital, of course, will try to solve its problems at the expense of the workers. To bring down costs is the aim. According to the respondents to the FBI enquiry, 'labour' is easier to get due to the lack of demand. The Labour movement must organise to ensure that it is not a passive factor in the deliberations of big business.

● Railways from page one

Talks with Beeching will not stop the Tories. Only a clear-cut struggle, waged by all transport unions, against redundancy and the Tory government can do this.

Railmen see need for anti-Tory struggle

By a Railway Shopman

THE one-day token strike called by the NUR raised the political level of railway workers. They no longer see Beeching as the sole instigator of redundancies but rather as the executive of the Tory government, which itself represents Big Business.

Local demands for further strike action have been linked with demands for the removal of the Tory government. In Manchester, on the day of the token strike, a mass demonstration of railwaymen passed with acclaim a resolution calling on the unions to fight for 'the end of the Tory government and the initiation of a planned transport economy that places the needs of public and workers before the economics and greed of Big Business'.

The resolution also called for 'more extensive action including strike action'.

Support for the one-day strike was 100 per cent in the Northwest. Yet only a handful of railwaymen attended a 'public protest' meeting held a week later in Manchester. This certainly does not mean that railway workers are apathetic in general. They are only apathetic about certain types of activity.

The feeling is that the Tory policies will not be ended by propaganda and resolutions alone. The realisation of what is involved in the present fight is forcing railway workers to the conclusion that only a large-scale showdown will do this.

If a call is made for a week's strike, then there can be no doubt that it will receive the same support as the one-day stoppage.

Tory transport plans, involving the closure of 'uneconomic lines' threaten the end of 150,000 railway jobs. That means the sack for one in three railwaymen.

Any retreat or compromise by the NUR and other unions on the present issue will strengthen the Tories for a future onslaught on railway workers.

The resolution of Manchester railwaymen, already mentioned, included the demand: 'No redundancies until the need for redundancies can be proved to our satisfaction by the BTC. All workers made redundant to be kept on the books with full pay until other work is found.'

That is the way to meet present and future Tory plans.

But it is clear that the fight can only be really won when the Tories are kicked out altogether.

To force any substantial retreat on the Tories will need more than limited action. The next step must be to involve all transport workers in a struggle to bring down the Tory government.

The 'Blue' fights docks plan

Call for unity of all dock workers

From BILL HUNTER,
Our Merseyside Correspondent

'If the port employer is allowed to get his way, with his present ambitious proposals, one shudders to think how many more dockers will be added to the workless as a result of the speed-up that mechanisation and palletisation, coupled with the complete mobility of gangs, will bring.'

This is one of the warnings in a leaflet issued by the Merseyside Area Committee of the 'Blue Union'—the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers.

The leaflet is concerned first to answer rumours based on recent press articles. It declares that, contrary to these rumours, 'Bro. Bill Johnson, who was democratically elected (not selected) by rank and file 'Blue' dockers, is still the area officer of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers.

'Secondly, the rules of the union have recently been amended so as to provide for the full participation of the Northern members.'

But the main purpose of the leaflet is to deal with what it calls 'the threat to the security and working conditions of all dockers, which is contained in the port employers' current proposals.

'The *Sunday Express* of September 23,' says the leaflet, 'carried an article headed "Now Cabinet is urged: 'Do a Beeching' at the docks". Fears were expressed in the article that a "Beeching" at the docks may provoke clashes with the dockers in connection with speed-up and the fears of redundancy which must follow.

MISLEADING

'When fears of redundancy are expressed we are told that natural wastage will absorb the surplus. This statement is grossly misleading. The speed-up in cargo handling and turn-round of ships would be felt instantly. The . . . surplus labour caused as a result would greatly exceed the number of retiring dockers.'

The leaflet continues: 'The London employers have already made their proposals. They want to split the dockers into categories of labour. With a labour force split into "attached" perms (weekly workers on contract), second class "unattached" perms and third class "reserve pool" men (casual workers), redundancy would be more difficult for the docker to fight, and something like three weeks wages and your cards could well become the order of the day for hundreds of dockers throughout the ports.'

'The NASD have met the

London port employers and are in the process of submitting the union's counter proposals.

'The NASD's demand for the shorter working week is essential, particularly, if shift work is to be worked on the docks.

