

The Newsletter

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FRANCE: CIVIL WAR?

by Leonard Jackson

FOUR years of the de Gaulle dictatorship has created a powder magazine in the heart of Europe. The traitorous 'socialist' leaders like Guy Mollet (Gaitskell's friend), who helped the General establish his regime in 1958, must now accept full responsibility for a bloody struggle which could be the beginning of World War III.

Sixteen years ago, after the end of the Second World War, the Communist Party, under the leadership of Thorez, advised the workers to give up their arms and support the de Gaulle government. They were advised to put their faith in capitalist 'law and order'. Now, armed bands of ultra-Right terrorists roam the streets of Paris spraying machine gun bullets over the Communist Party premises and wounding its members.

In his article on Monday, January 8, Mr. Sam Russell, the Paris Correspondent of the 'Daily Worker', talks glibly about the Communist Party's effort to provide leadership. Lyingly he tells the readers that the Communist Party has always supported the Algerian revolution. Yet in 1955, they voted in the French Chamber of Deputies for war credits to enable French imperialism to continue the war in Algeria.

The Communist Party, no less than the Socialist Party of Guy Mollet, cannot now wash its hands of the terrible results of that most cruel war.

O A S

Just as Franco brought his Moorish mercenaries in 1936 to crush the Spanish people and reduce them to one of the most impoverished working classes in Western Europe, so today General Salan and his OAS recruit their terrorists from the white colons of Algeria.

These colons provide a powerful reserve army for fascism, and they are now joined by thousands of paratroopers and French military personnel who are only waiting for the others to murder working class leaders and destroy the unions and Labour organizations.

For sheer brutality, French fascism will eclipse anything Hitler and Mussolini did in the past. Fresh from the most terrible torturing of Algerian nationalists, they murder trade unionists and blow up the homes of Left-wing intellectuals.

The crisis of France is once again the crisis of leadership. De Gaulle consolidated the Right by destroying all vestige of parliamentary democracy and replacing it with thousands of decrees aimed at the Labour movement. Step by step, this enormous concentration of anti-working class legislation has enabled the Right to prepare the conspiracy.

Police

De Gaulle's government is riddled with OAS men, and the General is fully aware of it. His police force is specially armed and organized to attack the working class. It directs its energy, not against the Right, but against the Left.

The tragedy of the French Labour movement dates back to the end of the Second World

War. The Communist and Socialist Parties retreated before the Right. Parliament became a sham and a venue for horse deals between the political parties.

The Communist Party had many opportunities to prepare for the taking of power, yet only a few short months ago, during the revolt of the generals, they were openly supporting de Gaulle. At a time when they should have been educating the masses and preparing them against the dictator, they were busy supporting him.

Small wonder the confusion in the French Labour circles. There will be a heavy price to pay. During the Second World War, the French Communist Party lost thousands of its best militants. Only the most resolute leadership can prevent it from losing many more in the coming days.

Fascism

De Gaulle prepares the way for fascism. This is the ABC of French politics today. It becomes more and more urgent to separate the working class from his leadership and provide it with independent revolutionary leadership which will be prepared to take the power and establish a socialist France.

The British Labour movement will be very strongly affected by what is now taking place. A victory for French reaction will mean the strengthening of reaction in Britain. At this moment, when giant monopolies are daily growing more and more powerful, there is already emerging a concentration of the most reactionary business groups in Britain. They will feel heartened by the success of their counterparts in France.

Gaitskell too

We must now do everything in our power to assist the French working class by an all-out struggle to get rid of the Tory government in Britain.

The first vital step would be to rid the Labour movement of the friends of Guy Mollet such as Hugh Gaitskell. If Gaitskell has to make the decision Mollet made in France, then he will choose the dictatorship of the Right rather than fight for socialism.

What is happening in France today, may well happen in Britain tomorrow.



Ted Hill

A SPECIAL conference of executive members of the trade unions affiliated to the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions will meet on Thursday to discuss their next steps following the rejection of their claim for a wage increase and shorter working hours for 250,000 of their members by the Shipbuilding Employers' Federation on January 4.

Also under discussion will be the rejection of a similar claim for three million engineering workers.

