

The Newsletter

WEEKLY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

Vol. 9, No. 416

October 23, 1965

Price 6d.

THIS WEEK

PAGE TWO
How NOT to fight Wilson

The Blacklegs' Charter

PAGE THREE
World-wide protest over Vietnam war

Tory conference summed up

PAGE FOUR
Mini-shift victory clinched

Bristol dockers walk out meeting

SOUTHERN RHODESIA

WILSON BETRAYS AGAIN

by The Editor

HOW long is this farce over Rhodesia to go on? The policy of the Tory and Labour Parties is to 'wait for Smith to speak', and the longer they wait, the more arrogant he becomes.

Not only are the leaders of the Rhodesian national movement in jail but even representatives of certain sections of big business who oppose Smith, such as Garfield Todd, are being confined. The Tory Party Conference gave the green light to Smith. Lord Salisbury may have lost the vote, but he won the day. He showed Smith that inside the Tory Party there is a powerful racist group who openly support Smith and his gang of brutal white settlers in Rhodesia.



Wilson: rushes to the palace to confide with Queen

Before the Tory conference, Wilson consulted the Labour government to Tory policy over Rhodesia.

He declared that Labour follows the policy of the previous government. He is now bound hand and foot to the Tory Party. So he no longer acts as a representative of the Labour Party.

DEPENDENCE ON MONARCHY

After each utterance by Smith, he rushes to Buckingham Palace to confide with the Queen, whose close relative, Mr. Angus Ogilvy, has powerful interests in Rhodesia.

Wilson shows the same dependence on the monarchy as Ramsay MacDonald did on George V in 1931.

Meanwhile, the natives of Rhodesia are being treated in a most brutal way.

Miss Judith Todd disclosed at the Edinburgh 'teach-in' cases where Africans with their eardrums kicked in by the police came to see her father.

But the police force in Rhodesia is recruited in Britain. In the eyes of the natives of Rhodesia, the people responsible are the British, be-



Smith: becomes more arrogant

cause they provide the brutal, fascist-minded material who are willing to work in Rhodesia to kick the natives about.

The British Labour government will pay a heavy price over Rhodesia if the lesson is not learned and a break made immediately with Tory policies of capitulation to Smith.

This impudent leader and the white settlers demand a return to the 1961 constitution. This constitution postpones any kind of voting rights for Africans for 50 years, and yet Wilson is prepared to rush

out to Rhodesia to negotiate on this basis.

This shows how far to the right is this Labour government and how far removed it is from the working class here and in Africa.

The 1961 constitution is a fraud and a farce. It should be suspended immediately. But what is to replace it?

The 'Daily Worker', organ of the Communist Party, calls for a constitution that will give a vote to everyone.

This is totally inadequate. So long as the Rhodesian state is a capitalist state the vote has as little meaning as it has in Britain.

FREEDOM THROUGH REVOLUTION

Real freedom for the Rhodesian people can only come through the nationalization and taking over of all the industries in their country by revolutionary action. Only in this context will the vote have any meaning for the natives.

The British capitalist government and is Labour lackeys cannot be expected to bring freedom to the peoples of Africa.

They jockey back and forth between the white settlers, the Tory Party and the working class, looking for a formula that will enable them to betray the Rhodesian people.

The real lesson of Rhodesia is the need for the British working class to step up the struggle to get rid of the Wilson-MacDonald traitors.

These men are betraying, will betray, and can only be stopped by a united movement of the working class acting in solidarity with the Rhodesian native population for full freedom and independence for Rhodesia.

SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE PUBLIC MEETING - LONDON, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17

Big struggles on union law certain

NEWSLETTER REPORTING TEAM

BIG struggles will be the order of the day when the Labour government introduces legislation against the unions in the next parliament, national secretary of the Socialist Labour League, Gerry Healy, told a 300-strong audience in London last week-end.

He was speaking at a SLL public meeting attended by Young Socialists, students and many trade unionists. Below we print the major points from his speech:

'Never in the history of any government since the end of the Second World War has there been so much money loaned by international bankers as that loaned to the Labour government over the last year.

If the international bankers and business men loan this, they must be very sure of the purpose for which it will be used. They have no illusions that the Labour government is going to introduce socialism or take away their wealth.

SUPPORT VIA CRISIS

The reason why the government enjoys so much support in the first place is because American imperialism, the largest in the world, is in a very serious economic crisis. There is no longer enough gold in the U.S. to back up the value of the dollar.

Devaluation of the pound could lead to devaluation everywhere and trade would be completely disrupted. This is in the background of all political developments in Britain.

The second reason is that the Labour Party has completely sold out to the bankers. All the policies decided at Blackpool were decided on the basis of the hard cash paid out by those bankers to the government.



