

The Newsletter

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Danger of Britain becoming a distressed area

BIG TORY CRISIS

Labour must answer with socialist policies

By THE EDITOR

THE unemployment debate in Parliament was a farce. Labour spokesmen failed to challenge Tory policies and avoided presenting a socialist alternative. Ray Gunter revealed this when he said he was

'... at one with the Chancellor in believing that there were millions of thoughtful people who were uneasy and who knew deep within themselves that there was something wrong somewhere.'

Such words will ring hollow in the ears of tens of thousands of unemployed youth and adult workers signing on at Labour Exchanges over Christmas.

Other Labour spokesmen blamed Selwyn Lloyd's credit squeeze and argued glibly that the new relaxation measures by the Tory government were simply a pre-election stunt. While there is some truth in this, it is not an explanation for the crisis; it fails to take into account the deep-going nature of the industrial change-over taking place in Britain.

Real nature of crisis

The *Daily Telegraph* editorial of December 18, commenting on the debate, pinpointed the real nature of the crisis:

'Behind the unemployment figures lie trends of far-reaching consequence for the future of the economy which need to be openly identified and vigorously exploited. All the signs suggest that at long last the decline of the old, traditional industries is accelerating, releasing scarce resources, labour in particular, for better use. The tendency to hoard is weakening. At the same time the new and expanding industries are achieving valuable economies in the use of labour. These are overdue changes which should be welcomed by anyone seriously interested in the country's economic health. But at the same time they create a new kind of unemployment problem.' Precisely!

The Socialist Labour League has been the only organisation in the labour movement to recognise this. The investment programme behind the development of several major industries, started in 1956 and 1957, means that they are now coming into full production. Over the past few years this high rate of investment has exceeded the rate of profit; consequently the employers are seeking ways and means to economise on labour and at the same time effectively increase production by the new techniques.

In the pre-election period of 1959, it was possible for the Tories to halt rising unemployment started in 1958 by credit relaxation, but today circumstances are quite different. The expansion of the market in 1958 and 1959 created by credit relaxation can now be used up far more quickly by these new techniques.

It is this problem which is creating anxiety amongst the Tories about their election possibilities. They fear that no matter how they juggle credits, unemployment will still continue.

Mobility of labour will not stop crisis

The talk about the need to make labour mobile will not alleviate the crisis. As soon as workers from the unemployment zones begin to flock into areas where industry is booming, employers will begin to cut wages because they will have a surplus labour force at their disposal. This must lead to a major clash with the trade unions.

Metropolitan-Vickers at Barrow have just received some new government contracts for atomic-powered submarines. It has been the practice for the company to attract labour from surrounding districts into Barrow by paying approximately £3 10s. a week lodging allowance to those employed. As they prepare to start work on the new contracts, the company has cut out these allowances and the result has been a sharp reduction in the wages of their employees.

The *Financial Times* of December 17 speaks about the holding up of investment programmes due to uncertainty about the negotiations over the Common Market. If Britain does not join the Common Market, this newspaper says there will be a sharp movement of capital from Britain into Western Europe to avoid the tariffs. This, of course, would rapidly turn practically the whole of Britain into one great distressed area.

If, as still seems likely, Britain does join the Common Market, it will do so by sacrificing British agriculture and throwing the major industries into sharp competition with their well-equipped continental rivals. There will be a tendency for a boom to grow around certain industries and for others to decline.

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'THE WORKERS' CHARTER'

New anti-strike moves

THE new 'Workers' Charter', claimed by government supporters as a move to give workers security of employment, is actually aimed at strengthening the employers. All Tory reformist legislation has a common feature. Whilst appearing to benefit the many, it is really introduced to enrich the few. Under the Contracts of Employment Bill, not only the employer but the worker, too, must give between two and four weeks' notice, depending on length of service, if he intends to terminate his employment.

The keynote of the Bill is the clause which states that 14 days' notice of strike action is obligatory, else men will forfeit their rights to termination pay.

The strike notice provision is directed at any legitimate withdrawal of labour, whatever the reason.

It means, concretely, that speed-up, new time schedules, lack of adequate heating in a factory, lack of sufficient safety provisions and similar provocations that can sometimes only be challenged by strikes, can all be introduced by the bosses to an ever-greater degree, without fear of action by the employees.

