

# THE NEWSLETTER

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## TORIES PLAN FOR DISTRESSED AREAS

### 1,000,000 unemployed after election

**T**ORY plans for more unemployment will become effective immediately the general election is over. 85,000 are to be sacked from the coal mines. A government White Paper declares that 120,000 railway workers are threatened. In aircraft, it is estimated that 100,000 will lose their jobs.

Taken in conjunction with the present unemployment figure of half-a-million, Britain's future army of unemployed is almost certain to reach the million mark.

This is recognized by a Bill which is to be presented by the Tories early in the new Parliament which talks in terms of getting rid of patches of unemployment, in other words, distressed areas. The Times of September 14 remarked that: 'The intention is to enable the new Government to deal with special local problems, without applying a general stimulus that might be inflationary in its effects.'

Here is an implied admission that the Tories have utilized inflationary measures during the pre-election period. The recent decline in unemployment was quite deliberately part of an election policy by the Tories who, if they are returned to power, are perfectly resigned to a rapid increase.

On all these matters there is not one squeak from the Labour Party. When it should be going all out to expose the real meaning of Tory election policies it maintains a discreet silence because the Labour leaders know full well that if they should be returned to power, they will be forced to do likewise.

That is why they avoid real discussion on the nationalization question, for there is but one real answer to unemployment. If the industries concerned cannot guarantee a decent standard of living to those who work in them, then they must be taken from the present owners, nationalized, and placed in the control of the workers employed in them.

### Tories Prepare for Slump

The announcement by Alderman Joseph Barrow, leader of the Middlesex County Council, that the Ministry of Education had cut the school building programme for the years 1960-62 from £8 million to £3 million is a sure guide to Tory policy after the election.

Facing a severe economic crisis, the Tories are in effect now gearing their economy towards the possibilities of a slump and these cuts which affect the most vital of all social services show that they may very soon, should the position get worse, be extended to the Health Service, Unemployment benefit and the other social services.

This is the real Tory policy and not the puffed-up election statements. It is one more powerful argument for a socialist policy for Labour.

## Labour's Left and the General Election

By GERRY HEALY

RANK-and-file members of Labour's left wing are worried about the general election. They realize that the Right-wing have adamantly refused to develop a socialist policy over the past five years, and that this threatens to weaken the party considerably at the polls.

They are also aware that the Bevanite movement, which in 1955 provided broad expression for Left-wing policies, has almost completely collapsed over the past five years, with the exception of the small Victory for Socialism group. Mr Bevan, who on the eve of the 1955 election was on the verge of expulsion, is now a staunch pillar of the Right-wing establishment and collaborates on all important questions with Gaitskell.

If the balance-sheet of Bevanism over this period is examined, it will be seen that Left-wing organizations which hover between the Right-wing on the one hand and the Marxist movement on the other, are doomed to disintegration and capitulation to the Right. There is absolutely no future for a centre group inside the Labour Party except, perhaps, to provide careers for unscrupulous politicians.

### CENTRIST PARALYSIS

#### Marxism attracts workers

The paralysis of centre politics can best be seen in an examination of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Tribune claims that it is the paper which constantly champions

this campaign. Yet, as the staunchest supporter swings from one demonstration to another, he or she is forced to recognize that the campaign has achieved little more than propaganda results over the past period.

It is at present in a state of crisis as a result of the intervention of Mr Cousins and the Stalinists, who are aiming to divert the policy of opposition to H-bomb manufacture into channels which suggest that this only be done by international agreement. Which adds up to Britain retaining the bomb for the time being.

The Marxist movement has one great advantage over all others, although at times this may appear to be a disadvantage. By basing itself on the class struggle, and confronting the Tories with policies which are diametrically opposed to theirs, it bases itself on the historic requirements of the working class.

### GENERAL ELECTION

#### A class question

Consequently, as the struggle develops, it more and more tends to attract attention within the workers' movement, although when the tempo is slow Marxists find themselves on occasion temporarily isolated.

The importance of the present general election is that it is not a normal routine affair so far as the Tories are concerned. It is part of an employers' strategic offensive against the Labour movement, under conditions of increasing struggle in

(Continued overleaf)

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**LUNIKS AND LUNATICS**

**T**HE arrival of Lunik II on the surface of the moon represents a great scientific achievement.

It represents an everlasting monument to the memory of those who successfully led the Bolshevik Party to victory in 1917. From out of the semi-feudal Tsarist empire came a relatively unknown body of men whose only claim to prominence was in their command of Marxism as a science.

History records the achievements and limitations of their revolution. Regardless of the criminal acts which the Stalinist bureaucracy and its henchmen who now rule the Soviet Union have inflicted upon the world movement, nevertheless it can plainly be seen that the former far outweigh the latter.

Lunik II is the product of a productive technique that would be impossible if Russia had remained in the control of the Tsar. The science of Marxism is the foundation for the development of the Soviet Union to its present leading position in the world of science.