They decided to support legislation against the trade unions; to support the Immigration Bill and the bombing of North and South Vietnam. There has never been a conference where so many reactionary decisions have been taken.

This is not the Labour government that millions of workers thought would act in their interests. It is a caretaker government that is kept in power by the bankers until it puts down legislation against the trade unions. This government will discredit Labour just as Ramsay



A section of the audience of last Sunday's meeting (above) listens to national secretary of the Socialist Labour League, Gerry Healy (below). Cyril Smith, SLL Central Committee member (lower page) also spoke.



MacDonald did in 1931. The Tories will then be able to make a comeback.

Why are the polls swinging to Labour at the moment? This is part of the British parliamentary system. The Tories have the support of the big businesses. The Labour Party enjoys the support of the trade unions. In between you have a floating vote which is on the fringe of the middle-class that sometimes swings to the Tories and then swings back to Labour.

They are the people the public opinion polls represent. This section of the middle class is satisfied that the Labour government, so far, is doing a good job against the trade unions and organised labour.

TORIES NEVER OUT

Who governs what anyway? Everyone knows that the state consists of full-time civil servants who are Tory to a man. The Tory government is out of parliament, but parliament is dominated by Tory full-time civil servants.

When the 'Daily Worker' says the Tory conference was bonkers, that is stupid. It was a conference of hard-headed businessmen who, behind the scenes, are drawing up reserve plans against the working class.

The Tories will never be out of power until the day a real socialist government takes the wealth and power and establishes clearly a working-class government on the basis of ownership and control of the

means of production by the working class.

The most serious thing facing the working class is undoubtedly legislation against the trade unions. The trade unions, despite their reactionary leaderships, are the custodians of wages and working conditions.

STANDARDS MAINTAINED

Without unions, wages and conditions would be pretty horrible. The working people could not maintain their standards of living unless it was organised in unions. We must separate the reactionary right-wing leaders from the rank and file.

Mr. Clore can offer millions of pounds for Selfridges without any protest being made—that's business. But if workers want an extra 10s. a week it will be legally impossible for them to get it.

The capitalist state will now be the main custodian of wages and working conditions.

When that happens, the whole purpose of trade unionism is defeated. The working class is moved back two centuries to the middle of the 18th century when they had to fight the employers through illegal trade unions.

Aged trade union leaders are now committing millions of their members to this legislation without consulting them.

I believe the average trade unionist today has no idea of the terrible state of affairs being prepared for him.

Every struggle now becomes a political struggle. You have to fight the state and you must fight to take the power. Each wage claim now becomes political.

POLITICS AND UNIONS

Let us ask all the people who say, don't bring politics into the trade unions—who is bringing politics into the unions now?

The British working class is faced with the position that they will either have to fight or go the way of the working class in Germany.

Hitler abolished the trade unions even though the right wing in the German trade unions tried to

PUBLIC MEETINGS

NO LEGISLATION AGAINST THE TRADE UNIONS! CLEAR OUT THE WILSON-MACDONALD TRAITORS! FIGHT FOR SOCIALIST POLICIES!

LEICESTER

7.30 p.m., Sunday, October 24
The Corn Exchange

Speakers:
Cliff Slaughter, Editor, 'Fourth International'
Dave Ashby, National Secretary, Young Socialists
Jack Gale, Central Committee Member, SLL

SHEFFIELD

7.30 p.m., Sunday, October 31
The Vestry Hall, Cemetery Road (Moor End)

Speakers:
Cliff Slaughter, Editor, 'Fourth International'
Dave Ashby, National Secretary, Young Socialists
Jack Gale, Central Committee Member, SLL

GLASGOW

7.30 p.m., Sunday, November 7
Partick Burgh Hall, Lesser Hall

Speakers:
Cliff Slaughter, Editor, 'Fourth International'
John Robertson, Young Socialist and engineering convenor

BELFAST

7.30 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 14
International Hotel, Donegal Square South

Speaker:
G. Healy, National Secretary, SLL

LIVERPOOL

8 p.m., Sunday, November 21
Lecture Room, Walker Art Gallery, William Brown Street

Speakers:
G. Healy, National Secretary, SLL
Cliff Slaughter, Editor, 'Fourth International'
Peter Kerrigan, Liverpool dockers

BIRMINGHAM

7.30 p.m., Sunday November 21
Digbeth Civic Hall, Digbeth

Speakers:
Aileen Jennings, Editor, 'Keep Left'
Mike Banda, Editor, Newsletter
Jack Gale, Central Committee Member, SLL

NEWCASTLE

7.30 p.m., Sunday, November 28
Bridge Hotel, Castle Square

Speakers:
Cliff Slaughter, Editor, 'Fourth International'
Jack Gale, Central Committee Member, SLL
Chairman: J. Williamson, Young Socialists National Committee

NO LEADERSHIP IN LEEDS VIETNAM MARCH

Newsletter Correspondent

A 'Peace in Vietnam' demonstration held in Leeds and incorporating all groups from Yorkshire, supported by all the major political and religious groupings from Leeds University—excluding the Marxist Society—mustered some 150 marchers last week-end.