The basis of future employment will be a written contract and any breach can be taken before the courts. Though either employer or worker may sue, it is hardly likely that the latter will find any protection there.

He will be obliged, in fact, under the contract to do a 'reasonable amount of work'. If a worker refuses overtime or arrives late for work, this may be considered a breach of contract, since it is, of course, the

employer who decides what is 'reasonable'.

The employers make no sacrifices by this charter. Their long-term, key employees with five years' service will be obliged to give a minimum notice of four weeks if they want to change jobs.

Today many firms are working short time—and the workers are consequently getting short money. Yet the four weeks' compulsory paid notice will be based on these lower rates.

This is no golden handshake for the workers. They will have to work out their notice time, and when they get their pay it will be taxed in the usual way.

The bill does not provide for any additional redundancy payments or 'severance pay' which, at least, puts a sum into the workers' hands to mitigate, perhaps, a bleak period of unemployment ahead.

For the security of labour which the employer will now possess, nothing is really given in return. So far as the larger firms are concerned, they plan production schedules not one month ahead,

but for much longer periods, so that they can always ascertain in good time when to give notice to their workers.

The legislation will tend to worsen the present unemployment situation. Now that employers will have to give minimum periods of notice, the slightest sign of a decline in orders will immediately set in motion the procedure for sacking men.

At its best, this bill will do little to prevent sudden dismissals; at its worst it will attempt to limit the rights for which workers have fought long and hard.

It is a Bill to intensify wage-slavery, the first of many measures to smash the militancy of workers, place them firmly under the thumbs of the employing class and, ultimately, make all strike action illegal.

The labour movement must oppose it with all the strength at their command and make sure that a Labour government scraps it with all other Tory class legislation.

By COLIN CHANCE

VICTORY FOR WELSH BRICKIES

THE strike of 320 bricklayers at the Steel Company of Wales Port Talbot plant ended on Wednesday after talks lasting for 22 hours.

A formula was reached for an early resumption of work and the suspension of the bricklayer—which caused the stoppage—was simultaneously lifted.

A company spokesman said: 'Difficulties of interpretation of some parts of the original agreement were satisfactorily resolved.'

The employers had threatened to close the plant and sack 8,500 men, but the bricklayers maintained their stand and won a notable victory.

CHRISTMAS BREAK

The Newsletter will not be published week ending December 29. The Editorial Board extend warmest seasonal greetings to all their readers and supporters.

Builders say no to Nick

By ALAN WEST, Our Labour Correspondent

BUILDING workers throughout Britain hit back sharply at government interference, through its National Incomes Commission, into their recent 40-hour week victory over the employers.

Nick's officers, under chairman Geoffrey Lawrence, QC, last week began an investigation into the Scottish builders' pay and hours award. In a statement, Mr. Maudling, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, showed that he is clearly worried that such demands would be taken up throughout industry.

Representatives of all the building unions met in London this week at the general council of the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives and considerable anger was expressed at the government moves.

The Federation's general secretary, Mr. Harry Weaver, said that the Chancellor's action was an attack 'not only on the building unions, but on the whole trade union movement'.

Mr. Weaver said that the Federation intended to contact the General Council of the TUC. He said he felt sure that the NFBTO would get the full support of the TUC and its affiliated unions if the government attempted to interfere with agreements.

Mr. Weaver declared that the council would be happy to put its case to the National Incomes Commission. 'We are confident that we will confound the Chancellor. A 40-hour week would help to ease the unemployment situation.'

Answering the charge that the builders' award would have a bad effect on costs in the industry, Mr. Weaver said that any increase would be 'almost infinitesimal compared to the steep increases in costs due to rocketing land prices and interest rates for building loans'.

● It was announced on Tuesday that the chairman of NIC, Mr. Lawrence, will receive a salary of £12,500 a year—£250 a week.

China-Russia Now it's an open split

THE Chinese leadership have now brought their split with the Khrushchevites further out into the open. A 5,000-word editorial in the Peking *People's Daily* of December 15 states their criticisms of Russian policy quite bluntly.

