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ABERFAN TRAGEDY



on-the-spot report

by Robert James

'BURIED ALIVE BY THE N.C.B.'



Rescue workers help clear the junior school of slurry.

[NEWSLETTER PHOTOGRAPH]

FORTY-YEAR-OLD Mr. John Collins' outburst at the opening inquest on the Aberfan dead sums up the disaster and emphasises the tension and anger throughout the Welsh valleys. Last Saturday I watched Mr. Collins frantically tearing at the slimy black slurry which, on Friday, had scythed its way through schools and houses, snuffing out the lives of at least 200 people, most of them the village's seven- to 11-year-old schoolchildren.

Like many others, Mr. Collins was looking for any sign among the rubble which might lead him to the bodies of his wife Gwyneth and his two sons—one aged 10, the other 14.

Each load of slurry, gingerly eaten away from the tons which had covered his home, was searched and examined by friends and rescue workers and re-searched by him as it was tipped into one of the thousands of lorries used to carry away the black load.

Obviously deeply grieved, he was, like many around him, holding back his tears. The strain soon told, and he had to be led away from the scene.

But he returned for Monday's inquest and gave voice to the feelings of every villager: "Record 'Buried Alive by the National Coal Board'", he told the coroner.

As the numbness—which left men, women and children wandering red-eyed between the smothered Moy Road and the Baptist Chapel 'morgue'—begins to wear off, others will join in with equally straightforward and objective statements.

For, despite Fleet Street's sensationalized emotion, engendered by emphasis on the religious aspect of the disaster, the Welsh community, though deeply religious, has generations of similar experiences . . . and they know quite clearly where to lay the blame for death, disaster and tragedy.

The immensity of such a tragedy—the sight of the giant tip sprawling its way down the steep hillside; the sudden, high and heart-rending end of this death-dealing triangle of black slush; the hundreds of rescue workers, young and old, hurriedly digging; the watching, headscarved and hollow-eyed relatives of the dead; the emotion of the whole scene—can only be truly felt by being there.

But the repercussions must be felt and heard by everyone until the system which produces such a slaughter is smashed.

This need was unconsciously expressed within the first two days of the tragedy.

When Harold Wilson visited the Pantglas school, I was told, he had a hostile reception and was told by rescuers, in no uncertain terms, to get out of the way.

The visits by Royalty also gained little response and NCB chief Lord Robens appears to have crept into the village and out again all too silently.

Mounting anger

Certainly the growing hostility to the Press was another sign of the mounting anger which could, at any time during the last week, have broken out into a riot. The troops brought in on the third day may yet show that they have a dual purpose in entering Aberfan.

One of the four Humphrey brothers, who had come from work on a holiday camp site in Porthcawl to join the rescue work, said that many people felt Wilson had no right to be at the scene. Others had said he should have 'taken off his coat and got hold of a shovel'.

Wilson, he said, had been given the kind of reception Winston Churchill would have got if he had visited the Welsh valleys.

The brothers had worked for almost 48 hours without stopping and told me how they had helped to bring out the bodies of 12 children.

'They were still sitting in their desks,' 30-year-old Trevor Humphrey told me. 'One little girl still had a pen in her hand, and a little boy had a rubber band he had been playing with still wrapped around his fingers.'

The irony of place names feature strongly in this disaster.

One of the rows of houses furthest from the Pantglas school is called Pleasant View—it overlooks the Merthyr Vale colliery churning out the slurry dumped on the tip which exploded down the mountainside on Friday.

The curtains in every house in Pleasant View were drawn this week—almost every child in the row died in the avalanche.

Others were lucky. I met John Maybank who lives in Bryntaf, very near to Pleasant View. He was just going to see his daughter Susan (eight) in hospital in

LEEDS UNIVERSITY Labour Society has passed a resolution calling for the immediate suspension of interest payments in relation to compensation payments to former mine-owners—the money to be diverted to ensuring that all coal tips in Britain are made safe.

The resolution also demands that nominees of the National Union of Mineworkers and of the people of Aberfan should sit on the Commission of inquiry into the disaster.

Merthyr Tydfil. She and another child were the only two out of a class of 26 to survive.

Mr. Maybank had rushed from the pit with the rest of the shift to find she was safe.

He paid tribute to the rescue workers.

A miner at the colliery for 22 years, he feared that the pit—one of five to be left open in South Wales—might now be closed because of lack of tipping space.

I learned from several local people that at the back of the three tips above Aberfan is a plateau. This has recently been bought by the Forestry Commission which has banned tipping on their land. This meant that the most recent tip had to be edged closer and closer towards the steep valley.

Ex-miner Aneurin Jones (72), who, until two years ago, lived

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Above: A section of the junior school cleared of the slurry. At the top of the page: The slurry on top of the senior school.

[NEWSLETTER PHOTOGRAPHS]

VICTIMS OF CAPITAL

By JOHN CRAWFORD

THOSE WHO DIED in Aberfan on October 21 were victims of capital. Whatever negligence may be revealed—or concealed—in an inquiry, this must never be forgotten.

Slag heaps are a product of the economics of the coal industry under capitalism. To achieve the highest rate of profit, every penny must be saved in the disposal of millions of tons of waste material brought to the surface along with the coal.

That is why miners and their families must live in the shadow of mountains of dirt: to take it further away from the colliery would cost money.

SLUDGE

Modern methods of mining have changed the nature of this material. In the past it consisted mainly of stone from which the coal had been separated.

Today, mechanised working means that waste must be removed from the coal in washeries. The coal floats to the surface and waste material forms a sludge.

It is this wet material which makes up the modern-day coal tip.

Far less controllable than the dry waste of former times, it has caused hundreds of accidents in the past 10 years.

And so, because British capital needs the cheapest coal it can get to maintain its profits, the slag heap destroyed the children of Aberfan.

For over 90 years, the workers of this area have been crushed beneath the weight of mining capital.

It was the power of capital that drove the men of South Wales underground.

LOW COSTS

There, their sweat provided the tribute drawn for the Merthyr Vale pit by the Powell Duffryn combine up to the time of nationalization.

But the National Coal Board was still an adjunct of British capitalism. Keeping down costs still limited expenditure on safety measures.



The four grim-faced Humphrey brothers Trevor 30, Ken 25, David 26, and Percy 22 take a break after working for 48 hours on rescue work.

[NEWSLETTER PHOTOGRAPH]

Since the pit was sunk in 1878, how many lives have been lost? How many limbs crushed?

It was not the wishes of individuals but the economics of capitalism which destroyed the lungs of miners, filling them with silica and coal dust.

This same system of production cut the wages to starvation levels after the union was broken in 1926. And it was capitalism which, in the 1930s, threw the miners on the dole—the human slag heap.

Now, as unemployment once more hits South Wales, the Aberfan disaster must be added to the infamous list of crimes which capital has committed against labour.

PUBLIC MEETING

Long live the Hungarian Revolution of 1956

CAXTON HALL (nearest tube St James Park)

Thursday November 17—7.30 p.m.

Speakers will include

MICHAEL BANDA, Editor, 'Newsletter' and Members of the Young Socialists.

Major recession looms

by PETER JEFFRIES

FIGURES OUT last week for unemployment and capital investment show that the economic crisis is gaining in momentum. All the capitalist press are agreed that a major crisis is on hand and are forecasting three quarters of a million unemployed soon after Christmas.

Unemployment at 450,000 is at its highest point since March 1964. It has risen by 100,000 over the last four weeks.

Unemployment is rising especially rapidly in those formerly 'prosperous' areas such as the Midlands: in the West Midlands, for example, unemployment has increased by over 7,000 in the last four weeks. Unfilled vacancies, at 300,000, are now considerably below the level of unemployment.

Much more serious, from the point of view of the employers, are the figures of last week relating to the investment plans of the major firms.