But it is at this juncture, right at this moment when Lunik II implants the hammer and sickle on the surface of the moon that the leaders of the Soviet Union are about to once again publicly reject all the basic teachings of Marxism in relation to the class struggle. As Khrushchev prepares for his journey to the United States, he makes it perfectly clear that he is for the maintenance of peaceful co-existence with the Wall Street capitalists. He is not for any change in the property relations of the United States. The whole message of those who pioneered the revolution in the Soviet Union was that science and production were being constantly hampered by the private ownership of the means of production. Yet Mr Khrushchev defends this private ownership. In the most crude and vulgar fashion, whilst puffing out his chest over the achievement of the Lunik II, he proceeds to reject the very Marxist principles which made it possible.

The policy of class-collaboration in international affairs preached by Khrushchev flies in the face of all scientific fact; far from preventing war it has in the past facilitated the preparations of the imperialists for war, because it disarmed the working class on the real role of their main enemy. Marxist science has proved over and over again that the only force which ends war is the working class. Khrushchev's policy under these circumstances can only be described as the moon madness of the twentieth century.

This, in a nutshell, is the contradiction of the Soviet Union today. The contradiction between a bureaucracy wishing to preserve its narrow privileges, willing to collaborate with the capitalists on the basis of peaceful co-existence, but at the same time resting on socialist property relations established by the revolution of 1917 which willy-nilly are breaking through the bureaucracy and demonstrating for all to see that it is not the narrow-minded, parasitic agreements of the pampered diplomats and statesmen which will decide but the great advances of technique liberated by the social revolution.

**LABOUR'S LEFT (Continued from front page)**

Britain. This, in fact, has been the case since the famous motor car strikes of 1956.

Meanwhile the Bevanite centre movement has staggered from crisis to crisis, despite the wallpaper pasted over the cracks by a well-meaning Tribune. Correspondingly the Marxist movement, represented by the Socialist Labour League, has grown, not spectacularly in a numerical sense, but steadily. It has made important progress in matters of theory and practical experience.

As the general election propaganda increases, the centre movement of Tribune, as well as some others who claim to be more left, rapidly immerse themselves in the politics of the Transport House machine. This is excused by the argument that we must have unity during the election and that discussion on policy would antagonize people.

Basing themselves on such explanations, the Right-wing have effectively paralysed Party conferences for three years before each general election. 'You never know when it may happen,' they say, 'so keep your mouth shut in case it happens next year.'

**LABOUR VOTE****A class vote**

This 'no discussion' argument seeks to separate the general election from the class struggle which is the heart of working-class resistance to the Tories. When millions of people vote Labour on October 8, they will certainly not be voting on points of Labour policy, but as a class in opposition to the Conservatives. This is what gives Labour its broad appeal, and not demagogic pre-election speech-making.

This class significance of the election, therefore, requires more than ever that policy should be discussed throughout the election. Preparation for the National Assembly of Labour on November 15 should reach its highest point during the election, when the policies advocated will be seen as the only answer to the present political crisis. By witch-hunting the Socialist Labour League the Right-wing have underlined once more the Bevanite collapse and its replacement by a Marxist alternative.

**A FAKE MARXIST****Helping the Tories**

This witch-hunt exposed, for instance, at least one fake left, who for several years had posed as a Marxist. London County Councillor Ellis Hillman deserted the Marxist movement early this year because he felt that its outspoken policies on the crisis were in conflict with his position as a Councillor.

It must be said that Mr Hillman was nominated for this position by supporters of the Marxist movement, who dragged him from relative obscurity in the Chelsea Labour Party during the LCC elections in 1958.

It is of course, the right of Mr Hillman to desert Marxism for the ruins of Bevanite centrism whenever he pleases, but when he chooses to slander those who uphold revolutionary Marxism in terms which imply that they are helping the Tories, then it is time to say a little more.

The essence of Mr Hillman's argument in his letter to Tribune of September 11, is that those who criticize him in Norwood should now shut their mouths and get on with the job of supporting the Labour candidate, otherwise they will help the Tories. This type of argument is not new, it has been used by the Stalinist reformists over many years along the lines that those who criticized Stalin were also guilty of criticizing the Soviet Union.

It is the argument of people who fear discussion along policy lines. Hillman knows full well that the formation of the Socialist Labour League was based upon the need to struggle for a socialist policy.

His Tribune letter is typical of the centrists as a whole. Right at the moment when policy is most needed for the Left-wing of the Labour Party, they run away from the fight on the grounds that any kind of discussion would help the Tories.

But this is only one side of the question. As the Hillmans and similar gentlemen draw closer to the swamp of the Right-wing, so thousands of workers and intellectuals will move closer to Marxism, especially around the great event of the National Assembly of Labour.

The Socialist Labour League, while urging a vote for Labour candidates in the election, does so in terms of class solidarity with the working class who are being drawn into action against the Tories. By raising policy questions throughout the course of the election, it points a way forward for all those who are being disillusioned by the centrists and the Right-wing.

Labour in power enables Marxists to all the more effectively expose the Right-wing by taking the working class through this experience.

The Marxist movement does not run away from people who are not yet in agreement with its policies. It seeks to establish the broadest possible unity around a programme which can serve to educate and rally the Labour movement. The five-point Assembly programme will establish unity between the student member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the shop steward in the factory fighting for the forty-hour week.