Although it refrains from actually naming Khrushchev, it accuses his tendency of defeatism, adventurism and capitulation.

On the question of the shambles over the missiles in Cuba it attacks him for 'over-rating the importance of nuclear arms' instead of 'having confidence in the power of the popular masses'.

Replying to allegations that Chinese policy in Cuba would have plunged the world into nuclear war, it says:

'As for nuclear war, China has always been opposed to it and has foreseen the elimination of nuclear armament and the solution of this problem by negotiation.

'All the same it is necessary to prove to the imperialists that Marxist-Leninists will never allow themselves to be paralysed by the fear of such a war.'

The *People's Daily* pulls no punches over the Sino-Indian border dispute:

'Those who criticise us have failed to analyse the policy of the Nehru clique from a class point of view. They call us brothers, but in fact they consider the Indian reactionaries as their true kinsmen.'

Denying charges that Chinese policy is an attempt to split the world communist movement, it discloses the fact that they have already approached the Czech CP with proposals to hold a conference of all Communist parties in order to find out 'what is right and what is wrong'.

US CP convicted

THE Newsletter Editorial Board protests most strongly at the McCarthyite witch-hunt against the Communist Party of the United States and calls upon the British labour movement to stand by the party and demand the conviction be lifted.

The party was convicted by a Federal jury in Washington on Monday of failing to register as an agent of the Soviet Union. US district court judge Alexander Holtzoff fined the party £43,000—the maximum penalty. Party lawyers said they would appeal against the verdict.

The true nature of the Kennedy administration is now revealed. Its aim is to smash and shackle the organised American labour movement which is coming into sharper conflict every day with the ruling class of the 60 families and their employers.

The conviction of the Communist Party is only the beginning of a calculated drive against all militants and socialists. American workers must be on their guard and prepare to fight back; the British labour movement must pledge its full support.

IN times of crisis a bureaucracy may be forced to change from a position on the extreme right over to the centre or even left of centre. It depends on how serious the crisis and upon the strength of the working class. But one thing it will never do—that is to change itself from a parasitic caste into a genuine socialist leadership.

There have been times in the past where even the leadership of the Labour Party has been forced in a left-ward direction only to betray the working class as soon as they felt confident of success.

The problem for Marxists is to understand that it is precisely when bureaucracy moves to the left that it must be dealt the most powerful blows in order to expose its treacherous role.

This is where the activity of the revolutionary party comes in. An exposure of the bureaucracy can only be carried out by a leadership trained to understand all the developments associated with its centrist nature.

The Khrushchev bureaucracy is no exception to this rule. Like the Stalinist bureaucracy it pursues a centrist role.

In Hungary it reacted violently to crush the revolution. In the Soviet Union it has been forced to give concessions to the working class and at the same time allow more freedom to intellectuals and others.

All these events are extremely important, but they have not arrived on the scene because of the benevolence of the bureaucracy; they are a symptom of its crisis, not its liberalisation.

The construction of a Marxist party in the Soviet Union, which will be forced at first to work illegally within the trade unions, the factories, the Komsomols and the Communist Party itself, is essential if the bureaucracy is to be replaced by organs of genuine socialist democracy.

Revisionists who want to paint a picture of the Khrushchev regime liberalising itself, are constantly talking about the dual nature of the Soviet bureaucracy. Trotsky stressed that insofar as the bureaucracy defends the Soviet Union and develops the Soviet economy it should enjoy the

The British ruling class prepared carefully for the 1926 General Strike, setting up their strike-breaking services and (right) using scabs as policemen. But the labour bureaucracy was totally unprepared and helped engineer the defeat.

The last article in GERRY HEALY's analysis of the latest trends in the USSR



The treacherous role of the labour bureaucracies

missiles and jet bombers to Cuba, Khrushchev was using this military intervention as an extension of his false policy of peaceful co-existence.

He betrayed and weakened the Cuban revolution politically. Those who talk about his 'great statesmanship' speak as pacifists and ignore the facts.

The internationalist defence of the Cuban revolution lies in the extension of the class struggle and not through military assistance as a replacement for that struggle.

