

THE NEWSLETTER

Weekly Journal of the Socialist Labour League

Vol. 3, No. 117

Threepence

September 12, 1959

TRADE UNION CONGRESS IN ACTION

160,000 members lost and 'Blue' Union expelled

By Newsletter Industrial Correspondent

BLACKPOOL, WEDNESDAY MORNING

THE Trades Union Congress lost 160,000 members during the last year. The National Amalgamated Stevedores' and Dockers—the 'blue union'—was expelled after a twenty-minute discussion.

The General Council recommended its expulsion because it had not handed back to the Transport and General Workers' Union the members in the northern ports it was accused of poaching in 1955.

In vain C. Stebbing and B. Aylward of the NASD pleaded that their members in the north could legally claim full membership rights, and to hand them back would mean legal actions against the union that would certainly land it in bankruptcy.

The short discussion on the expulsion included a revealing intervention by T. O'Leary of the docks section of the Transport Union. He talked about the northern docker members of the NASD as if they were the property of his union like so much office furniture.

'It is simply a question of housebreaking by the NASD,' he said, 'and wilful housebreaking. Like a burglar they say: "Let us keep the loot and we'll talk".'

PRINT LESSONS IGNORED

THE print strike was only mentioned in passing by Robert Willis in his Presidential Address. He made a mildly-worded criticism of the General Council over its failure to issue a prompt reply to the British Employers' Confederation after they had issued an appeal to employers everywhere to support the master printers.

Last Tuesday morning the paragraph of the General Council report dealing with the printers' struggle was passed by without any discussion. The valuable lessons arising from the employers' offensive and the weakness of the unions were ignored.

H-BOMB KEPT

The H-bomb debate on Wednesday morning was opened by Sir Vincent Tewson moving the joint TUC-Labour Party statement for the formation of a 'non-nuclear club'. The only clear thought which came out of his twenty minutes of confused support of the manufacture of the H-bomb was that we 'couldn't put our boys into the field unprepared.'

ANTICIPATES TORY VICTORY

The news of the General Election date was received with applause, but clearly the platform has already accepted the inevitability of a Tory victory and what concerns it about the future is how to secure amicable relations with a Tory government.

There were 76 items on the Agenda. The motion calling for the return of a Labour Government was item 76.

SHOP STEWARDS ATTACKED

In the first day's session of Congress, the General Council spokesman attacked shop stewards quite as

viciously as the representative of the Engineer Surveyors' Association who asked for an inquiry into their activities. Sir Tom Williamson, for the General Council, while opposing the Engineer Surveyors' resolution declared that the 'anarchy' which resulted from the unofficial activity of shop stewards could not be tolerated.

And the General Council, which is to hold no inquiry as to why there has been a membership drop for the first time in eight years, gave a pledge to forthwith 'examine the position with which the resolution deals.'

Even those who opposed the Engineer Surveyors' motion on shop stewards—in the only debate so far which has shown any sign of life—did not make a forthright defence of militancy but were concerned to show how 'constitutional' the mass of shop stewards were and how they really prevented strikes.

Electrical Trades Union Enquiry

There is no communist interference in our union.

Met Jayne Mansfield

'Jayne and the TUC have been meeting frequently this weekend on the most amiable terms.

'She was greeted on the frontsteps of the hotel by Ted Hill and that gallant cavalier, Sir Tom O'Brien.

And this morning even Amalgamated Engineering chief Bill Carron found himself patting her toy sized pekinese Powder Puff.'

(Daily Herald 7.9.59)

Booked Royal Suite

The Chairman, 55-year-old Bob Willis, and his elegant wife, Elsie, are in the Imperial's Royal Suite—on the first floor with a fine view of the sea.

(Daily Herald 7.9.59)

At the end of a hard day

'TV singer Marion Ryan, who is appearing here in Blackpool, is hoping for one or two extra engagements. "The TUC boys are sure to be having some parties up here—after the days' work, of course. I don't mind livening their lonely hours".'

(Daily Herald 7.9.59)

Comments by some older delegates

'Isn't it a pity that they've cancelled the Labour Party Conference.'

THE NEWSLETTER186 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4
Telephone Macaulay 7029

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1959

SUMMIT SELL OUT

Mr Harold Macmillan who is going to the summit talks is the head of the Tory government that perpetrates mass murder in Kenya and Cyprus and attacks the standards and organization of British workers. Eisenhower is the chosen representative of the most powerful and ruthless employing class in the world. The peace-loving Khrushchev, so anxious not to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, is the butcher of the Hungarian revolution. If these men meet at the summit it will be to plan for the 'containment' of their main enemy, the working class of the world.

Khrushchev recently wrote an article for the American capitalist journal *Foreign Affairs*, in which he explained his strategy of 'peaceful co-existence'.

It was headlined in the British Press as 'Communism will win, says Mr Khrushchev.' But the prospect he offers is a road of defeat for the working class and for the Soviet Union. He writes: 'We say to the leaders of the capitalist states; let us try out in practice whose system is better.' What nonsense! As if the bosses don't know already what system is better for them!