The absolute ineptitude of any section to give leadership was clearly reflected both in the slogans and at the meeting following the march.

The demonstration was one aimed at 'putting pressure on the Labour government to dissociate itself from U.S. policy in Vietnam'.

The major force on the demonstration was the Communist Party, whose members revealed their abysmal failure to emerge with a clear class line on Vietnam. The meeting followed the same pattern.

A member of the local Trades

Council and the Labour Party, noted for his hostility to the Young Socialists, said that Vietnam was a moral issue, which involved everyone in Britain. The purpose of the march, he said, was not to support either side.

He then added: 'Personally, I am not concerned with who wins in Vietnam!'

A CND speaker then enthused over a world meeting of Peace in

Vietnam Committee followers in Helsinki.

The last speaker, from the Communist Party, could only call for all demonstrators to join the Peace Pledge Union group.

The identity of the Communist Party with this grouping, consisting of liberals, pacifists, Tories and others openly hostile to the Vietcong, is a further indictment of the Party's role.

Report of world-wide demonstrations against Vietnam war. See page 3.

Cont. page 3, col. 3 →

READERS of The Newsletter will by now be familiar with our occasional replies to articles which appear in the duplicated periodical 'World Outlook', issued from Paris and associated with supporters of the revisionist group calling itself 'The Fourth International'.

This Paris centre, in fact, long ago abandoned Trotskyism, the traditions of which are now carried on by the Socialist Labour League and its collaborators in the International Committee of the Fourth International.

The current issue of 'World Outlook' contains an article by a correspondent called Peter Kork. His purpose is to defend Mr. Peter Price, the Nottingham delegate to the Labour Party Conference at Blackpool.

Answered

I have already answered the accusation that my Newsletter reports on the Labour Party Conference were unfair to Mr. Price (last week's Newsletter), but Mr. Kork raises the question once more.

Kork says:

"These left-wing centrists are characterised by 'The Newsletter' as having exposed their 'insincerity' in that one of them 'congratulated Woodrow Wyatt on his courage'."

He then quotes my report which, incidentally, does not question at all the 'sincerity' or otherwise of Price and his friends. We have no instruments for measuring such things, and if we had we would see little point in using them.

For my part I have no doubt that Mr. Woodrow Wyatt, for instance, is a very sincerely convinced advocate of capitalism.

Kork makes the remarkable statement that 'the Nottingham speaker, Peter Price, said no such thing as that attributed to him'.

Press report

I already quoted in last week's Newsletter the record of Price's speech as reported both in the 'Daily Telegraph' and 'The Guardian', but now I must add that I happened to

The future of the Left

How NOT to fight Wilson

by Cliff Slaughter

He then quotes my report which, incidentally, does not question at all the 'sincerity' or otherwise of Price and his friends. We have no instruments for measuring such things, and if we had we would see little point in using them.

He 'apologised' for Price's speech, and in no way attempted to defend it, hoping only that he would perform better the next day on Vietnam.

Kork enthuses

I believe this is the same Kork who writes in 'World Outlook' since they display the same rapturous enthusiasm for the conference speech of another Nottingham delegate, Ken Coates.

For example, in 'World Outlook', Kork talks about this as an 'important speech', 'a trenchant attack', and says that it was 'widely described as the most sharply critical utterance at the conference'.

When I spoke to Mr. Kork

at the conference, immediately after Coates' speech, he was similarly enthusiastic, and even appeared agitated and wiping his brow as if the speech had taken as much out of him as it did out of the speaker himself!

No, I did not write anything about Coates' speech. It explicitly confined itself to the kind of criticism which is commonplace among liberal and 'humanitarian' opponents of the Vietnam war, and expressed their point of view very well.

But I had not the space to develop a critical account of it, which certainly would have been necessary.

Compromise

For example, Coates insisted that if the delegates were in Vietnam they would have no choice but to be with the Vietcong, 'just as, during the war,

we had no choice but to fight with the communists against fascism'.

Again, Mr. Kork agreed with me that the latter was at best an unnecessary compromise with the reactionary conceptions of many of the delegates at the conference concerning war and the struggle against fascism.

