

ETU CONFERENCE

EDITORIAL

'Boom' and unemployment

WHILE the government spokesmen loudly cheer a slight improvement in their production and export figures, unemployment continues to rise. The jump of 64,000 from mid-July to mid-August is accompanied by a sharp fall in the number of vacancies at employment exchanges.

Many of the 40,000 school-leavers who came on to the labour market in July are having difficulty in getting jobs. In Scotland and in the north of England, unemployment percentages are about double the national average of 2.1 per cent.

The drop in the number of jobs available in manufacturing industries has been going on for some time. The total fell by 43,000 between June 1961 and June 1962.

Closures of pits and railways will produce further drops in employment in the near future. The collapse of sections of the aircraft industry means the dole for thousands of workers in towns which were largely dependent on a few big factories.

Common Market changes will accelerate the decline of industries like textiles and shipbuilding, already in the shadow of depression.

SELWYN LLOYD's pay pause was linked with the restriction of investment which is now having its desired effect in the production of a pool of unemployment. NEDC and NIC are part of the same strategy as the employers get ready for the Common Market by trying to curb the power of the Labour movement.

With a few minor exceptions, the Labour leaders accept these measures. Labour's 'shadow' chancellor, JAMES CALLAGHAN, now speaks up for some form of wages 'planning'.

The union leaders who are prepared to accept a few pounds in compensation for the sack, are capitulating before the Tory attacks. Even worse are the futile appeals parroted by the *Daily Worker* for the government to direct new industries to badly-hit areas.

A plan to unite the whole trade union movement in the fight against sackings is vitally needed. Workers' representatives must demand the right to examine the financial and technical situation in their industries. A policy of 'no sackings' must be linked with a campaign for nationalising the basic industries.

Now is the time to fight, not when the dole queues have grown.

FARCE

New rules will disfranchise members

By Our Industrial Correspondent

THE Rules Revision conference proposed by the right-wing executive council of the Electrical Trades Union is to be held in Margate early in October. It will certainly be one of the most extraordinary conferences in the history of the union.

Although branches were informed of it and elected delegates several weeks ago, they are not yet in possession of the amendments proposed by the executive council to the rules, nor have they been given the opportunity to amend the amendments of the executive council.

It is therefore impossible for the membership to make any preparations for the conference in a way that would guide the delegates as to their course of action at the conference.

Not concerned

The gentlemen who gained power through the support of the law courts and the capitalist press are, of course, not concerned about this important aspect of democracy. The nature of the conference which they propose to hold is completely undemocratic and, in fact, disenfranchises the membership.

There is to be one delegate from each branch and if we base attendance on the 1960 membership figures, this would amount to 683 delegates, irrespective of the number of members in the branch. From branches of from 1-100 members there will be 178 delegates, representing 9,092 members; from branches with 101-199 members there will be 126 delegates, representing 18,000 members; from branches with 200-250 members there will be 46 delegates, representing 10,236 members. A total of 350 delegates, representing 37,328 members, as against the remaining 333 delegates, representing 205,567 members.

Confusion

The decision to call such a conference was pushed through the branches under a barrage of anti-communist propaganda in the press and at a time when there was a considerable confusion among the membership. This position is now changing very rapidly, especially since the real anti-militant face of the Byrne-Chapple Right wing was revealed in the Kincardine strike. If the branches were to vote now on the character of such a conference, they would undoubtedly be opposed to what is to take place.

The method of the Right wing has always been to push through decisions without adequate discussion and mask these decisions

No grant yet for Foulkes



AT a meeting recently held in Liverpool, Frank Foulkes, ex-president of the Electrical Trades Union said that he was not yet in receipt of the 'humanitarian grant' which is supposed to be doled out to him by the present executive council of the ETU.

He said that he was informed on August 12 in a letter from J. T. Byrne of the decision to make him such a grant. This decision was taken on July 9.

ETU members should demand to know whether or not Foulkes is going to receive his grant.

'Get down!' — and the Mosleyite did

Newsletter Reporter

LAST Sunday, the Union Movement held a street meeting in Sheffield. As the speaker launched into the usual defence of the 'white race' and the movement's policy for dealing with coloured immigrants, a young West Indian woman with a child in her arms came to the front of the crowd.

'Get down from there!' she demanded. The startled speaker stopped, then meekly climbed down from his orange box.

The woman took his place and began to make a very different kind of speech.

'What harm have the coloured people ever done to this country?' she asked.

'None!' roared the growing crowd of workers. This was dangerous stuff and the impromptu meeting, using Union Movement equipment, was quickly closed down.