Khrushchev says he wants such competition 'to raise the well-being of the people.' The steel strike in the USA, the printers' strike in this country, the struggle of the miners in western Europe and Britain against pit closures—all these are necessary because the 'leaders of the capitalist states' are interested in exploitation for the maximum profit, and not in 'raising the well-being of the people.' A 'communist' who slurs over this fact in the interests of high-powered diplomacy is blind-folding the working class in order to lead them into a trap.



Khrushchev asks the capitalists for a 'repudiation' of war, and an 'obligation' not to go to war. Now of course the USSR is bound to make agreements with capitalist states, but Khrushchev's article is a guarantee to the American ruling class that the Communist Party in their country will adhere to 'peaceful competition'.

The road to the victory of socialism is international class struggle against capitalism in every country. It is **treachery** to tell the working class that its function is to keep up pressure for peace on the government of the employers while the USSR 'proves' its superiority.

And when the day of proof arrives, what then, Mr Khrushchev? Will the ruling class resign or will it be removed forcibly? We say that it will forcibly resist all attempts by the working class to achieve socialism.

The issue is thus very clear. Khrushchev has departed completely from the international struggle of the working class. His strategy is to guarantee to the 'friendly' imperialists that his followers in their countries will try and see that the working class causes no trouble. As he says in his article: 'peaceful competition is not just a tactic.' On the contrary, it is the whole essence of Stalinist policy, from the summit to the shop floor at BMC.

Nothing could more clearly emphasize the need for independent revolutionary politics in the working-class movement.

THE HIGH COST OF WITCH-HUNTING

DOES Labour gain from the witch-hunt against the Left? Let's just examine two cases where Transport House attempted to crush the left-wing in Labour Parties.

First, take St Pancras: here Transport House expelled 16 members of the Borough Council Labour Group. That Labour Group had refused to raise the rents of council tenants, despite rising interest rates imposed by the Tories and a surcharge levied on them by the Public Auditor. But last May Labour lost control of St Pancras and now the jubilant Tories are attempting to raise the rents of every one of the 7,500 tenants, some of them by £4 a week.

Then take Norwood: here we have a marginal Tory seat, won by Labour in 1945 and lost again in 1951. In 1959 the right-wing Labourites declare privately that it is a certainty that the Tory, Brigadier Sir John Smythe, will keep his seat—with an increased majority. Yet Norwood won the London County Council seats for the first time in 1958.

How do these facts square with the claims of the right-wing that they are strengthening the Labour movement by getting rid of trouble-makers?

It is policy that decides Labour's victory or defeat at the elections. And even the most disinterested worker knows that the right-wing has got nothing to offer.

In St Pancras there is a large concentration of railway workers, a large Cypriot population, immense overcrowding and appalling housing for thousands of people. In Norwood there are many small engineering and clothing sweat shops, and the largest number of West Indians in London. The Labour parties have campaigned for socialist policies to raise the living standards and hopes of their constituents. But the National Executive Committee ruthlessly tries to impose a 'policy' which will do nothing of the sort.

It gives no leadership to the working class on the basis of a socialist policy. Far from it. The Labour leaders try to drive the left-wing out of the Party. This constant witch-hunting aids the Tories and creates a sense of frustration among Labour supporters.

And so the cost of the witch-hunt against the left in the Labour Party is a high one for the working class. For they know that it is the militant socialists in the rank and file who win them better living conditions. It is the left in the Labour Party that refuses to assent to rent increases, the shop steward who fights the boss every day, the ordinary member canvassing on the doorstep who maintain and increase the strength of the Labour movement.

The success of the demand that all bans and proscriptions be lifted is now a life and death question for the Labour Party.

THE DAILY HERALD REGRETS

'The report in our issue of September 5 that Mr Gerry Healy of the Socialist Labour League had become editor of *The Newsletter* incorrectly stated that Mr Healy owns the firm that prints it.

In fact it is printed in the ordinary course of business by Plough Press Ltd, and we regret the error.

(Daily Herald 10.9.59)

GENERAL ELECTION

Manifesto of the Socialist Labour League

THIS is a time for decision. The Tories have fixed the General Election for October 8. Their plans are carefully laid. Millions of pounds have been spent and millions more are about to be spent on the assumption that the great lie will prevail, so that the Tories may be elected on the basis of false promises.

What are the real facts of Tory rule? Since 1955 unemployment has risen to almost half a million; the Rent Act has increased rents to an all-time high; thousands of people can be legally threatened with eviction immediately the election is over. Prices and profits have risen while the purchasing power of wages has declined. Stocks of the H-bomb have increased, tests have become more frequent, and poison from strontium 90 is endangering the human race. The number of deaths from leukaemia is rising rapidly.

In the field of foreign affairs we have disaster after disaster. From Suez to Cyprus the bodies of British youth and the colonial people bear testimony that Toryism is blatant imperialism.

In a nutshell the cost of the present Tory Government is unemployment, colonial wars and preparation for H-bomb catastrophe.

PREPARATION FOR STRUGGLE

Back to the thirties

All sections of the Labour movement must vote solidly for Labour as part of a great demonstration of the working class in preparation for the struggle that lies ahead. This general election will not be decisive, and even if the Tories succeed in rigging the vote as they have so many times in the past, the real issues will be fought out in the factories and workshops after the election. The great powerhouse of working-class strength in Britain is not the House of Commons, but the factories, mines and workshops where the rank and file are powerfully entrenched in their trade union organizations.