Carve-up

After all, I pointed out to Mr. Kork (and he eventually agreed), it was a question of Labour leaders making an agreement not to oppose the British capitalist government, while they made an alliance with the Stalinists, an alliance which ended in the carve-up of Europe and the betrayals of 1945.

How is it that this same Kork has nothing to say on this

question in the columns of even so 'revolutionary' a journal as 'World Outlook'? Perhaps he is only prepared to criticise Coates behind his back and not in print.

Into the same category comes the issue of 'The Week' for October 7, which contains a report from Pat Jordan.

He notes four demonstrations of workers at the Blackpool conference, but manages to ignore completely the demonstration of 2,000 Young Socialists and trade unionists behind the policies of the Young Socialists and the Socialist Labour League, which was by far the largest and most effective demonstration of the week.

Ignored YS

The gentlemen around this paper, for all their talk about alternative policies, are opposed above all to the building of a real alternative. This is why, earlier in the year, they similarly ignored the 1,000-strong conference of the Young Socialists in Morecambe.

Coates and others around this paper, described by Kork in 'World Outlook' as 'left-wing centrists', are, in fact, preparing a trap for any trade unionists and Labour Party members in search of an alternative to Wilson.

Such an alternative can be built only on the foundations of Marxism, in the actual construction of a revolutionary organisation.

Coates and company concentrate instead on 'winning friends and influencing people' without ever stating these real alternatives.

Thus Coates found himself seconding a 'moderate' resolution on Vietnam at Blackpool, and appealing for support on 'liberal, humanitarian, socialist' lines.

Frighten friends

This is why 'The Week' ignored the Morecambe conference and the Young Socialists demonstration in Blackpool. To mention the actual Marxist alternative might frighten the 'liberal, humanitarian' friends who sponsor 'The Week' and consider some 'Marxists' to be harmless enough, after all.

'World Outlook', in its comment on the Labour Party Conference, admits that the conference 'revealed the weakness of the Left', and even talks

about replacing the present Labour leadership with new leaders, but it says nothing about the political reasons for the weakness of the 'left'.

We have pointed out in The Newsletter that the 'left' is still caught in the trap of social-democracy.

They fail to recognise that a new stage has been reached in the relation between the classes in Britain, for which reformism, left or right, has no answer. Only revolutionary leadership will suffice.

'Out of touch'

But 'World Outlook' simply says:

"The forces of the left are weak because in the constituencies, trade unions, parliament and in intellectual circles, they are out of touch with each other. They are fighting different battles and in different ways. The left must now unite, select the issues on which it will fight, and organise the fight on a nation-wide basis throughout the Labour Party and the trade unions."

But there is no point in confused people getting together unless the confusion is cleared up. This is the essential need in the British labour movement, the need for Marxist theory, for political perspectives to guide the struggle.

'The Week' and 'World Outlook' thus present very similar lines. They concentrate on influencing circles of left reformists and using talk about unity which does not disturb the confusion and political prejudice of these reformists. The fact that 'World Outlook' says 'find new leaders' at next year's conference to replace Wilson only helps perpetuate the myth that the existing forces of left reformism can make the Labour Party into an instrument for the socialist revolution.

'The Week' is still lagging behind, and calling for pressure to change the policy of the existing Labour leaders.

'Pressurize'

'The Week' for October 7 says in its editorial:

"Mr. Wilson and his team must be made to understand that socialist principles are infinitely more important than the paper victories obtained by manipulation and mesmerism. Every organisation in the Labour movement must be made to realise that not to fight against the government's policies is to court disaster for socialism, for working class standards and for the Labour Party. The aim of this campaign must be to reverse Government policy." (Our emphasis.)

After one year of the most gross betrayals, 'The Week' still cannot bring itself to say that to avoid disaster the working class must get rid of Wilson; they want to show him the error of his ways, to explain to him the importance of socialist principles. That is why we say that 'The Week' is a trap for those moving into opposition.

The nature of the fight against government policies requires the most resolute class opposition to Wilson and Brown, and this will only be led to victory around the building of an alternative revolutionary leadership in the Young Socialists and the Socialist Labour League.

The Wilson government intends to enact a Bill against workers defending their wages and conditions, similar to the Trades Disputes Act introduced by the Tories in 1927. Workers showed their contempt for this Bill by calling it:

THE proposals of the Wilson government to introduce legislation on wages is but a short step from even more vicious attacks on the rights of trade unions. The consequences for militant dockers contained in the Devlin Report and the talk about 'trouble-shooters' in the motor industry make this quite clear.

It is, therefore, valuable to look at earlier experiences in the history of the working-class when the employers launched similar attacks.