The chief negotiator for the Confederation, Ted Hill, the

Shipbuilders Claim Rejected

By OUR INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

general secretary of the Boilermakers' Society, said that the unions would not take this lying down.

'I don't believe in working to rule but in striking and fighting,' he declared. 'I am prepared to advise members of my union to take action to preserve their living standards, but what the Confederation will do is another story, of course. I won't know the answer to that until next week.'

It seems likely that the Confederation will not take any steps to force a showdown with the employers and will settle for further negotiations in February. Isolated action by one union within the 'little TUC' will be of small value.

Ted Hill refuted a statement by a spokesman for the Employers' Federation who had said that the industry 'simply

cannot afford an increase in wages'.

As usual, Mr. Hill said, the employers pleaded poverty but were 'not so badly off as all that'. Profits and dividends had been good for the year.

He quoted the dividends of a number of shipbuilding firms—Fairfields, 20 per cent, Hawthorn Leslie 25 per cent. The profits of Smiths Dock, North Shields, were '£900,000—more than in 1960'.

● **At a meeting in Liverpool last Sunday to discuss the refusal by the employers to negotiate, engineers heard Boilermakers' chairman, Dan McGarvie, report on the situation.**

Two amendments to a tame official motion called for strike action on a national basis to enforce the Confed's pay claim. They were carried overwhelmingly.

Italian Communist Party Leader Declares: TROTSKY INNOCENT

WHILE other Communist Parties dodge the issue as best they can, the Italian CP is now officially on record as to the falsity of the charges made against Leon Trotsky.

On December 1, at a press conference reported in 'L'Unita', Communist Party leader Pajetta answered a question about Trotsky's rehabilitation.

'Nowadays in the Soviet Union, he said, 'when someone speaks about Trotsky, he doesn't any longer consider these allegations of criminal character which to some extent have helped to justify the condemnation of the Trotskyists. If by rehabilitation you mean establishing Trotsky as a revolutionary not in league with the imperialists in criminal action against the USSR, then we think not only does this problem not exist, but that it has indeed been resolved.'

Pajetta then went on to separate the question of Trotsky's innocence from the correctness or otherwise of his views. 'The struggle against Trotsky in its essential political elements was a just one, even if after a certain point it was conducted partly with methods that violated socialist legality.'

The Italian Young Communist League monthly, 'Nuova Generazione', was criticised by Pajetta for not separating these questions. A further article is now to be published which puts the 'correct' line.

The position of the Italian Party contrasts strongly with that of other Communist Parties. In particular, it makes

nonsense of Palme Dutt's 'Notes of the Month' in the December 'Labour Monthly'.

This broke the record in dishonesty, even for Dutt. Without mentioning any names of the leaders slandered by the Stalinists in the '30s, Dutt tries to smuggle in all the old slanders against those who opposed Stalin.

'For socialists and militant workers outside the Soviet Union during this period in question,' he says, 'there could



R. Palme Dutt

be no basis of knowledge to judge the specific actions and decisions of the security organs save in respect of the fully reported public trials, where acquaintance with the previous records and characters and words of the principal participants corresponded closely enough with their subsequent declarations at the trials to make this political outcome understandable.

'These public trials have not

so far been questioned or repudiated in the official statements made during these eight years of review. The rehabilitations so far have only been in respect of those found to have been unjustly sentenced under special procedure without public trial.' (pp. 550-1)

Dutt knows quite well, and has known all along, that the whole fabric of lies about 'agents of fascism', 'enemies of the people', etc., collapsed as soon as Khrushchev admitted that confessions were forced from innocent communists. Now that he has publicly questioned the responsibility for Kirov's assassination, nobody can doubt that the trials of Zinoviev and Kamenev, and of Radek and Piatakov were frame-ups.

The whole process of 'unrewriting' the history of the Communist movement is a contradictory one. As Pajetta and others indicate, it is very important for the CP leaders to keep apart the question of Stalin's purges from the political issues of the '20s.

Hence the emphasis on Stalin's personal characteristics and the avoidance of any hint of a relationship between Trotsky's (and Lenin's) fight against bureaucratization from 1923 onwards, and the crimes of Stalin a decade later.

Combined with this is the problem for many leaders in the Stalinist apparatus from Khrushchev down, of covering their own actions in the period of Stalin's rule. It is this consideration which has held up action against Molotov.