The Confederation of British Industry, carrying out a survey of the investment plans of business, reveals that investment in plant and machinery, the basis for any possible modernisation of British industry, will fall by as much as 35 per cent over the next 12 months.

This is a massive fall, described by a leading industrialist as 'catastrophic' and much worse than in the squeeze of Selwyn Lloyd or Thorneycroft.

It is the biggest turn down in planned investment since 1958. Sir Hugh Weeks, speaking for the CBI, said that if these plans were realised 'I don't see how on earth we are going to get out

of our mess'. This catastrophic fall in investment plans is eloquent testimony to the international crisis in which Wilson and British capital now finds itself locked.

The decision of all sectors of business to cut back is a consequence of the measures taken, especially those of July 20, by the Wilson government, measures taken to 'defend the pound'.

Involved in this decision, carried through under pressure from Wall Street, was a policy deliberately designed to raise the level of unemployment and produce industrial stagnation.

This is the price which international finance demanded for the rescue operation which we launched to save the pound two years ago.

Mr. L. K. O'Brien, Governor of the Bank of England, speaking at the Annual Bankers' dinner given by the Lord Mayor in the City of London last week made this clear:

'After the long-drawn-out erosion of confidence overseas from which we have suffered, we simply cannot afford to let the outside world think that even now we shrink from actually swallowing the medicine we are taking.'

This is a warning to Wilson and Callaghan that they must on no account respond to any pressure from the working class for a re-inflation of the economy. British capital still owes these international financiers over £900 million which must be repaid by 1970 with nearly £400 million of it due by the end of 1967.

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Stalinism unmasked

Revolution and counter-revolution in Hungary

by G. Healy

THIS ARTICLE, which was written in the midst of the events of October 1956, does not pretend to be an exhaustive analysis of the Hungarian Revolution. On the contrary, it was written with the principal purpose of refuting the slanders and distortions of British Stalinism and defending the heroic struggles of the Hungarian workers.

Despite the victory of the Red Army there is no doubt that the Hungarian Revolution sounded the death knell of Stalinism in the same way as the abortive Commune of Paris sounded the death-knell of capitalism.

Today when Stalinism, social democracy and Pabliste revisionism are trying desperately to obscure the real significance of the Hungarian Revolution, we Trotskyists are doubly proud to publish Comrade Healy's article. It is the best contribution we can make to the Hungarian workers' struggle against Stalinism.

STALIN IS DEAD BUT STALINISM LIVES. That is the message spelt out in letters of blood by the Hungarian people.

The labour movement of the world is rightly shocked at the brutality and ruthlessness of the Soviet armed forces. But this fact must not permit us to be taken off guard for one moment by world imperialism and its agents. Stalinist rule has always been associated with persecution and murder, both inside and outside the Soviet Union. Eden and Eisenhower have never protested when revolutionary opponents of the regime have been smashed. They helped to whitewash and justify the Moscow trials through the book and film 'Mission to Moscow' written by American ex-ambassador Joseph E. Davies. Both the British and American governments refused asylum to the great revolutionary Leon Trotsky when he was being hounded from one country to another by Stalin's GPU.

If these gentlemen shed tears for Hungary today it is not for the workers and peasants who have borne the brunt of the fight against Stalinism but for their fascist and landlord friends.

What happened in Hungary, as we shall see, was a revolution for national independence and democratic rights. Connected with this was a series of demands passed by the trade unions.

1. Workers' councils in every factory to establish workers' management and radically transform the system of state central planning and directing.

2. Wages to be raised immediately by 10 to 15 per cent and a ceiling (about £106 a month) fixed for the highest salaries.

3. To abolish production norms except in factories where the workers or workers' councils wish to keep them.

4. The 4 per cent bachelor and childless family tax to be abolished; the lowest retirement pensions to be increased; child allowances to be raised with special reference to the needs of large families.

5. Speed up house-building with the state, co-operatives and other organisations launching a powerful social movement to mass produce houses.

6. Negotiate with the governments of the Soviet Union and other countries in order to establish economic relations that will ensure mutual advantages by adhering to the principle of equality.

(*Daily Worker*, October 27).

The backbone of this movement was the demand for the withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Hungary.

The imperialists were against this type of revolution. On the same day, October 27, the 'New York Times'—mouthpiece of American big business—declared:

'The view prevailing among United States officials, it appeared, was that "evolution" towards freedom in Eastern Europe would be better for all concerned than "revolution", though nobody was saying this publicly.'

The 'New York Times' again returned to this theme the next day, October 28, when it declared that the problem of western imperialism is

'how to encourage the nationalist and libertarian spirit in the satellites without flaming it into a large scale revolt.'

As if not to be outdone by the 'New York Times' the London 'Daily Worker', echoing Moscow, declared on October 25: 'Only false friends resort to the gun...'

Five days previously (October 22), John Foster Dulles speaking in Washington defended the legality of the presence of Soviet troops in Poland under the Warsaw agreement.

'From the standpoint of international law and violation of treaties,' he said, 'I do not think you can claim that it would be a violation of a treaty.'

Mr. Dulles was fully aware at the time he made that statement that a revolution was under way in Hungary and Hungary was also a party to the Warsaw agreement.

Hot on the heels of Mr. Dulles came R. Palme Dutt of the British Communist Party.

'The Soviet armed forces,' he wrote, 'were legally in Hungary by agreement under the Warsaw Pact.' (*Daily Worker*, November 10.)

In a cable from Washington by its correspondent Philip Deane, the London 'Observer', November 11, 1956, reports that:

'High Administration sources say that the United States has tried to let the Russians know, without being provocative, that Berlin and Austria will be defended by American forces, Hungary, meanwhile, has been officially and finally abandoned to its fate.'

And Basil Davidson, one of the last journalists to leave Hungary, reports that of the American financed propaganda station Free Europe Radio one revolutionary said:

'I wish I could shut its ugly mouth. It lied to us just as the Russians lied to us.'

Neither the Soviet bureaucrats nor the imperialists and their representatives Palme Dutt and Foster Dulles care two hoots about the working people of Hungary. They were both, for different reasons, opposed to the revolution, and in each case supported their own particular agents and not the movement of the Hungarian people as a whole.

HOW THE REVOLUTION BEGAN

On October 23, a large group of unarmed students gathered outside the Budapest radio station and demanded that their 17-point programme of democratic demands be broadcast. After the police opened fire the government dominated by Erno Gero, a notorious Kremlin lack, promptly called for Soviet troops.

On Wednesday, October 24, Russian tanks and artillery fired on demonstrators in Budapest killing and wounding hundreds of men, women and children. It was these actions which sparked off the revolutionary armed resistance. During the next day, October 25, armed rebellion broke out. Workers on Csepel island in the Danube took up weapons against the security forces. Radio Budapest announced this as a rebellion of the working people. Absolutely no mention was made

at that time that this was the work of armed gangs and the counter revolution.

The spearhead of the whole struggle was a general strike. In cities and towns under their control the rebels set up councils of workers, soldiers and students. The first to down tools were the railway workers. They were quickly followed by workers from factories and plants. The strike was directed by a 'Central Workers' Committee'.

At the same time Imre Nagy, who had previously been jailed, was installed as premier to help win back popular support.

On October 29, a parade of workers' delegations from the provinces presented its demands to the new government. They demanded the removal of Russian troops, unconditional amnesty for revolutionaries and the release of all political prisoners.

According to reports, the peasants were passive at the beginning. The 'New York Times' on October 30 quoted some insurgent leaders who attributed the failure of the army as a whole in the early days to the fact that they were for the most part 'farm boys'. According to the same reports it (the army) had given them small arms. These rebel leaders declared:

'The peasant is conservative by nature and therefore passive. But the workers have fought with us, even the workers from "red Csepel" which contains the biggest concentration of industry in Hungary.'