TOOK ADVANTAGE

Following the defeat of the General Strike in 1926, the Tory government and the employers did not hesitate to drive home their advantage. In 1927, they introduced The Trades Disputes and Trades Unions Bill.

This Bill:

1. Restricted the power to strike, without affecting the employers' right to lock-out.
2. Made picketing impossible.
3. Deprived the unions of the right to raise political funds.
4. Kept civil servants away from other trade unionists.
5. Limited the right of local government employees to strike.
6. Allowed the Attorney-General to interfere in the administration of union funds.

The Bill declared any sympathetic strike illegal if it was 'intended or likely to coerce the government or intimidate a substantial part of the community'. Anyone taking part in or 'promoting' such a strike was liable to a fine of £10 or imprisonment for two years.

The Blacklegs' Charter

by Jack Gale

Any strike not directly concerned with conditions of employment within the trade could be declared illegal. Moreover, this decision could be retrospective. That is, a worker could take part in a strike which he considered was concerned with conditions within his trade, but if this was subsequently judged to have gone beyond these limits, he became liable to prosecution.

EMPLOYERS EXEMPT

Such legislation did not, of course, apply to employers. They could lock out workers without any fear of criminal prosecution.

The second clause of this Bill was concerned to defend strike-breakers. Picketing was declared illegal if 'the number of pickets or manner of picketing is such as to make the person concerned afraid of injury, loss, violence or exposure to hatred, ridicule or contempt'.

In effect, this meant that pickets could only approach blacklegs who were willing to be approached!

Violation of this clause carried a penalty of a £20 fine or three months' imprisonment.

In addition, no blackleg could be expelled from his union, or be punished in any way, for refusing to take part in a strike declared illegal. He could claim substantial damages from the union if this was done. And this included subjecting the blackleg to

'hatred, ridicule or contempt'.

Even the use of words like 'blackleg' or 'scab' was dangerous.

This legislation was made retrospective, with the specific purpose of protecting those who had scabbed in the General Strike.

No wonder the Trades Disputes Act became known amongst workers as The Blacklegs' Charter!

An important feature of the Bill was the substitution of 'contracting-out' of the political fund by 'contracting-in'.

Unions could raise political funds only from those members who declared individually and in writing their willingness to pay them.

FEARED WORKERS' STRENGTH

This was an attempt by the Tories to keep the unions away from politics, and was inspired by their fear of the political consequences which could have arisen from the General Strike, when the working class had shown that it had the strength to take the power but lacked the leadership. The Tories wanted to take no more chances.

Legislation against the unions always raises the question of the connection between them and the Labour Party.

The unions gave rise to the Labour Party because no existing party could serve their interests.



In 1927 the Tories tried to force home their advantage following the defeat of the 1926 General Strike by introducing the Trades Disputes Act. Workers actively opposed this legislation in demonstrations like the one seen above.

In 1927, it was the Tories who tried to split the unions from the Labour Party by 'contracting in'.

In 1965, it is the actions of the Labour Party leaders themselves, who, by their threatened legislation, raise anew the whole question of the permanence of this relationship.

CIVIL SERVANTS BARRED

Another way in which the Tories tried to weaken the working class in 1927 was by splitting off civil servants and employees of local and public authorities.

No civil servant was allowed to be a member of a union which admitted members outside the civil service, while any employee of a public or local authority was liable to a fine of £10 or three months' imprisonment if he 'broke his contract of service' (i.e., went on strike) in such a way that the authority could not 'effectively carry out its duties'.

This Act hamstrung the unions. Practically no strike was legal, and even those that were could be prevented.

For instance, the Attorney-General could apply to the courts for an interim injunction against a strike which would be granted before the action was proved illegal.

Even if the union then proved that its action was legal, it had no redress against the Attorney-General.

Of course, the employers and

Tories felt confident in 1927 to launch a direct attack on the unions, because of the defeat which the cowardice of the trade union leaders had brought on the working class in 1926.

Today, in an economic crisis far worse than that of 1927 (or even of 1931), the capitalist state desperately needs similar restrictions on working-class action.

But 1965 is not 1927.

The working class is not defeated and demoralised, but strong and confident.

TORIES LOOK TO WILSON

The Tories dare not carry out such measures themselves—that is why they allow the Wilson government to continue in power. They hope that Wilson, assisted by those trade union leaders who voted with him at Blackpool (and by those like William Carron of the Amalgamated Engineering Union who repudiated the vote of his own delegation) will place anti-strike and anti-union legislation on the statute book.

This will give the Tories the jumping-off point for a fundamental onslaught on the rights and standards of the working class.

All workers must look closely at the 1927 Act and its results, and realise now that all legislation against wages and strike rights must be thrown out, and those Labour leaders who support such legislation must be repudiated.