The Newsletter

January 13, 1962

The Twist

LIKE a ritual dance, the manoeuvring between the TUC and Selwyn Lloyd goes on. Their most recent meeting last Friday produced a rich crop of contradictory reports about what the Chancellor said and how his remarks were received.

Some accounts gave the impression that restrictions on dividends and some relaxation of the pay pause were envisaged. These would give the Union leaders the excuse to enter the National Economic Development Council.

Other reports indicated that no such bait was laid. The Tories intend to stand firm on wage restraint and in particular on the claim for railwaymen. The suggestion that a 2½ per cent increase was to be offered for the middle of the year hardly contradicted this, since for many railway workers this would imply an increase of an insulting four shillings.

While Lloyd's deflationary measures take their effect and production falls off, other preparations for European competition continue. Mergers, resulting in giant monopolies, are reported constantly.

But the co-operation of the Labour leaders in disciplining the working class is the key to Tory economic strategy. The British ruling class, with centuries of experience behind it, knows well how to deal with Labour leaders.

Their understanding enables them to judge when to conciliate and when to attack, when to offer a knighthood and when to start a press campaign, which leaders to take seriously and which are mere windbags.

Above all, they know that the Right-wing union leaders will not look for answers to problems outside the framework of capitalism and that they can be relied on in any clash which brings organized labour into fundamental conflict with the social system. 'Our economy' will not be damaged if these gentlemen remain in control of the Labour movement.

But given correct leadership, the working class can upset all these calculations. The GPO work-to-rule marks the start of a whole series of wages struggles. Provided the fight is prepared, the Tories can be beaten.

This preparation must begin now. Instead of wasting time in discussions with the employers about how the exploitation of the British working class can be 'planned', the joint action of those sections of the workers involved in pay disputes should be worked out.

The employers have a class conscious leadership which works out the strategy for Big Business. Labour needs to replace its present leaders with people who will do the same for the workers.

Strange Bedfellows in the ETU

by John Barker

THE January issue of 'Electron', the journal of the Electrical Trades Union, carries an article by John Byrne, Right-wing General Secretary, in which he argues for the continuation of the witchhunt against Trotskyists and Communists.

Having cast aside the new rules of the Union, which gave power to the membership over the Executive, Mr. Byrne and his clique apparently consider that their election provides them with a mandate to throw their opponents out of the Union.

Unity in the Union, he says, is impossible with those who follow Lenin's dictum that all sorts of stratagems, manoeuvres and illegal measures or subterfuge are necessary to penetrate unions and carry out work in them.

DISTORTION

This, of course, is a distortion of Lenin, who was completely opposed to any kind of fraud inside unions. Lenin was speaking in particular about defeating the bureaucratic practices of the Right wing.

It will certainly be necessary for the rank and file of the ETU and their Left-wing leaders to manoeuvre against Mr. Byrne, otherwise the union will remain split from top to bottom.

There can, in fact, be no unity between the Left and Right wings inside the ETU.

Unity will only be established by the removal of Mr. Byrne and his group from leadership. Some people in the Right wing of the Communist Party who dream in terms of a deal, will have their illusions shattered before very long so far as Byrne is concerned.

The main target for Byrne's attack is, of course, the Campaign Committee. This body has already saved many in the ranks of the union from the demoralization resulting from the court case last summer. Unfortunately, there was little time between the court action and the Executive elections.

BARRAGE

The Committee had to work against a united press barrage from Fleet Street, coupled with a highly organized Right-wing machine co-operating closely with Catholics and other reactionary influences.

The leadership of the Communist Party at King Street have never been friendly to this Campaign Committee, because they saw in it the danger (for them) of genuine Left unity inside the union between Communists, Trotskyists and Labour Party members.

The membership of the Communist Party in the union have been left leaderless, apart from the efforts of former members of the ETU Executive who have

done what was possible in a most difficult situation. Now, when the Stalinist leadership of the Communist Party is contemplating an effort to bring the Campaign Committee to an end, they find themselves, in fact, supported by Mr. Byrne.

Should not this be a real lesson for rank-and-file Communists in the ETU?

The Campaign Committee is already forging unity in a number of important towns throughout the country. Its work has only begun. National leadership is still to be established, with a policy based on the Annual Policy Conference decisions.

