

NEXT WEEK

PABLO IN HIS TRUE COLOURS

By Nihal Goonatilake

The Newsletter

WEEKLY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

SUBSCRIBE TO THE NEWSLETTER

Vol. 9, No. 392

April 24, 1965

Price 6d.

B/OSL FILE

AFTER ALL THE 'LEFT' TALK IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE

Wilson



gets his orders

HAVING courted de Gaulle and wooed Erhard, there was only one thing left for Mr. Wilson to do—that was to pay his respects to President Johnson and get his orders from the State Department.

In the weird lingo of the Foreign Office this is called 'preserving a special relationship with the USA', but to anyone who can read between the lines of Mr. Wilson's statement, it is obvious that these regular pilgrimages to the Washington shrine make Wilson a fervent devotee and errand boy of imperialism.

Mr. Wilson's trip had a two-fold purpose. One was to confine the Vietnam war by negotiation so that Britain could concentrate on the problem of defending her strategic and economic interests in neighbouring Malaysia.

BANKERS' ACCLAIM

The other was to impress on the President and the U.S. bankers that the Labour government would not, and did not, hesitate to take 'pretty unpopular measures' to revive the pound in return for tariff concessions in the States.

'The Times' was very explicit on this point:

'There had been a big improvement in Britain's economic position, he [Wilson] went on, and this was welcomed by the American government and by the bankers.' (Our emphasis)

Since when have U.S. bankers been on the side of labour?

On Vietnam Wilson paid fulsome tribute to Johnson's filthy, genocidal war. In order to cover up this shameful sell-out Mr. Wilson tried to conjure up a vision of peace-through-negotiation with Britain playing the role of intermediary:

'I think there are possible initiatives, but there are one or two consultations to be held with one or two of the governments concerned on whether there is a way in which Britain can take a useful initiative over this.'

What a masterpiece of equivocation!

Ignoring the presence of 30,000 U.S. troops and armour as well as the feverish preparations of the U.S. High Command to escalate the war with bombing and a blockade of North Vietnam, Mr. Wilson talks of 'initiatives' and 'consultations'!

CRISIS INSPIRED

Even while Wilson was chatting to the press back in London, American fighter-bombers were strafing and bombing communications in North Vietnam and in South Vietnam 1,000 tons of bombs were being dropped on a single target!

Wilson's support for Johnson in Vietnam is not due to any fine feelings of Fabian altruism. It is inspired entirely by the present desperate crisis of sterling in the face of a mounting trade and investment offensive by America.

Wilson requires time and credit. 'Mr. Wilson's point was that he needs a breathing space of more than three months—in case the reviving patient has a fit of hiccups.' ('The Times', 17/4/65)

However, neither time nor credit, i.e., the International Monetary Fund, are on Mr. Wilson's side. It is extremely doubtful whether three months, plus another loan, will make the least difference to a flagging economy and if the latest trade figures indicate anything—they indicate a further depreciation of Britain's gold and dollar reserves.

LET'S HAVE ACTION ON VIETNAM

MP's must put down motion challenging Wilson

by John Crawford

THE massive support for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament march last week-end was a demonstration of the widespread opposition to Wilson's pro-imperialist policy on Vietnam.

Despite the apologetic attitude of CND's leaders, thousands of young people ignored the Easter weather and flocked to Trafalgar Square.

This implied a clear message to 'left' Labour MPs to stop sitting on the Parliamentary fence and start a real fight against the government's backing for U.S. imperialism.

About 20 Labour MPs were on the march and some spoke at Monday's meeting. They expressed varying degrees of 'disappointment' with Wilson's foreign policy.

Frank Allaun, who resigned last month from a minor government post, said that Britain should play the role in Vietnam of 'a strictly neutral mediator'.

'Lefts' speak

Joyce Butler told the meeting that the government would have to develop 'a satisfactory foreign policy'.

Lord Brockway said he was 'disappointed, dismayed and humiliated that a British Labour government should give support to the Americans in Vietnam'.

Anne Kerr, MP for Rochester and Chatham, raised the loudest cheer when she described the Vietnam struggle as 'a bloody fascist war which the Americans have lost'.

Many of them are still paralysed by fear of 'rocking the boat'. But Wilson, Stewart, Callaghan and Brown, have already taken actions which will sink the Labour Party altogether, unless they can be reversed. To defend Wilson, or to avoid attacking him, is not to strengthen the Labour Party, but to weaken it still further.

Speak out

It would be better for the government to fall as a result of a fight for socialist policies than for it to be used by the employers to carry out Tory policies, demoralizing millions of Labour supporters in the process. If Wilson is backing 'a bloody fascist war', how can socialists support him?

It is impossible to evade the issue by hoping that Wilson will change his mind or that Mr. Cousins' conscience will begin to function again.

Local Labour Parties must force their MPs to speak out. They should ask Colonial Secretary, Greenwood, who used to head the Aldermaston March, why he was unable to come along this year.

Motion

Perhaps a man whose job it is to use on Arab peasants the same poison gas employed by the U.S. forces in Vietnam, could not face the Trafalgar Square audience.

And where was Frank

Cousins? As Minister for Technology he sits in a government still responsible for the running of Aldermaston itself, not to mention the research establishments developing germ warfare and chemical weapons.

If the 'left' MPs are to make any stand, they must immediately put down a motion on the orders paper in Parliament condemning Wilson's support for Johnson's bloody and brutal policy in South-east Asia.

The absence of a clear aim was an outstanding feature of the march as a whole. All kinds of slogans and arguments were to be found.

The Young Communist League was collecting signatures for its petition humbly requesting Mr. Wilson to reduce the expenditure on armaments by an unspecified sum.

No neutrality

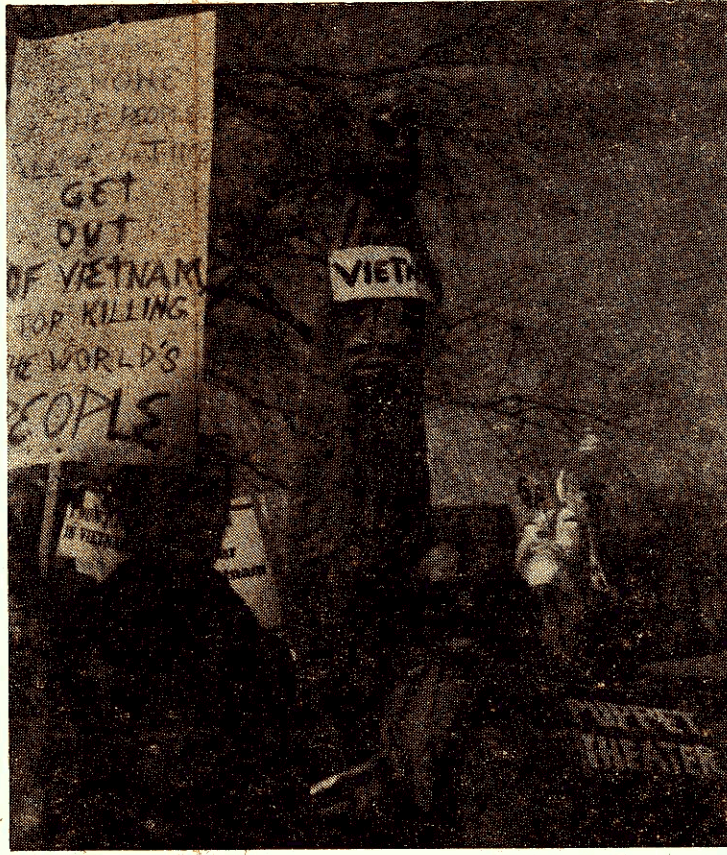
The Committee of 100 had sent a letter to the same destination asking the Premier to come out and discuss with them when they visited Downing Street. But Wilson was on holiday in the Scilly Isles and masses of police prevented anyone getting near Downing Street on Monday afternoon.

Some of the leaflets put out by CND, as well as the Communist Party-led British Peace Committee, did not mention Vietnam at all.

Those that did took a 'neutral' line between the Vietnamese people and U.S. imperialism. Several speakers at the meeting and banners carried on the march called for the re-convening of the Geneva Conference which cut Vietnam in half in 1954.