It will establish unity between all those who are heartily sick of Bevanite retreat, and workers who are just coming into politics for the first time. We ask all members of the Labour Party, therefore, to compare the programme of the Assembly with the lack of policy of the Right-wing, Tribune and Bevanism. We are confident that on this basis they will not stop criticizing the Right-wing during the election but, on the contrary, utilize the election as the means of preparing for a great advance in the next period.

## NO SEGREGATION AND NO SACKINGS

by John Byrne

An attempt by the management of Laing's, Great Queen Street, Kingsway, to divide the carpenters into separate coloured and white gangs, was thwarted by the men on the job, who made it clear to the management that they would not have segregation on the site. As one man put it: 'They were trying the old game of playing off white and coloured against each other, creating disunity among the men over bonus payments. We made it clear to the management that if they tried to force that on us, they would have trouble on their hands.'

Laing's also tried to sack all the men who did not earn bonus, their contention being that they were not working hard enough. At Friday's site meeting the men on the job refused to return to work until the sackings were withdrawn. The agent went into the canteen and threatened to sack the lot if they did not return to work, but failed to move the men from their decision. The sackings were withdrawn later in the day.

This site will be electing delegates to the National Assembly of Labour on Friday. And a good reception was given to a speaker from the Socialist Labour League, when the League held a meeting on the job.

## RENTS

### ANGRY TENANTS DEMONSTRATE AGAINST ST PANCRAS RENT SCHEME

By Bob Pennington

HUNDREDS of angry tenants demonstrated outside St Pancras Town Hall on Monday, as members of the Housing Management Committee met to discuss the new rent scheme.

Time after time the crowd chanted: 'We want Prior' but Mr Prior, the leader of the Tory council group remained inside the meeting along with the rest of his supporters. One person who did leave was quickly surrounded by police and escorted to the Kings' Cross Tube Station where police sealed

off an entrance to let him get away.

As the crowd surged forward against the entrance they were pushed and jostled by the police. Later two demonstrators were arrested.

A delegation was finally admitted into the meeting and they reported that a special sub-committee was being set up to consider the scheme. Many tenants consider this an attempt by the Tories to ride the storm.

'They hope that will satisfy us and kid us into believing they intend to do something. The only way to make sure we don't pay the increases is to force the Tories out of office' said one woman from the Cannon's Way Estate.

Very few tenants seem impressed by the proposal to form a sub-committee. Most of them recognize that the tremendous resistance to the increases has shaken the Tories and that they are now playing for time.

On Monday October 1, the Central Committee of the St Pancras Tenants' associations is organizing a march on to the Tory Central Office at Smith Square. Don Cook, the Committee's secretary, says that they are calling on all London tenants' organizations to support this demonstration.

## HUYTON TENANTS PROTEST AT LABOUR RENT-INCREASE SCHEME

By Bill Hunter

CARRYING placards with the slogans 'Down with Rents', 'Rags or Rents,' 500 tenants demonstrated outside the Council offices of Huyton on the outskirts of Liverpool on Wednesday morning. The majority of the crowd were women with babies in prams.

They were protesting at the rent increases which have been imposed by Huyton's Labour Council.

For nearly three thousand tenants rents have gone up by amounts ranging from 3s. 7d. to 7s. 6d. a week.

Since the increases were announced in July, tenants' associations have sprung up in all four estates affected.

At Mosscroft Farm Estate, which began the rent protest, a petition was circulated, a meeting held, and a committee elected by the 93 tenants on this estate within three days of the announcement that their rents would go up by 7s. 6d. a week.

On September 4, when the increase was due to be paid, a march on the council offices began from this estate.

More than 100 housewives, many pushing prams, protested at the rent rise, which means that one quarter of their average wage will be paid out in rent.

These 'ordinary working class people', the Tenants' Association declared, 'had been told that yet another 7s. 6d. would be added in less than three years'.

Labour Councillors say the Tories are behind the protest.

Spokesmen for the Tenants' Committee at Mosscroft Park—on which there is a docker, an engineering worker, a carpenter and an electrician—declare they are non-political.

In the past, however, the majority of the tenants on all the estates were Labour voters.

A letter from Harold Wilson, MP for the division, tells tenants: 'I agree you have been wronged, but by the government, not by the council.'

He blames the increases on the removal of subsidies and the government's high interest rate policy.

## IRELAND

### LENIN AND TROTSKY ON IRELAND

by Brian Pearce

BRIAN Behan's remarks on the Dublin lockout of 1913 and the Easter rebellion of 1916 should stimulate fresh study and discussion of the history of the labour and national movements in Ireland in this century. It may be helpful to recall the comments of two great Marxists on the Easter rebellion soon after its occurrence.

Lenin wrote about it in the autumn of 1916 in his article

'The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up'. The experience of the world war had already disproved, he declared, the view that the national struggle of small oppressed peoples against imperialism had exhausted its significance. Karl Radek had dealt with Easter under the title 'A Played-Out Song', saying that the rebellion was just an affair of the urban petty-bourgeoisie which had found no response among the masses (the peasantry had been 'appeased by reforms') and was without significance for the social revolution.