It is equally foolish to accept Kennedy's word that he will not invade Cuba in the future. Those who claim that Khrushchev got a concession from Kennedy are doing nothing more than building up illusions in Kennedy.

Only the constant vigilance and struggle of the international working class can defend Cuba in the very difficult period ahead. In this struggle, the Soviet youth and militant workers will play a prominent role as they fight tooth and nail against the narrow, nationalist policies of the bureaucracy.

In this way the Soviet people will come to the aid of the Cuban revolution; they are in the forefront of the fight against bureaucracy which is the mortal enemy of that revolution.

critical support of the Fourth International.

But he stressed equally emphatically that the bureaucracy would do so by its own methods which, he said, would weaken the Soviet Union in relation to the international working class.

There are many cases in Britain where the bureaucratic leaderships of the trade unions have gone into action against employers because they felt they were being challenged as well as their members. But the manner in which they engaged in this action—lack of preparation and so on—actually engineered the defeat of their unions. The most important example is, of course, the 1926 general strike.

Trotskyists have no confidence in bureaucracy either in the social-democratic movement or in the Soviet Union.

That is why we criticise the Soviet bureaucracy for its handling of the Cuban crisis. The revisionists on the other hand adopt a pacifist role. They say that by removing the missile bases and the jet bombers, Khrushchev saved

the peace. In making this point they strive to exploit pacifist sentiment.

The defence of the Cuban revolution can only be considered within the framework of the revolutionary movements first of all in North and South America and the building up of constant support in the ranks of the international working class.

This is something which the Khrushchev bureaucracy cannot and will not do. The policy of the Communist Party in the United States was to support the Democratic Party in the recent elections. The policies of the Communist parties in other places strive for Popular Fronts with capitalist politicians.

The leaderships of even the most left-wing of the Communist parties are so confused by their political relations with Stalinism that they are utterly incapable of developing an internationalist Marxist policy towards the defence of Cuba.

Military weapons cannot be a substitute for socialist internationalism. In sending mis-

Big Tory crisis: from page one

In other words, the choice is between speeding up Britain's decline into a distressed area by not joining the Common Market or more slowly becoming a distressed area through entry.

Behind the Skybolt controversy is not so much the military significance of the weapon, but the fact that American big business is forcing British capitalism to cut itself down to its economic size. Between it and the spokesmen for American capital investment in Europe, Macmillan and company have no real independence.

This new crisis cannot be answered except by socialist policies. It is not a temporary affair, but the first real effect, since the end of the Second World War, of the chronic crisis of British capitalism, first spoken of by Marxists as early as 1914.

British capitalism cannot cure the unemployment problem and it has no intention of doing so. To arrest the fall in the rate of profit from high investment means to make the working class work faster and for longer hours. The continuous shrinkage of the world's markets, and the intensified competitive relations between the big monopolies have shown more and more that socialism is the

only alternative to capitalist degradation and nuclear barbarism.

A Labour government under Gaitskell which has no policy to meet such a crisis will result in a catastrophe far greater than the MacDonald government of 1931. Trade union leaders who make big noises about Foras, but who do nothing in practice, will betray their members when faced with the type of sharp industrial struggle which will be posed in the future.

No industrial action, no matter how stubborn and well-fought, can really answer the crisis. Preparation for strikes must be made alongside a continuous campaign inside the Labour Party and the trade unions for the nationalisation of the basic industries, under workers' control, and the institution of a planned economy along socialist lines.

Either Labour adopts this programme for power, or the working class runs the risk of losing all they have gained during the boom since the second world war and returning to conditions much worse than the misery of the 1930s.

'Cuban CP? Not necessary' says Russell

NO Communist Party is necessary in Cuba, said Daily Worker correspondent Sam Russell at Friends House, Euston, on Tuesday, December 18 at a meeting called by the London District of the Communist Party to hear an account of Russell's recent experiences in Cuba. He was replying to a questioner who asked what the strength of the Cuban Communist Party was.

Russell explained that there was only one party in Cuba formed out of the original July 26 Movement, the old Communist Party and a student organisation. Since this party was doing the job 'there is no need for a separate Communist Party'.

In answer to another question he said, 'The proportion of Marxist-Leninists in the Cuban government is 100 per cent.'