In the struggle between the Vietnam liberation

Cont. p. 4, col. 7 →



Members of the 'Pupp Theatre' which has been touring the New York ghettos protesting the Vietnam war joined in the 15,000-strong demonstration outside the White House last week. Newsletter photograph

Dr Allen on way home

FREED from a Nigerian jail last week, 41-year-old Leeds University lecturer, Dr. Victor Allen, is on his way back to Britain. Still weak and unwell after his hunger strike against the delay in his appeal against sentence, Dr. Allen is staying for a few days rest in Accra, having flown from Lagos, Nigeria, on Monday.

His appeal, along with that of three Nigerian trade unionists, Sidi Kayam, Olushengun Adebayo and Jonas Kiomasekenagh Abam, who were jailed with him, was upheld on two of the three charges the quartet was tried on.

Delay in release

As the men had already served four months of their sentence, they were released following the successful appeal. There was some delay in the prison authorities being given permission to release Dr. Allen.

On his release the lecturer told an 'Observer' reporter in an exclusive interview: 'These last days have been terrible and I have not slept at all. I expected to be out on Thursday (after the court



Dr. Allen: resting in Accra

decision). It was only because of outside pressure that I was let out today (last Saturday).'

His first priority would be to finish the book he was writing on African trade unionism when he was arrested last June.

Dr. Allen had originally travelled to Lagos to carry out research for his book.

The Nigerian working class had just gone through a victorious general strike in which the government of Abubakar had been forced to grant large wage increases. The arrest of the four men was seen as a retaliatory act by the government.

Campaigned for release

Since the arrests, The Newsletter has campaigned for the release of the four men.

On July 14 members of the Socialist Labour League picketed the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference in London, attended by Abubakar, demanding the release of the four.

The trial dragged on through July, August, September and October. On November 9, all four men were given one year's hard labour.

On November 18, students and young and old workers lobbied about 20 Labour MPs demanding they take action to get the four men released. Several MPs, including Eric Heffer, Hugh Jenkins and Stan Orme promised to set up a committee, but nothing came of their promises.

Cont. p. 4, col. 7 →

'Morally wrong to strike' says Gunter

By Robert James

TIME after time, Minister of Labour, Ray Gunter, has called for, or threatened, discipline on workers and their organisations. As Minister of Labour Gunter has to act the hard man and aim harsh blows at the working class on behalf of the Tories and bosses to enable them to overcome the financial crisis of capitalism.

This becomes an urgent necessity as an increasing number of workers, reacting against the lowering of their living standards by wage-freezing 'deals' and a crippling Budget, demand higher wages.

Contempt of virtues

Following equally reactionary statements, Gunter told delegates at the Co-operative Party Conference in Blackpool last week-end that those responsible for unofficial strikes and 'unjustified' wage claims were morally wrong.

In the heightening class struggle of the 60s this man impudently states:

'Some old-fashioned phrases and virtues are regarded with some contempt in modern circles, but it remains as true today as ever it did that discipline and the will to earn an honest living are still of paramount importance.'

'Honour one's word'

Indeed, the democratic society that has been created in this country by so much sacrifice in the ultimate must depend on standards of conduct and the honouring of one's word and one's agreements. Today, in far too many cases, agreements are broken with impunity, and lines of procedure commonly agreed are overthrown at a moment's notice. This is very wrong and disastrous for the standards of our country.'

So, according to Mr. Gunter, when agreements, like the three-year 'package deal' are challenged by men like the toolroom workers at Pressed Steel, Cowley, it is 'wrong and disastrous for the standards of our country'.

'Honesty and discipline'

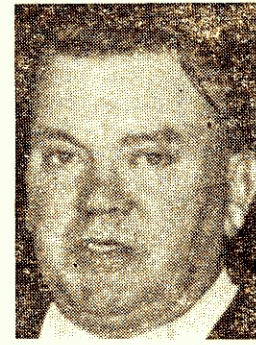
But when the capitalists are in a financial crisis and 'have been living on borrowed money for a decade' it is quite proper for the Labour government to break its 'agreement' with the working class that elected it and impose the required discipline.

After all, says Gunter: 'We all recognise that an incomes policy is all about honesty and discipline.'

'It is, in simple terms, to try to arrive at means whereby profits, wages and salaries shall not increase at a greater rate than we earn that increase.'

'There is a tendency today to disregard the moral principles upon which an incomes policy ultimately must depend.'

But this is not a moral question. Nor is it a question



of 'we' the profit-makers and wage and salary earners. It is a class question.

It is a question of whether the working class movement can challenge the betrayal of all the promises made before the General Election last October, reject its present so-called leaders in the Labour Party at a recall conference, and implement socialist policies.

The whole labour movement must demand this conference now to answer Wilson, Gunter and company, and their aides in the leadership of the trade unions, with socialist policies for the nationalization of all the major industries, the banks and the land.

TEACHERS WANT 44 PER CENT RISE

By JACK GALE

THE decision to refer the teachers' pay claim to arbitration is an attempt by the National Union of Teachers' leaders to avoid a fight. The teachers are demanding a salary of £900 rising to £1,700 over ten years. The present scale is £630 to £1,250 over 15 years.

The employers' latest offer is £710 to £1,400 over 14 years, subject to a two year standstill. The claim now goes before the new arbitration machinery that was provided by the recent Representation of Teachers Act.

This is binding on both teachers and management, but the Minister of Education, Mr. Crosland, has power to impose his own settlement through Parliament if he does not like the arbitration award. This is clearly what will happen should the arbitration favour the teachers.

Crosland's statement to the National Union of Teachers Conference that he wanted teachers to get an increase greater than George Brown's 3½ per cent limit was demagogic since they have already rejected a 12 per cent offer.

Demands by the teachers amount to a 44 per cent increase—about 14 times the 'guiding light' of 3-3½ per cent laid down by George Brown. The teachers' leaders, however, instead of uniting with other workers against the government's wage restraint policy, hope to dodge the issue by separating the teachers from other workers and claiming that they are a 'special category'.

Militant teachers must prevent their leaders from playing into the government's hands by keeping them away from the organised strength of the working class.



Part of the massive crowd at the Sylvan Theatre in the grounds of the Washington Monument after the White House demonstration.

Conflict in the Coalfields

THE picture in the coalfields of Britain is one of rapidly increasing mechanisation, rapidly increasing productivity and falling manpower. Meanwhile wages are increasing much more slowly, yet the disease and accident rates rise higher and higher.

In 1959 658,200 men were working in the coal mines. The last available figures (published in July 1964) show that 517,000 men were left in the pits. The figure is dropping at a rate of 20,000 a year. At the same time mechanised output has more than doubled in recent years.

In 1959 31.3 per cent of the coal produced was gained by mechanised means. In 1963-64 the figure was 68.4 per cent. The percentage obtained by mechanised means is increasing at a rate of 10 per cent per year.

Output increase

Output per man-shift has increased considerably. The output per man-shift for face workers over the last five years is—1959, 75 cwt.; 1960, 79.5 cwt.; 1961, 83.5 cwt.; 1962, 91.0 cwt; and 1963-64, 99.1 cwt.

This is an increase of almost 33 per cent in four years.

The output per man-shift of all mine workers also shows a marked increase, from 26.9 cwt. in 1959 to 33.4 cwt. in 1963-64.

In the same period earnings have increased by nothing like the same proportion.

Including the value of earnings in kind, face workers in 1959 were earning an average of 80s. and by 1963-64 this had gone up to only 95s. 7d. The average earnings for all miners, including payment in kind, were 63s. 11d. in 1959 and 76s. 9d. in 1963-64.

Much of this increased productivity has been due to a rapid extension of mechanisation. This can be illustrated most clearly by recent developments in the Midlands.

A coalface at the Ormonde Colliery in the East Midlands is operated by remote control and is producing 23 tons per man shift—four times the national average for similar machines without remote control.

The Coal Board plans another 18 remote-controlled units and anticipates that half its output will be mined this way in ten years' time.

Production will begin this year at Bevercotes Colliery, also in the East Midlands. This will be the first pit in the world to have full mechanical control from coalface to the surface.