Although Fleet Street have given much publicity to the actions of the new Executive Committee, there are already signs that this body has overstepped itself.

CONFUSION

Mr. Chapple, as is known, is a member of the Executive and personal assistant to Mr. Byrne, but in Mr. Chapple's own trade union branch, a Communist Party member has been elected to the Annual Policy Conference, the first in years.

The ETU is not a Right-wing union. The main danger at the present time does not arise from the lack of desire of the membership to adopt Left-wing socialist policies, but rather from confusion in relation to court actions and organizational matters.

STRAWS

Once this confusion is cleared up and the union is steered into action on the basis of policies for electricians, then the days of the Right wing are numbered. This can already be seen from the actions of some of its supporters. Mr. Sharman, who replaced Sam Goldberg, voted with the two Left-wing members on the Executive, whilst Mr. Tuck abstained.

These are straws in the wind, but they indicate what is possible as a result of pressure from the ranks.

Merseyside

Set up in November, the Merseyside ETU rank and file Campaign Committee, is now representative of all ETU branches in Birkenhead and Liverpool.

Meetings have been well attended and all ETU militants in the area should note that the next meeting will be held on January 19 in the Washington Hotel, Liverpool.

The chairman of the Campaign Committee, Pat Grannell, told The Newsletter: 'The feeling on Merseyside is that unity of the Left is essential on a national basis to keep every member of the ETU informed of the role of the present executive, and to prevent any attempt to destroy progressive policies of the ETU. It is time the situation was ended where our affairs are decided by the press and the capitalist courts.'

CYPRUS is a small, insignificant island in the Mediterranean and events that take place there can have very little influence on the great struggle of the workers of the rest of the world. However, this is the story of a courageous people whose enormous sacrifices were made useless by the cowardice of those whom it regarded as its leaders.

Hundreds of years of colonialist rule created conditions unbearable for the people. The British capitalist rulers had, naturally, no other aim but the filling of their own pockets.

The economy was purposely kept on an agrarian basis, helping to provide Britain with essential agricultural products, while on the other hand it was one more piece in the vast collection of markets for the industrial products of the 'mother country'.

HATRED

The island was also a valuable military base for the protection of British oil interests in the Middle East.

Low standards of living, a high rate of unemployment, inadequate education and absence of any political rights, all helped to build up the feeling of hate against foreign domination.

It was only natural that the majority of the working class turned to the Working People's Freedom Party, AKEL (the Cypriot Communist Party), for revolutionary guidance. This can be clearly seen by the results of the municipal elec-

Cyprus Reckoning

by G. Demetriades

tions, before the 'emergency' where the Right-wing candidates were successful in only two out of the six main cities of Cyprus while the Communists gained complete control in the other four.

Soon, however, the workers began to realise that their hopes would not materialise through the CP. The leaders began to advocate openly that the only solution could be found through the UN and by negotiations with the colonialist masters.

Instead of organizing the masses and preparing them for an all-out struggle against imperialism, they contented themselves with toeing the bourgeois line of 'peaceful settlement'. As this achieved nothing but harsher oppressive measures on the part of the colonial bureaucrats, the Right-wing demagogues swiftly changed their tune. Negotiations have failed, violence was the alternative and so, they declared, the CP who denounces violence must be an agent of imperialism.

Even this did not wake the short-sighted CP leadership. Throughout nearly five years of bitter fighting and tremendous waste of the lives of hundreds of militant proletarians, they stubbornly refused to recognise their mistakes.

Instead of hurrying to join the struggle and thereby to try to regain the leadership, they

said they could not participate in the uprising as their Marxist (!) principles did not allow them to indulge in 'class collaboration'.

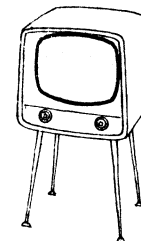
In the words of Marx and Engels, when a revolution is being staged 'the revolutionary workers' party will co-operate with the petty-bourgeois democrats against the fraction' (in this case colonialism) 'whose overthrow they both desire', while at the same time 'it will oppose them in all points when its own interests arise . . . until all the more or less possessing classes have been forced from power . . . throughout the world'.