Against Radek, Lenin made two points. First, 'a section of the workers' had taken part in the rebellion. Second, only to see the confused and backward 'petty-bourgeois' ideas of the rebels was to miss the main thing. The social revolution could come about only as a great complex process involving all kinds of outbreaks by backward elements, both petty-bourgeois and proletarian, imbued with all sorts of prejudices. 'Only those who imagine that in one place an army will line up and say "we are for socialism", and in another place an army will stand up and say "we are for imperialism" and this will be the social revolution, only those who hold such a ridiculously pedantic opinion—could vilify the Irish Rebellion by calling it a "putsch".' Objectively such movements, whatever the 'reactionary fantasies' entertained by participants in them, attacked and weakened capital. The struggles of the oppressed nations 'help the real power against imperialism to come on the scene, namely, the socialist proletariat.'

### Ireland's importance is twofold

Trotsky's comment was made in an article entitled 'The Events in Dublin' published in the newspaper of Russian revolutionaries in Paris, *Nashe Slovo* (July 4, 1916). The occasion was the sentence of death passed on Sir Roger Casement.

While paying tribute to Casement's personal courage, Trotsky pointed to his isolated position in the Easter movement, as a bourgeois nationalist looking for support to imperialist Germany. In the main the Irish bourgeoisie had stood aside from the revolt, which was a movement of workers and intellectuals. The peasantry also had failed to respond. 'The historical basis for national revolution has passed away even in backward Ireland.'

Ireland's importance for British imperialism was twofold; Gladstone had obliged the landlords to make big concessions to the peasants in order that Ireland might be held more securely, **strategic** interests taking precedence over the direct **economic** interests of a section of the British ruling class. The agrarian reforms of 1881-1903 (land purchase acts) had transformed the Irish peasants into a conservative element no longer interested in the national struggle.

### Easter rebellion lives on

Confronted with the corrupt and philistine leadership of the British labour movement it was but natural that the militant Irish workers had turned not only to syndicalism but also to nationalism, and had expressed their discontent by rebelling, along with part of the intellectuals, under 'an out-of-date banner'.

But the Irish workers' struggle was not ended with the crushing of the Easter rebellion. Moreover, it would 'find an echo throughout Great Britain. Scots soldiers smashed the barricades in Dublin. But in Scotland itself the coal-miners have rallied around the red flag raised by Maclean and his friends.'

Part of the Irish peasantry played a much more active part in the national movement as it developed in the period subsequent to 1916 than either Lenin or Trotsky appears to have expected, providing, indeed, the main driving force in the Anglo-Irish War. This revival of the national-revolutionary spirit in the countryside—provoked by the British attempt to enforce conscription—seems to have been due to the gradually-accumulating effects of the war, in particular to the rise in the price of land. This doomed the hopes held by many landless and 'uneconomic' peasants of acquiring or extending farms

through land purchase. The stoppage of emigration had greatly increased the pressure on the land. Export of food to England by the rich farmers created an artificial famine from which the poor farmers suffered as well as the town workers.

As is well-known, the Irish bourgeoisie made use of the upsurge of the small farmers and semi-proletarians of the countryside to extort some political concessions from British imperialism, and then betrayed them, violently crushing those who tried to seize the land of the rich farmers. The central fact of that period 1919-1922 is the weakness and disorientation of the working-class movement after the blood-letting of 1916, which left the rural poor without the leadership they needed.

### GERMAN MINERS DEMONSTRATE NEW MOOD ABROAD

Between 50,000 and 70,000 miners will demonstrate in Bonn on September 26 against the West German government's failure to halt the rise in coal stocks. Herr Gueternuth, their union leader, said that 200,000 wanted to take part, but the number would be limited because Bonn is not big enough for such a demonstration.

This follows a statement by the Chairman of the German Mine Owners' Association that fifteen Ruhr coal mines are to be closed in an attempt to deal with the two-year-old crisis.

All the coal mines belonging to the industrial combine of Krupp are to be formed into a single company. These mines have an annual capacity of around 8½ million tons of hard coal, but the biggest coal-mining firm in the combine owns the largest untapped sources of coal in Western Germany. After December 31, the entire combine will be in the hands of a single man, Herr Alfred Krupp.

### AUBTW BRANCH SUPPORTS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF LABOUR

The Brixton branch of the AUBTW at its meeting on September 4, passed a resolution calling on the Lambeth Trades Council to support the forthcoming National Assembly of Labour and to elect delegates to attend.

The branch elected a delegate to attend the pre-assembly meeting at Lambeth Town Hall on September 21.

A resolution was also passed calling on the Executive Council of the Union to reinstate Brian Behan to full membership.

### LETTER

I should like to point out that I was rather disturbed by some of the remarks made by your correspondent about the present day youth of Poland.

As a student myself, I was most interested in the younger generation and their hopes and problems when I visited Poland recently and my observations have led me to arrive at some rather different conclusions that may be of interest to you.

Your correspondent records that because the membership of the Communist controlled ZMS and ZMW has fallen there is therefore apathy amongst the youth of Poland but I do not think this to be the case. As a result of the events of 1956 the people received considerable freedom and the youth of the country made use of their freedom by seceding from youth organizations which had hitherto been virtually compulsory. The fall in the membership of the ZMW and ZMS could be more reasonably attributed to a reaction away from Stalinism and all the hardships and privations that it entailed.