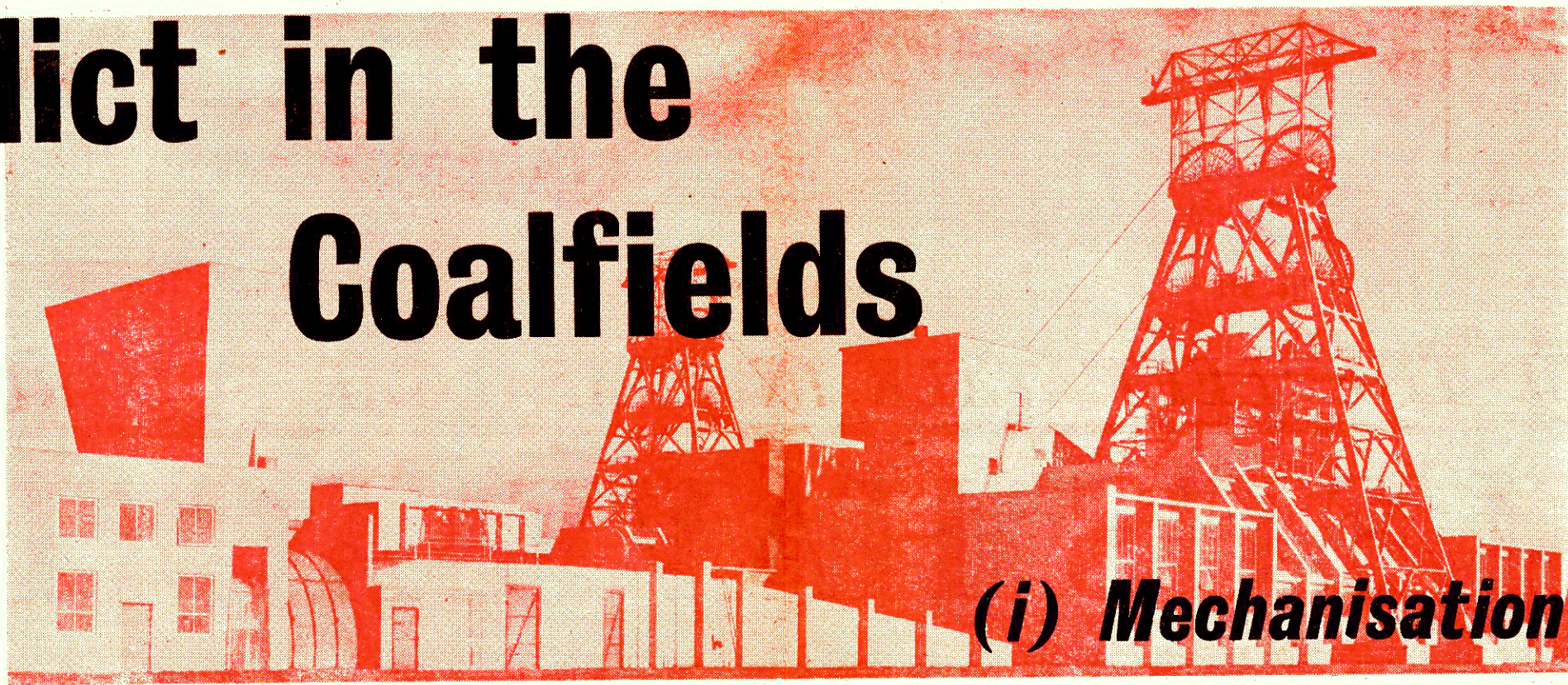
Mechanical changes

Bevercotes was first planned with a labour force of 2,000 using conventional methods. Now fewer than 800 men will be employed and output will be higher.

When production started in 1959 at Lea Hall Colliery, in the West Midlands, it was



MINERS: There are fewer men, but an increasing number of accidents.



The first of a series of three articles
by **JACK GALE** and **PETER JEFFRIES**

estimated that output would be one and a half million tons per year, two-thirds of which would be mined by conventional methods. Thirty coalfaces were to be used and 3,000 men employed.

Now, with mechanisation and concentrated production, it is expected to produce one and a half million tons this year with 1,000 fewer men.

In 1947 there were 60 pits in the West Midlands with an average output of 277,000 tons. By 1963 there were 35 pits with an average output of 420,000 tons.

From 1947 to 1958 output per man-shift rose on an average of less than 1 per cent per year in this region. Since then there has been an annual increase of more than 7 per cent.

Bigger leaps

In 1957, 3,376 men were employed for every million tons of coal produced. Five years later this had fallen to 2,615 men.

Over all Britain, productivity has increased by 23 per cent in the last four years. Even bigger leaps can be expected now with the introduction of electronics and the development of machines like the Midget Miner, the first mining machine to be steered by nucleonics.

The latest available figures show that 1,661 power-loading machines are in use for coal-getting. (These include 625 Anderton shearers, 295 Trepanners, 193 Rapid Ploughs and 95 Trepan Shearers.)

When the next Coal Board Report is published (probably in July this year) it will certainly show a rapid extension of mechanisation.

Machines developed

For instance, at the end of 1963 there were 33 ripping machines in use. There are probably twice or three times as many now. At the end of 1963 there were 10 stable hole machines. There are probably 40 such machines in use by now.

Experiments are well under way with Remotely Operated Longwall Faces (ROLF). Here, the mining equipment on the face is controlled by one man sitting at an operating panel in an adjacent roadway.

There is also the development of the Collins Miner—a remote-controlled cutter-loader for extracting coal from thin seams.

New types of coal-sensing equipment and obstruction

detectors are being developed. However, the speed at which a mechanised coalface can advance is limited by the time required to complete the necessary ancillary operations in the roadway adjacent to the coalface. The Coal Board is anxious to mechanise these operations, especially in order to speed up the advance of the roadways and stable holes.

'Million ton' pits

Work is being done on power-loading machines which will be able to make their own stable holes. They are also developing hydraulic drives for conveyors and coalface equipment.

Already 18 per cent of the faces in production are operating on the basis of powered self-advancing roof supports. These enable the faces to operate double-shift or even treble-shift coaling. (Traditional methods allow only one or two shifts coal-getting in every three, the others being used for preparation.)

Thus the development over recent years has been to increase productivity at the more 'efficient' pits, to work coalfaces more intensively and to close down 'uneconomic' pits.

In the 15 months up to

carried out in recent years and these are designed, according to a Coal Board statement, 'to raise productivity between the coalface and the surface so that the full potential of improvements in mechanisation and in the concentration of colliery working can be achieved'.

Over 500 of these studies have been on work measurement techniques for determining norms of performance for teams employed on power-loading. Needless to say, the National Union of Mineworkers has co-operated in this speed-up process!

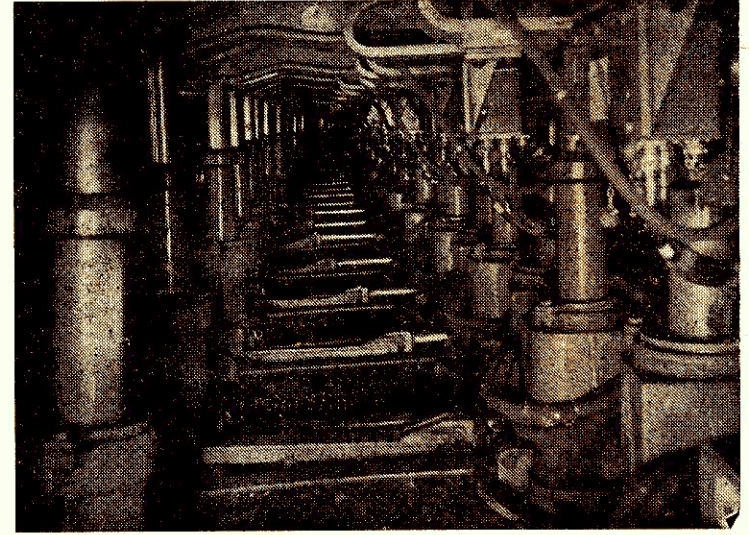
Meanwhile, closed-circuit television is being introduced at selected pits and everywhere miners complain that Deputies and Overmen are becoming constant 'production pushers'.

Miners' health

Who benefits from this increased productivity?

It has already been pointed out that increases in wages lag far behind increases in productivity, despite the promise made by Lord Robens at last year's conference of the National Union of Mineworkers.

Robens said: 'All my life I



MECHANISATION: 18 per cent of production faces operate with powered self-advancing supports.