He went on to say that Fidel Castro had begun as an anti-communist but had come to accept Marxism-Leninism and was building the socialist revolution in Cuba. When that was completed he would build communism.

One old communist leader, Escalante, had been found to be sectarian and had been publicly reprimanded. (Russell made no attempt to explain Escalante's sectarianism or the policy he had supported.)

It was a great thing that a former anti-communist who was now a communist was able to give lessons to someone who was communist long before he was, but who had 'strayed'. 'I think this is a great credit to Fidel Castro and to the Cuban people,' said Russell.

Replying to questions about the Soviet action over its missile bases, he said that the Cuban people were 'disappointed at first' with Khrushchev's decision, but now accepted it.

He did not agree that this withdrawal had weakened Cuba's defences. Rather he thought it made Cuba safer because Kennedy had promised not to invade Cuba or let anyone else invade.

If the bases had not been withdrawn the United States would have wiped out Cuba, so it was better to defend the revolution by dismantling the defences!

Swing to the right in S. Rhodesia

British colons take power: new headache for City

by James Baker

LAST week's elections in Southern Rhodesia brought the Rhodesian Front to power; they defeated the United Federal Party of the present Prime Minister, Sir Edgar Whitehead. This change is likely to have important consequences both in Britain and in Central Africa.

The Rhodesian Front stands openly and unashamedly as the party of white supremacy and racialist oppression. It has the support now of most of the white farmers, businessmen, clerks,

Hosiery workers oppose speed-up

Newsletter Correspondent

AT a recent meeting in Leicester 800 members of the National Union of Hosiery Workers unanimously rejected the hosiery employers' proposal that a 3-shift, 24-hour day be introduced in place of the existing 2-shift, 18-hour day.

The attempts by the hosiery employers to introduce three shifts, to cut out 'inefficient' units and to pay off 'surplus' labour, is directly linked up with the Tory government's preparations for entry into the Common Market.

The British hosiery industry, which is centred on Leicester and Hinckley, is faced with cut-throat competition from Italian firms.

EXCUSE

The growing threat of Italian competition is being used by the employers as an excuse to introduce heavier work loads for machine operatives. This is particularly so in the switch from production of the more expensive, fully-fashioned stockings to the cheaper, circular-seamless variety.

A machine producing fully-fashioned stockings costs £20,000 to buy. At the moment an operative looks after two of these machines and can produce 520 dozen stockings per week. These stockings sell at from 4/11 to 10/11 a pair.

A machine producing circular-seamless stockings costs £850 to buy. At present an operative looks after 20 of these machines and can produce 1,800 dozen stockings per week. These stockings sell at between 7/11 and 8/11 a pair.

EXTENSIVE

The falling demand for fully-fashioned stockings has already resulted in extensive short-time working and rising redundancies.

Bear Brand have already closed down their fully-fashioned section. Pex have just declared 40 workers redundant in their fully-fashioned section and there are well-founded rumours that the whole section, employing 400 workers, is to be closed down.

The threat of unemployment to fully-fashioned knitters is being held over the heads of the circular-seamless knitters in order to force them to double their present work.

● Most of the 30,000 hosiery workers in Leicester, Hinckley and Loughborough are being forced to take a ten-day Christmas 'holiday', but will get only two days' pay (from £2 to £3). The local secretary of the Hosiery Workers' Union commented, 'The situation is extremely black.'

They have voted in this way to prevent Africans, living next door to them, going to the same schools as their children or using the same maternity hospitals.

The election was fought on a weighted franchise which gave full voting rights to all Europeans and enabled only 12,000 Africans of a total of 2 million to qualify for votes—of those only 3,000 in fact used their votes.

It is quite out of the question to regard Whitehead as any kind of a liberal. He had banned the main Nationalist Party supported by the masses of the population, the Zimbabwe People's Union, and he had sent leaders of the party into detention.

For this reason the election was styled by the nationalists as a 'fake quarrel between whites'.

OPEN UP NEW AREAS

According to the *Financial Times* the policy of Winston Field, the tobacco farmer who owns thousands of acres of rich farming land and who is now Prime Minister, will be to open up new areas under community development schemes, as sources of raw materials for export.