If, in other words the leadership of the workers refuses to join in the struggle, but leaves it in the hands of the bourgeoisie and the reactionaries, the latter will carry the revolution only as far as it serves its own interests, namely, the passing of power from the foreign administration to its own hands, and not in the interests of the workers.

The Cypriot Communist leaders should have participated in the 1956 Revolution. They would have been able to carry on the revolution from the moment the petty-bourgeoisie showed signs of compromise with the colonialists.

However, everything is not completely lost. There is still time to correct the errors of the

'THE TITANS': I THE SOVIET UNION, BBC Television, Tuesday January 9, reviewed by T. BANDA



REVOLUTION BETRAYED

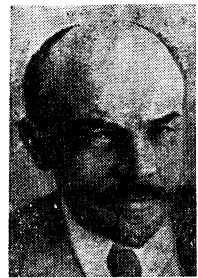
THIS is a BBC film, and consequently suffers from all the facetiousness that goes with the Establishment. This is especially so with the commentary. Nevertheless, it makes an interesting documentary.

The film has been compiled from recent finds of old Russian films (some dating from Czarist times) and from official Soviet newsreel shots.

The early sequences contrast the primitive culture of old Russia, of serfdom with the barbaric splendour of the Czarist court. They are all there: 'Little Father Nicholas', the Czarina, duchess and archdukes, and 'Big Father Rasputin'.

This is followed by scenes of the slaughter of World War I and glimpses of the battlefield of Tannenburg. Russian society cracked under the strain. The result was the February Revolution.

There is a brilliant photo portrait of Kerensky, and of field guns being rolled up to batter the strong points of Czarism. We see Lenin's return

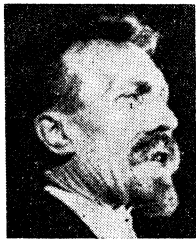


Lenin: Powerful, incisive, dominating.

and his welcome at the Finland Station, and then Lenin speaking before the crowds, powerful, incisive, dominating.

The director mixes up the time sequence, so that we see Trotsky at the front, presumably during the Civil War, and then return to the Smolny and

to the preparations for the October Revolution. There are more photo portraits, of Rykov,



Rykov: Premier.

of the affable, chubby Zinoviev, of Lenin at work in the Kremlin, of mass demonstrations, of Trotsky at Brest-Litovsk, and then of Trotsky at his headquarters during the Civil War, Trotsky at the Polish front—fiery oratory and sweeping gestures. Here the commentator pays tribute to Trotsky as the supreme architect of the Red Army, the defender of revolution.

There is an interesting sequence of the Civil War itself, showing the training of the new formations of the Red Army, and the armoured trains, the supreme weapon of the Civil War. We see the Red Cavalry, Budyenny, and first-class newsreel photography of Civil War fighting.

Graphically pictured is the price of the Civil War—the material base of the exhaustion of the Russian working class—derelict industry and the terrible famine of 1922. What has been missed out here, and certainly not for want of film material, is the war of intervention and the very special contribution made to it by British imperialism.

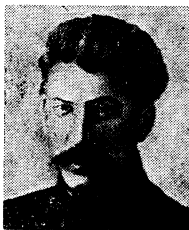
The next sequences are mixed up again. These show the later industrialization, but they are shown before Lenin's active participation at the Comintern Congresses. Then the film breaks into a gallop. The period of anti-religious propaganda is mixed up indiscrimi-

nately with the New Economic Policy, Neumann speaking in Moscow, scenes from 'Russian inspired' labour activities in the United States, and, believe it or not, Ramsay MacDonald on the Communist Party platform, and scenes of street fighting in France in the 1930's.

Then, what amounts to a flashback, early pictures of the crafty Georgian and his crony, Molotov.

To Lenin's funeral there are some obscene touches. Stalin, with whom Lenin had broken off all relations before his death, is one of the pall-bearers. The others, except for Molotov, were later to be his victims.

We see pictures of Radek, Molotov and Kaganovitch, and



Stalin:

the new type of unanimous Party congresses. Trotsky's exile, and then H. G. Wells and the Fabians at the court of Stalin. As uncomprehending, remarks the commentator, 'as vegetarians in an abbattoir'.