March 1964, average weekly saleable output per colliery increased by nearly 9 per cent from 5,600 tons to 6,100 tons.

There were in this period 23 'million ton' pits—ten in Yorkshire, nine in the East Midlands, three in Northumberland and Durham and one in the West Midlands (i.e., pits producing over one million tons per year).

Fewer coalfaces are being worked each year, while mechanisation enables those that are being worked to be worked on more than one shift a day.

Last year's Coal Board Report shows that in 1961, 629 longwall machines were working one shift, 626 were working two shifts and 96 were working three shifts.

Method study

By March 1964, 505 longwall machines were working one shift, 770 were working two shifts and 207 were working three or four shifts. This year's report will certainly show a further increase in multi-shift working. Meanwhile, average daily pithead output from longwall faces is increasing by 14 per cent per year.

This is what lies behind the increase in method study in the pits. There have been at least 3,000 method studies

solution has yet been found.

It has also been realised—somewhat belatedly—that excessive noise is a cause of deafness, and this has become another occupational hazard for miners.

Accidents are also on the increase, even with fewer men in the pits.

Casualties per 100,000 man-shifts worked show a startling increase in the last four years. The figures are: 1961, 148.33; 1962, 161.8; 1963-64, 180.72. The last Coal Board report showed 254,063 accidents in 15 months, 308 of them fatal.

This, then, is the picture of mechanisation in the British coalfields. Already more than 72 per cent of the coal produced is power-loaded.

Robens told the last National Union of Mineworkers conference that he wanted to mechanise every coalface possible, and to increase the average working time of the machines by 15 minutes per shift.

No wonder he urged miners to throw away their 'old conceptions' of militancy with the pick and shovel. 'Accept new thinking with the new machines,' says Robens.

This is now extremely important to Robens, and the role of the right wing and Communist Party leaders of the miners' union in holding back and misleading the miners cannot be over-emphasized.

For the most important result of mechanisation is that production in the 15 months ending March 1964 was 247.5 million tons. This is equivalent to 218 million tons a year, and will certainly have gone up since then.

Yet Robens told the 1964 National Union of Mineworkers conference that he wanted to maintain production around 200 million tons a year.

Indeed, some sections of big business think this is too much and want a limit of 180 million tons a year. This figure of 180 million tons is 38 million tons less than was being produced a year ago, a loss equivalent to the jobs of at least 120,000 miners.

Fewer men

The important fact is that the level of production required by the Coal Board has already been reached and probably exceeded. The purpose of mechanisation now is not to produce more coal, but to produce the same amount more cheaply—that is, with fewer men.

Thus, the case of Lea Hall Colliery, mentioned above, is highly significant. After mechanisation this pit did not produce more coal, but produced the same amount with 1,000 fewer men.

Moreover, since there were already 23 'million ton' pits last year, this means that one-eighth of all the coal required in a year is already being produced from these 23 pits.

Thus, the intensified drive to mechanise every possible face can only mean an attack on miners' jobs and conditions in the coming period.

How is this affecting wages? What is the role of the Labour government? What should the attitude of miners be to this government? These vital questions will be answered in later articles in this series.

'Self management' in Algeria a farce

Newsletter Correspondent

In last week's Newsletter ('Kenya and Kaunda show their hand'), we explained how the talk by some African politicians about 'African socialism' is nothing more than a cloak for capitalist policies.

These politicians came to power by riding on the crest of mass movements against imperialism, and by gaining the sympathy and support of socialist and working-class organisations in other countries, including Britain.

In their different ways, these nationalist politicians now attack the workers of their countries, in order to preserve their own agreements with the imperialists, whose investments remain in African states, despite so-called 'independence'.

A great deal has been heard, for instance, about the special 'Islamic' path to socialism reputedly being trodden by Ben Bella and his Algerian government. Many self-proclaimed Marxists have even described Algeria as a workers' state, waxing particularly enthusiastic about the introduction of so-called self-management in industry and on estates.

WORKERS TIED

In fact, Ben Bella, the only survivor in power of the old National Liberation Front (FLN) leadership against French imperialism, is using the idea of a one-party state and a socialist Algeria to tie down the workers to his own bourgeois state.

'The Guardian', in an article on Monday, April 12, indicated some of the reality behind the myth of 'Algeria's (Islamic) road to Socialism'.

From this account it is clear that 'self-management' in Algeria is a farce: workers' committees exist, but 'the government appointed an estate or works manager with professional qualifications who was responsible to it, and the government also controlled the financial management, all major purchases and investments and all sales...'

From the socialist point of view, such central planning in the economy would be correct, given two circumstances: a workers' state machine through Soviets and workers' parties; and nationalized property in

the factories and the land.

But the state is, in fact, a centralised and bureaucratic one, which denies to the trade unions the right to strike in 'self-managed' industries and severely restricts it elsewhere.

The agreement of the UGTA (Algerian Trade Union Federation) to these restrictions has been secured after two annual conferences in which Ben Bella's official nominees have been completely substituted by ruthless means for the earlier leadership.

PRIVATE INDUSTRY

Years previously, the FLN terror machine had been used to physically wipe out the militant young trade union leadership grouped originally around the Algerian National Movement (MNA).

For all the talk about a 'workers' state' in Algeria, four-fifths of industrial and commercial undertakings remain in private hands, and Moslem landowners retain seven million acres of cultivated land in estates of over 120 acres each. The ruling party is not only given a monopoly of the political life of the country, but has now been made the official and compulsory arbiter in settling industrial disputes in the nationalized sector of the economy.

The workers of Algeria are being tied down by a combination of repression and 'socialist' talk. All Ben Bella's speeches last year about the peasantry's importance and the need for restraint by the workers can now be seen in its true meaning.

COLLABORATORS

The workers are to be disciplined by the state, by the ruling party, and by the official trade unions which serve the state, to provide the labour for the accumulation of wealth for the national capitalists. These capitalists meanwhile retain their business relations with the imperialists of France, Britain and the USA, and lean on the richer peasants at home.

All those 'Marxists', such as the various spokesmen of the Pablist 'Unified Secretariat' in Paris, who glorify the supposed 'socialist' evolution of leaders like Ben Bella, are collaborating in this process of preventing the working class of the African countries from taking the leadership of the national revolution, posing their own socialist demands, and taking their place in the international workers' revolution, above all by building independent revolutionary parties in all the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

May Day climax for Spanish workers

WORKERS in Spain continue to press for higher pay and free trade unions in a campaign which will reach its climax in a militant May Day demonstration.

On April 7 over 3,000 workers marched in a demonstration, organised by the Metalworkers' Federation of the Workers' Trade Union Alliance (ASO), to the CNS (Franco Trade Union) building demanding 175 pesetas (about 21s.) a day, reinstatement of sacked workers, scaled salaries, protection against arbitrary sackings, and for the right to strike and free trade unions.

More than 5,000 workers were stopped on their way to the demonstration in the Paseo de the Prado, a boulevard in the centre of Madrid.

In Baracaldo, near Bilbao, at about the same time, 7,000 metalworkers demonstrated for similar claims. Still detained

HOWEVER embarrassing it may be to descend to the level of controversy chosen by Joseph Hansen...

On March 26, 'World Outlook' carried an article by Hansen which criticised The Newsletter for neglecting the major political issue of Vietnam.

We showed how every issue of The Newsletter since the beginning of February had given front-page treatment to Vietnam...

We drew Hansen's attention to the activities of Newsletter supporters and Socialist Labour League members...

Great hostility

In particular, we explained why Hansen went in for these distortions: it is a way of escaping from discussion of the critical problems...

The sure and steady growth of the Socialist Labour League in Britain and of its influence throughout the international movement...

Only if this is done can Hansen conceal the fact that since his own arrival in Europe his attempts to unite the revisionists...

In Ceylon the great majority of the supporters of this unification entered into and supported the capitalist coalition government of Mrs. Bandaranaike.

In Belgium, the ingenious method of permanent concealment of Trotskyists within the official Socialist Party...

Eight-page reply

Within the Secretariat, so firm was the 'unity' that Pablo himself and his faction are suspended from membership...

This brings us to Hansen's latest effort, in which he tries to reply to our disposal of his rubbish about The Newsletter's neglect of Vietnam.