## RAIL UNITY NEEDED NOW!

By BRIAN ARUNDEL (Member, Editorial Board, The Newsletter)

**THE Tories, confident of an election victory, and fighting hard to keep up their industrial offensive, have announced a 're-appraisal' of the modernization plan for the railway industry. This Government White Paper is the biggest challenge ever issued to railway workers.**

It means that by the end of 1960 hardly a depot in the country will not have seen redundancy notices served to one grade or another.

On top of the cuts and closures already made it is intended that by 1963 over 1800 more miles of track and another 1000 stations will have fallen under the hatchet. By 1964 a further 250 signal boxes, 300 marshalling yards and 250 goods depots will also have been closed.

What this will mean in terms of redundancy cannot be readily estimated but even at the present rate more than 120,000 jobs will disappear by 1964, and huge numbers of workers will be thrown on the dole.

### MODERNIZATION WELCOMED

The most glaring feature of this reassessment is the treatment planned for railway shopmen. Three years ago they were promised that there would be full employment in the workshops until 1961. Today they are told that 11,000 must go in the next three years. Not a section on the railways will escape under this plan.

It would not be true to say that railway workers are against modernization. On the contrary, it has been welcomed as an alternative to dirty and outdated working conditions and equipment. But on the other hand wholesale sackings and closures cannot be tolerated, as were the appeals for wage standstills etc, in 'national interest' in the past.

How can modernization take place without sackings? Obviously only by introducing a progressively shorter working week. It might be that even with this there could be a surplus of railwaymen who would have to be re-trained for jobs in other industries.

### 24-HOUR WORKING WEEK

The only way railway workers could be absorbed into these industries without creating unemployment in them would be by reducing hours in all industries. A speaker at the recent TUC stated that with automation and the use of atomic energy, all the work that is being done now, could, in ten years' time be done in a working week of 24 hours.

The big question, asked by all railway economists, is, where will the money come from to meet this and the demand for a better basic wage? No one has ever been under an illusion that modernization could be carried out without vast expenditure. The burden of compensation payments to ex-owners, interest charges, and money borrowed to pay for modernization, is the reason why the railways are financially unsound.

In 1958 these charges amounted to £72m and, along with losses from the decrease in goods and freight haulage, went a long way to create a deficit of £89m.

### DIMINISHING TRAFFIC

Bro. Greene, the general secretary of NUR, who has been urging railway militants to wait for a Labour government which, in his opinion would solve the problems facing railway workers, pinpointed this question in his report to the NUR Annual Conference. Speaking of the effects of the economic recession he said that 'BTC receipts in connection with mineral traffic had diminished beyond what was anticipated'.

By this it can be assumed he means the slump in coal, steel, and other basic industries. It is only by controlling—and this means extensive nationalization—major sections of the economy, and planning the distribution of profits from the lucrative sections, using them to assist the development of non-profit-making concerns, such as the railways, that this problem can be overcome. Along with this compensation payments and interest charges could be written off.

This means, however, a long and bitter struggle against the Tories and employers, a struggle which neither the railway union leadership nor the next Labour government are prepared to face. Militant phrase mongering and pious threats, are no substitute for action. But this is all that railway workers have been treated to, since it first became obvious that the railway crisis was going to mean redundancy to many thousands of railway workers.

### REAL WORKERS' UNITY

In preparing for the struggles that lie ahead railway workers face many problems. With the control of the industry in the hands of men whose hatred of the working class and whose interest in capitalism are well known, railway workers are confronted with a choice of either following a leadership bent on collaborating with the BTC to solve the crisis at the expense of workers on the railways, or of organizing the fight against sackings and the attempt to drive them back to the 1940s.

The biggest obstacle to unity amongst workers lies in the existence of 3 separate unions for workers in the same job. This artificial barrier must be broken down and a drive made to achieve real rank-and-file unity against the railway employers.

This must be unity between workers on the job and at the scene of the struggle. We have experienced unity at the top, when during the London bus strike, Bros. Greene, Webber and Co., fell over one another to accept the notorious 3 per cent. pay offer, and leave the London busmen at the mercy of the Tories.

### BREAK DOWN PREJUDICES

A real attempt to make contact will mean breaking down old prejudices and forgetting past differences. An attempt has already been made in Sheffield where a meeting between ASLEF and NUR branches took place recently to protest at the closing of the old GC line.

The Tories and the BTC with the backing of the entire employer class will strive to exploit this position, but presented with a determined and united front of railway workers who are prepared to act in unison with other sections of the working class, they will crumble.

When struggles take place on the railways let support be given irrespective of what kind of label is tagged on, or who is involved, whether it be loco or conciliation, shops or clerks, official or unofficial. Smash down this artificial barrier keeping railway workers apart as a first step to smashing the BTC, Tories and employers.

My second quarrel with your writer is that I cannot for one moment agree that the enthusiasm of the post-October days has been dissipated . . . it is still there as strong as ever but it merely expresses itself in different ways. The majority of the youth of Poland are socialists—they know what they want and will not be hoodwinked by the so-called communists now in power. They do not need Marxists outside Poland to

'enthuse them with socialist consciousness', if I learnt anything from my visit it was that the youth of Poland are as good socialists as you will find anywhere and what is more they are organized; all they are waiting for is the right time to act.