'HOW WOULD YOU BLOW UP REDS?'

In the trial of the British 'Nazis' this week, a War Office scientist was asked by one of the accused, John Tyndall, how he would go about blowing up a building 'such as the Communist Party headquarters with a weed-killer explosive'.

The scientist said: 'I don't know whether, in the public interest, I should give evidence of this kind.'

The magistrate directed him: 'I don't think you should give that evidence.'

Gin and sympathy

By BETTY JACKSON

SIR GRAHAM HAYMAN, Chairman of The Distillers Company Ltd., has circulated a statement with the annual company Reports and Accounts for the year ended March 31, 1962.

He reports that 'the year under review was a very active one, and turnover for the group amounted to £267 million'. Profits of the group, which has interests in whiskey and gin distilling, chemicals, plastics and drugs, were £32,796,909 for the year.

Dividend for shareholders on ordinary capital is recommended at 13½ per cent. Almost £10,000,000 was spent on additional buildings and plant, and of one of these, Sir Graham reports, 'it is gratifying that so much favourable comment has been made on the impressive modern establishment, attractively situated and efficiently designed to meet the increasing demand for Dewars White Label Scotch Whiskey'.

A short section of the report, under the heading 'Biochemical Division' reads:

'The Division withdrew its Thalidomide products from the market immediately following receipt of the first report from abroad suggesting the association of this drug with certain cases of congenital abnormality. The drug had been subjected to thorough testing in accordance with all recognised procedures, and was highly regarded by the medical profession as being of exceptional value in the treatment of certain conditions.'

'The utmost sympathy must go to the parents and children who have suffered tragedies which may be associated with the drug.'

● It was reported last week that the Lady Mayoress of London's Fund for the aid of Thalidomide-deformed children had reached £1,000.

Stop Mosley



on Sunday

MOSLEY's Union Movement have suddenly switched their proposed march through Birmingham on Sunday to London's East End. The Mosleyites, aware of the strong opposition growing amongst the Birmingham Labour movement against their demonstration, have turned to the East End this Sunday, where the British National Party is to hold a meeting.

The anti-fascist 'Yellow Star' movement intends to occupy the BNP pitch early on Sunday morning at Ridley Road, Dalston, and to keep a meeting going non-stop so that the BNP cannot compete.

Mosley plans a two-mile march through East London starting at 6.30 p.m. in Hoxton Square, and ending in a meeting in Victoria Park at nearby Bethnal Green. Victoria Park was his destination in 1936 when the workers of East London poured into the streets to combat him. The result was the famous 'Battle of Cable Street'.

The Board of Deputies of British Jews have denounced Mosley's plans for Sunday as 'an extreme provocation to the large number of Jews residing in the area'. It is far more than this. Both the Union Movement and the BNP are attempting to drive wedges into the Labour movement by dividing worker against worker along racial and religious lines. They stand clearly as the enemies of the working class, who try to obscure, through their racist filth and patriotic mysticism, the real tasks of all workers, which are the removal of the Tory government and the struggle for socialism.

The job of the London Labour movement this Sunday is to stop fascism. There can be no equivocation on this point. Appeals to the government and the Home Secretary will not stop them. Only the organised working class of London can do this.

This Sunday, in London's East End, the Labour movement must take another step in the campaign to crush these groups before they can start their drive against the organised Labour and trade union movement.

IN his letter printed on August 18, Jack Hendy said he thought THE NEWSLETTER suffered from the defects attacked by Lenin in his pamphlet *Left-wing Communism*. I hope Comrade Hendy will soon accept our invitation to write more on this question.

Lenin's book of 1920 contains some very important lessons for the Labour movement today. Comrade Hendy's reference to it is particularly timely in relation to events in the ETU for Lenin is discussing the relation between principles and their tactical application. What happened to the Communist Party in the ETU was due precisely to a failure to relate 'manoeuvres' and tactics to basic principles in the way Lenin advocates.

He wrote when the Communist International was engaged in a struggle against right-wing reformists and parliamentarians and their middle-of-the-road hangers-on. Trying to put the tremendous experience of the Bolsheviks at the disposal of the international working class, he showed how Bolshevism had taken shape in a battle against such tendencies.

But it had also to fight another enemy in the shape of 'petty-bourgeois revolutionism'. Anarchists and other so-called



Trotsky: bitter fight against 'ultra-lefts'

Left currents had been seen many times in the Russian movement; they were also to be found in the ranks of the Com-

Lenin and 'Left-wing' Communism

That infantile disorder

By JOHN CRAWFORD

munist International, said Lenin.