In 'World Outlook' of April 16, he combines an eight-page reply to our demonstration of the activity and initiative of the Socialist Labour League...

last week in a Baracaldo police station were Santiago Ramirez, aged 18 and 20-year-old German Ortega, both employed at General Electric Espanola...

After this, between April 6 and 8, four workers were arrested in Barcelona and taken to the Modelo Prison...

They are: Jose Pujol, a 30-year-old metalworker employed at Montesa, accused of being secretary of the Metalworkers' Federation...

The Newsletter and Joseph Hansen

ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

of personal abuse.

There is little point in replying to the letter, which consists mainly of drawing the attention of the reader to the fact that before Cliff Slaughter became a Trotskyist he was a member of the Communist Party...

I can only apologise to Hansen for having had to fight to become a Trotskyist and for not having completed this fight in the Communist Party until I had reached the ripe old age of 28.

I suggest that at the next conference of the Socialist Workers Party, Hansen moves a resolution for the setting up of a stud farm for the breeding of Trotskyists from birth.

Now to deal with the tedious reply of Hansen to our article of April 3.

Hansen way out

Hansen manages to convey the impression that our headline emphasis on Vietnam in The Newsletter of March 27 was a response to the criticism which he had made in his original article.

While we do produce a weekly paper, we do not have the technical facilities to change half the paper according to Hansen's criticisms on the same day that we print the paper!

And in any case, Hansen ought to know the Socialist Labour League better than to suppose that we are in the habit of being determined in our political course by the 'noises off' of critics like Hansen.

While on this point, it should be said that Hansen brings in here another supposed 'capitulation to imperialist pressure', the earlier article by P. Desai in The Newsletter dealing with the fighting in the Congo.

In that article the author, trying to critically appraise the policy of the Chinese Stalinists in the Congo, referred to shootings of 'helpless white and coloured women and children' by the rebel forces.

The Newsletter editorial board published a lengthy letter from one of the Socialist Labour League's organisers criticising the errors in this article.

We agreed with the letter that it was the business of revolutionaries here to support the revolution in the Congo, and that

accused of being secretary of the Bank Employees of the Workers' Trade Union Alliance and of having contact with unions in France; Jose El-hombre, 28, single, and member of the Municipal Workers' Federation. He is accused of distributing leaflets calling for a demonstration in Barcelona on April 30 and May Day; and Antonio Martinez, 30, employed at Chemical Industries and accused of possessing a duplicating machine.

The Workers' Trade Union Alliance is appealing for support by sending letters and telegrams to Mr. Jose Solis, Minister/Secretary of the Movement, Madrid, and Mr. Gerralda, President of the Public Order Tribunal, Palace of Justice, Madrid.

Any donations to help the hundreds of workers and their families hit by the Franco regime will be acknowledged by the National Confederation of Labour of Spain in Exile.

this support was weakened by reports and judgments like those contained in the article.

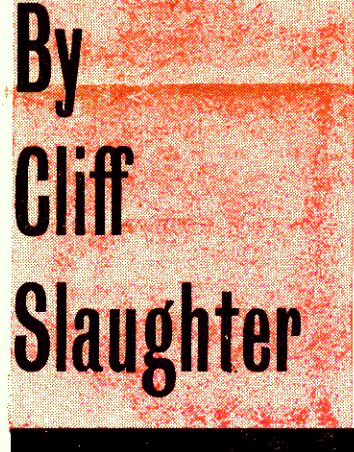
We drew the attention of the author to these criticisms and he corrected the mistake. More careful editorial work would certainly have discovered the error before publication and made it possible to rectify it.

But there is a difference between acknowledging and correcting errors, and casting round for every brickbat to hit the Socialist Labour League.

We corrected the error on the Congo in the course of our revolutionary work, which stands up to every examination from the point of view of Marxism.

As part of this work we published a few weeks afterwards a long interview with young Congolese revolutionaries showing the fundamental connections between the revolution in the advanced countries and in the colonial areas.

Hansen, however, thinks that our 'capitulation' on the Congo and our failure to give sufficient prominence to Vietnam are proof of our capitulation to imperialism. This, he says, has come about because we 'minimise the



importance of the colonial revolution'.

Hansen claims that it is this underestimation which explains our failure to reunite with the Pablottes in 1963.

We have serious differences with Hansen and his friends on the 'colonial revolution'.

It is not a question of minimising its importance, but a question of the role of the working class in the national liberation movement. Hansen and Co. have adopted a position which abdicates from working-class leadership and hands over all power to the middle-class nationalist leaders (see this week's article on Ben Bella and Algeria, p.2).

Further, we have always insisted that those who prate about the overwhelming importance of the colonial revolution use this to help them avoid the construction of revolutionary parties in the advanced countries.

Secretariat's activity?

Hansen's own article is a very good example of this. In our earlier reply we had drawn attention to the fact that for all its pretensions and for all the attacks on our 'neglect' of Vietnam, it was impossible to find any evidence of any activity on this question by any British supporters of the 'Unified Secretariat'.

In his latest article Hansen again has not a single word to say on this subject.

This makes nonsense of his long rignmarole about the connection between propaganda and organisation, in which he tries to prove that the Socialist Labour League's propaganda in The Newsletter omitted the main issue (Vietnam) and that therefore whatever organisational work was carried on by the Socialist Labour League was separated from the main political issue.

Here we must repeat in similar terms what we wrote in our first reply to Hansen.

You cannot judge the role of the Socialist Labour League in fighting against the war in Vietnam simply by measuring the

print in The Newsletter. Hansen's argument finally boils down to complaining that we didn't carry articles on Vietnam. For example, twice we only carried reports of resolutions, one by the International Committee of the Fourth International and one by the conference of Young Socialists at Morecambe in February.

We readily acknowledge that this is the case, and we note that the 'World Outlook' of April 16, for instance, carries 'articles' on all manner of subjects, but nothing about the organisation responsible for the journal whatsoever, no news of its activities anywhere, no reports of resolutions or demonstrations by any workers' organisations under its influence. It is not even possible to tell from this publication who is responsible for it, except that 'unsigned articles represent the standpoint of revolutionary Marxism'.

Let us examine the unsigned editorial comment of April 16, for instance.

It consists of an attack, written in journalistic style, on the fake peace offer of Johnson, noting at the end that at least this shows the pressure of public opinion on Johnson. The article also repeats earlier criticisms of Harold Wilson's support for Johnson.

The article contains no analysis of the latest phase of development of the imperialist campaign against Vietnam and nothing about the moves towards a carve-up through diplomacy following on the proposals of the Russians for a conference on Cambodia.

Propaganda and action

Hansen refers several times to the wave of protest from liberals and socialists of all kinds to the imperialist war in Vietnam, but not once does he mention that all these opponents of the war are without the political strength of Marxism to prevent their being sucked in behind these phoney peace proposals.

This is why Hansen makes no reply to my insistence on the correctness of our constant harrying of the so-called 'lefts' in the Parliamentary Labour Party.

While we in the Socialist Labour League insist that their words against the Vietnam war be translated into acts of political opposition to Wilson's policy in and out of Parliament, even if this leads to the defeat of Wilson in the Commons, Hansen and his supporters leave the protest at the level of articles written against the 'dirty war'.

So please, Joe Hansen don't attempt to give us lessons about the inseparable link between propaganda and political action!

In an eight-page article, Hansen finally comes down to proving that, while we covered the Vietnam issue through all the principal campaigns of the movement here, and while we never put forward any but correct demands, there were some weeks when we did not actually carry a separate article on the question of Vietnam. So much for the great proclamation that we had 'capitulated'.

Indeed the only demand about which Hansen made any critical comment was, 'No Secret Diplomacy!' He does not return to this question in his latest writings.

As we have pointed out, the editorial in the same issue of 'World Outlook' has absolutely no comment on the manoeuvres by the Stalinist bureaucracy to come to terms within the framework of peaceful co-existence.

Detailed criticism

The editorial is followed by a word-for-word reprint of the statement of the official Algerian government paper boasting of the part played by Ben Bella in setting afoot negotiations between China and the United Nations Secretary-General. Is this then the role of the 'colonial revolution', which the Socialist Labour League is reputed to 'underestimate'?