'We want the abolition of night work and the introduction of two six-hour shifts, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 7 p.m., with a basic wage of £3 per shift. This policy, as well as providing the industry with 12 hours' continuous productivity, would effectively combat redundancy and bring fresh young blood into the unions, strengthening the unions.

PRIORITY

'The maintaining of the Dock Labour Scheme and the retention of the present Continuity of Employment rule is top priority in the NASD's policy for "effective decasualisation". An increase to £200 lump sum, plus an adequate weekly pension instead of the present few bob, is included, with the demand for adequate sickness benefits for all.

'The NASD are in favour of permanency provided it gives security to all dockers without discrimination in grades of wage and privilege.'

FIGHTING POLICY

The Merseyside Area Committee ends its statement for a fighting policy to meet the employers' proposals with the following urgent appeal:

'This stand of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers against the employers' proposals and its alternative policy is worthy of the consideration and support of all dockers.

'But time is running short and a policy is hardly effective if only on paper. The widest possible support must be gained for these ideas. If approved by the dockers, liaison of the 'Blue Union' with rank and file TGWU dockers is a must in order to prevent the port employers bulldozing their conditions for their convenience on the docker.'

Fords move to buy off militants

By REG PERRY

THE award of a 3½ per cent wage increase to 45,000 Ford Motor Company workers is, in reality, a preparation for further attacks against the working conditions now in operation in Ford's factories. This is made clear in the statement accompanying the award. Pointing out that the company 'could not afford' the increase because 'trading results are not as good as we hoped they would be, in fact they have deteriorated compared with last year', the statement claims that there is an annual loss of £3 million due to labour inefficiencies.

Although the award, which gives approximately a 10s. a week rise, is a considerable concession compared with the firm refusal made by the management in May, it is accompanied by an agreement that the unions co-operate in reducing bad time-keeping, absenteeism, abuse of washing time periods and that the resistance to increases in production time-speeds be abandoned.

The most important moves in the negotiations with the 22 national union officials have been to limit the power and authority of the shop stewards' committee.

Agreement was reached that:

1. There be weekly visits of district officials to the factories.
2. There be meetings twice a year with works committees and the national union officers.
3. Convenors of shop stewards will meet the executive of the Ford Company once a year.

These moves would cut out the direct approach of shop stewards with company representatives over immediate issues. In this way Fords hope to steam-roll through the speed-up and other new conditions while discussions travel round through elaborate union and negotiating procedure.

Although one of the concessions demanded by Fords—that shop stewards' credentials be authorised only by the officials of the 22 unions meeting together—was thrown out at this stage, the drive will continue to weaken the resistance of the workers by destroying the militant shop stewards' power. Only three days after making the award, 700 workers at the Southampton works have been put on a 4-day week.

● Over 1,000 workers at Dagenham walked out on Wednesday night after a shop steward was sacked—one week after the 'peace agreement' was signed!

With falling orders throughout the motor industry, Fords' workers can expect the get-tough policy of Sir Patrick Hennesy to be intensified.

They will have to watch with the greatest vigilance the negotiations continuing between the union officials and the management.

Otis liftmen strike

Newsletter Reporter

1,500 workers employed by Otis Elevators in London and Liverpool voted to resume their strike for a substantial wage increase on Wednesday morning.

The strike, which involves factory workers, outside erection men and service workers began on October 9. After nearly a week the shop stewards at the London factory were told by the union organiser that the employers were willing to open negotiations on an interim basis if the men returned to work. This was agreed and the strikers went back to work on Tuesday, October 16.

Derisory

During the day the six shop stewards met the management, who offered a derisory three-farthings an hour increase. At a mass meeting held that evening, the stewards recommended the rejection of the offer and the meeting voted unanimously to recommence the strike the next morning.

The workers in London and in Liverpool have been acting solidly together throughout the strike, and the stewards are keeping in frequent contact so as to hit the employers hard with 100 per cent solidarity in the strike for more wages.

SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE PUBLIC MEETINGS

Glasgow

THE FIGHT TO GET THE TORIES OUT

Speaker: Bob Shaw

Sunday, Oct. 21, 7.30 p.m.
Kingston Rd., 336 Paisley Rd.

Wednesday, Oct. 24, 7.30 p.m.
Rutherglen Town Hall

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