Such people, sometimes through youthful impatience but also because of a basically anti-working class approach to politics, shouted very radical sounding phrases. They denounced 'compromise'; they were against 'manoeuvres'; they were opposed to Communists having any part in bourgeois parliaments, in reactionary trades unions or, in Britain, in the Labour Party.

Lenin, and especially Trotsky, carried through a bitter fight against these trends. At the Third Congress of the International in 1921, Trotsky was mainly concerned with this fight.

most flexible in their operation.

Manoeuvres and compromises detached from principles can only lead the way to disaster for the working class and the destruction of would-be revolutionaries. That is why the SLL, while fighting against the witch-hunters in the ETU, condemns the way in which the CP industrial department conducted the work of its electrician members.

It is important for Marxists to win the leadership of trade unions from the Right wing, but holding on to positions by means which weaken the political support for Marxist ideas in the rank and file has nothing in common with Marxism.

We have to manoeuvre within

‘The attitude of a political party towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest criteria of the seriousness of the party and of how it fulfils in practice its obligations towards its class and towards the toiling masses. To admit a mistake openly, to disclose its reasons, to analyse the conditions which gave rise to it, to study attentively the means of correcting it—these are the signs of a serious party; this means the performance of its duties, this means educating and training the class, and, subsequently, the masses. By their failure to fulfil this duty, by failing to give the utmost care, attention, and consideration to the study of their self-evident mistake, the ‘Lefts’ in Germany (and in Holland) have proved that they are not a class party, not a mass party but a group of intellectuals and a few workers who imitate the worst features of intellectualism.’

—V. I. Lenin, *Left-wing Communism*

They pointed out that it was not sufficient to shout about the need for socialist revolution, the treachery of the opportunists, or the impossibility of getting socialism through parliament. The Marxists had to take part in the day-to-day struggles of the working class in order to win the leadership away from the agents of capitalism.

This process involves all kinds of manoeuvres, alliances and retreats. But these are not in contradiction to basic principles but must be, in fact, the way they are made to work. On the basis of the firmest adherence to principles, the Marxists can be the

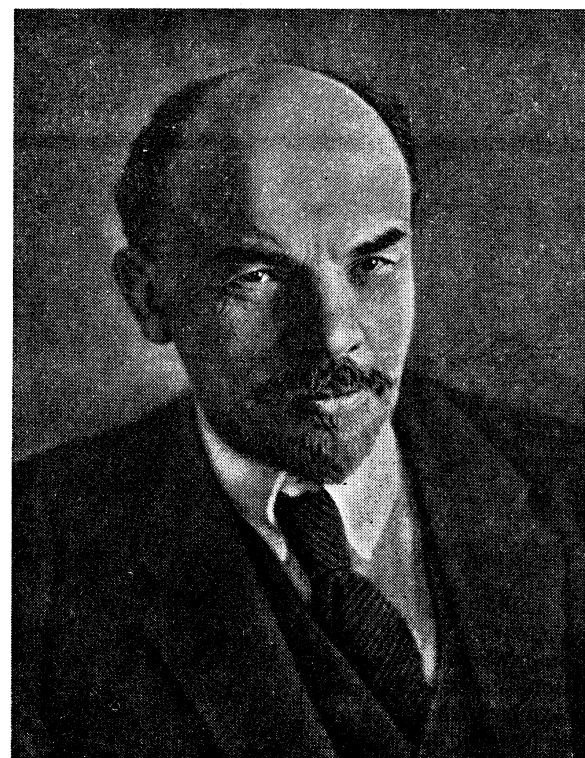
limits set by our main aim—the raising of the consciousness of the working class of its position in society. Clever tricks behind the scenes, which deceive our own people rather than the enemy, can only aid the employer. That is why the Marxist movement bases itself on democratic centralism, in which majority decisions are reached with the fullest discussion of tactics.

Those who say that the Socialist Labour League is 'sectarian', 'abstract' or 'ultra-left' have not really grasped what Lenin was arguing on this question.

The Trotskyist movement has

involves a fight to take them into the everyday world of working class life, to develop and enrich them in the course of everyday struggle. Our movement has also a record of a fight against those who did not want to soil their lily-white principles with contact with real life, but wished to remain aloof, in a dream-land of abstraction.

Today the Socialist Labour League tries to equip itself from this historical arsenal to give Marxist leadership in the Labour movement. In the fight against the right-wing witch-hunters, as in the ETU, we try



grown up in the course of a battle for the traditions and principles of Bolshevism. Stalin and his mouth-pieces were not only responsible for the murder of Communists, but even worse, for the destruction of a whole method of Communist work. The movement was led into disastrous errors both of a 'Left' and Right variety.