The importance of the general election to the Tories is this. They are fighting to win so that they can introduce reactionary legislation to help them break up trade union organization as a prelude to driving down the standards of living to a level parallel with those of the hungry thirties. The general election on October 8, is but one of the class battles that must be fought from the standpoint of the overall struggle against the whole employing class. Therefore a vote for Labour is simply one of the blows struck in the course of this great fight. It is not final, it is part of the battle.

For the working class, too, there must be a single strategy of struggle, industrial and political. Just as the Tories will use another term of office to back the employers' offensive and attack the working class, so the workers must use their basic industrial strength to prepare the political defeat of the Tories. This fear of the real strength of the working class is the basic weakness of the Labour leadership.

A LABOUR WEAKNESS

At one with Tories

Tory confidence in the outcome of the election stems from a basic weakness within the Labour movement itself. The ranks of Labour want to fight—but the leadership is in retreat. This retreating right-wing leadership doesn't really want an election victory. It is content to remain as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. So it has steadfastly refused during the last five years to adopt a socialist policy that would have rallied the working class to its side.

On the hydrogen bomb the Labour leaders are at one with the Tories in all important respects. In the prosecution of colonial wars they are at one with the Tories. On the defence of the capitalist nation, they are at one with the Tories. In the struggle to condemn the actions of stewards in factory

organization, they are at one with the Tories. These people are, in fact, the Tories' allies inside the Labour movement. That is why on the eve of the general election they wage a witch-hunt against members of the Socialist Labour League, and on all those who raise the banner of a serious socialist struggle against Toryism.

British Labour will not win a single victory against the Tories unless its ranks are purged of these elements once and for all. To continue with Gaitskell is to invite the experience of another Ramsay MacDonald.

Here it is necessary to state that Mr Bevan's conduct reveals that he also bears a tremendous responsibility for the leaderless state of the Labour movement today. He not only sold out on the hydrogen bomb, but has repeatedly endorsed the inactivity of the right wing on all important questions, and has also endorsed the witch-hunt. Bevanism stands revealed as a left cover for right-wing betrayal.

The Socialist Labour League declares that it is time for a new leadership, and the general election will be one more experience which can assist in realising this.

THE CLASS BATTLE

Rank and file policy

The battle between the class forces is reaching its peak in England. United action against the Tories demands united action on policy. In thousands of discussions and debates, the rank and file have already declared their policy:

An end to the manufacture of the H-bomb;

The strengthening of the fight for the forty-hour week, higher wages, against rent increases, for the defence of jobs and the defence of shop stewards;

A fight for the extension of nationalization;

A fight against oppression in the colonies and against racialism in Britain;

A fight against the bans and proscriptions inside the Labour Party and the trade unions.

This is the programme for which the Socialist Labour League fights. Unity can and must be built around this programme. The responsibility for carrying the fight on this programme rests entirely on the shoulders of those who accept the class struggle as a fact and who strive to build a Marxist leadership as the basis of all left-wing activity.

DEFEAT THE TORIES

Forward to Socialism

The Socialist Labour League calls upon all workers to use the election campaign as a broad political platform in the fight for such a policy; the struggle against Toryism and the removal of the right-wing leaders. By voting Labour we weaken the Tories. By campaigning for a socialist policy we weaken both the Labour right wing and the Tories. If this line of action is carried out, Labour will emerge a stronger and more united force.

The National Assembly of Labour called by the Socialist Labour League on November 15 must become the medium through which the real lessons of the general election are discussed and a serious policy adopted.

In the event of a Tory victory, a strategy to prepare their early defeat can be worked out. If a right-wing Labour Government is elected the National Assembly of Labour will assist the development of the struggle for a socialist policy inside the Labour Party and the trade unions.

Vote Labour against the Tories.

Campaign for a socialist policy.

Rally to the National Assembly of Labour on November 15 so that the plans for the next stage of the struggle can be worked out and a great socialist offensive prepared.

ALGERIA

ALGERIA: TOWARDS A TURNING POINT?

By Tom Kemp

THE Algerian war, nearly five years old, rages as ferociously as ever. It continues to dominate the French political scene and may yet bring about the downfall of the Fifth republic as it did its predecessor.

De Gaulle had no magic solution when he took power and has since been pursuing a cautious policy: on the one side backing up the army's task of 'pacification', on the other leaving open the possibility of some kind of negotiated peace.

The herding of villagers into concentration camps, the torturing of suspects, the public execution of prisoners—these are the fruits of military rule in Algeria. Rumours have been heard of the use of napalm by the French air force. Mercenaries have been put into nationalist uniform to provoke incidents with Tunisia and Morocco.

The efforts deployed in recent weeks to subdue the nationalist strongholds in Kabylie show that a 'solution' by force is as far away as ever. Technically the war can continue for years. In the meantime the French public will grow increasingly weary of a conflict without end—and of the regime which perpetuates it.

Outside the army there are probably few government supporters who expect a purely military decision. The emphasis is on a political settlement; it is even said that the Kabylie operations were designed to show the futility of the view that the army could go it alone.