We have scenes of the first Five-Year Plan, of famine (the price of the forced collectivization), military reviews before the purge of the generals, a glimpse of General Yegorov, and an extract of Trotsky speaking in English on the development of Soviet technique and industry.

We see Gorky's funeral, but the fact that he was poisoned at Stalin's behest is not mentioned. There is a glimpse of Ordzhonikidze, himself forced to suicide. Then Kirov's funeral, at which his murderer, Stalin, was the chief pallbearer.

The scenes of the Stalin-Hitler negotiations, with Molotov acknowledging the fascist salutes and chatting amiably with the fascist leaders, are macabre.

This is followed by Trotsky's



Trotsky: Supreme architect.

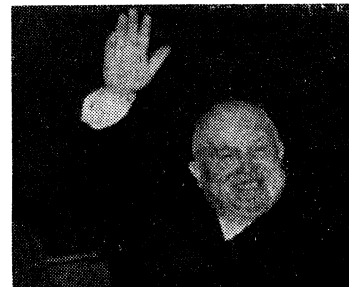
assassination, the invasion of the Soviet Union, and the initial collapse of the Russian army.

Stalin makes a speech in a whining monotone in which he invokes the shades of Czarist Russia in order to raise the morale of the Soviet working class.

There follow newsreel scenes of the war, of Pollitt after he had switched his line to support of the war, and of the Soviet-Chinese pact, pictures of Stalin's entourage, the Belgrade airport meeting, and of Khrushchev's market-place performance at the United Nations and elsewhere.

To a student of Soviet history this film has many gaps. It has been tailored to fit the current Western view of the Soviet Union. The commentary, too (by Malcolm Muggeridge) is, of course, slanted. But nothing can obscure the value of the material at this time.

Confronted with filmed evidence of Trotsky's role during and after the revolution; confronted with filmed evidence of Stalin's crimes and Khrush-



Khrushchev: Market-place performance.

chev's participation in them, the Communist Party member of today can no longer close his eyes and ears.

The 'Daily Worker' may dismiss it as a distortion, but the debate continues, and this film is valuable material.

Pollitt Supported Churchill

By OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

A COMMENT on the televising of the film, on Russia, by the BBC, in the 'Daily Worker' of January 10, remarked that the most inspiring scene was that 'of the late Harry Pollitt addressing that historic Trafalgar Square rally which demanded the opening of the Second Front'.

At that time the Communist Party supported Churchill's imperialist government to the hilt. Their members scabbed in strikes and did everything possible to destroy the militancy of the working class.

All that Harry Pollitt did during that rally was to encourage the working class to support enthusiastically their capitalist rulers.

It should by now be perfectly clear that as far as British imperialism was concerned, the war was fought not against fascism, but to defend the right of Big Business to continue its exploitation of the working class.

The Hitler government was defeated and replaced by Adenauer. The Nazis were driven out of France and replaced by dictator de Gaulle. Winston Churchill and his successor, Harold MacMillan, were perfectly satisfied with this state of affairs. They stand four-square against socialism now as they did during the second World War.

In the same issue of the 'Daily Worker', there is a strong protest against Macmillan's gratification over

Adenauer's decision to buy British arms. But surely this was the real purpose of the war.

At that time the safety and well-being of Britain, according to the capitalists, depended upon disarming the Germans. Now, apparently, according to the same capitalists, the safety and well-being of Britain depends upon selling arms to the German capitalists.

This, of course, is nothing more than the old Tweedledum and Tweedledee role of capitalism, which the Communist Party supported so enthusiastically during the World War. The only charitable thing one can say to the editors of the 'Daily Worker' is that they should either stop slavishly idealizing the policies of the late Stalin, or recognize what is clear for all to see now—the imperialist nature of World War II.



'It was not accidental that for decades we had no works on political economy philosophy or history of any worthwhile significance.'

Ilyichov, at CPSU 22nd Congress October 24, 1961

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Confidence Trick

Saturday's press contained accounts of the union leaders' new meeting with the Chancellor. 'The Financial Times' reported: 'They emphasized most strongly that the only hope the government had of persuading the unions to accept a policy of wage restraint was if this policy were also applied effectively to the "other two types of income".' 'Other types of income' means profits and dividends.