Hansen very wisely chooses not to answer at all the points we made about the opportunism of his own party, particularly on the Negro struggle in the USA. We repeat that the letter of condolence sent by the Socialist Workers Party secretary Farrell Dobbs to President Kennedy's widow was an unmistakable signal of this advanced stage of opportunist degeneration. There can be no excuse for this act on the part of professed revolutionaries.

Hansen tries to suggest that to include this in our original reply was to evade the criticisms he had made. However, that reply took up in detail all the direct criticisms made by Hansen; we sought then to show that the source of such a flood of exaggerated and unsubstantiated accusations against us was in the political development of the Socialist Workers Party and the Pablotte centre in Paris.

Finally, we have to make the same point about another part of Hansen's article.

Readers of The Newsletter will know that for some years the Socialist Labour League has been engaged in controversy with the Socialist Workers Party on questions of basic Marxist theory as well as on immediate political

perspectives. Up until recently, Hansen has insisted that our concern with questions of philosophy and scientific method was only a pretence, and that we were ignoring the 'hard facts' of a new objective situation.

In dealing with The Newsletter and the Socialist Labour League, however, Hansen chooses to ignore the activity and political work of the League, concentrating instead on articles like the ones in 'World Outlook'. And in the latest one, he even makes a most ill-advised sally into the realm of Marxist theory.

After years of telling us that in the modern world it is possible to win workers' power even without constructing revolutionary parties based on Marxist theory, Hansen suddenly launches into a hymn of praise for 'the enormous role which political consciousness plays in a socialist revolution'.

Not Marxist

In case anyone should think that Hansen has returned to Marxist positions at this late stage of the game, it is best to quote the rest of the paragraph, especially as Hansen is fond of accusing us of tearing statements out of their context.

Hansen continues: 'The higher the level of consciousness among the revolutionists and the vanguard of the working masses, the easier becomes the revolutionary victory. The written and spoken word are intimately linked with organisation and action, the two sides of the process being bound up with the aims established in successive stages of the revolutionary process.'

For all its appearance of sophistication and its play with the 'sides' of the 'process', etc., this paragraph is as far removed from Marxism as any of the 'theoretical' efforts of Hansen in the past.

For him the role of revolutionary consciousness (i.e., theory, and the development of strategy and tactics from this theory at given stages of development of the revolution) is vital only to the ease with which the revolutionary victory is gained.

The essence of Trotskyism, however, is its stress on the central role of revolutionary consciousness; this essential core of Marxist philosophy has become easier to grasp in our epoch because of the development of the class struggle itself, and Trotskyism has been able to creatively develop this dialectical theory of consciousness through the struggle to win leadership of the masses against the treacherous Stalinist and reformist leaderships.

Revisionist adaptation

Hansen's position as an avowed empiricist, an outcome of the whole failure of the Socialist Workers Party to develop dialectical materialism against pragmatism and empiricism, leads him to substitute for Marxist analysis a catalogue of political and organisational phrases which have not been developed in any way since the death of Trotsky in 1940.

In this way, the phrases become simply a formula for adaptation to the prevailing middle class forces which dominate the struggle of the masses in the various phases of the world revolution.

This is why the revisionists began by capitulating to the Stalinist bureaucracy, and ended in complete subordination to the middle class nationalist leaders in the colonial countries and to the social-democracy in Britain.

Finally, the reader will perhaps be wondering why so much space in Hansen's journal should have been taken up with criticising the contents of Newsletter, necessitating our rather lengthy replies.

After all, in 1963, Hansen and his friends wrote off the Socialist Labour League and its comrades in the International Committee as an insignificant and blind sectarian tendency. For ten years the Socialist Workers Party had publicly solidarised itself with the Socialist Labour League and the International Committee against the revisionism of Pablo's International Secretariat.

Continued back page ->

LETTER

'Unified' Secretariat's Vietnam statement reveals bankruptcy

IT is impossible, in one issue of The Newsletter, still less in one letter, to discuss fully how genuine revolutionaries are to defend the Vietnamese people against U.S. aggression.

The support of the Communist Party of the United States for Johnson in the last U.S. election, the policies of the governments of the workers' states and the Communist Parties of the world, and many other considerations, must be taken into account in a full analysis.

But it is only possible, here, to continue the analysis of the position of the so-called 'Unified Secretariat of the Fourth International' which I began in a letter in your issue of April 3.

This clique issued another statement on the Vietnamese Revolution—titled 'Help the Vietnamese Revolution!'—on March 11, 1965. A comparison between it and their statement of February 16, 1965 (see my previous letter) reveals completely their utter bankruptcy.

Thus, these self-appointed writers of advice columns for the international working class, in their first statement, predicted that, in the face of increased aggression against North Vietnam and China, 'the Asian workers' states will quite understandably increase their support to the South Vietnamese revolution by more and more radical means'.

Now, however, they comment: 'Most serious of all... is the apathy which the leaderships of the principal workers' states [i.e., the USSR and China—E.W.] display in face of the step-by-step "escalation" of U.S. military intervention in South-east Asia... The government of the People's Republic of China appears at the moment to be most concerned about pinning on Moscow the blame for a possible defeat of the revolution in Vietnam.'

So much for aid by 'more and more radical means', 'the Asian workers' states'—and our prophecies into the bargain!

Again, our heroic analysts, who formerly attributed U.S. aggression in Vietnam to 'blind arrogance', and said it 'reveals how little the American rulers understand the real feelings of the anti-imperialist forces in South-east Asia and how abysmally ignorant they are of what has happened in South Vietnam', now say that 'their [the U.S. imperialists'] course in Vietnam... [is] the consequence of cold and deliberate calculation in which they evaluate the risks as being low'.

Heads you loose, tails I win! What is one to make of this mish-mash? It is hard to believe (especially with the 'Unified Secretariat so divided) that these two statements were from the same source—but it is probably true...

Apart from the gems just quoted, the new statement is, like its predecessor, full of predictions of what will happen, and advice for the governments of China and the USSR (just in case they have forgotten something!)

For example: 'As if a revolution mounted by the broad mass of the people... could be told to "play dead" or "give up" at a signal from Hanoi, Peking, Moscow or anywhere else!'

What hypocritical liars these people are! Not only do they, in two long statements, manage somehow to avoid characterizing the 1954 Geneva Agreement as a sell-out, they even declare the sell-out never happened (for, if a revolution mounted by the broad mass of the people could not be told to play dead, then... such a revolution obviously

was not told to play dead in 1954)!

Or, again:

'The government of the People's Republic of China would do better to offer to Khrushchev's heirs a joint public commitment to protect the common interests of the two workers' states, and those of the socialist revolution, in South-east Asia. Then let the workers of the world judge the response!'

What treacherous drivel this is! Instead of clearly exposing the Chinese bureaucrats as traitors, and explaining to the workers of the world just why the Chinese bureaucrats cannot but seek, in their own interests, to betray the revolution, these self-proclaimed members of the revolutionary vanguard of the working class create the illusion that the Chinese have obstructed the shipment of Soviet arms to North Vietnam (this has been denied by Peking) is a sufficient comment on these gentlemen!

Further:

'It is particularly urgent that the governments of the Soviet Union and... China close ranks before the common danger. This does not mean giving up the ideological and political differences; these can be continued and thrashed out on a party level. [As if the Sino-Soviet split was merely a difference of opinion!]—E.W.] But let the governments close ranks! A joint statement should be issued clearly and solemnly warning imperialism of the fundamental solidarity of the two countries... It is equally urgent for both governments... to show by action in the most concrete way that this defence [of the Vietnamese Revolution] has begun... and will be carried through to the end with genuinely Leninist determination.' (My emphasis—E.W.)

This last quotation demonstrates the complete capitulation of the Unified Secretariat to imperialism. I can only suggest to these 'Trotskyists' that they might read Trotsky (for they evidently have not yet done so) on the foreign policy of Stalinism.

They will find, if they can spare the time from reading 'revolutionary' pronouncements by Stalinists, that Trotsky proves that the foreign policy of Stalinism is not, and cannot be, 'genuinely Leninist', but is determined by the interests of the Stalinist bureaucracies, and is counter-revolutionary.

But these 'Trotskyists' do not just adapt to imperialism by white-washing the role of the bureaucracies.

Their whole perspective is one which places reliance in forces other than the working class. (Thus, according to them, action by the bureaucracies is 'particularly urgent', while action by the international working class is merely 'urgent'.)