The Land Apportionment Act which prevents Africans from purchasing land in 'white areas' and which Whitehead had promised to abolish will now be retained.

Field does not like the word apartheid used to describe his policies. He said at a recent press conference he would prefer to call it 'separate development'. According to *The Times*, the Rhodesian Front is 'pledged to delay African government'.

This group of British 'colons' might well precipitate open and violent conflict with the force of African nationalism.

This would wreck the policy of conciliating the African petty-bourgeois leaders by granting them fake independence, a policy which has been followed with such conspicuous success in Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and other territories.

AGITATION IN CITY

This is why there is such an amount of agitation going on in the City just now. They fear for their investments and in particular for the mines and other forms of capital in the area.

The British labour movement must demand in Southern Rhodesia the holding of elections on the basis of complete adult franchise. These elections should set up a National Constituent Assembly with complete powers over the territory.

The labour movement should also demand the disarming of the white troops which exist to defend the interests of the capitalist class, and the setting up of working class militias to maintain order. Nothing less than this is a socialist policy for Southern Rhodesia.

Kentucky mine closures bring violence

By ERIC NEILSON

THE menace of martial law is threatening the workers of Eastern Kentucky, USA. The little town of Hazard has been aflame with sabotage, bombings and arson.

Local collieries have been blown up with dynamite and saboteurs have been active on the railways. Private homes and cars have also suffered.

There is a tragic background to this tale of violence. Perry County, where the incidents took place, relies completely on the coal industry for its livelihood. In the United States this industry is in a very bad way.

As a result, poverty and unemployment in Perry County have reached such a pitch that out of its 36,000 inhabitants over 14,000 are on the Federal food dole.

The flare-up centres around picketing of mines where employers have broken agreements with the United Mine Workers.

ROYALTY

Up to now the coal bosses paid a royalty of 40 cents a ton, which was used by the union to run hospitals and welfare services. Before the union established these services there was no specialised medical attention available to workers in the area.

Lately the bosses have been cutting down on these royalties; many have refused to pay them altogether. This, coupled with the fall in coal production, has seriously affected the union's welfare fund. Already they have had to announce the closure of four of their ten hospitals in the New Year.

This has drawn the women into the fight. Many of them are active in the mobile picket bands which tour the local collieries.

In addition to this, miners are angry over a cut in pensions they

suffered last year. Last August some men lost their right to medical care when their company refused to pay any further royalty.

Now the bitter struggle in Hazard has reached the point of violence. The pickets flatly deny responsibility for the bombings and point out that it was often their own houses and cars which suffered.

They accuse the bosses of the sabotage on the railway, because these men know that such an act might give grounds for a Federal injunction or the establishment of martial law, which could effectively smash any opposition of the workers to their plans.

INJUNCTION

When the bosses demanded an injunction to stop the picketing the local judge, C. C. Wells, refused to grant it without a proper hearing. This should not be taken to mean that he is on the side of the miners; the machinery of 'law and order' was not designed to protect the interests of the working class.

This is especially true in this case, when we consider that the high sheriff of Hazard happens (by sheer coincidence) to own some of the mines that are being picketed.

The Hazard workers have to contend not only with the police but also with the union leadership which will not have anything to do with the picketing. This has given the police the chance to claim that they are not dealing with a respectable union but with an unruly mob of 'trouble-makers'.

Kentucky has been hit for a long time by economic depression and now the situation is worsening. The miners are obviously in a militant frame of mind, but they have no clear objectives in view and the union leadership is determined to stamp on their militancy.

Blendon Row rent rebels fight ON

Newsletter Reporter

IN spite of the statement by the Southwark Borough Council, South London, that they will not rehouse them, the tenants of Blendon Row last week held a meeting at which they declared their determination to continue the fight for the demolition of their 102-year-old 'homes'.

The tenants accepted a number of proposals, including one from the Southwark Trades Council, that they should organise a public meeting in the New Year to draw the support of local trade unionists, Labour Party members and tenants of both slum properties and borough council estates.

EFFECTIVE

A member of the Socialist Labour League also proposed that tenants should join the Labour Party as the most effective way of winning support from the rank and file of the labour movement, both for their case and for a real socialist housing policy.