But the upholding of principles

to build up the maximum unity with other tendencies, without giving up any of our principles. We want to learn from such action, as well as to teach.

In the fight against the growth of fascism, to take another example, we are completely opposed to the 'liberal' proposal that the Tory government should be asked to legislate against racialism. (Somebody in Manchester wants to petition the Queen!) We want to see a united campaign by all sections of the Labour movement.

In this way, the correctness of our conceptions of the relation of fascism to capitalism and the capitalist state will be brought home in practice.

Of course the SLL does not know all the answers and we are not incapable of making mistakes. But we try to correct these on the basis of the theoretical and practical experiences of the communist movement. We do not need to hide our history.

Comrades in the Communist Party should examine our record and our policy carefully, instead of dismissing us with a label. In the course of the preparation of the British revolution, we shall draw heavily on the lessons contained in *Left-wing Communism*.

Humanite's 'Erratum'

ON August 20 *Humanité*, the French Communist Party newspaper, reported: 'The newspaper "Nepszabadsag" today published a communique on the last session of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. . . .

'Karoly Kiss, who was Hungary's vice-president up to October 1961, was expelled from the political bureau for not having recognised his responsibilities in decisions taken by various organs of the party before 1956.

'17 others who, like him, carry the responsibility for political trials held against active members of the workers' movement and who belonged to the Judiciary or State Security departments, were the object of a similar measure, as well as six others who had entered Rakosi's or Gero's fraction.'

On August 21, *Humanité* carried an erratum to the effect that the report should have read as follows after 'before 1956'.

'The former leaders of the Party, Rakosi and Gero, who had followed a dogmatic and sectarian policy, were expelled from the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

'17 others who, like them . . . were also the object of a measure of expulsion from the Party.'

The Germ-warfare factory

THE War Office is advertising a job for a biophysicist at the Microbiological Research Establishment at Porton, where Mr. G. Bacon worked on and died from pneumonic plague. The job, it is announced, will entail research into the factors influencing the survival of airborne germs.

Naturally, the War Office has not disclosed exactly what kind of work the new man will have to do. However, the defensive uses of such an investigation are difficult to imagine. Common sense tells us that it would be impracticable to cover Britain with some sort of germ-killing fog—and, even if it were, to stop it being blown away by the wind!

Once germ warfare had broken out, the priority presu-

'A vacancy occurs . . .'

ably would be to identify the germ or germs involved and to prepare and use the appropriate vaccines as quickly as possible before the entire population was wiped out. It might be possible to save a few people in this way, but it would still be impossible to kill all the germs in the atmosphere around us—the germ-killing fog is still impracticable.

One possibility left is that the War Office envisages a war in which most of us will be left to die while the elite retires to underground rooms. These rooms would have to be fitted with filters to prevent the germs (and radioactive dust) from getting in. But such filters have already been developed—they are used in some of the

more modern operating theatres in hospitals—and further work on these, from the War Office point of view, would be superfluous.

On the other hand, if the War Office is developing germs for use as an offensive weapon, then work on the survival of these germs would be all too necessary. Already US scientists have developed new techniques for the dispersal of air-borne germs. To drop a germ-filled canister from an airplane is very effective, but it is also crude and obvious.

A more subtle method is to spray the germs from an innocent-looking tramp steamer or fishing boat just outside 'enemy' territorial waters. Provided that the weather conditions are right, the germs

can be scattered over hundreds of square miles. And, since the boat would be miles away when the inevitable epidemic broke out, the aggression would be nearly impossible to prove.

However, these dispersal techniques require the development of newer and deadlier germs which will also survive in the air for several days at least. It now seems possible that such work is being carried out at Porton.

Of course, thanks to the veil of secrecy which hangs over Porton, the British working people still do not know exactly what is going on there. We can still only make intelligent guesses. It is high time that we did know, and put a stop to it.

Algerians swing from Ben Bella

'To the gallows' cry against pro-Evian leaders

By Tom Kemp

OPINIONED between the obligations of the Evian agreement and the thrust of the masses for social change the Algerian national leaders are struggling to keep control of the situation. Naturally, under such conditions, bitter factional struggles have taken place. The apparently united FLN turns out to be an uneasy coalition.

None of the existing leaders can escape from their own origins and give a revolutionary direction to the aspirations of the peasants and workers. To look for a 'Left' or 'Right' in such a situation is to miss the whole point. The hair's breadth difference between the 'socialist' phraseology of the different tendencies is no basis for judging their political character.