At a time when it is necessary to turn the struggle against the war in Vietnam towards the working class, when it is necessary to fight the war by blacking U.S. ships (as the dockers of Melbourne have done), by strikes and demonstrations, and by building the revolutionary movement to overthrow the imperialist governments, at a time when it is necessary to insist on the independence of the working class from Stalinist secret diplomacy and Labour gunboat diplomacy, the Unified Secretariat, by creating illusions of 'genuine Leninism' or 'left social-democracy' renders an inestimable service to imperialism, and stabs the Vietnamese people in the back!

Then, can, in the fight to build the Fourth International throughout the world, be no accommodation with these traitors.

E. Webster.

Italian YCL congress cancelled

By PETER ARNOLD

THE Stalinist leadership of the Italian Communist Party has postponed this year's congress of the Italian Young Communist League.

The reasons for this move were announced at the National Committee meeting of the Young Communist League, held on March 12-13 this year.

In his report, the national secretary, Achille Occhetto, stated that the documents submitted for the congress reflected a line deviating too far from the official party line.

The Communist Party in Italy, which has over a million members, is even more openly reformist than the British Communist Party. Its pro-

gramme is centred around demands for what it calls 'structural reforms', that is, nationalization of some of the country's basic industries.

Its leadership maintains friendly relations with the Catholic Church.

For a number of years now, the youth section of the party has been in open opposition to the Stalinist leadership.

Two years ago, 'New Generation', the Young Communist League weekly, published full page photographs of Trotsky in the uniform of Commissar for the Red Army.

This year, 'City of the Future', the movement's

monthly paper, has printed articles critical of the party line, openly challenging positions held by members of the Central Committee.

At the youth movement's National Committee meeting where the postponement of the Congress was announced, National Committee members criticised the party leaders, notably on the question of the Soviet Union's failure to provide military aid to the Vietcong.

Up till now, however, the opposition in the Italian Communist Youth Movement has been more of a rebellion than a serious attempt to build any alternative to the party's Stalinist leadership.

RAIL AND BUSMEN MAKE PAY CLAIMS

BOTH railwaymen and busmen in the London area are putting in claims for wage increases.

Members of the National Union of Railwaymen and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen are demanding increases of 6.5 per cent and a 40-hour week.

Workers on Britain's railways have been trying for some time now to get a rise in wages which would at least increase their pay packets to meet the steadily rising cost of living.

INCREASE

London busmen are to ask London Transport for an increase of 30s. a week.

They are demanding parity with the underground workers, who receive a basic rate of £16 14s. whereas a bus driver receives only £14 3s. 6d.

Such a demand will no doubt meet with opposition from the Labour government and both rail and bus workers can expect to have to take up a big struggle for their increases.

Plumbers win on redundancy issue

WORKERS employed by Humphreys and Glasgow at Linacre Lane gas works, Bootle, Liverpool, have won an important victory after being on strike for seven weeks.

Men belonging to the Plumbing Trades Union and the Heating and Domestic Union withdrew their labour after they claimed the firm had broken a site agreement on redundancy.

A significant thing about the dispute was that although it concerned a site issue, agreed upon by all unions on the job, men of the Constructional Engineering Union were reported to have been instructed to remain at work.

The CEU members, who included a number of members of the Communist Party, remained at work throughout the dispute despite repeated appeals from the strikers to abide by the vote of the site.

Victory

Despite this action the workers have won a victory of considerable importance. As a result of their protest and under their pressure, the MP for Walton, Mr. Eric Heffer, was forced to complain in Parliament about the inadequacies of the Contracts of Employment Act and secured a verbal promise that it should be amended.

It remains to be seen just what sort of amendments are being made.

The strikers received very good support from surrounding sites in the Merseyside and Manchester areas and they remained solid throughout.

As a result of their victory the strikers returned to work, with all sackings withdrawn and a return to the site agreement on redundancies.

Industrial Newsletter

ENGINEERING CLERKS REJECT EMPLOYERS' 'PACKAGE DEAL'

From Our Special Correspondent

DELEGATES to the Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union at their conference last week-end rejected the 'package deal' offered to engineering clerks by the employers.

Engineering clerks, most of whom work in the offices of factories such as the British Motor Corporation, Ford, Vickers, etc., make up the majority of the membership of the CAWU.

Carried forward by the struggles of the engineering workers in the Amalgamated Engineering Union, this section of the clerical union is at the moment very militant.

However, they are also very confused about the issues concerned in the Labour government's wage freeze policy.

When the Executive Committee presented a resolution in support of the Declaration of Intent it was carried and a motion from a Belfast branch against any form of wage restraint was defeated by 33,540 to 15,170 with 18,000 abstentions.

ABSTENTIONS

The large number of abstentions—more than the vote against the resolution—shows how great the confusion was on the question of wage freeze.

That such confusion should arise is hardly surprising when the Advertising Manager of 'Tribune', David Winnick, made a speech supporting the Declaration of Intent.

The conditions were created for confusion by the so-called 'lefts' around 'Tribune' so that although delegates rejected the package deal and took a decision that white-collar workers in the power industry should ban overtime in protest over a wage claim, when it came to giving a definite line on policy, the conference was left without leadership.

Although the union's executive committee supported the throwing out of the 'package deal' they were quite prepared to negotiate for a three-year settlement.

AWARE

The right wing are well aware that by accepting the 'Declaration of Intent', which limits wage increases to 3½ per cent a year, they have really stifled the 10 per cent claim of the clerks.

The executive have also said that it is up to the branches to negotiate with their local employers if they want to win wage rises.

This union which has had no record of militant struggle has now been thrown into a really big fight with the employers.

Two of the notorious right-wingers on the EC have been replaced by centrists. It now remains to be seen whether these people will merely follow in the steps of Winnick of the 'Tribune'.

Certainly the stage has been set for some big struggles in the CAWU and if the rank and file are really to win against the policies of the Labour government and their trade union leadership, they must see that a fight against any package deal involves a struggle against wage freeze, incomes policies and the Declaration of Intent.

Growing discontent against wage freeze

By OUR INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

MEMBERS of at least six major unions are either involved in or heading for struggle against Labour's wage freeze policy.

Although George Brown wants to introduce an incomes policy, as soon as possible, through his Prices and Incomes Board with the Tory Aubrey Jones, he will find it difficult in the face of strong opposition in many sections of British workers.

An attempt in a number of industries to bring in wage-freezing through 'package deals', is being answered by threats of strikes, go-slows and other industrial actions.

Members of the Draughtsmen's and Allied Technicians' Association took part in an unofficial strike this week in the shipbuilding industry and it is reported there was a 98 per cent response.

This strike has followed a break-down in negotiations with the employers for a substantial increase. The employers have offered £13 15s. at 21, rising to £21 5s. at 30. The men feel that this is 'unrealistic'.

Worried

Employers in the steel industry are getting worried about possibilities of strike action. They have appealed to the Ministry of Labour over a claim by the workers for premium payments for night work.

This claim has resulted from a recent arbitration award to blast furnace men and the employers are afraid that the award would snowball into similar demands from process workers.

The railwaymen, busmen and postmen are all expressing dissatisfaction with their present wages, and all the claims now being put forward are far above the 3-3½ per cent maximum increase laid down by George Brown.

BOAC's 3,000 clerks were expected to stage a three-day strike this week for a substantial wage increase.

BEA clerks were granted an increase of 10 per cent last week, and the BOAC want to bring their wages up to this level.

The Newsletter warned before the election of the Wilson government of the attempts to maintain the employers' profits and solve the balance of payments crisis at the expense of the living standards of the British working class.

Good standard

However, some sections of workers have been used to a comparatively good standard of living over the past few years, and they want their wage packets to keep pace with the rising cost of living.

As a result there are some big struggles coming up not only on the shop floor and in the offices, but with the union leaderships as well.

The forerunner of this has been the three-year 'package deal' between the engineering unions and the management, which has resulted in large disputes in the Midlands.

Clearly the union leaderships in agreeing to such deals, are helping the Labour government hold back the wages of workers and what is posed for the rank and file of many unions is a fight against the present leaders for an alternative leadership which will not sell out.