Now available: Two issues of
Fourth International

A journal of International Marxism
Volume Two Numbers One and Two

NO. 1

Statements of the International Committee of the Fourth International on Algeria and Vietnam

The Fourth International and the Socialist Workers' Party Documents covering the period 1953-1963

NO. 2

Rebuilding the Fourth International (Resolution of the International Committee)

Cuba: Marxism and the Revolution by John Castle

The Struggle for Marxism in the United States III American Trotskyism with Trotsky by Tim Wohlforth

Appendix: A discussion with Trotsky—Stenographic report dated 12-15 June, 1940

Price: Three shillings each. Obtainable from:

NEW PARK PUBLICATIONS LTD.,
186A Clapham High Street, S.W.4.

MINI-SHIFT VICTORY CLINCHED

Workers force employers to back down

By Sylvia Piek

Officials attack schedule strikes

By Newsletter Reporter

THE fight of London busmen against the London Transport Board's new schedules continues and the busmen now find themselves also fighting Transport and General Workers' Union officials.

On Thursday, last week, two special meetings at Hanwell, London, garage voted by 66-14 to strike every Saturday until their old schedules are restored.

The next day, three full-time union officials, at a meeting called at a few hours' notice, persuaded the few present to call off the strikes and accept the London Transport Board's offer, which the larger, more representative Thursday meeting had rejected.

A leading union official has written a letter denouncing the criticisms of union leadership contained in the busmen's rank and file newspaper, 'The Platform' (reported in The Newsletter, October 9).

'Libellous slander'

His letter, which calls 'The Platform' article a 'libellous slander', was duplicated and given to every busman.

The original article said that only the many garages taking so-called 'unofficial' action against the schedules were really waging a fight on behalf of London busmen.

The union called three mass meetings for the three divisions for this week and next at which 'the team dedicated to improving the status, raising the wages and obtaining better conditions' of busmen (i.e., the local union leadership), would be present.

Busmen must continue in the garages to expose the officials' subservience to the employers. They must defend the rank and file, their actions and their newspaper.

● Vietnam

from page 3

the 100 or so police who bundled them into vans.

The blatant and bloody war in Vietnam, which Monday's 'Times' claims is supported by a majority in America—'Consciences do not seem to be assuaged by the wholesale shipment of artificial limbs, the call for plastic surgeons, and the dispatch of teams to care for hundreds of thousands of refugees'—is, in fact, drawing a broad section of working and middle-class layers into a limited struggle.

Headed-off

Like the Negro struggle, to which it is so closely tied in the United States, the protest against the Vietnam war could be headed off by the middle-of-the-road, middle-class, dogooders who are, in Britain, supported to the full by the Communist Party.

The struggles in the United States, in Britain, and elsewhere, are intimately linked in that they must oppose imperialism and must fight through the building of revolutionary parties for its overthrow.

As The Newsletter and the Socialist Labour League have stated continuously in the past period: 'We are for the military overthrow of U.S. troops in Vietnam. We are opposed to calls for 'peace' in terms of a re-call Geneva conference.'

A victory for the Vietcong in south-east Asia would be a tremendous blow against imperialism, and a blow against imperialism is another step forward towards socialism for the world working class.

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

CAR workers last week won the official seal on their victory in the fight for a four-night week against the notorious Friday night mini-shift. This is the first important hole they have made in the engineering 'package deal' agreed over their heads last December between employers and trade union officials.

The employers finally gave in with a bad grace. A spokesman for the Engineering Employers' Federation declared that they signed last week's agreement 'reluctantly' and 'in the interests of good industrial relations', and that the meeting with the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions had been held because the Confederation 'could not control their members'.

He also complained that it constituted 'a reversal of the policy passed at their conference this year'.

This victory gives the biggest slap in the eye to Sir William Carron and the leaders of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, who arranged the 'package deal' and voted at their national conference to support the Labour government's wage freeze policy.

It also strengthens those who supported the AEU delegation's vote against legislation against the unions at the Blackpool conference of the Labour Party.

At Austin's Longbridge factory, Birmingham, workers are now seeking to rupture the 'package deal' a second time by pressing a claim for a 38-hour week of 9½ hours per shift, in place of the 40-hour week for day and night-shift workers laid down in the deal.

Continued fight

This would bring their working hours into line with those of 4,000 night workers at other Midlands car factories.

It would also demonstrate that no matter what deals are made between bosses and union 'leaders', workers will continue to put up an independent fight for improved pay and conditions. And that, with resolution and solidarity, such struggles can be won.