By October 29 revolutionary workers' councils had taken control in several large towns. These included Gyor, Szombathely, Sopron and Papa, Kaposvar, Viszprem, Pecs, Miskolc, Szolnok, Szekesbardi and Magyarovar.

On October 29 Miskolc radio station broadcast in the name of the workers' councils of Borsod Province. In another industrial town, Sopron, the streets were patrolled by groups of three: one soldier, one student, one worker. The uprising was symbolised throughout by the unity between the workers, soldiers, and students—clear proof that it was a popular revolution in which the working class occupied the vanguard positions.

Finally if there is any further doubt on this point, just read over the dispatch from the 'Daily Worker' (November 3) correspondent Peter Fryer, who was sent to Hungary to get the facts. His first job was to interview Mr. Charlie Coutts, another member of the British Communist Party; who was for three years editing 'World Youth' (paper of the Stalinist-dominated WFDY) in Budapest. Here are extracts from the interview. Mr. Coutts reported as follows:

'The Hungarian uprising—the result of eight years pent-up feeling—arose from the refusal of Communist leaders to make real changes after the 20th Congress.'

'The people,' Mr. Coutts explained, 'did not oppose everything that happened in their country since 1945. They had wanted to build socialism in Hungary. They established the basis—but they were never allowed to build their own socialism on it.'

'After the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party everyone expected there would be a complete change.'

'There were some timid changes but nothing that met the needs of the situation,' said Mr. Coutts.

'In both the Communist Party and its youth organisations there were people who had not joined either on principle or because of political understanding but to advance their careers. They had joined for money and for power.'

'There was no free discussion at all inside the Party. It follows from this,' Mr. Coutts went on, 'that in order to maintain its position the Party leadership had to use the security police which was created in 1948.'

'The Party as a whole, and Parliament of course, had no control over the security police at all. They had copied the worst features of the Soviet security police as it was under Beria.'

Mr. Coutts said it was only after Soviet troops entered the fight that it became a national movement, with the two main demands 'Russki go home' and 'Abolish the AVH (security police)'.

Mr. Coutts said that from the Thursday onwards the security police became completely isolated. Everyone's hand—including honest Communists—was against them. Much of the fighting from Thursday onwards was simply to kill off the security police.

'I have seen the hatred against them expressed in the most terrible scenes,' said Mr. Coutts. 'I saw an AVH man clubbed to the ground with a rifle butt then literally kicked and torn to pieces.'

THE 'DAILY WORKER' STANDS BY STALINISM

It would be difficult to find an occasion in history where there was a more discredited political tendency than the British Communist Party. Having served Stalin loyally for well nigh 30 years, and justified his most brutal crimes, the men who lead the CPGB are incapable of offering anything but a classical Stalinist answer for the events in Hungary—and as always this has led them to the most ridiculous positions. Here is their record:

'Counter-revolution in Hungary staged an uprising in the hours of darkness on Tuesday night.' (*Daily Worker*, Thursday, October 25.)

The same edition carried an article entitled 'The Hell that was Horthy's'. Whilst factually it contained material that was accurate, its purpose was to smear the revolution that had begun in Hungary as 'fascist inspired'.

The 'Daily Worker' stuck more or less to the

counter-revolution theme for several days. In this it was faithfully supporting the line taken by 'Pravda', the Kremlin's mouthpiece, which right from the start denounced the Hungarian events as 'counter-revolutionary'.

Then came the formation of the Nagy government and the repudiation of 'Pravda' by 'Szabad Nep', the Stalinist paper of the Hungarian Workers' Party. In strong language it denounced a 'Pravda' dispatch which was headed 'Collapse of the anti-peoples' adventure in Hungary'—a 'mistake'.

'What happened in Budapest,' says 'Szabad Nep', 'was neither anti-people nor an adventure, and it did not collapse.'

'The slogans on socialist democracy were the loudest, not those of the reactionaries nor of counter-revolutionaries.'

'The revolutionary people of Pest and Buda want freedom, people's freedom, a life without despotism, terror and fear, more bread and national independence. Would this be "anti-people adventure"?' asks the paper.

The first point in the Hungarian revolutionary demands of 1848 was national independence.

'Today also this is the first point. What has collapsed and can truly be called anti-people is the reign of the Rakosi-Gero clique.'

Saying that the Hungarian nation wanted independence, and that this was the first among its demands, the article continued:

'Let Hungary be free. Let it be an independent country, and let it live with its neighbour the Soviet Union in peace and friendship on this basis.'

This scared the 'Daily Worker' editors, especially as it was rumoured that the Soviet armed forces were being withdrawn. They felt that perhaps it was Moscow policy to let the Nagy government get on with things, so they began to change the line, and what was previously a ~~counter-revolutionary~~ ~~anti-people~~ ~~anti-people~~ ~~anti-people~~ they now recognised as having perhaps been 'revolutionary' after all. The editorial on Tuesday, October 30, remarked:

'In the course of the struggle in Hungary many sections of the working people have put forward proposals which are justified, which arose from the bitter experiences of the past period, and which the government, the Party and the people should work in unity to implement.'

'This is not a sign that the majority of Hungarians want to return to the days of landlordism and capitalism, as the western press would like us to believe.'

'Whatever deep resentment and burning criticism exists as a result of mistakes and wrongs since the end of the war, communists and socialists in Hungary and outside know that to attempt to put the clock back would be the worst possible disaster for the Hungarian people.'

Diplomatic language to be sure, but a decisive change from its editorial on October 25.

If we had relied upon the 'Daily Worker' for our news and policy on Hungary, we would be forced to reason something like this. From October 25 to somewhere in the region of October 30 the Hungarian events were counter-revolutionary; then they began to change to revolutionary. This was, by implication, acknowledged in the publication of the dispatch of Peter Fryer (already quoted) on November 3.

On Sunday, November 4, Soviet tanks in large formations opened fire on Budapest and other cities. It was now clear that the rumoured withdrawal of Soviet troops was a smokescreen behind which massive troop and tank formations for an all-out assault were mustered. Immediately these forces went into action the 'Daily Worker' changed its line, and on November 5 proceeded to support the intervention of the Red Army, again denouncing the Hungarian events as 'counter-revolutionary'.

What is clear from all this is that the British Communist Party leadership and the 'Daily Worker' have one simple guide to help them work out their policy, and that is 'watch Moscow and the Red Army and support them under all conditions'.

When Gero called upon the Red Army to fire upon an unarmed population the 'Daily Worker' denounced the Hungarian events as 'counter-revolutionary'; when it appeared that the Nagy government was being supported and the Red Army withdrawn, these same events became revolutionary, and when once more the Red Army returned to the attack they again became counter-revolutionary. Where in the world could be found a more glaring example of Stalinist reasoning?

STALINISM AND COUNTER-REVOLUTION IN HUNGARY

The events in Hungary after the end of the war were similar to what took place in all Eastern-European countries with the exception of Yugoslavia. In 1945 the revolution was bureaucratically carried out through the intervention of the Red Army. The Hungarian Stalinist Party was hoisted into power, not through the popular intervention of the masses, but upon orders from Stalin in Moscow.

The Russian Revolution in 1917 established the complete overthrow of the Czarist regime by the democratic power of the workers and peasants through their Soviets. In the early days they defeated the internal forces of counter-revolution not so much by force of arms as by argument and policy. The Soviets were supported by the overwhelming majority of the Russian population. That is why the Russian Revolution was a comparatively peaceful affair, with only a handful of people losing their lives. The real struggle and

loss of life began when Winston Churchill and his armies of intervention endeavoured to restore the old ruling class.