Finally I should like to say that I am in complete accord with the rest of the article.

John L. Fryer

# THE FACTS BEHIND THE MOTOR CRISIS

## PART II

By T. EVANS and L. CARTWRIGHT

If our conclusion is correct, that only rank-and-file solidarity action can defeat the employers' plans to increase exploitation, why do our leaders prefer negotiation and compromises which amount to selling out the membership?

These trade union leaders act in this way because of their own fear of the class struggle. They forget too easily the conditions of the shop floor. They move in circles to close to the employers; their salaries and expenses draw them into a middle class way of life. They then begin to resent militancy and resist it.

They appear to believe that the age of militant leadership is past. Apparently the engineering employers' document, 'Looking at Industrial Relations' might just as well have been about their relations with the Martians rather than their attitude to the unions.

In this document the engineering bosses quite blatantly state that twice they were prepared to take on the engineering unions in a fight to the bitter end; to shut down the industry 'as clearly the unions' ability to pay strike benefit is limited . . .'

### York Memorandum spells defeat

We say that a new militant union leadership, free from all forms of class collaboration, must be built in the motor car industry.

The reliance on 'procedure' like the York Memorandum has disastrous results. At the Nuffield plant recently 500 day workers, the lowest paid in the factory, struck work for an increase of 6d. an hour, after **four months** of 'procedure negotiations.' The TGWU sent one of their top officials from London. He refused point blank a request from the strikers to make their strike official, and forced through a return to work.

When the Morris (Birmingham) workers struck over the refusal of a leading hand electrician to join the ETU, Fisher and Ludlow electricians walked out in solidarity. This correct action could have spread throughout the BMC factories and would have rapidly forced the issue. But union officials from top level intervened, 'negotiated', and ensured a return to work.

### ETU officials argued

ETU officials argued that they took this course of action because of the failure of the Executives of other unions involved at Morris (Birmingham) to shoulder their responsibilities.

Although certain sections came out in support of the ETU at Morris it is a fact that other members continued working, although the machines had been maintained by outside scab labour.

This confusion was a direct result of the failure of Executives such as the AEU and also, ironically, the TGWU, to back the ETU dispute.

Unless unity in action is built in the factory itself, and linked in turn to other motor factories, such defeats will be repeated. No one section, or even factory, can 'go it alone.'

We believe that rank-and-file committees, linked with shop stewards, are necessary to break the vicious circle of procedure. Too often militant stewards are threatened by their own union officials and heavy pressure put on them to secure a

return to work.

If the stewards brought representatives from the shop floor on to the strike committees, which in turn gave the lead to all the workers, then the York Memorandum would go by the board.

### For new negotiation procedure

There should be only two stages of negotiation. First should be discussion of the workers' claim with the managements. Then the local officials should come in, and if there is still failure to agree, **it should be left entirely to the members what further action is required.**

The rank-and-file committees we have proposed should be in constant liaison with each other. Conferences called by motor shop-steward committees should always invite shop-floor delegations.

Solidarity action must be pledged, regardless of Press attacks. These decisions must always be brought before mass meetings of the motor workers. In this way a conscious and **prepared** rank and file can be assured of victories in the battles that lie ahead.

Finally, such meetings and committees should forge links with dockers, railwaymen, road transport men and others, for mutual aid in future strikes, so that work can be blacked immediately.

If the motor bosses resist our claims, and attempt to victimize and restrict shop stewards at a time when more vehicles are being sold, and profits are higher than ever before, how will they act when a recession is threatened?

### Valuable lessons

Intensified world competition in motor vehicles is reviving the anarchy and uncertainty of capitalism, and the 'boom' is only a prelude to future recession. Automation is constantly raising productivity to outstrip demand at a future date.

Valuable lessons can be learned from the Midland 1956 redundancy strikes. 1956 witnessed the most ruthless casting-off of labour in the last decade. The union leaders showed themselves to be totally unprepared both in policy and in strength of organization.

The Standard and BMC redundancies were not a bolt from the blue, as some union officials would have us believe. There were clear indications months before the actual sackings. Thousands were on short time.

The Standard workers who led the fight were sent back. The Norton strikers were left to linger for seven months without any solidarity action, except for the splendid action of the Earls Court Motor Cycle Show workers.

### Price of defeat

This solidarity action was sold out by the AEU Executive Council, who terminated the Norton dispute at the very moment when victory was possible.

The result of all these 'settlements' was that thousands were sacked at the BMC and Standards, and thousands of others went on short time for months.

Since then, the works' organizations, found wanting in the BMC dispute, have improved. But there is no such improvement at top level. There they still cling to the holy 'compensation' formula.

The defeat at Standards, where many shop stewards were sacked in the redundancy wave, was an important setback for the workers. The only policy that could have won was one of 'no sackings.'

It was, in fact, Communist Party officials, in agreement with the Right-wing, who moved the vote at the Confederation

meeting for a return to work by the Standard workers in May, 1956, without a single concession from the bosses. This action by top Communist Party union officials led to a split among their own shop stewards at Standards.