The 'Marxist' Ben Khedda has been eclipsed by the 'Marxist' Ben Bella who, in turn, faces strong opposition from sections of the army and from the population of Algiers. But the success of Ben Bella did not indicate a Left turn. To be sure, he proclaims himself 'socialist', but he is careful to add that there will be a place for 'free capitalism' in the new Algerian state.

BLANK CHEQUE

At a meeting with the employers in Algiers on August 14 he asked them to give him a blank cheque to safeguard the economic future of the country. Significantly, at the same meeting were present Fares, president of the Provisional Government—a moderate—together with other figures trusted by French investment interests.

It was clear that Ben Bella was prepared to go ahead with the developments envisaged in de Gaulle's Constantine Plan, including the steel works at Bone, a petro-chemical complex and large-scale exploitation of phosphate deposits. In the meantime, the French government is increasing the pressure to push on with the clauses relating to the Sahara contained in the Evian agreement.

In short, it is clear that the petty-bourgeois leaders are being given to understand that this agreement was not a victory over imperialism but a deal with it. At the same time, facing hunger, unemployment and further hardship as the economy runs down, the masses are turning away from those leaders who have compromised themselves.

UNWILLING TO FIGHT

The cry 'To the gallows with the men of March'—the date of the Evian agreement—has been heard in the Algiers streets. The shift from Ben Khedda to Ben Bella, and now the falling stock of the latter, are associated with the spreading understanding that these leaders are neither able nor willing to fight imperialism.

Unhappily there has, as yet, appeared no leadership adequate to the needs of the times. The different factions in the FLN are merely seeking to stabilise a position based upon a deal with French and foreign capital, to

keep Algeria within the world market of capitalism. None of them can, or wants to, carry through a social revolution. They are the representatives of the national bourgeoisie.

Despite 'socialist' phrases, their policies are intended to further develop along capitalist lines, with greater scope for Algerian capital in the new, independent state. The character of Algerian society, especially the extremely narrow social base from which the leaders are drawn, makes it difficult to make such a policy acceptable to the masses of the people.

Even the leaders of Wilaya 4, Algiers Maquis, who constitute the extreme plebian Left wing of the FLN and the most serious threat to Ben Bella and Fares, do not go beyond a radical democratic and agrarian programme.

TREACHEROUS

As for the Communist Party, its role is nothing short of treacherous and disgraceful. Having been refused permission to include its nominees on the FLN election lists the party leaders have refused to contest the FLN on a separate list and instead call for the maximum

THOSE prescription charges and national health contributions progressively increased over the years are, you will be interested to know, levied in a worthy cause—the cause of the drug manufacturers.

Their largest customer is the government, of course. When you have a prescription made up by the chemist, the government re-imburse him from public money, for the cost of his services and medicines supplied.

Occasionally the Ministry of Health instructs the doctors not to prescribe certain drugs on the grounds that they are too costly and maintains that there are cheaper alternative medicines. But proscriptio, rather prescription, lessens the efficiency of the National Health Service, and enables the rich private patient to have treatment denied to others.

Fresh evidence is now available of the way in which the pharmaceutical manufacturers hold the people to ransom in dictating the prices of drugs.

Sales of drugs in 1961 amounted to £67 million. The known cost of advertising was nearly £7 million, but to this figure must be added 'promotion' expenses borne by UK subsidiaries of American



Ben Bella: no left turn

support of the FLN and the Politburo—this at a time when the Politburo is disintegrating!

According to *Humanite*, 24/8/62, members of Wilaya 4 entered the offices of the Algerian CP press (*Alger Republicain*) and stopped them from printing the declaration of M. Khider attacking Wilaya 4.

The CP with its usual double-think, stated it had no animosity towards Wilaya 4 but that this form of censorship was wrong!

If those masses had been passive in the past it might have been easier—but the seven-year struggle for independence involved the great majority of the population and costly sacrifices. It culminated in the outrages perpetrated by the OAS which inflicted big casualties on civilians—while the leaders restrained those who wished to strike back at the murderers.

MASSES MORE RADICAL

The demands which are coming from the masses are much more radical than those which any of the rival factions striving for leadership can meet. No Left turn can result from any combination or permutation of such leaders.

● On Tuesday, the Algerian Communist Party issued a statement calling for support for the FLN Political Bureau led by Ben Bella. The CP said it would support the 'Politburo' because a central authority was needed to organise elections.