When Lenin died in 1924, Stalin and his bureaucracy captured power in the Bolshevik Party and destroyed all democracy and opposition. This was the beginning of Stalinism—the rule of a powerful bureaucracy safeguarding the privileged positions they had gained as a result of the revolution. Although this bureaucracy rested upon the nationalized property relations established by the revolution, its role from the start was predominantly counter-revolutionary, in that its first consideration was to protect itself and its positions of power. Since it rested on the property relations of the October Revolution, it was always forced to defend this economic base from attack by the

imperialists which was done not by revolutionary appeals but through typical bureaucratic and military methods. For instance, during the second world war it denounced all Germans as fascists; never once did it make a revolutionary appeal as

Lenin and Trotsky did during the Russian Revolution and the war of intervention. It relied solely upon military means and the help which it received from the British and American imperialists.

Stalin dealt ruthlessly with all those on the left such as Trotsky who sought to re-introduce Lenin's revolutionary policy. As Khrushchev remarked, he (Stalin) coined the phrase 'enemies of the people' and this became a substitute for all discussions. You either agreed unreservedly with Stalin or you were an imperialist agent of fascism. It was under those conditions that the Moscow frame-up trials were organised—the object being to direct opposition away from the bureaucracy by creating a diversion along the lines that the forces of imperialism were preparing to take over in the USSR. From all this the Soviet workers were left with no choice but to support Stalin. Indeed we know that the victims of the trials themselves, having become completely demoralised, actually agreed to tell these monstrous lies because they felt in their demoralisation, that this was the only way they could defend the gains of the revolution.

To Stalin, Hungary was a buffer zone of military importance only—but having decided to intervene in 1945, he had to face a number of problems: the chief problem being the fact that Hungary was a capitalist state, and in order to gear its economy to that of the Soviet Union he was forced to destroy the capitalist property relations and replace them with state ownership.

Insofar as this was done, it was supported by the overwhelming majority of the working class who, directly and indirectly, participated in the event. The Stalinist bureaucracy in Moscow and their Hungarian agents never for one moment relaxed their tight hold over this movement. Power in Hungary was maintained in a similar way to that maintained in Moscow. The Rajk trial was staged for similar reasons to that of the Moscow trials. The regime was propped up by the secret police.

The tragic story of 61-year-old Dr. Edith Bone, an ex-member of the British Communist Party who was jailed by the Hungarian Stalinists confirms this in most concrete form:

'I had been in the cellar cells for over two months,' she says, 'when the police decided to declare their real purpose. I was taken again to the third floor.'

'There had been many big industrial accidents in Hungary, due to the lack of higher skilled technicians, and the workers were getting restless. The communists needed a scapegoat. Britain was to be that scapegoat. I was to "confess" that I was a secret agent, sent by the British Intelligence Service to organise sabotage. I was to be given a list of names, and was to say yes, these men were the saboteurs.'

'I was to "confess" all this at a public trial and in return said the police, I would get a light sentence of four years. This sentence, they promised, would be reduced to two, and I would serve them in good conditions. (I suffered and I accuse—'Daily Express', November 9, 1956.)'

And if any loyal Stalinist should think that this is a pack of lies let the 'Daily Worker' put him right. In its issue of November 3 appears the editorial statement:

'The "Daily Worker" expresses its condemnation of the inhuman treatment of Dr. Edith Bone and our deep sympathy with her in the ordeal to which she has been subjected.'

This bureaucratic transfer of power had another side to it as well. In politically expropriating the Hungarian ruling class, it enabled the remnants of the old ruling class to find an effective cover for counter-revolutionary work amongst the masses who more and more became hostile to Stalinism.

Since the workers were not permitted to deal with the old capitalist elements through democratic organs of power such as the Soviets in Russia in 1917, the basic struggle remained unresolved. Stalinism in Hungary was like a vast repressive lid which since 1945 had clamped itself down upon the whole nation—rightist and leftist elements alike.

When the revolution finally blew the lid off, events in Hungary expressed themselves through the centre Nagy government as a state of dual power. Right-wing, capitalist inspired and peasant elements demanded recognition, as well as representatives from the revolutionary workers. This was also the case inside many of the workers' councils, and it was similar to what happened in the Russian Soviets immediately prior to the revolution. This situation is also described by Peter Fryer of the London 'Daily Worker' in his interview with C. Coutts, November 3, 1956:

'A great number of political groups were now active in Budapest and the rest of Hungary. The air was thick with manifestoes ranging from those who wanted to defend collective ownership to those who were against it but could not say so yet, and therefore put the people's genuine national demands in an anti-socialist way.'

'What the outcome was going to be nobody could say with certainty. The revolutionary committees, and in the factories, revolutionary workers' councils had no overall direction and aim, no overall basis of policy.'

'I don't want to minimise the danger of the return of the emigres,' said Mr. Coutts. 'But if the revolutionary committees can hammer out some form of unity around the basic demands for an independent, democratic and socialist Hungary, then all attempts at counter-revolution will be defeated.'

Mr. Coutts believed the working class was now without an organised leadership.

'There are dangers of terrorism against individual communists. In fact, that has begun. But in spite of everything there will be a Party that will identify itself with the Hungarian revolution and will be forced now to win the Hungarian working class for socialism on the basis of conviction.'

We can see therefore that by November 3 the situation was crying out for genuine socialist leadership and that, according to Coutts and Fryer, it was possible that this could have come from the working class. On the other hand, the centrist government of Nagy was swinging

PROBLEMS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

THEIR SPLIT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE in 1962 did not save Robertson and his group from expulsion from the Socialist Workers' Party. As soon as Cannon, Dobbs, Hansen and Co. had come out in support of the reunification conference with the Pabloites they also made preparation to throw Robertson and his group out of the SWP. This they did in December 1963, after a fake enquiry following so-called charges that in fact amounted to a frame-up.

Robertson went quietly. He did not volunteer to supply the Socialist Labour League and the International Committee with copies of the relevant documents, just as one of his members supplied Hansen and the SWP with correspondence arising from the international conference of the International Committee of the Fourth International last April.

Ready to accept SWP discipline

He presented a mildly-written statement to the Control Commission of the SWP which pledged his group to abide 'by discipline,' i.e., the discipline by the Pabloite revisionists and to 'accepting decisions'. Contrast this declaration to the slander and lies which he pours out today in relation to the circumstances of the split from our International Conference.

In addition the chief witness in his favour at the Control Commission inquiry was one of the oldest advocates of unity with the Pabloites, Myra Tanner Weiss. Her testimony reveals the middle-class nature of Robertson's group.

'Dobbs,' she says 'gets up and says they [Robertson's group], want to split the party, they don't want to remain in an empty shell. These comrades get up and say "We do want to remain in the party. We regard the SWP as being the basic revolutionary cadre in this country". They say [again referring to Robertson] "We will abide by discipline".'

Such a witness is naturally very hostile to the Socialist Labour League. 'Healy' she says 'is a sectarian', and 'Shane Mage [Robertson's chief collaborator at the time] together with Robertson will have nothing to do with his procedural tyranny and bureaucracy.'

'Mage', she goes on to say 'discussed his verbal disagreements with Healy. . . . I was thoroughly convinced that any collaboration between Healy and Mage and Robertson was out of the question.'

It should be understood that this statement of Myra Tanner Weiss was compiled from the discussions which she previously had with Robertson and Mage.

Theoretical sceptics

This same Mage has now left the Robertson group, rejecting Marxism and suggesting that what everybody needs is a dose of the drug LSD. Yet when we characterised him as a renegade, we were indignantly rebuked by two of Robertson's members, Turner and Sherwood, who wrote to us on April 30 insisting that 'he [Mage] is neither anti-Trotskyist nor a renegade'. To this day there are no written documents discussing the differences between Robertson and Mage before the latter departed.

Another small extremely pessimistic group formerly associated with Robertson headed by one Peter Fried-

lander recently put out a leaflet which asks the question 'Is Marxism dead?' and answers it by saying 'It looks like it'.