The only effective way that a limitation of profits could be achieved is by an imposition of an excess profits tax. Mr. Lloyd is unlikely to be very enthusiastic about such a measure.

In any case the revolt from the back-benchers, so powerful, as recent events have proved, would put a stop to any possible move in that direction.

But to secure trade union participation, he might be prepared to legislate some form of dividend limitation, on a temporary basis, of course.

The fact that the TUC leaders would be prepared to co-operate with the government if dividend limitation was a reality, poses a most dangerous situation for the working class. For dividend limitation is an immense hoax.

Since production techniques tend to improve, a wage freeze means that the amount returned to the worker of the commodity he produces is proportionately reduced.

Given dividend limitation, the distribution of part of the increase would be deferred, but this will cause no hardship to the employers! For in the meantime the surplus profits will go to swell the reserves of private industry, making it yet more powerful and better equipped to resist future wage demands.

It may be that some form of capital gains tax will be enacted. Selwyn Lloyd, having pulled that one out of the hat in July, seems not to be allowed to forget it. No doubt though, he will listen to the pleas of Lord Ritchie, chairman of the Stock Exchange, who

whilst realizing that the government, 'are politically committed to some form of tax on short term gains . . . wish to set on record the extreme urgency of the fact that such a tax should be framed in a manner which will do the least possible damage to the marketability of securities'.

With that sort of provision in mind, such a tax is not likely to turn rich men into poor ones overnight.

But our trade union leaders may very well be persuaded to 'buy' it, not because they are naive but because they only want an excuse to be promoted to the ranks of the statesmen responsible for the 'planning' of the 'national' economy, through Lloyd's National Development Council.

No, neither dividend limitation nor a capital gains tax can be equated with wage freeze. And if the TUC are going to fall for that one, knowingly or unknowingly, they are falling for a confidence trick. Not that the rank and file will stand for the machinations of their leaders. But it is as well to be warned.

Industrial Newsletter

Birmingham Trades Council Support

A MOTION pledging full support to the postmen in their work-to-rule campaign was passed unanimously at the Birmingham Trades Council meeting on Saturday, January 6.

Bro. Redman, a young counter hand, from the Union of Post Office Workers moved the motion and said, 'Government action is rendering all Wage Tribunals a farce. We have been kept hanging around for over six months and had no other course left open to us except to resort to industrial action.'

Bro. Ridge, the seconder, also from the UPW, was loudly applauded when he said, 'We're fighting a battle on behalf of the whole working class. We are lagging behind the rest of industry 5 per cent in wages.'

'Postmen are conscientious workers. How are letters got to you on time? Virtually by us living on the job. If we were paid a decent wage the necessary recruits to the Post Office would be found.'

Delegates who spoke stressed the importance of the postmen's action. They were in the front

line of the fight against the wage pause. One speaker said it was necessary to unify the different wage struggles.

Another delegate wanted Woodcock of the TUC to match his words of support for the UPW with deeds and he suggested a direct appeal to the whole trade union movement for a one day's solidarity strike in support of the Post Office workers.

Fortissimo

THE Musicians' Union has joined the striking actors' in demanding higher fees for its members employed by the television companies. At a meeting in London on Tuesday with programme contractors the union called for a 'network' fee for a performance relayed by more than one company.

An official of the union said there was no reason to anticipate them joining the Equity strike as he was confident that the contractors would grant their demand. The MU is also to arrange talks with the BBC.

The mail must get through!

Mr. Edward Martell, the well-known champion of 'freedom', has recently formed The National Fellowship, 'A Great New Political Ginger Group', in place of his People's League for the Defence of Freedom.

It is an organization which believes in Christian principles; in action against trade unions who abuse their power with strikes and restrictive practices; in containing communism abroad and eliminating it at home; in Sir Roy Welensky; and in restoring Britain's greatness.

The first long list of sponsors for the Fellowship contains a long string of high-ranking officers, lords, ladies, vis-

counts, sirs and hons. Out of 202 signatories, only 43 are plain mister, doctor or professor. There is also a lady—or gentleman—or both—called The McGillycuddy of the Reeks.

Mr. Martell, who used scab labour during two print strikes and ran 'Freedom Buses' during the last big bus strike, has quickly swung his Fellowship into action with an 'Urgent Mail Delivery' to beat the postmen's work-to-rule. The UMD will gather and deliver important mail, like legal documents for the courts.