On the issue of the four-night week, car workers finally broke the resistance of their bosses and union officials, and defeated certain tactics which, it was suspected, were dragged into the struggle in a last-minute attempt to reverse the night workers' victory.

Some form of compensation will have to be sought at Longbridge for time workers in negotiations for the four-night, 38-hour week. As things stand these workers would lose the equivalent of four hours' pay for the Friday night shift.

Woolf strikes over sackings

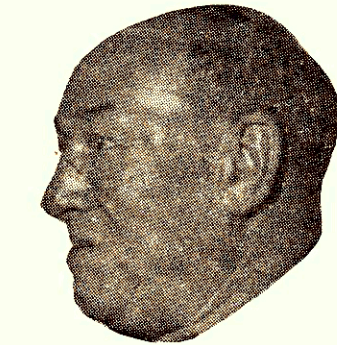
AT a meeting of the Shop Stewards' Committee of R. Woolf and Co., rubber works, Hayes, Middlesex, on Saturday it was decided to hold a strike every Wednesday and to ban all overtime for a month.

If the dispute, which is over the dismissal of ten militant workers—including a shop steward—is not resolved by then, the workers will come out on strike.

MINERS WANT 7 PER CENT RISE

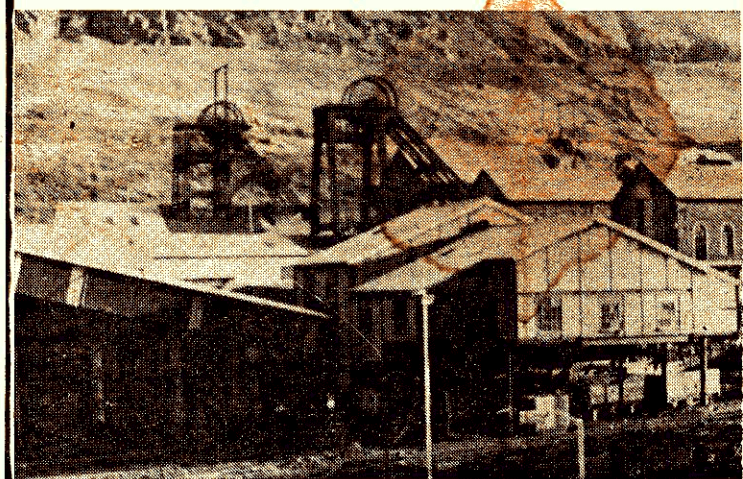
FOLLOWING a demand by members of the National Union of Mineworkers the union's executive decided on Wednesday to put in for a new wage increase of up to 7 per cent.

The men are asking for 12s. a week for surface workers and 17s. a week for underground workers. At the moment the basic rate for the latter is £12 13s. and for the surface worker £11 13s.



Slap in the eye for Sir William Carron

ROBENS TO SHUT PITS FASTER



LAST week-end Lord L Robens, £12,500 a year chairman of the National Coal Board, announced that the rate of pit closures was to be doubled over the next five years.

Closures, which were originally to take five years are to be concentrated into three, which will mean the 're-deployment' of a very large number in the industry.

The aim is to make the already profitable pits more profitable, 'to eliminate several million tons produced at a loss and replace them by several million tons produced at a profit'.

Hardest hit will be Scotland, the North-East and South Wales—the Rhondda is 'doomed in the long run'. No advance notice could be given of the closures, said Robens—it would have to be decided on a pit-by-pit basis.

Of course, every man displaced will be offered another job in the industry! But only 'if he is prepared to move!' As Robens fully realises, for a man to move several hundred miles with no guarantee of a house

LONDON AIRPORT

Ministry workers' national strike threat

Newsletter Reporter

AIRPORT workers have again announced that they will stage a national strike over wage claims.

In face of this action by their union members, the leadership of the Transport and General Workers' Union wrote a panicky letter to George Woodcock, secretary of the Trades Union Congress, asking the new wage-vetting committee to look at the dispute at its first meeting.

This committee is the 'warning system' on wages which was proposed at the Trades Union

Congress earlier this year.

The letter to Woodcock states that 'we cannot hold the position much longer'.

Reports stated that members of the T&GWU were threatening to go out on strike at Prestwick on Thursday.

The T&GWU leadership has been forced by the airport men to demand a wage increase for 2,000 government-employed airport workers to equal those granted to the British European Airways and British Overseas Corporation employees last April.

Committee's Role

If they are to fight to win parity with other airport workers they must first of all recognise the role that the wage-vetting committee plays in holding back wage demands.

Brought into being at the Trades Union Congress as a so-called alternative to legislation against the trade unions by the Labour government, this committee provides the government with a convenient vehicle for continuing their present wage-freeze policy.