The contents of the leaflet go on to reject Marxism and raises a series of questions such as 'Why did Stalinism become a mass movement embodying the most intelligent and dedicated workers and intellectuals, while remaining an organisation of mysticism and deceit, a living lie?', and they again supply an answer.

'We are tired of the old Trotskyist formula, which has nevertheless been the best answer so far—every word a masterpiece of theoretical scepticism.'

What they are saying in effect is that 'we are tired of Trotskyism and we're looking for something new'.

After expulsion from the SWP

Following his expulsion from the SWP Robertson kept up the formal pretence of general political agreement with the International Committee, but this by itself was not enough.

The main question involving the political reasons behind Robertson's split from the International Committee in 1962 still remained unsettled. A further attempt had to be made to see if the political experiences of his group had produced a change in this respect for the better or whether or not the gap had widened.

This was the purpose of the Montreal Conference which took place in October 1965 and brought the Wohlforth and Robertson groups together around a unity agreement. The salient points of this agreement were as follows:

1. It could not become effective until after the International Conference of the International Committee, April, 1966. We wanted to see if Robertson still maintained his old political hostility towards internationalism before the International Committee agreed to unification. The next most important point was contained in the Section 4, which reads:

4. The American Commission would be empowered to insist that the resolution or resolutions on perspectives, which was to be presented to the Unification Conference, accepted the principles embodied in the decisions of the first four Congresses of the Communist International, the resolutions and documents agreed to by the 1938 Founding Conference of the Fourth International and the International resolution on perspectives adopted by the International Committee of the Fourth International Conference April 1966.

Tactical disagreements on the USA would not be an obstacle to unity provided they did not contravene the above decisions. They would be left to the majority of delegates at the Unification Conference to decide. The International Committee of the Fourth International reserves the right to make its political position on these matters known to the delegates at the Unification Conference if it considers this necessary.

Both groups accepted these proposals unanimously and it was now left to the experience of the International Conference to see if unification could be realised.

Over the past few months, Robertson, actively assisted by Hansen of the SWP (one of the men who supported his expulsion in 1963), has been busy spreading lies, slander and gossip about what happened at this conference.

We are not in the least in-

The seventh of a series of articles by G. HEALY

National Secretary
Socialist Labour League

that this man should be one of his group's alternative delegates.

Our first reaction, knowing Tishman's associates, was to refuse this request, but we did not want to place any obstacles to Robertson attending the conference so we allowed the proposal to go through.

What happened at the Congress?

When Robertson and his delegation arrived in England for the international conference they were treated with the utmost courtesy. The Young Socialists invited them to their annual conference at Morecombe as their guests where their nominee spoke as

ing on a document on US perspectives the night before.

He had in fact been assigned to write this document as a result of the Montreal Conference decisions nearly seven months previously. Having left it to the last moment, he now claimed that he was tired and could not listen to the discussion of his own report.

Having made political criticisms he was not interested in hearing the answers.

Such arrogance immediately revealed the real role of this petty-bourgeois leader. For, if he was not prepared to listen to those who had differences with him in the international movement, it was reasonable to assume that he would not be prepared to listen to those who had differences with him in the proposed fused organisation in the United States.

He was, first and foremost, a clique leader who relied on his little group of cult worshippers to support and provide him with a majority at all costs.

If he didn't want to listen to criticism then he did not feel obliged to do so since he was assured of a clique vote in favour of such a position.

It was clear that since Robertson felt that he would have a majority inside the fused group in the USA the Wohlforth minority could be curbed effectively and if necessary driven out at a later stage.

It was now established for all to see the kind of unprincipled unification which Robertson was working for.

But still the international conference was anxious to give him every opportunity to change his opinions. When it

to do anything of the sort.

Such a reaction then prompted the question—if Robertson wouldn't accept the authority of the conference, there was not the slightest doubt that he would ignore the advice of the international movement if he became the leader of the fused organisation in the United States. In other words, section 4 of the unification agreement would become meaningless.

Robertson wants a centrist international

Naturally, Robertson, Hansen and Co. like to snigger about the discipline of the International Conference, but all this arises from the fact that they have an entirely different conception of responsibilities to the Fourth International than we have.

For us the conference was the highest and most authoritative body in the international movement. It embodied all the lessons from the theoretical and practical struggle of the Fourth International since it was founded in 1938. These included the experience of the international communist movement to apply the policies of the first four congresses of the Third Communist International in the period before Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration.

There is no other body more politically authoritative today than the International Committee elected by the April conference.

When Robertson decided to split from this conference because he would not accept its political authority he split from the international Trotskyist movement.

He could have stayed even if he disagreed with the decisions. Indeed, one of his closest disciples, Rose Jersawitz, wrote in a letter dated April 9, 'In hindsight, it was probably a mistake for Jim [Robertson] not to have attended that session, or to have done or said anything which could have been misinterpreted for that matter.'

Without knowing it, Rose Jersawitz has let the cat out of the bag so far as Robertson's alleged 'illness' is concerned. She knew, better than anyone else, since she was a member of his delegation, that his 'illness' or 'tiredness' need not have prevented him from participating in the conference.

This was nothing more than a cheap fraud and she pulls back from repeating it.

Likewise, the allegation that the conference wanted Robertson to denounce himself as a petty bourgeois is just a downright lie. It did nothing of the sort.

She had, of course, a definite political point of view so far as her estimations of the conference went, and that was, together with the French group Voix Ouvriere, a confirmed centrist position. In a letter dated May 6 she reports a conversation with Hardy, a representative of Voix Ouvriere.

'On rebuilding the FI (H) (a) This task remains for us. The IC was (and maybe is) a hindrance only in so far

as the illusion is held that they might have the capacity can best be shattered by going ahead with the task on two fronts: (1) building our own national sections and aiding those we can; (2) establishing as much of a dialogue as possible between as many tendencies as possible. V.O. plans to have an international mimeo publication soon, taking out the various pol. and org. questions beginning with recent conference. In this way we are hoping to begin an exchange with ICers and will attempt to draw in US, Pabloites and Posadasites as well as many 'independents' (such as us) and contacts of internationals (such as Japan) as possible. And to begin to establish working relationships, personal exchanges, travelling, translation aids etc. In other words to begin the establishment of the org. committee which we had expected to come out of the conference. (me—Rose) I said that I did not think we were in a position to initiate or even play a major role in these activities.'

In other words, they envisaged a type of conference such as was organised by what Trotsky described as the International Bureau of squeezed lemons, the three and three quarter international, in the year s before the Second World War.

The Independent Labour Party and others were members of this bureau which advocated 'all inclusive' conferences with opportunists, revisionists and others.

Hardy of Voix Ouvriere and Rose Jersawitz, Robertson and Co. wanted a similar type of conference where Pabloites and Posadasites participated in order to finally agree that no one would be responsible for what was decided. Thus they could all go their own way immediately the conference was over.

In a letter written on May 23, 1965, when arrangements were already under way for the Montreal meeting, G. White, a colleague of Robertson's from Berkeley, placed a question mark over the issue of unification with the International Committee. 'What about our relations with Posadas?' he said. The Posadas group is an ultra-left split off group from the Pabloites in Latin America.

It is now clear that Robertson proceeded in the period before the conference as a man with two political faces.

One of these was turned towards his clique, assuring them that since they would have a majority in the fused group, they had nothing to fear from Wohlforth.

The other was turned towards the International Committee Conference, mouthing left phrases whilst at the same time doing everything to avoid being brought under the discipline of the Committee.

He was prepared in December 1963 to work under the discipline of Cannon, Hansen and Dobbs group of revisionists but he was not prepared to work under the discipline of the International Committee in 1966.

Continued page 4, column 6 →

The Robertson group of the U.S.A.