The post office's legal advisers are considering whether such action threatens the GPO's monopoly rights.



PMG says only 20% of postmen are supporting go-slow —then he cancels parcel post!

Overtime Ban Next Step?

By The Newsletter Industrial Correspondent

WITH a huge back-log of mail piling up in GPO centres and railway stations throughout the country, big business and the banks are beginning to be badly affected by the work-to-rule of the Union of Post Office Workers.

The London Clearing Banks have issued a statement regretting that it would take longer for cheques to be cleared due to the dispute between the postmen and the GPO over a pay increase. Individual banks are operating emergency services to get cheques and mail clear.

Mail continues to pile up. At the big London sorting office at Mount Pleasant on Tuesday the inland section was no longer being used for general distribution. A union spokesman described this as a most exceptional measure and said that mail normally sorted at Mount Pleasant was being diverted to provincial centres.

The backlog of work at Mount Pleasant amounted to nearly 4 million items, which meant that the centre was nearly 24 hours behind its normal schedule. This, however, can give no indication of the delay being caused to mail which, in some cases, is as much as three to four days.

Platforms at main line stations are buried under mounds of uncollected sacks; 800 mailbags were not collected at Manchester stations, 100,000 items missed the first delivery on Tuesday and 50,000 circulars were held up.

The GPO claimed that compulsory overtime enforced over the week-end had helped to ease the situation considerably in several main centres. Another week-end and more nights of compulsory overtime could

easily begin to minimise the effects of the work-to-rule.

The union should prepare to counter the growing threats by the employers by calling, as a first step, for a complete ban on overtime.

The emergency cabinet meeting called to discuss the postmen's go-slow proves the government is worried. This first industrial action by the UPW is harrying the ruling class and its business associates.

With support from other unions and a militant determination to see the dispute through to a complete withdrawal of labour, the post office workers could weaken the whole structure of the pay pause.

Postmen Refuse Splitting Bait

In an attempt to split the unity of the postmen, the employers re-introduced tea breaks and other concessions on Tuesday to about half of London's postmen, mainly employed at the East Central delivery office. They were not restored to workers at Mount Pleasant, the most heavily hit centre.

But reports indicate that most GPO employees are refusing to accept the concessions until they are extended to all post office workers involved in the work-to-rule. A union spokesman said the tea break bait was an attempt to divide the postmen.

Wednesday morning, Mount Pleasant. A post office worker told me that the basement of the giant building was now choc-a-bloc with unsorted mail.

Other post office workers I

spoke to in the cafes around Mount Pleasant were very reluctant to talk. One or two said that they had to sign the Official Secrets Act when they were taken on by the GPO.

It was very apparent, however, that many of them were far less enthusiastic over the work-to-rule than they were at the beginning of the week. This does not mean they are not keen to fight the employers; on the contrary, there is now a general feeling that more positive action is needed if they are to win.

MUDDLED THINKING

The introduction to the booklet on the work-to-rule by UPW general secretary Ron Smith is a clear indication of the muddled-headed thinking in the leadership of the union.

'It may well be that, in "working to rule", you will find yourself challenged officially and instructed to proceed in some other fashion. Under no circumstances should you refuse to obey an order given by a superior officer. But where such an order involves you in a breach of the Post Office Rule, then before you obey the instructions, you should respectfully draw the attention of the supervisor to the Post Office Rule. . . .

'The object of this action is to harry and hamper with a view to embarrassing the Post Office Administration and Management. But action of this nature could easily be interpreted, or distorted, as action against the Government. It is therefore of primary importance that you should recognise, and make it absolutely clear, that our fight is with our employer.'

But whether Mr. Smith likes it or not, this is action against the government, for the postmen are hitting at the pay pause and the attack upon all sections of the working class. Unless the dispute is seen in this light and not as a gentlemen's tiff then it is doomed to failure.

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League Notebook

PUBLIC MEETINGS Glasgow

Sundays, 7.30 p.m. at Berkeley Halls, Room 1

Jan. 14
The Trotskyist Opposition Against the Soviet Bureaucracy

Jan. 21
The Communist International

Jan. 28
Rebuilding the Communist Movement