At the BMC another CP official proclaimed a victory when Leonard Lord agreed to 'compensation and consultation.' The Daily Worker had banner headlines saying 'BMC workers win great victory.' What kind of left leadership is this?

### How to fight redundancy

The ultimate solution to redundancy of course is a political one, the fight for socialism, which alone can guarantee full employment. We must fight for the motor industry to be nationalized. But not in the way the mines and railways were nationalized.

We should fight for full workers' control of the industry. There must be no compensation to the motor tycoons; they have made their millions out of our labour.

This demand must be fought through in the Labour Party. We must be prepared to join forces with the Left-wing in the Labour Party to fight for socialist policies. We must bring our own disputes into the local Parties to get support for our industrial actions. Motor workers should encourage these actions by becoming union delegates to the local Labour Parties.

Every threat of redundancy must be resisted. We in the car industry bear an important responsibility to the rest of the working class. Having established a fair standard of living by our own militant shop organizations and knowing that the industry is subject to recessions, we **must** give the lead against sackings.

### A programme for unity in action

The demand must be—'No sackings—workers to be kept on the books until suitable alternative work is found. A shorter working week without loss of pay to absorb all workers.' The profits show that this is perfectly possible.

This fight is very much tied up with the fight for the 40-hour week. Every year the leaders pass a pious resolution. But it is now time to prepare for action on this and on wages. It is madness to wait for a recession before fighting for the 40-hour week and an increase in wages.

We are confident that the rank-and-file leadership necessary is already in formation within the motor factories. It is immediately necessary to bring together the militants from different factories around a fighting policy.

These are the main points of such a policy:

- (1) **Support for the fight to bring day workers' wages throughout the industry up to a level comparable to those of piece workers.**
- (2) **Maintenance and improvement of piece workers' earnings.**
- (3) **Formation of solidarity committees composed of shop stewards and members of the shop floor linked factory by factory and also linked to workers in other industries.**
- (4) **United action by all motor workers to defend shop stewards and militants against victimization.**
- (5) **Termination of the York Memorandum by class action; demands on union leaders to break from this employers' charter.**
- (6) **Preparation for a big fight on the 40-hour week and an increase in wages.**
- (7) **Mass resistance to any threatened redundancy. 'No sackings—keep all workers on the books—reduced hours of work without loss of pay to share available work.'**
- (8) **Nationalization of the motor industry, under workers' control, without compensation, as part of the fight for socialism.**
- (9) **Demands for this to be made in the Labour Parties in addition to working for joint actions with Labour Parties to help us in our disputes.**

## DIRECT ACTION AND THE WORKERS

By Peter Cadogan

ON Saturday August 22 the Direct Action Committee, with support from local CND groups, organized a march on the rocket base under construction at Polebrook, a remote village near Oundle in Northants.

Can it be that the calculated seclusion of the rocket sites is an indication of the fears and uneasy consciences of our military masters? We are certainly required to march to the back of beyond!

About 300 people took part. The march was significant more from what can be learnt from it than from what it did. It can hardly have caused even a ripple in official quarters and relations with the police have reached the point of being embarrassingly good! The atmosphere was killingly respectable and the miserable and spineless silence rule was again applied as we marched.

The character of the speakers and speeches showed signs of change. This was of some importance. Most of the speakers were local trade union leaders. There was no big name (and from the point of view of publicity this was perhaps a pity) but the platform witnessed to the good hard work put in by Pat Arrowsmith and others in doing the essential job of getting round the trade union branches and district committees.

Taylor, of the local district committee of the Woodworkers, came to the microphone to appeal to the construction workers on the other side of the barbed wire to back their own union's decision against the bomb and leave the job. He assured them of other work in the area. 'All resolutions are nought', he said, 'just pious resolutions, unless you back us.'

### No money for a hospital

D. H. Padgett, Secretary of the Peterborough Branch of the AUBTW and a member of his executive, told us that there was no money to build a much-needed hospital in Peterborough but plenty of cash for a rocket base. He called upon all building trade workers to go into action inside their organizations on the question of the H-bomb.

But we must face the facts. There was no response at Polebrook to the plea to down tools for the last half hour of the day. Eventually the workers came out in lorries and cars and drove between lines of silent demonstrators pursuing the martyred dumb protest line to the bitter end.

There should have been a hell of a row! Saintliness cuts no ice with the working class.

Even so, why should a handful of hopelessly isolated building workers carry the can for something that is certainly not less than the responsibility of the whole working class?

It appears most clearly from the experience of Polebrook that Bro. Padgett's advice should be taken much further than he perhaps intended it.

Instead of asking a few building workers to down tools for half an hour should not we put it squarely to our fellow-workers that in key industrial enterprises all over the place token sit-down strikes and other demonstrations of gathering strength should be undertaken, directed against particular local armament activity?

We keep on saying that we must mobilize the working class for peace. Alright then! Let's do that. What's stopping us? Should we not break up that general proposition into such parts as will enable us to really go into action over it?

We may not have a great deal of time.

## Birmingham Anti H-Bomb March

Saturday, September 19

The Socialist Labour League will be marching with its own contingent on Saturday. All Newsletter and League supporters are invited to join us.

Assemble Small Heath Park, at 9.45 a.m.