A social and economic question

What sort of political settlement? The problem is to find Algerian figures willing to accept a compromise and able to put it over to their people. A compromise which, while conceding the form of some measure of 'independence' within the French community will, at the same time, enable the social and economic set-up to continue unchanged. The million or so Europeans (out of a population of some eleven million) will conserve their privileges. Above all, French capital will be able to continue to exploit the downtrodden Algerian peasants and workers.

For these reasons, the concessions which can be made from the French side are strictly limited and can have little appeal to the Algerian people. But they may tempt some of the leaders of the Provisional Government

The fundamental question in Algeria is a social and economic one. It cannot be solved by any political arrangement, however liberal.

To satisfy popular aspirations means to break up the big European estates and break the hold of French capital on the country. This cannot be done without a social revolution—of which the nationalist leaders are afraid—and without a parallel movement in France.

The visit of de Gaulle to Algeria will settle nothing. Only the unity of the French socialist and labour movement with the struggling people of Algeria can help bring the French imperialists to their knees and find a socialist solution to the problem not only in Algeria but in France. This is the great need of the hour.

POLAND

ALTHOUGH the recent International Esperanto Congress in Warsaw was being held for the first time within the Soviet sphere, this did not prevent the Soviet Government refusing visas to the Soviet Esperantists who had registered.

No doubt they feared to allow their citizens contact with

the still vigorous political discussion that goes on in Poland. This continues despite the measures of Gomulka's government against the left-wing paper, *Po Prostu*, and against any political power for the workers' councils.

Although many of the old Stalinist leaders were removed from trade union positions after the 'October events', it seems clear from discussions that some of the vacancies have been filled by bureaucrats who differ only in degree from their forerunners. In fact, listening to a story of victimization in one union was like re-hearing the reactions of the AUBTW leadership during the South Bank dispute, the main charge against the victim being that he was constantly criticizing the President of the Union! He even had the temerity to criticize some of the 'perks' still available in Gomulka's Poland.

Apathy spreads

This reimposition of bureaucracy in the trade unions has led to much apathy among the rank and file who feel that they have the scales weighted against them in matters of policy. The spread of apathy since the stirring months of 1956 applies equally to the youth movement, where the two 'official' youth organizations; the ZMS (Socialist Youth Association) and the ZMW (Peasant Youth Association) have a membership which is only a fraction of their former figure.

The enthusiasm of the post-October days has been dissipated. The President of ZMS, a supporter of *Po Prostu*, has long been removed from office and the activities of both organizations are mainly social with politics a very poor second. It seems clear that the present Polish Communist Party has failed to enthuse the mass of the youth with socialist consciousness and that this is a task which is to some degree the responsibility of genuine Marxists outside Poland. Certainly there are greater opportunities for influence than exist in the rest of Eastern Europe and the USSR.

A final and bitter memory of the Congress is reading the Guardian's report of the secret trial and death sentences passed on the young workers in Budapest. Only a few hours before I watched the Hungarian delegates solemnly voting a protest against the prison sentence on Manolis Glezos in Greece.

SOUTH AFRICA

ALTHOUGH Lloyd's, the world's biggest insurance organization, reported on Monday August 31 their worst-ever year—profits slumped in 1956* by £7,162,000 compared to 1955—they have still turned down the chance to insure £30 million worth of civic buildings in Durban.

The biggest drop came in the normally highly lucrative non-marine section. This side of the business boasts of insuring everything from white mice to civic buildings. Profits here dipped from £4,767,000 to £2,116,000.

Lloyd's experts are no more optimistic about returns for the next two years. Compelled to cut premiums through the increasing competition of foreign insurance companies Lloyd's would normally be expected to snatch eagerly at such a 'plum' as the Durban civic buildings.

However, the clash between African women—now in the fore of the fight in South Africa against apartheid—and the brutal club-swinging, trigger-happy white coppers has been vibrating around the underwriting floor at Lloyd's. The shrewd assessors and underwriters have certainly paid tribute to the struggle of the South African people. Lloyd's have less confidence in the stability of the present régime than its timid 'liberal' opposition.

The latest clashes at St Faith's Mission, Natal, which is situated one hundred miles from Durban, resulted in the arrest of 168 women. With their babies strapped to their backs, armed only with sticks, 1,000 women charged into the ranks of police equipped with sten guns.

Not one day goes by without brutality and repression. Every

day 1,000 Africans are arrested for not having their passes. But hardly a day goes by, either, without a fight back by the Africans.

The Right-wing Labour and trade union leaders do nothing to help this fight. Apart from the odd mumbled protest and the pious phrase, the leaders display an apparent lack of interest bordering on indifference.

Like the Lloyd's underwriters, Labour must also recognize the tremendous power and strength of the developing South African revolution and give it every possible support.

The demands voiced in The Newsletter Special on June 19 where we called for the trade union movement to 'black' all South African goods and for the National Council of Labour to organize a protest demonstration against the repressions and brutalities in Durban are still valid.

Labour's failure to offer any real and effective resistance to the apartheid policies of the South African government strengthens reaction not only in South Africa but also in Notting Hill. The fascist thugs and crazy race-haters who peddle their filth along the Portobello Road draw much of their inspiration from South Africa House.

* Lloyd's always announce their profits three years later because of the time lag between collecting premiums and meeting claims.