(PART TWO)

interested in such politically degenerated methods, except in so far as they reveal the political method of those who peddle such stories around. A ready-made audience for this sort of thing always exists in the ranks of disorientated petty bourgeois who have no belief in the power of the working class to change society, and, as a result, no confidence in their ability to build a revolutionary party.

In the months preceding the conference we had a glimpse of the unprincipled kind of politics which Robertson pursues in practice. A member of his group, Mark Tishman, who was temporarily resident in Britain, collaborated closely with the renegade state capitalist group of Tony Cliff. (Immediately the International Conference was over he supplied this group with a full report of what took place.)

A few weeks before the conference, Robertson proposed

a fraternal delegate.

To facilitate their political work at the conference an apartment one minute away from the meeting place was placed at their disposal. No other international delegation enjoyed such good conditions of work.

We were sincerely working for the success of the unification, if it could be achieved on a principled political basis. If this could be attained we did not want the slightest hitch in the arrangements.

The conference opened with the main political report presented by comrade Cliff Slaughter.

On the morning of the third day (Wednesday) Robertson intervened and whilst expressing his general political agreement with the report, proceeded, as was his right, to make certain criticisms.

About ten minutes before the afternoon session was due to commence, Robertson said he wanted to rest because he was tired, having been work-

From page 2

REVOLUTION AND COUNTER-REVOLUTION IN HUNGARY

steadily to the right, thereby encouraging capitalist intervention.

At this juncture the labour movement of the world is able to see clearly what has happened in the Soviet Union since Khrushchev's speech. Stalin is dead but the bureaucracy which he personified continues to rule. They have been forced here and there to retreat by the mass pressure and hostility of the Soviet people (Khrushchev's speech was one example of this) but such retreats are one thing—giving power back to the working people is quite another. Long ago in 1927 Stalin, referring to his ruling clique, explained that they could only be removed by civil war. The present bureaucracy in the Soviet Union will never liquidate or liberalise itself out of existence. It will only be removed finally by the actions and struggle of the Soviet people led by a conscious socialist leadership.

In typical bureaucratic style, the Soviet bureaucracy turned its armed might, not only against the capitalists and Cardinal Mindzenty elements in the Nagy government but against the revolutionary people as well. The usual stooge government of Janos Kadar was set up and the shooting began. No socialist programme was presented by the Russians—just giant T.34 tanks and masses of armour. The Soviet troops who were in Hungary when hostilities began and who, according to Coutts and Fryer, fraternised and discussed with the Hungarian people, appear to have been withdrawn. Fresh troops replaced them and the attempt to restore bureaucratic rule, as in 1945, commenced.

The tragedy of Hungary today is that the brutal war begun by the Soviet troops is no longer directed against the capitalist elements but against the revolutionary forces. The most stubborn resistance comes from the industrial areas; a general strike continues despite the reports that 20,000 have been killed. The Kadar regime has no basis whatsoever, and is distrusted by everyone. This is shown by what the 'Manchester Guardian' describes as the

'helplessness of the regime when it was forced to

admit that the free forces may have been inspired by "genuine and honourable motives" in taking up arms. Hitherto it had been calling the forces fascist and counter-revolutionary.' (November 11, 1956.)

Again on November 9 the 'Manchester Guardian' reported:

'The Minister of the Interior, Ferenc Muennich, today issued instructions to all Hungarian troops to remain in their barracks—thus proving that none is fighting on the Russian side. They were ordered to dissolve their revolutionary committees, which were formed during the first Hungarian crisis. Civilian revolutionary committees were told that they must eject counter-revolutionary elements. Political "advisers" will be appointed by the government and attached to them.'

In other words, the struggle is now to take political power away from the working class, and replace it with the 'Kadar' clique.

The hirings of the British Communist Party and the 'Daily Worker' have scoured everywhere for some factual information, which would prove that capitalist elements control the situation in Hungary, but little appears to have been found apart from the speech of Cardinal Mindzenty, and as soon as this is quoted it immediately defeats itself. For the fact remains that if the capitalist elements have such a mass base, why did the Cardinal have to take refuge in the American Embassy? Capitalist agents there are, to be sure, but the movement right from the start was predominantly revolutionary, and it is this fact which must guide the Labour Movement.

HUNGARY AND BRITISH LABOUR

The responsibility for the emergence of capitalist elements in Hungary and for the war now being waged to crush the revolutionary workers rests entirely on Stalinism, and those who defend its policies inside and outside the Soviet Union. For an example of this type of individual, listen to Mr. D. N. Pritt.

'Anyone,' he says, 'who joins in the shouting against the Soviet Union at the moment is helping the American ruling class and bringing the third world war nearer.' ('Daily Worker', November 9, 1956.)

Simple, isn't it? You are either for Russia right or wrong, or with the imperialists.

This is the line which Messrs. Pritt, Palme Dutt, Gollan, Pollitt and the rest of them peddled in order to justify the Moscow trials and all the horrors which Khrushchev revealed in his speech. The fact that Mr. Pritt, who has never publicly commented on Khrushchev's speech, has now emerged from his legal hole in order to repeat the same line, illustrates how the old Stalinist hacks in Russia and elsewhere are preparing for a last ditch stand.

Fortunately, Mr. Pritt's return to the 'old vomit' is not being followed by many members of the CP and readers of the 'Daily Worker'.

In the same issue Gabriel, its cartoonist for twenty years, resigned over Hungary.

Eric Hobsbawm, one of the leading intellectuals in the CP, demands that the Soviet troops be withdrawn.

Another reader, Ken Jones from Bristol, writes:

'We owe it to our Hungarian and Polish comrades, as well as to ourselves, to settle accounts with all responsible for providing us with such a grotesque caricature of the real developments in Poland and Hungary over the past five years.'

British labour must stand by the working people of Hungary and help them defend their revolution. This can only be done provided we expose and fight any attempts by the imperialists in the west to exploit the situation in order to restore capitalism. We must support the demand not only for the immediate withdrawal of the Red Army, but for the withdrawal of all the imperialist armies in Western Europe as well.

There is a movement afoot by right wing Labour leaders to cover up their disagreements with the Tories on Suez and slip into national unity behind the capitalists over Hungary. This must be

pitilessly exposed and fought.

All monies, food parcels, and medical supplies which are collected by the labour movement should be distributed in Hungary by the representatives of our movement. They should not be left to imperialist agents who will utilise them in an effort to raise the prestige of the capitalist countries.

Labour can help Hungary only if it does its work independently of all Tory forces.

Labour must organise itself if necessary to prevent British fascists and their Tory friends from launching a witch-hunt either against members of the British Communist Party or members of the Labour Party. There is a danger of this taking place here as it has in France. We must be on guard. No matter how we detest Stalinism, we must preserve the democracy of the movement.

All members of the Communist Party and Young Communist League should immediately demand a special Congress to repudiate the leadership's line on Hungary.

STAY IN THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND FIGHT IT OUT.

The people of Hungary do not want to return to capitalism. They want to preserve the system of centralised planning and state ownership and get rid of Stalinism forever. This we must support with all our might.

At the same time the people of Hungary must deal with capitalist elements in their own ranks. That is their job, and we are sure they can do it. The socialist and communist movement in Hungary must win its right to govern not through the indulgence of the Moscow bureaucracy—its guns, planes and tanks—but by means of a socialist policy which will secure for it the support of the overwhelming majority of the people. There is no other road for Hungary—or for the working people in any country.

DOWN WITH IMPERIALISM!
DOWN WITH STALINISM!
LONG LIVE THE HUNGARIAN SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

'Advice' for the 'left' MP's

By John Crawford

HAVE YOU EVER spared a thought for the hard life led by a 'left-wing Labour MP? Have you ever considered the effect on his nerves of meeting unemployed constituents who want to lynch him? The hours of exhausting abstention? The struggle to raise a family on a measly £62 10s a week you get for selling your principles these days?