USDAW Conference

24 resolutions against government policy

By A Newsletter Correspondent

TWENTY-FOUR of the 131 resolutions to be discussed at the annual conference of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers to be held in Margate next week-end, oppose the Labour government's policy of wage restraint and George Brown's Declaration of Intent.

Resolutions call for wage increases of £2 or a minimum wage of £14. Branches in Glasgow, Nottingham and South-east London oppose any attempt at holding back wage rises.

When Prime Minister Harold Wilson speaks at the beginning of the conference he will find plenty to worry about—there are only a few resolutions which actually support the Labour leadership's policy on wages.

For over a year the right wing leadership of this union have been trying to sell the idea of a three-year wage agreement. They have opposed a basic wage for distribution workers.

DEMANDS

But the number of resolutions dealing with demands for increased wages shows that USDAW's membership is not prepared to buckle under to the union leadership.

In a resolution from the Edinburgh and Leith Co-operative Wholesale Society branch it is pointed out that the present wage of £9 19s. a week 'does not provide a tolerable standard of living'.

Such a declaration comes from a firm which has almost 100 per cent union membership and must represent some of the feeling shop workers have about their low wages and lack of prospects for a substantial increase.

Wilson's only reason for going to Margate will be to demand support for his efforts to save the employers' profits at the expense of USDAW members' wages.

It is hardly likely that he will express agreement with the union's policy of the nationalization of the distribution trade or the Edinburgh members' resolution.

His role, along with that of the right-wing union leadership is to defend the interests of the distribution giants whose profits went up by 10 per cent last year.

REPORT

In a report presented by the union's Executive Committee, which took two years to produce, concern is expressed at why one-third of the membership leave each year.

But the only conclusion that this 40-page report can come to is that 'far too much of the work of the union is being left to full-time officials'.

The real answer, however, lies in the refusal of the union leadership to lead a fight for higher wages for all shop workers.

Delegates to the USDAW conference must recognise the urgent need to organise and throw out any policy for wage restraint and demand a struggle for higher wages.

Scottish TUC clash on incomes policy

From BOB SHAW

TRADE union leaders intervened to tone down a clash on George Brown's incomes policy at the annual conference of the Scottish Trades Union Congress which was held at Rothesay last week.

Harry Nicholas, acting general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union and a member of the Executive Committee of the Trades Union Congress, speaking in favour of the remitting of the much diluted composite resolution, cynically remarked that the delegates would be judged by what they said at the conference and not what was in the resolution.

Nicholas went on to say: 'I doubt if you all understand what the norm of 3½ per cent means, and that it includes increases in the cost of living, lengthened holidays, and the like.'

But the resolution endorsed the government's economic policies, merely expressing inability to accept a wage freeze and urging the government to take into account the lowness of wages in many industries.

INDICATION

The words of Nicholas and the manipulation of the resolution at the Scottish Trades Union Congress is a clear indication that the trade union leadership intend to try and head off militant opposition to the policies of George Brown.

Brown had previously addressed the conference and denied any intention by the

London postmen angered by pay agreement

NEWSLETTER REPORTER

LONDON's postmen this week expressed just what they thought about the government's so-called 'fair deal' pay offer for Post Office workers.

Branches in London sent resolutions protesting against the pay agreement to the Executive of the union.

Although their rejection of the three-year pay settlement, which will raise wages by 20 per cent between January 1, 1964, and the beginning of next year, was only in resolution form it is clear that the postmen are far from satisfied.

Union leader Ron Smith must have had some clear idea as to what his members' reactions to the deal would be.

Last week he issued a panicky message appealing for no unofficial action.

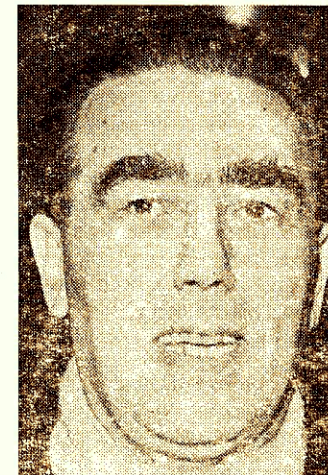
According to a union official it was agreed at a special conference of the Union of Post Office Workers in February last year that postmen's wages were £2 a week 'below the earnings of comparable workers in outside industry'.

RESULT

As a result of the new pay agreement increases would only amount to £1 9s., leaving the postmen permanently 11s. behind the pay of other workers.

The signing of a three-year agreement would put an end to all the post office workers' hopes of a decent living wage.

Many postmen are very bitter about the fact that they were persuaded to accept an inquiry into their wages instead of going on strike.



Smith: panicky message

The general feeling amongst the London postmen is reported to be that if they had known what the results of the pay inquiry would be last year, they would not have given in so easily.

This settlement fully exposes not only the policies of the Labour government but the role played by the Union of Post Office Workers' leadership.

If post office workers are to win their demands they can only do so by fighting against any attempts to hold back their struggle.

Vietnam

From page 1

movement and U.S. imperialism, socialists cannot be neutral. We must support every blow against the power of the imperialists. We must organise to stop them retaliating wherever possible.

This is the only way to fight the threat of a world war.

The British labour movement must give a lead internationally. The march of 15,000 people in Washington on Saturday, as well as mass protests in many other countries, shows what effect this could have.

The Young Socialists have demanded the recall of the Labour Party Conference to overturn the pro-capitalist policies followed by the present leadership.

This campaign can draw together the mounting opposition to the government's foreign policy and the trade union struggle opening up against the wage freeze and the effects of the Budget.

The timidity of the left-wing members of the Parliamentary Labour Party is holding back the development of a massive working class movement against the right-wing leaders. On the economic front, and internationally, the Labour government is bowing to the power of world capital and attacking the working class.

The Labour MPs who still claim to be socialists must stop apologising for Wilson and support the Young Socialists' fight for a recall Labour Party Conference.

Allen

From page 1

Commonwealth secretary, Arthur Bottomley was asked questions in the House, but he said Dr. Allen had a fair trial.

Later in November, the Socialist Labour League held a protest meeting in London and since then has continuously demanded the immediate release of Dr. Allen and the three Nigerians.

Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper Printed by Plough Press Ltd. (TU), r.o. 40 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4 Published by The Newsletter, 186a Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4

The Newsletter and Joseph Hansen

From page 3

In 1963, the conference of the Socialist Labour League made proposals for a conference of all International Committee sections to consider the prospects of unification of the international Trotskyist movement.

We were at that time continuing with preparatory discussions on a parity basis with representatives of the International Secretariat, with the approval of the Socialist Workers Party.

As the discussion on political and theoretical questions went closer to the heart of revisionism in the Socialist Workers Party as well as in the International Secretariat, Hansen went into a joint conference with the Pabloites, together with a few individuals such as Peng and the 'Austrian section', and announced a 're-unification' without any discussion on the disputed questions which had divided the movement for ten years since the 'Open Letter' of the Socialist Workers Party in 1953.

Does not Hansen's devoted study of The Newsletter, his loving care for 'correcting' its

errors, suggest that our proposals for a thorough discussion of the politics of the movement, as the only principled preparation for unification, would have been the best course.

We ask Hansen and his friends to consider once again the proposals we made then.

Hansen's articles, whatever else they are, show that he is slowly having to revise his earlier conviction that the best treatment for the Socialist Labour League was to ignore it and wait for it to disintegrate.

The same thing applies to his criticisms of the French section of the International Committee of the Fourth International. We have no doubt that our comrades will give their answer to his accusation that they have had nothing to say on the question of Vietnam. They were the first in the international movement to speak out against the methods and politics of Pabloism.

We recall that the Socialist Workers Party in 1953 had to publicly apologise to the French

section for its failure to respond to their appeals to oppose the bureaucratic attacks on the French section by Pablo and the International Secretariat.

After long and difficult years these French comrades have now built up an organisation stronger than ever before and standing firm on the programme of Trotskyism, in sharp contrast to the divided and ineffective ranks of the followers of Frank and Hansen.

It ill becomes Hansen, after his unprincipled return to the Pabloite camp which nearly destroyed the French section, to slander their political work.

Again we must repeat that the question was open for Hansen in 1963, when a discussion of the work of all sections was precisely what we demanded and was studiously avoided by Hansen. That he has to reopen the question now is surely something that will provoke a reconsideration of their course by his followers in all the sections of the 'Unified Secretariat'.