IRELAND

By Brian Behan
(Continued from previous issue)

The socialist movement in Ireland is split into a number of splinter groups none of them with any mass influence, except perhaps the Northern Ireland Communist Party.

The Stalinists in Ireland show their opportunism by recognizing partition to the extent of having two separate organizations, one for the north, one for the south. The Northern Ireland Communist Party, because it cannot approach the ending of partition from a class basis, has evolved the happy formula of just not mentioning it in its programme. In the south the movement has been destroyed time and time again by following the ruinous policies put out by the Comintern or the Cominform.

On top of all this, emigration has bled the Left-wing movement white.

Despite all this it is not impossible to begin to think seriously of laying the basis for an all-Ireland socialist republican party based on Marxism. Within the country itself the very bankruptcy of all parties leaves the road open to one uncompromised by betrayals.

An example of this was the very rapid development some five years ago of the Dublin unemployed movement, which not only fought and won considerable concessions but also had its own paper The Torch and returned its own member of parliament, Jack Murphy.

Socialist Labour League discussed

Just recently the ruling party (Fianna Fail) attempted to remove the proportional system of voting, which allows small parties more chance of returning candidates than the straight vote in Britain. They linked this change to the election of De Valera as President, hoping to use his name to push the thing. This move was defeated by quite a substantial vote, which is a tribute to the good political sense of the people.

While I was there I was able to open a discussion on socialism and the Socialist Labour League and I received a number of sympathetic enquiries from young people anxious to know more about us.

Our movement has a great opportunity and responsibility to help in the training of hundreds of young Irish socialists. The Ireland of today mirrors the future that British capitalism has in store for its own working class, and our struggle to build a socialist organization that can assist in the establishment of an Irish socialist republic is no skin off our nose, but a positive

contribution towards the bettering of our own conditions.

Because Ireland was and is a colony, the embrace of imperialism strangled any budding socialist movement through victimizing those who would have built the movement and forcing them to emigrate.

The material conditions in Ireland have not allowed for the growth of a sturdy socialist movement with a continuous firm leadership. In the past the leadership of the Irish socialist movement has consisted of returned emigrants who used the breathing-space in England to equip themselves for the task of constructing the native movement.

This was also largely true of the Republican leadership and of men like Mitchell and Davitt, who led the war for the land in Ireland.

Larkin, whom Lenin described as a giant amongst proletarian leaders, was actually born in Liverpool of emigrant Irish stock. Connolly was born in Edinburgh.

Even the nationalist movement had its share of 'foreigners'. For example, De Valera escaped hanging by the British for his part in the 1916 rising by virtue of his claiming American citizenship. Actually he was Spanish-American.

Make available writings by James Connolly

Patrick Pearse, one of the most revered of the sixteen executed leaders, was also half-English.

The importance of saying this is to show that a socialist organization in England with a correct attitude towards the Irish can play a decisive part in helping to determine the future of the struggle.

One of the great tasks of our movement must be to make available the writings of James Connolly to Irish workers in Britain. They can be read with profit by all socialists, but to the Irish they can be political dynamite. There is hardly a problem that faces us today that Connolly has not written on. More to the point, the Socialist Labour League is the true heir to the teachings of Connolly.

Since 1926 almost one million Irish workers have emigrated to Britain, making the Irish the biggest immigrant grouping. We have the responsibility of bringing as many of these workers as possible into the Socialist Labour League, so that they can fight jointly with us for our revolutionary programme. (concluded)

CND CAMPAIGN OPENS NO POLITICS SAY SPONSORS

By Bob Pennington

NEXT week the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is running a special campaign with meetings, demonstrations and film shows in every area.

This campaign has been given even greater urgency and importance by the recent statement of the American chemist and Nobel prize winner, Dr Linus Pauling, that '1,540,000 people are going to die from the effects of nuclear weapons exploded in the last 14 years.'

Since its inception the CND has done a thorough job of bringing to the attention of large sections of people the dreadful dangers and horrors of nuclear war. But despite its success in creating a large climate of opinion against nuclear war plans to date the CND has been unable to mobilize that opinion into an effective force against the manufacture and testing of the H-bomb.

The adherence of CND to a policy of 'non-politics', its reliance on 'statesmen' and so-called 'leaders' prevents it from finding a road to the working class which is the only effective force capable of removing the threat of thermo-nuclear warfare.

American imperialism now has a H-bomb that is the equivalent of 15 million tons of T.N.T. De Gaulle plans to test French Bombs in the Sahara thereby unleashing poisonous radio-active dust over millions of colonial peoples. Last November, Nikita Khrushchev boasted in Moscow that Russia had 'achieved an increase in the power of our nuclear weapons.'

The same British ruling class that stock-piles H-bombs, is the one that threatens the jobs of 85,000 miners and whose policies are responsible for the rent increases in St Pancras. In America and France it is the De Gaulles and the Eisenhowers who wage war on the living standards of their own working class. Khrushchev sanctions the murder of Hungarian workers and internationally makes overtures to the imperialists.

The historic interests of the working class demand that they settle accounts with capitalism and the Soviet bureaucracy. Their fight for jobs, for genuine freedom and the struggle against war are inseparable.