Have you no sympathy for him at all? Well, frankly, nor have I.

But Mr. Ken Coates feels quite differently. Writing in 'The Week' of October 20, he publishes 'A letter to a left Labour MP'.

'Dear Comrade,' it begins, 'this is an appeal to you to do something which neither of us would have thought possible back in October 1964.'

What dreadful deed is Coates asking the poor man to commit to vote against the activation of Part IV of the Prices and Incomes Act. This is the section under which trade unionists can be fined or imprisoned for fighting for higher wages.

Not only does Coates think it necessary to make a special appeal for his 'comrade' to oppose such a measure. He goes out of his way to express his understanding of and sympathy for the difficulty of undertaking such opposition.

'There is no doubt that the climate is bad for the left as a whole,' he remarks encouragingly. He is speaking, remember, to one who could not bring himself to vote against the Act in question in July.

In fact, he specifically excuses this action, or lack of it.

'When you abstained in the vote before the recess, everyone had a clear understanding from government spokesmen of the conditional, reserve nature of the powers which were to be taken under the Act. Now these pledges, like many more, have been grotesquely disregarded.'

So! These innocent virgins were seduced! And he looked such a nice man!

BE BRAVE

Now we must be brave. 'There comes a time when it is necessary, however unpopular it may be, or however it incites those in power to mean reprisals, to do what is right.'

(Wait a minute. Does that mean that before that time, it isn't so necessary?) 'I earnestly hope you will do what I know you have it in you to do. The tension of this week will be unbearable.'

After a short pause for un-controllable weeping, let us recall just what this is all about.

When Coates left the Communist Party in 1957, he worked with the Trotskyists for a time. But the formation of the Socialist Labour League in 1959 brought home to him that we were not a 'left-wing' protest group, but an organisation determined to fight the right-wing Labour leaders to a finish.

BURIED

At this point, he departed to bury himself in the Labour Party. In recent years, together with his right-hand man, Pat Jordan, he has devoted himself to 'The Week', described as 'A News Analysis for Socialists'.

Together they have drawn moral sustenance from the Russell Peace Foundation, which combats war and death duties simultaneously.

The main target of 'The Week's' influence is the Parliamentary Labour Party. The 'theory' behind this type of politics is that the leaders of the movement can be coaxed in radical directions, if only we can learn to coo softly enough.

And so, when the Labour government took office, it was described as a 'left' government. If we didn't frighten him, Wilson might do splendid things.

But events were somewhat different. The government carried out attack after attack on the working class. It backed the Americans in Vietnam.

And Ken Coates has been expelled from the Labour Party, not by the National Executive, but by his local Party.

At each stage, the 'left' MPs have run away from a fight with Wilson. After much talk about amending the prices and incomes anti-union law, they finally abstained when it went through.

ILLUSION

In fact, we can see a clear relationship between the actions of the 'left' Parliamentarians and the treachery of Wilson. For, along with their allies in the Communist Party, they provide the illusion of being an opposition without actually doing any damage.

The purpose of Coates' letter is therefore clear. He wants to advise the 'lefts' as to the best way to maintain their chief asset on the political market: their reputation for being 'rebels'.

As the cover of 'The Week' proclaims: 'To Abstain is Not Enough.'

This type of 'leftism' has been part of the existence of the British labour movement, but the struggle now developing will bring it to an end.

For the working class to withstand the attacks of the employers and the government it must break free from such politics.

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MILLWALL DISPUTE

Attempt to split dockers

NEWSLETTER INDUSTRIAL REPORTER

AT A MEETING on Tuesday morning at Millwall Docks, striking members of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers (the 'Blue' union) were told by their officials that if they allowed dockers from the Transport and General Workers' Union ('White' union) to work there, they would eventually lose their jobs.

The men are striking against the proposed handling of a new ship by members of the T&GWU sent in by the Dock Labour Board.

The Millwall Docks have traditionally been a 'Blue' area, and the strikers are afraid that if 'White' dockers are brought in to work there they would be squeezed out.

They are supported by official strikes of NAS&D members in other London docks and in Rochester.

Officials put forward their answer to the problem—to visit individual MPs and get it raised in the House of Commons.

'A fat lot of good that will be,' one stevedore said. 'Our MP, Ian Mikardo, is part of the Labour government, and he won't do anything for us.'

Another young docker summed up the general feeling: 'The governors are trying to stir it up between the two unions just before this new Devlin Report is brought in.'

The men were confident that the 'White' men would support them and not cross their picket lines, and proposals were in hand to start official picketing on Wednesday. 'But we shall have to see what happens when the ship comes in later this week.'

Not a word

Although members of the NAS&D are on sympathy strike at the Royal Group of Docks, Communist Party dockers' leader, Jack Dash, usually so vocal, has not said a word.

No call has gone out from the unofficial liaison committee, of which Dash is secretary, to support the 'Blue' men and prevent the two unions being split.

'He's keeping his mouth shut,' our reporter was told. 'We've got to fight him, too.'

For many years the port employers have looked for an opportunity to attack the militancy of the dockers, and have been driven back by the unity of 'Blue' and 'White' in struggle.

No doubt a demarcation dispute between the two unions would be very welcome just as the fight against the implementation of the Devlin Report is getting under way.

Dockers and stevedores must be very much on their guard against letting the 'governors stir it up' between them now.

YS dominate Vietnam march

SEVERAL HUNDRED people demonstrated through the centre of Oxford last Saturday (October 22) against the war in Vietnam. The march was called by the Oxford Vietnam Co-ordinating Committee [pro-Chinese] and was supported by a wide variety of political groups ranging from the Oxford Peace Movement to CND, the anarchists and the Communist Party.

Young Socialists, who had a strong West Midlands contingent, made up nearly a third of the demonstration and dominated the march with their slogans, including 'Victory to the Vietcong', 'Johnson, Wilson, Out!', 'Workers of the World Unite—And Fight!'

Other demonstrators marched in silence with banners calling for 'peace' in Vietnam. CND finally took up one slogan, 'Support the NLF'.

As the march passed through crowded streets Young Socialists gave out leaflets explaining why they thought the Vietnam war was closely linked with the sackings coming up at the BMC Cowley motor works.

At the rally afterwards Tariq Ali of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign spoke for the first time in his new role as representative of the Vietnam Co-ordinating Committee—he read out a committee statement.

BMC shop steward John Power linked up the war with the crisis in his own industry and the international crisis of capitalism.

One day, he said, Johnson, Wilson and others would stand trial before the world working class for the outrages they had committed against workers.

District secretary of the Communist Party John Tarver said that since Britain was the main prop of US foreign policy a change in Wilson's policy would be a big step towards 'peaceful settlement in Vietnam'.

Challenged on this, he spoke of the need to 'carry on with criticism'.

YS national committee member John Edwards said there was no question of Wilson's mind being changed, since he was committed to maintaining capitalism, which involved attacking workers.

Demonstrations, said Edwards, were not enough in the fight against the Vietnam war; they could only be part of a process of building up an independent revolutionary party that was preparing to overthrow capitalism.

He mentioned the trip of 500 Young Socialists the week before to Liège in Belgium where they had joined an international demonstration against the war.

This had only been possible on the basis of a long struggle against bureaucracy in the Labour and Communist Parties. This made it very appropriate to commemorate the Hungarian revolution—that heroic struggle in 1956 against Soviet bureaucracy.

NO ANSWERS FROM THE 'PEARLY' DOCKER

By Newsletter Reporter

MR. JACK DASH, the Communist Party's man on the London docks, spoke at a meeting organised by the Bristol area committee of the Party in the Corn Exchange, Bristol, last Friday (October 21).

Like most of Mr. Dash's performances, this displayed the wide repertoire of funny stories that has put him in high demand

with press, TV, businessmen's clubs, and garden fetes.