Anti-Franco strike wave grows

By ERIC NEILSON

THE past week has seen a sharp renewal of the struggles in the Asturian mines. On August 21 the Spanish Communist Party issued a statement in support of the strikes, drawing the following conclusion:

'The events of the last few days in the Asturias confirm that the days of April and May saw the first big fight of a battle which can only finish with the disappearance of the dictatorship. That is why the CP addresses itself to all anti-Franco opposition forces so that, without wasting any time, they can renew the contacts made during the month of May, in order to co-ordinate their efforts, to prepare jointly for the new working-class and popular struggles and to work out the basis for a political agreement for the re-establishment of democratic liberties in Spain.'

CP RUNS AWAY

However, while the CP, by proposing alliance with all kinds of reactionary organisations, runs away from its task of mobilising the working class against Franco and the system which put and now keeps him in power, the fight in the mines goes on.

On August 23 it was estimated that 9,000 miners were on strike

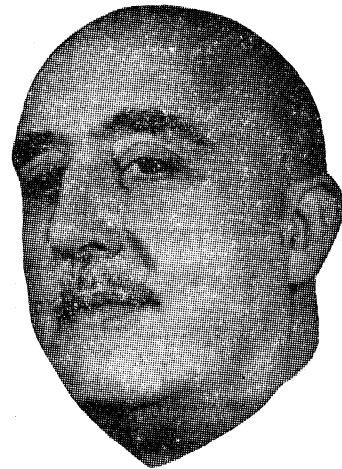
making 15 pits completely idle. In other mines in the area, workers went down the pits but refrained from working. In those mines where work carried on, only 70 per cent of the normal output was maintained. By the next day the number of strikers had risen to 10,000 and 20 pits were affected.

By the 26th the figure was 15,000 and still rising. The day also saw the publication of a communique by certain 'respectable' opposition groups denouncing the support given by the US to Franco in times of crisis for the regime, and cutting off their relations with the US embassy.

VAGUE REPORTS

Since then news of the strike has been somewhat vague. Official reports in the Franco press on the 27th contradict themselves—one spoke of 3,000 miners returning to work and 8 mines reopening, another of the spread of the lock-out in the mines.

The attitude of the Franco



Franco: promised US support

government towards this last wave of strikes has shown a marked degree of hesitancy. Instead of declaring open war against the strikers it has resorted, in the face of growing solidarity towards the movement, to conducting a smear campaign against them in the press, accusing the leaders of being paid by foreign powers to carry out subversive activities.

CRIMINAL POLICIES

At a times when the dictatorship finds itself in such a weak position, the policies of the Spanish CP become all the more criminal. By calling for the re-establishment of bourgeois democracy in Spain, it is laying the base for the re-establishment of fascism. For if bourgeois democracy were restored, the extreme backwardness of the economy would in all probability force the bourgeoisie to resort once more to fascism to solve its problems.

City Slants

by colin chance

firms, the cost of which is not known.

This massive expenditure takes the form of brochures, free samples and even free travelling offered to doctors to inspect factories where drugs are produced. When, sometimes, the factories are in Europe, the attraction of such visits is obvious.

The Association of the British

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Drug ethics

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Pharmaceutical Industry states that without substantial profits, research for new drugs would be insufficient and that 'earnings of the profit necessary to pay for this research inevitably depends in our free enterprise society on the normal commercial practices of advertising and the maintenance of brand names and on full patent protection for the discoverer of a new drug'.

Actually the cost of research is a charge against profits and all such expenditure is wholly allowed for tax purposes. It would be wrong to imagine that the drug manufacturers, out of the goodness of their hearts, allocate part of their profits to research for the benefit of 'our free enterprise society'.

Clearly the case for the nationalisation of the pharmaceutical industry has been made by the manufacturers themselves. Since the cost of chemicals is an important factor in determining drug costs, the chemical industry too must be nationalised.

Proper public control of the industry will enable the best drugs, not the best advertised, to be used. It will enable research to be undertaken in a regulated fashion so that the experience of all engaged in the industry will be available to all. Discoveries will not be jealously guarded by individual firms but will lead to still greater improvements in the treatment of illness.



'We are fighting for all dockers' says London Lighterman

● ETU Conference
From page one

THE attempt which the Master Lightermen and Bargemen have made to break the agreement with the Unions in May has been solidly resisted this week by the strike action taken by the 3,700 members of the Watermen, Lightermen, Tugmen and Bargemen Union in the ports of London, Tilbury and Gravesend.

The May agreement, for the reduction of the working week to 42 hours without loss of pay, was made between the National Port Employers and the unions involved in the port transport industry following the threat of a national strike. The new agreement was due to come into operation on August 27.