## Constant Reader | Chuck it, K

'Peaceful co-existence' is a phoney notion and like all such it is most safely defended by means of platitude and claptrap. If one ventures on to solid ground in arguing for it one is likely to get caught and exposed.

Khrushchev seems to have forgotten this homely wisdom in his article for the American magazine, *Foreign Affairs*. Not content to stay on the plane of analogies with neighbours in a 'village tolerating each others' oddities, he has to drag in a bit of history: 'One does not need to delve deeply into history to appreciate how important it is for mankind to ensure peaceful co-existence. And here it may be said parenthetically that the Europeans might have benefited a great deal in their day if, instead of organizing senseless crusades that invariably ended in failure, they had established peaceful relations with the differently-minded peoples of the Moslem East.'

Cairo papers please copy, I suppose. But when I read this I reached for a book I bought in Moscow some years ago, a university textbook on the Middle Ages, edited by Kosminsky and Skazkin, and looked up the chapter on the crusades. On orthodox Marxist lines, it showed these expeditions as resulting from the tensions in West-European feudal society of those days.

Shall we find a new treatment of the crusades appearing in Soviet history books now, in which the whole business is treated as a silly misunderstanding which could have been

### U.S. REFUSE VISA FOR GERRY HEALY

The Newsletter made application to the American Embassy in London for permission to send its editor, G. Healy, to the United States as special correspondent to report the Khrushchev visit.

The United States have refused to admit Mr Healy on the grounds that his communist politics place him in the category of an inadmissible alien.

avoided if leaders like King Richard Lion-heart and Sultan Saladin had only been as wise as Khrushchev and sought 'summit talks'?

Twentieth-century capitalism, even worse than twelfth-century feudalism, is a system driven to expand and grab by its inner necessities, and no preaching or finger-wagging will alter it. The only effect which articles like Khrushchev's can have is to confuse and disarm the working class, whose clear understanding of the nature of capitalism and how to overthrow it is the only sure guarantee of peace and the defence of the Soviet Union.

### Stalin, Churchill and—Gallacher

Quite naturally the approach of 'summit talks' has set many people recalling what happened the last time such negotiations took place, in the days of Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam, 1943-1945.

Crankshaw, in the *Observer*, reminds us of Stalin's pained astonishment when the Western Powers began to show that they did not take seriously their agreement to leave Russia a free hand in Rumania though he had most scrupulously observed his promise to stand back and let the Greek workers be crushed, as a quid pro quo.

The British intervention in Greece aroused such indignation in the labour movement here that the Communist Party was compelled to make some protest noises. Churchill showed insolent awareness of the special difficulty of their position when, while 'Big Three Unity' was still the cry, he spoke in the House of Commons on January 18, 1945, in justification of his action:

'For three or four days or more it was a struggle to prevent a hideous massacre in the centre of Athens, in which all forms of government would have been swept away and naked, triumphant Trotskyism installed. I think 'Trotskyists' is a better definition of these people, and of certain other sects, than the normal word, and it has the advantage of being equally hated in Russia.'

And when Gallacher a little later dared to ask a question, Churchill growled menacingly: 'I shall continue to probe carefully the exact political shade which the honourable member adopts.'

### False claims

The Daily Worker's breathtaking claim that the talks arranged to take place between Eisenhower and Khrushchev constitute some sort of 'triumph' of the 'peace movement' is characteristic of the cynical methods of the Stalinists.

Reading a newspaper article recently about the abdication of Edward VIII (I think it was the one in the *Sunday Times* about Queen Mary's angle on that traumatic event in the history of the royal family) I was reminded of the capers cut on that occasion. All too probably, the younger members of the Communist Party do not know and would be surprised to learn that the 'party line' was to support the King in resisting pressure for his abdication. His desire to marry Mrs Simpson was said to be 'a private affair.' (The writer of a letter to the *Daily Worker* which was refused publication, and which appeared in *The Plebs* for January 1937, asked whether they would have said the same if the King had proposed to marry, say, Goering's sister?)

At the French Communist Party's annual congress, however, held not long afterwards, Thorez listed among the victories of 'the people' in recent times 'the removal of a pro-fascist king in Britain!'

In fact, of course, Edward was removed by the British ruling-class, acting through Baldwin, because he had ceased to be a suitable symbol of the bourgeois virtues. There was nothing about the man to evoke support from the working class. Indeed his associations and those of Mrs Simpson were with near-fascist elements—but that was not why he was removed by Baldwin and Co.!

### VIRTUE IS ITS OWN REWARD?

Mr Morgan Phillips is still having difficulty in getting a top-class insurance for the period of his retirement. He allowed his name to go forward for the 'safe' North Nottingham constituency, since the miners' first nominee had withdrawn. It was announced on Wednesday of this week, however, that the miners had made a new nomination, Mr W. Swain, a working miner.

Well, well; Mr Phillips has managed the Labour Party all the way through the taming of Bevan to the present domination by the extreme Right-wing, and has recently excelled himself by proscribing the Socialist Labour League and *The Newsletter*. His final blaze of glory was a record number of expulsions during the summer. When will the miners learn to display a modicum of gratitude for such fine and resolute leadership?

### SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

## A MEETING

Monday September 21, 7.30 p.m.

Brixton Town Hall

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