A fight now for parity involves much more than just getting a wage claim. It means challenging the decision of the Trades Union Congress on the question of the 'wage-vetting' committee and opposing the trade union leadership.

BRISTOL

Angry dockers walk out of union meeting

By NEWSLETTER REPORTER

BRISTOL dockers angrily walked out of a meeting called to get them back to work on Tuesday as their strike over loading rates for timber entered its fourth week.

The consequences of the strike by 1,500 men go much deeper than the demand for a higher rate—on Monday, Minister of Labour, Ray Gunter, announced the setting up of a committee to investigate the strike.

STOP PRESS

● A meeting of 500 men on Wednesday voted to return to work on Monday.

According to the 'Daily Mail', Thursday, October 21, 'One of the first hands to be raised in favour of the return to work was that of Albert McGrath, secretary of the Liaison Committee.'

the past 10 to 15 years, and prove that the Bristol Liaison Committee are not wreckers.'

He felt that the men would have returned to work on Tuesday, 'if the meeting had been run properly'.

But Mr. McGrath should not be advising the T&GWU officials how to run their meetings. He should use the support he has in rallying the men to link up with other ports to demand the nationalization of the docks industry and the rejection of the Devlin Report.

He should also campaign among his men to tell those people organising other 'unofficial' meetings where they stand.

Their contention that the men can begin earning again while the dispute is investigated will only weaken the struggle of the Bristol dockers.

Dockers in all other ports should stand by the Bristol men in this significant struggle in which the often-disputed issue of timber rates has developed into the vital defence of dockers' rights.

Rail claim to go to incomes board

By Newsletter Reporter

THE conditions under which a pay claim for railmen is to go before the National Board for Prices and Incomes is double-edged—one of the issues most certain to be involved in any settlement is the question of increased productivity and that most surely means 'liner trains'.

The White Paper which will be used as a guide by the Board refers to the possibility of contributing to higher productivity by changing working practices.

At present the pay offer stands at 3½ per cent, or from 8s. to 11s. 6d. a week from the beginning of this month and a reduction in hours from 42 to 40 from April next year.

Before the three main rail unions met last week with George Brown, Minister for Economic Affairs, the National Union of Railwaymen had rejected the offered terms and was planning to go to arbitration.

Into the fire

Now they have succeeded in jumping from the frying pan into the fire.

Any report that the Incomes Board makes will be used as a basis for resumed talks between the British Railways Board and the unions. The final settlement is bound to have an effect on negotiations still in progress for London underground men and for railway engineering workers.

The actions of the rail unions' leadership in letting the pay claim go before the Prices and Incomes Board—who are bound to tie up a wage increase with increased productivity and speed-up—must be challenged by the rank and file.

Fear for jobs in Scottish shipyard

Official Receiver appointed

By MICKIE SHAW

NEARLY 4,000 workers employed by the Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Company, Govan, have been told by the managing director of the firm that there can be no suggestion of the yard being closed.

This statement follows reports of the firm's balance sheets over the past three years showing losses of £458,339; £381,078 and £519,446 after taxation. Overdrafts and bank loans amount to over £3,000,000.

An official receiver has been appointed to manage the company's affairs.

Workers at Fairfield's, who say they are afraid for their jobs, held a mass meeting on Monday this week at which they decided to send a telegram to Harold Wilson asking for government intervention and a full-scale enquiry.

The closure of major shipbuilding yards such as Simon-Lobnitz, Renfrew, and Denny's, Dunbarton, in 1963 as well as the disappearance of many other shipbuilding firms are constant reminders to shipyard workers that there is no guarantee of employment in the race for profits by the international shipping employers.

But the Labour government to which the workers turn to for help will not render assistance.

They are too busy appointing trouble-shooters in the car industry, setting up committees of enquiry into 'unofficial' strikes, preparing legislation against the trade unions, attacking the dockers and retreating on the question of steel nationalization.

Meanwhile the Scottish Trades Union Congress, which had a meeting with the Clyde shipbuilding employers only a week before Fairfield's announced the appointment of an official receiver, made no mention of any such possibility. Perhaps such unpleasant matters were not discussed.

DEALS

In other yards throughout the Clyde a drive has already been made to end 'restrictive practices', to tie wage increases to increased productivity, and to end demarcation disputes, in an attempt to attack the militancy of the shipyard workers so that bigger profits can be made.

Attempts are now being made to extend agreements for ending certain demarcation practices amongst boiler-makers.

These are the kind of conditions the shipping employers want to see put into practice.

The only answer for the shipyard men is not to ask the Wilson leadership to intervene, but to demand the nationalization of the shipyard industry and an opening of the books.

This is the struggle that faces all workers on the Clyde, including those at Fairfield's.