The CND must recognize this and thereby be in a position where it can assist in a united movement aimed at destroying for all time the present threat to humanity's future.

INDUSTRY

DUNDEE DOCK STRIKE SOLID

THE strike of Dundee dockers is now in its second week. Despite continuous demands by officials of the Transport and General Workers' Union for a return to work the 250 dockers are determined not to go back until suspensions imposed on 90 of them have been withdrawn.

The suspensions, ranging from one to three days, were imposed on the dockers by a Dock Labour Board enquiry, from which the Dundee men's representative was absent, following a dispute at the docks.

During the unloading of the 'Indian Resource' dockers had asked for negotiations on hatch rates, in relation to the pool earnings, but these had been refused. Labour was withdrawn for a day. During the stoppage the employers agreed to the men's claim and the dispute was settled.

The employers then immediately reported the matter to the Dock Labour Board and the suspensions were issued following the enquiry.

This is the first time on the docks that suspensions have been imposed following a dispute. It is a precedent that the dockers are determined shall not be established. They rightly see this as a further move in the employers' attempts to drive down conditions on the docks and to break down trade union organization.

Why then does the TGWU not support these dockers? Visits from his Glasgow office by Dan Burnside, area secretary of the union, have been made with the intention of breaking the strike. All these attempts have failed. A petition addressed to Tim O'Leary, national officer for the docks section of the union, has been completely ignored.

The dockers, however, are determined that the fight to protect their conditions and organization shall go on. Support from every other port should now come behind them.

LESSONS FOR CLYDE RIVETERS

By Newsletter Industrial Correspondent

AFTER holding out against employers' threats for thirteen weeks, the Clyde riveters have agreed to the employers' offer of negotiation on their claim for an increased hourly rate and a guaranteed period of employment.

By refusing to accept employment at Denny's shipyard, Dumbarton, and later at Barclay Curle's, Glasgow, unless they were granted these demands, the riveters had brought the full wrath of the employers' federation on their heads. Threats to close down the Clyde to lock out every riveter, was the tone of the employers' statements. Other sections of workers were suspended from the yards in an effort to bring pressure on the riveters. Yet it was with much reluctance that they agreed to the pleas of the union officials for a return to normal working

to allow the proposed talks to take place.

By accepting this course the possibilities of bringing defeat on the employers and leading the fight for guaranteed employment and increased rates has been lost. A campaign to bring every Clyde shipyard worker behind the riveters would have transformed the situation. Every worker on the Clyde faces the prospect of the dole queue. If the lead were given on a fight to secure guaranteed employment then support would come from every section and trade.

True, the District Committee of the Boilermakers' endorsed the riveters' claims, but why did they not mobilize a campaign behind them? Why were no gate meetings held to explain the riveters' case? In other words, why were the riveters allowed to remain isolated?

The failure of the official machinery, enmeshed as it is in a web of constitutional practice, to conduct such a campaign indicates the need to create and, where necessary, strengthen rank-and-file organization in the shipyards.

LIVERPOOL BUSMEN ARE STIRRING

By William Hunter

LIVERPOOL busmen are growing more and more uneasy over the state of affairs in the Corporation Transport Department. Results for the year ending March 1959 disclose a decline in passenger traffic.

The general manager says that the reason for this is the increase in television and private car owners. However, apart from an estimated loss to the transport department of £40,000 owing to last winter's fog, there was an overall net surplus of £28,351.

The management, anticipating a continuing decline in passenger traffic, made a five per cent. 'economy' cut in services.

Busmen declare that services are being cut on routes which are admitted to be paying their way.

They recall that in the past local Labour Party leaders declared they would hold a public inquiry when the party gained control of the City Council.

The Labour Party has been in control of the Council since 1955, but held an inquiry in private which it never concluded.

The unions having accepted the service cuts, the management have now brought forward proposals for a limited all-night service. This has further angered busmen.

Rank and file bus unity needed

The cost of such a service is estimated in the region of £28,000. If this service is put on, busmen ask, are we going to be faced with further cuts to pay for it?

Proposals for bigger buses add to the dissatisfaction. There are three types to be tried and they have an increased seating capacity of one-third above that of the normal fifty-six seater. The unions have agreed to give them a trial, but under pressure from the rank and file have refused to take standing passengers pending a national agreement.

Liverpool's busmen are organized in two unions—the General and Municipal Workers' Union and the Transport and General Workers' Union. For years the competition between the unions, depot against depot, and route against route, has split the unity of Liverpool busmen. The management take advantage of the split and play one union off against the other.

It is estimated that there are a considerable number of non-unionists in the garages. But militant busmen declare that the great majority of these men and women are not anti-union but are awaiting leadership—just like the mass of members of both unions.

Conditions are now favourable for the organizing of the non-unionists and the establishment of solidarity throughout the garages.

Rank-and-file busmen must unite against the worsening of their conditions and for an organized drive by committees comprising members of both unions and linking the garages together.

THE FACTS BEHIND THE MOTOR CRISIS

PART I

By T. EVANS and L. CARTWRIGHT

MOST of the recent strikes in the motor industry centre around a number of key issues. These are the fight to revise lists of bad piece-work prices or failures to agree on new model prices; the struggle of low paid day-workers and other time-workers to bring their standards up nearer to piece-worker levels; the constant striving for 100 per cent. trade unionism and the retaliation by the members against savage victimization of shop stewards by sack-happy managements.