At a mass meeting of the 3,700 strikers in Poplar on Monday, Mr. Bill Lindley, General Secretary of the WLTBU, exposed the refusal of the Master Lightermen to implement the principle of this agreement. He told the strikers that the Executive Committee had written to the employers on June 9 pointing out that the agreement would, in the case of the lightermen, mean a reduction of the working week from 48 hours to 42 and a corresponding increase in the time rate of 14.3 per cent. The union suggested that this would be worked in five 8-hour shifts and a 2-hour shift on Saturday morning.

'The employers procrastinated until the last minute and finally announced that they could not afford the new increases but would instead increase the time rate by 4.3 per cent only. We had no alternative but to inform the employers that this was a breach of the May agreement and our members would work from August 27 only on the implementation of the agreement as we interpreted it,' said Mr. Lindley.

EMPLOYERS RETREAT
As a result of the stoppage on Monday the employers retreated from their position and agreed to the reduction to 42 hours with the consequent increase of 14.3 per cent in the hourly rate, but still adamantly refused to concede the correct payment for overtime at the established time-and-a-third, time-and-a-half and double-time rates.

The lightermen are angry at the decision of the Joint Council for the Port Transport Industry to refer the dispute to arbitration. They are particularly critical of the other unions who agreed to this at a time in the negotiations when the lightermen's delegation was absent reporting to its members. At a second mass meeting in Victoria Park on Tuesday, Bill

Lindley declared, 'We have not been consulted whether to go to arbitration or not. As far as we are concerned they can go ahead without us. We feel we are beaten before we get there, not on fair argument, but under a set-up where the government has interfered unfairly and unjustly in the arbitration machinery over the past period. The employers have been only too ready in the past to push agreements down our throats. This time we are doing the pushing down theirs.'

The following resolution was carried unanimously.

DECLARED POLICY
'In May 1962 this union, in the company of other trade unions in the dock industry, stood firm in refusal to refer the issue of a shorter working week to arbitration in view of the Government's declared policy in relation to wage increases.

'We are clear that the position in this respect has not altered, and while we appreciated that the work-people's side of the national joint council have supported this union's contentions regarding the application of the 42 hour week, both as regards time rate and overtime rate, we do not consider that a reference to arbitration can be in our members' interests.'

Many lightermen have noticed the solid front of all the port employers supporting the Master Lightermen. They are convinced that this is a try on against them and the ocean shipowners tally clerks (also under attack on the same question) as preparations for moves later on against all dockworkers.

As one lighterman remarked to me, 'We are spearheading the fight on behalf of all dockworkers. We don't expect much from the union leaders of the Transport and General but we are confident that we will get the support of all rank-and-file dockworkers. Involved here is more than the employers. Behind them is the hand of the Tory Government.'

Kicks and protest for Beeching

DR. BEECHING, hatchet-man of British Railways, arriving at Edinburgh Waverley Station on Tuesday, was met by a large crowd of demonstrating and booing railway workers and was kicked on the shin by an angry by-stander who declared his sympathies with the railwaymen.

Dr. Beeching later had a 90-minute meeting with six representatives of the NUR, ASLEF and the ETU in the stationmaster's office.

Mr. Daniel Penman, secretary of the East of Scotland district council of the NUR, said afterwards: 'Dr. Beeching's whole attitude is for profitability. All the efforts the Commission will

make in regard to railways will be concentrated on the lines that are already paying. In other words the uneconomic lines as shown in his recently published map are doomed.'

● On Tuesday, 4,000 workers on the day shift at the BR Locomotive and Carriage Works at Derby stopped work for a 10-minute protest meeting and decided to stage a mass walk-out on Wednesday.

Next day they listened to speeches by union leaders condemning the Beeching policies and passed a resolution supporting colleagues in Scottish workshops who are planning similar action.

£20m. loss rumour by NCB gas project

By ALAN WEST, Our Labour Correspondent

LORD ROBENS, head of the National Coal Board which is busily engaged in closing down 'unprofitable' mines and facing thousands of miners with unemployment and redundancy, has been quick to deny that attempts to produce cheap gas from low quality coal by the Lurgi process are to be abandoned and £20 million has been lost on the project.

Stirred into action by a lead story to this effect in the *Sunday Telegraph*, Lord Robens stated:

'Nobody could halt the project without my knowing about it. I am surprised by any such news that the project has been abandoned. We believe there are great possibilities in this field. I find the project both exciting and rewarding. It is absolutely nonsensical to say we have given it all up.'