But his audience, which included many dockers and youth who were expecting some answers to the political questions now facing the working class, were left without leadership.

Instead of explaining the depth of the economic crisis, he described unemployment as something 'unnecessary', attempting to show that British capitalism could be made to work more efficiently.

Devlin ignored

From this point of view he could not deal with the dangerous political situation facing workers.

For instance, in a half-hour speech, he scarcely mentioned the Devlin Report—one of the main things dockers in his audience expected to hear about.

His only advice was that the working class should be more militant.

It was left to Young Socialists in the audience to bring out the real issues.

One asked why he proposed a form of nationalization of the docks which would simply allow a few dockers onto a joint board with permanent civil servants, thus leaving control in the hands of the government.

Replying, Dash would not support the YS call for nationalization under workers' control. State officials were necessary to supervise financial matters, he said, omitting any mention of which class controls the state.

Answering another point he denied that he would ever take a seat on the national docks' modernisation committee set up after the Devlin Report.

However, said Dash, his Royal Docks' unofficial liaison committee had offered to co-operate with the work of the modernisation committee.

Late call

Interest was aroused by another Young Socialist who asked Dash why he had opposed the blacking of British ships during the seamen's strike.

He claimed he had called for blacking, but dockers had not supported him! He failed to mention his call was made in the fifth week of the strike.

After that he moved to safer ground—more funny stories.

Growing numbers of workers are now being forced to re-examine and reject traditional leaderships which give no alternative to the crisis.

Neither his reputation in the Tory press as a militant, nor his 'pearly king' humour, will stop this happening to Jack Dash.

Problems of F. I.

From page 3

Robertson returns to the politics of the SWP

It was very natural therefore for Hansen of the SWP to offer full support to Robertson in his unprincipled fight with the International Committee after the conference was over.

It was equally natural for Robertson to uncritically accept this support. He ordered bundles of their pamphlet attacking the International Committee and distributed them everywhere he could.

An unprincipled united front was launched against the International Committee, but with absolutely no success.

The anti-internationalist Robertson had merely rejoined the anti-internationalist SWP and nobody really cared two hoots what either of them would do. They had this much in common.

The SWP since Trotsky's death had utilised the Fourth

International as a front, behind which they carried out their nationalist orientation inside the USA. Robertson wanted to use the International Committee of the Fourth International as a front behind which he arranged an unprincipled unification inside the USA for purely national reasons.

The 'real issue' at the conference is summed up by his disciple Tishman when he posed the question in his letter of May 7 as to 'whether the present international committee... constitutes the sole organised successor to the Trotskyist movement?'

He, together with Robertson, rejects this, we support it—that is why a definitive split had to take place both with Robertson and the Voix Ouvriere group in France.

Following a highly-successful conference it was a good, clear, politically-motivated split on the principled issue of responsibility for carrying out the decisions of the international conference.

All the lessons which we had to learn in England from the experiences of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International in 1938 were applied at this juncture.

We have broken from Robertson and his anti-internationalism for all time.

There is no future for such a group, no matter how much activity it carries out. Revolutionary parties will take the power can only be built henceforth on the principles, organisation and discipline of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

Next week:

The Socialist Labour League

ACTION TO REINSTATE STEWARD

LAST THURSDAY, the morning shift at J. Lucas' factory on the Lucas-CAV site at Liverpool, stopped work for half an hour and held a meeting at the gate.

It took place just before a director of the firm arrived at the factory to open 'National Quality and Reliability Year'.

Workers in the factory had been invited to hear him in the canteen, but decided to boycott the meeting.

They heard a report on the latest developments in the case of their convenor—Ernie Johnston—who was sacked on September 22.

A local conference of the Amalgamated Engineering Union and the employers has registered a failure to agree and the case has now gone to central conference.

The Lucas-CAV shop stewards' committee has issued a statement throughout the factory declaring: 'The AEU district committee has taken a decision to support in full a claim for Bro. Johnston's unconditional reinstatement.'

Within a month the official procedure will be exhausted. Then action will have to be taken. The future of our organisation is in your hands. In your interests, SUPPORT THAT ACTION.

'The shop stewards are visiting all major factories in the area to obtain maximum support in this fight to defend trade union organisation.'

Major recession looms

From page 1

The measures taken to defend sterling cripple any chance which British industry might have had of making any recovery.

In the CBI survey nearly a quarter of firms report credit difficulties which are directly hitting their ability to export. Bank loans have slumped by £250 million in the last two months alone.

The unemployment and redundancies, which have been produced as a result of Labour's policy, mean that industry is working well below capacity, which, as everybody knows, forces up costs and therefore prices.

This is particularly important for those export industries, such as steel, motors and chemicals with vast amounts of capital tied up which has to be fully utilised if costs are to be kept down.

Violent reaction

This is why the owners in the motor car industry have reacted so violently to the cut-back in their industry which has resulted from the credit squeeze.

They realise that with their costs forced up they will be less and less able to meet intensifying competition from the US and European car makers.

The position is only worsened when one looks at the record of the British economy in relation to its foreign competitors. The only way in which productivity can be raised and costs lowered is through more investment in the technologically advanced areas of the economy.

Yet the latest figures show that the proportion of total national income devoted to investment is amongst the lowest of the 'advanced' countries:

Percentage of GNP devoted to investment	
Japan	29
Western Germany	24
Italy	23
Sweden	23
France	22
Denmark	19
Belgium	19
United States	18
Britain	17
(GNP—Gross National Product)	

The writing is clearly on the wall.

The employers are increasingly demanding a slashing of the expenditure on the welfare state to provide more resources for private investment. This was reflected in the 'Financial Times' the day after the latest unemployment and investment figures were announced and by O'Brien in his address to City bankers.

The fake 'left', followed by the Stalinists, responded to these developments by repeating their hoary old demands for an end to sterling's role, a cut back in foreign capital exports and military expenditure.

No 'remedies'

These are no 'remedies' even from the point of view of capital.

Capital export and military expenditure abroad are an essential part of the international role and strategy of British imperialism.

The end of the role of the pound, apart from meaning a loss of valuable income to the City, would produce a head on collision with President Johnson and Wall Street and involve the smashing of NATO.

The dollar is no longer strong enough to carry the burden of the international financial system and the preservation of the pound is essential for the

stability of US and world capitalism.

Were the pound to go to the wall the dollar would certainly be devalued and the world monetary system thrown into a crisis on a scale even bigger than that of the 1930s.

But the Stalinists and reformists cannot see beyond the end of their noses: for them it is a 'British' crisis to be solved by a series of reformist plans which will not challenge the basis of capitalist power.

Their strategy is to tie the British working class to capitalism by playing on all its insularity and lack of internationalism.

Wilson does not have any independent economic policy: he merely carries out the policies of the international bankers until they decide to dispense with his services.

The crisis will find no solution for the working class in policies which rely upon putting pressure on Wilson to make him carry out reforms.

Wilson, along with the Labour government, stands on the side of monopoly capital as its trusted servant.

The road for the working class lies in the rejection of these traitors and the construction of a new international leadership based on the Fourth International. Only this can answer the growing international crisis of capitalism.

ABERFAN TRAGEDY

From page 1

On Wednesday parents took their children away from the school below the Cmw colliery tip.

Like the Vietnamese peasants, the children of Aberfan are seen in terms of money—in Vietnam it is £2 a head; in Aberfan £50 is offered initially by the NCB (and refused by many families).

This cannot compensate for a whole generation of lost children and, in any case, is a flea bite compared with the thousands of pounds sweated out of the Aberfan fathers who are breathing the same black death down their throats that just that much quicker suffocated their children.

Lord Justice Edmund Davies says his inquiry will not be a 'whitewashing affair'—an ironical phrase in such circumstances.