The attacks of the employers in different industries remain unabated, although varying in form. We have seen the viciousness of the printing employers recently in their resistance to the demands for a 40-hour week and 10 per cent. increase in wages. We also saw the weakness of the print union leaders and their refusal to make the print workers' struggle the fight of all trade unionists.

The employers' attacks take varied forms but all contain the common strategy of weakening the trade union organization at shop-floor level.

Since the end of the war the concentration of wealth into the hands of fewer and fewer motor-factory owners has proceeded rapidly.

Today, five giants are locked in fierce struggle for the supremacy of the world market in vehicles. These are—British Motor Corporation, Fords, Vauxhalls (owned by General Motors, USA), Rootes and Standards. These five produce 95 per cent. of the British car output, but within the big five, BMC, Fords and Vauxhall predominate.

Huge investment programmes in automation and new techniques have taken place in the last few years. From 1950 to 1958 productivity has shot up by 60 per cent. Nearly £150,000,000 have been spent by the big firms in the investment programmes.

This has more than paid for itself, for today, an average of £9 per week profit per worker is made for the share-holders as against £2 10s. in 1948.

Taking Austin as an example: In 1946, 20,000 workers produced 2,000 vehicles per week. Today, the same number of workers produce 6,000 vehicles and 12,000 units.



The competition between these giant combines is liable to get much fiercer. It is quite possible that there will be more mergers and take-overs, leaving Fords, BMC and General Motors as the main contenders. Already, BMC and Fords in Britain produce 504,000 and 417,000 vehicles respectively, with Vauxhall producing 150,000 but now geared to produce many more in the future.

The effects of this competition for world markets on working conditions are evident. These big combines continue to intensify their pressure on our wages and conditions so that they can squeeze the maximum profit out of their labour force. Just look at the profit per worker again—£9 as against £2 10s. in 1948—nearly a 400 per cent. increase! Have wages gone up 400 per cent.? Of course not.

BMC made £26,100,000 profit last year. In five years it has made £100 million profit; in five years, Ford made £95 million profit.

These economic facts prove one important thing for all motor workers—we are up against a powerful set of employers who are automating for **their** benefit. We must be prepared to

fight tenaciously if we are to maintain and improve our standards.

The huge sums of money invested in automation have increased productivity and increased profits. All the sugary talk when automation was first introduced, to the effect that this was going to mean ever higher standards for the motor workers, has been exploded by reality.

Every motor worker knows that today piece-work rates are continually being threatened. Each new model in the industry, or each new method, heralds a new round of hard bargaining, threats and counter-threats. Sometimes the sheer frustration of long drawn out arguments forces the shop organization to take strike action. Today the situation requires a firm attitude by shop stewards, backed up by clear cut decisions by members on the shop floor, if the unions are not to be thrust back.

The viciousness and aggressiveness of the employers was adequately shown at the Standard Motor Company over the new Herald model. The company sacked a whole shop for refusing their prices, and accompanied it by the usual diatribe blazoned across the Press, stating that the men had demanded £50 per week. This falsehood was mouthed in an attempt to justify the Standard employers' attempt to impose their own prices on the Standard workers.



The constant struggles on piece work rates, vital as they are, often leave convenors and shop stewards with too little time to consider the problems of day workers. The main problem of the day worker is his comparatively low wage standard—compared, that is, with the piece-work rates. Whilst day-work wages in the motor industry are favourable compared with similar jobs in other industries, the fact remains that motor industry time-workers do not get their full wage considering how vital their work is to the piece-workers' need to have an uninterrupted flow of production.

Further, as the workers move forward in strengthening their trade-union organization by the fight for 100 per cent. trade-unionism, we have witnessed the fiercest counter-attacks by the employers. They have shown that they are prepared to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds in protecting 'non-ers' from carrying out their obligation to join the union. The employers talk about protecting the freedom of the individual. Hypocrisy! When it suits their purpose the only freedom they offer workers is to sign on the dole, as happened in 1956 when they sacked thousands from the motor industry. Big disputes at Fords in Dagenham took place, on the issue of 100 per cent. trade unionism. In spite of the sabotage by certain union leaders the members won the day there. But in Birmingham, the Morris Motors ETU eight-week strike did not reach a successful conclusion for reasons we will examine later.



Finally, as the guiding strategy of the motor barons, the Procedure Agreement in Engineering is used to spin out negotiations for months and months. We must say quite frankly that union officials cling to this 'Abandon Hope' machinery with as much tenacity as the employers. Is it any wonder, that when workers were constantly sent back to work 'for the stages in the machinery to be carried out', the employers increased their confidence each time until finally they felt strong enough to openly sack a leading TGWU shop steward at Morris Motors, Oxford, even though this provoked an official strike.

The essential thing is to create the unity of all workers at the bottom regardless of what union they belong to. In the

BMC, pronouncements, as after the Horsman defeat, to the effect that the BMC stewards will pledge full solidarity action in all BMC plants if another steward is sacked are correct. But such pronouncements have been made in the past—they must be matched by action. An ounce of solidarity action is worth a thousand inquests.