ECONOMIC POSSIBILITIES

A joint study group set up by the NCB and the Gas Council, has been studying the economic possibilities of large-scale Lurgi gas production for the past 18 months. One small plant is operating at Westfield, Fife, and another is being built in Warwickshire. If the project has not been abandoned, they will eventually report to the Minister of Power, who will decide whether or not to continue with the project on a large scale.

Lord Robens stated that far from the study group abandoning its work, it was considering tenders from the contractors before reaching any final decision. The last of the tenders had come in two weeks ago.

'I have been perfectly satisfied with the way things have been going,' he said, and denied that there was any 'disillusion' with the project at the NCB. A Gas Council spokesman also denied that the project had been abandoned.

NEVER ENTHUSIASTIC

There are, however, indications that the plant contractors are very concerned about the state of the project. They stand to lose millions of pounds in business if the cost of gas produced by the Lurgi method turns out to be more expensive than imported methane. These indications are backed up by rumours that the Gas Council has never been enthusiastic about the whole project.

At present, methane gas imports equal about two million tons of coal annually. The NCB is therefore keen push ahead with the Lurgi process; if it cannot persuade the Gas Council to switch over, it stands to lose a valuable market to imported methane.

Miners should press for the NUM to demand a definite report on the nature and state of the Lurgi investigations and what

effect this would have upon employment in the industry. In particular they should ask to see the balance sheets of the project and be given a definite yes or no as to whether the project is to be dropped.

With unemployment spreading throughout the industry because of government and NCB policies, miners want to know if £20 million has been squandered.

Victory for Projectiles women

Newsletter Reporter

A SUBSTANTIAL victory has been won by the 20 women at the Projectiles engineering factory, South London, following their week-old strike for higher wages.

With production in the car section coming to a halt as a result of the stoppage and the effect of the men's supporting overtime ban being felt throughout the factory, the management last Thursday were finally forced to re-open negotiations. On a recommendation by the shop stewards, the women agreed to return to work and the men's overtime ban was lifted so that talks could begin. Talks went on all day Friday but no agreement could be reached.

One of the issues raised was the fact that several women were having to find 9/- a week out of their own wages to buy special gloves to do their work, the industrial gloves supplied by the firm being unsuitable. The management eventually agreed that these would in future be paid for by the firm. The women, however, refused to accept this offer as a final settlement of their claim and demanded an increase in their hourly rate as well.

Negotiations were resumed on Monday morning, but deadlock seemed to have been reached, with the prospect of the women resuming their strike. At this point the men in the factory's trucking section held a meeting and decided that if the women were forced to strike again they would come straight out, too, which would have speedily brought the factory to a complete standstill.

This threat had the necessary effect on the management who quickly made an additional offer of a 2d. an hour increase, which was accepted by the women. The final settlement gives them the equivalent of a 16/- a week increase.

by using the law court findings against members of the old executive. Thus the men who went into the courts to 'democratise' the union have been busy ever since they attained power in depriving the union of even the inadequate democracy which it enjoyed in the past.

The first item that must be discussed therefore at the coming conference is the anti-democratic nature of its representation.

It is impossible to vote in favour of decisions made at such a conference which is not representative of the majority of the members.

Amongst the amendments to rule now under discussion is the proposal to make the executive council full-time and to extend its length of office to five years. Apparently, while this is agreed in principle by the majority of the executive, it will not come before the conference because of certain disagreements over the financial commitments this would impose on some members.

According to *The Times* of August 27, 'Some executive members have good jobs and could only continue on a full-time basis at considerable financial loss.' If this is true the only issue involved is whether or not the salaries of full-time executives should be increased.

WORKABLE SOLUTION

There is every probability that the executive will arrive at a workable solution to this difficulty, especially since it would mean that the present executive would continue in office until the autumn of 1966. If the conference accepts the anti-democratic nature of the representation and the proposals to change the rules, then there will be no opportunity to change the executive council for at least four years.

It is also proposed that a biennial conference be held to replace the present annual conferences. According to *The Guardian* 'the biennial policy conference shall deal mainly with major policy questions affecting the whole union,' whilst there will be specialised industrial conferences affecting particular industries called to discuss 'the bread-and-butter questions in the industries.' In other words, the union is to be broken up into different sections which will remain isolated one from the other as is the case in other right-wing unions. Thus it is hoped that the executive council will have an opportunity to play one section off against another and in this way further consolidate their regime.

Delegates have a clear duty to the rank and file at this coming conference: they must vote against the character of the conference and its representation which disenfranchises the majority of members and all other proposals of this bureaucratic executive council.

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