The employers know this full well—so do top union bureaucrats. It is a fact that as soon as it became clear that a danger of the Morris, Oxford, strike spreading was in evidence—the Employers' Federation in Birmingham rang up all union district offices in an attempt to get them to order their

stewards not to take action. TGWU London offices rang through to Birmingham, also to prevent action. The 'negotiations' were speeded up and Horsman was given a job in another factory—NOT in the BMC.

The lesson is clear—**solidarity action is the key**. This will prevent all excuses by top leaders to the effect that other union executives 'let them down'.

If the ranks are kept firm then the leaders cannot get away with equivocation and so-called compromise settlements, which turn out to be sell-outs.

(To be concluded)

Constant Reader | He liked Lloyd George

THE BRITISH COMMUNIST PARTY seems to be preparing for a return to the halcyon days of 'Big Three Unity'. The moment Eisenhower signs a piece of paper with Khrushchev we can expect to hear the most amazing eulogies of 'Ike' and the whole circle of allegedly pro-co-existence politicians of America and Britain.

It is worth recalling how far the British Stalinists went in buttering up the bourgeois political world in the epoch of Teheran and Yalta. A characteristic statement of that time was Willie Gallacher's parliamentary oration on the death of Lloyd George. When one recalls the role played by Lloyd George in the First World War and the years immediately following—the years when, in no small part thanks to him, the British revolution did not happen—and recalls, too, the militant activities of Gallacher in that period, the mind boggles at the speech. Yet it was actually made, it was typical of its time, and it gives a hint of the pernicious rubbish we can expect from the same quarter in the near future, if events take a certain course.

It ended thus: 'Eagerly, anxiously, he sought for understanding and alliance with the Soviet Union. He recognized what a mighty combination that would be in maintaining peace. In this he had a common bond, one of many, with the present Prime Minister [Churchill, then already preparing for the 'cold war']. In the strange drama of life he played many parts, great parts, always with the fervour and intensity of a son of the people, for it was the common people that bore him. It was the suffering of the common people that called him forth to battle against poverty and neglect. But the drama for him is ended. Others must take up the burden and the task. Very quietly, very softly, after all the storm and strife, the curtain has fallen. May he rest in gentle peace.' (House of Commons, March 28, 1945).

Divided we fall

We have had occasion more than once to point out that the real 'adventurers' in the industrial field are those trade union leaders who fail to take steps to bring out all appropriate sections of the workers in support of any particular section involved in a dispute.

By keeping each struggle isolated they bring about their members' defeat, whereas true trade-union statesmanship would mean extending the struggle and so ensuring rapid and conclusive victory. In their militant days the Communist Party were accused, like the Socialist Labour League now, of being adventurers, and I was interested to come across recently the reply made to this charge in the organ of the National Minority Movement, a reply which expresses perfectly our own view on this question.

'The partisans of the Red International of Labour Unions and the Minority Movements have never been in favour of striking for the fun of the thing. A strike is a serious thing for the workers with domestic responsibilities. It should never be propagated unthinkingly. It should never be launched without effective preparation. The reformists are continually emphasising to us that it is our last resort when all else has failed. Yet at the moment they are allowing sectional demands to be made, some of which may culminate in a strike, without endeavouring to make that careful preparation or trying to secure that effective unity which can alone shorten

the strike and gain speedy victory for the working class.

'Surely the time has now arrived when this haphazard method of playing with the welfare of the working class must give way to scientifically organized action. In rallying the workers around a common demand, in preparing the ground for common action, lies our only way out of our present difficulties.' (Editorial on 'The Labour Unrest' in The Worker, April 26, 1924).

BRIAN PEARCE

LETTER

LIFE ON GLASGOW DOCKS 'FREE BOOKING' SCANDAL

I WONDER if you would publish a few facts about life on Glasgow docks. I am aiming in particular at the method of booking on for work. This is so-called 'free-booking', as distinct from directed to work or allocation.

This free booking has outlived its usefulness, as it has now developed into the most bestial and depraved exhibition anyone can ever wish to see. The wooden platforms provided for foremen to stand on have been smashed again and again by men crushing and jostling each other for jobs that may carry some bonus or perhaps overtime work. Most of this is done by the same greedy men, who take the best out of one ship and lay themselves out to do the same with the next one with the result that others are compelled to go to jobs that they leave and clean up after them.

Trade Unionism is a farce where these individuals are concerned. They have only heard of it. Equality is completely unknown. Middle-aged or elderly men are in grave danger of serious injury at these animal exhibitions, so they must keep away and so go idle.

No one seems able to do anything about this state of affairs, or perhaps nobody in authority cares one damn.

There is one sure remedy and that is what is known as 'continuity', in some form or another. I am strongly of the opinion that 'ship continuity' is the answer. This would mean that men who are engaged on a ship would have to finish that ship and only men who have no engagement would be able to offer themselves for employment at any subsequent ship. This would equalize everyone's wages more or less at the end of any one year.

I would very much like to see this being made compulsory.

Glasgow

Old Timer

SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

A MEETING

Monday September 21, 7.30 p.m.

Brixton Town Hall

Speakers: Gerry Healy—national secretary.
Brian Behan—national chairman