This was opposed by a leading member of the Communist Party on the grounds that the tenants were only concerned with Blendon Row and that changing Labour Party policy was not their job and would not help them.

Meanwhile, the landlord has not even completed the minor improvements which he agreed to do. Paint which was put on some of the staircases two or three weeks ago is already peeling.

NO LIGHTS

One block is still without stair lighting and one tenant complained that her toilet door, which came off a week ago, had still not been replaced.

At their next meeting in January, the tenants will have to draw up detailed plans for contacting rank and file members of the trade union and labour movement and other tenants in the area. Without such support, the tenants could go on for years in a dog-fight with the landlord over every minor repair.

Big support for Japanese right wing

From Our Special Correspondent

A QUIET but most significant development in Japan has been the astoundingly rapid growth of Soka-gakki, a new militant group which has grown from Nichiren-shu, an old ultra-right chauvinistic sect of Buddhists.

Starting in the poor quarters of Tokyo, it has spread like wild fire into the whole country, and is now the largest political organization, with 7 or 8 million fanatic devotees.

So many people are demanding membership that the leaders all over the country are unable to organise them quickly enough. Sohyo (TUC) is sounding the alarm, for its unions have been infiltrated by Soka-gakki.

The movement is getting massive support at every election, national or local. Youths, not only poor and ignorant, but many graduates of big universities, are turning to the sect. It is estimated that 700,000 or 800,000 youths are organised in its ranks. The

discipline is rigid; they are taught that they are the only true patriots and their mission is to save the country.

They are not yet armed, but at the last general election they acted as an action corps.

Kishi and Eisaku Sato, the leaders of the Japanese right wing, are secretly trying to fraternise with Soka-gakki. It is clear that the basis is being laid for a highly disciplined and drilled fascist movement for Japanese and American imperialism.

Other young people, workers and students, are turning to the Communist and Socialist parties and their youth organisations. The numbers are much smaller but still notable.

When the government relaxed its financial control for a few years, Japanese industry developed dynamically throughout the country. This development was arrested last year when the government re-imposed controls.

Socialists must show the people

what a boundless potentiality there is if only we have a planned economy based on nationalisation of the industries. At the moment socialist propaganda dwells only on the misery of the people.

The European Economic Community is viewed here only from an economic angle. We must emphasise the fact that it is the negation of the national state by the capitalists themselves.

The two bases of capitalism, private property and the national state, are thus ultimately proved to be historically anachronistic, one by the workers' countries and the other by EEC.

Japan is the last national state of advanced capitalism. Its dead end is being proved before our eyes.

The EEC has to be more clearly opposed with Leon Trotsky's programme of a United Socialist States of Europe. The growing boldness of young writers in Russia, reflecting the mood of the workers and also the vacillation of the top bureaucrats, will embolden broad masses of youths and workers in Russia and throughout the world.

New struggle at Nine Elms

Contractor sacks 21 men

By REG PERRY

THE fight of 34 constructional workers at the Nine Elms gas works in Battersea against unemployment and sackings broke out again this week when their employer, West Works, closed down one section of the site and sacked 21 men.

Busmen's paper slates Cousins

Newsletter Reporter

THE December issue of *Platform*, the rank and file bus workers' paper in London, sharply criticises Frank Cousins and the Transport and General Workers' Union for their lack of leadership in the fight for better wages and working conditions.

In the front page leader 'All Talk—No Do', it maintains that the new claim, presented by Cousins, for a substantial wage increase is a cover for accepting a 6 per cent increase which has already been won by underground workers in London.

'We shall have gone cap in hand to our employers to ask for something already negotiated for us in advance by another union.'

It goes on to condemn Cousins for his refusal to link the struggle of busmen with that of railway workers.

'Twice in 1962 the London bus section honestly tried to act jointly with underground railwaymen in the two protest strikes that were staged.

On both occasions we were thwarted by the direct intervention of Frank Cousins and the General Executive Council.'

It condemns the incessant talks on the 'package deal' which have lasted for 12 months between the busmen and the LTE, during which time busmen have been demanding action.

This criticism of Cousins, by a rank and file paper which in the past has too often apologised for him, should be noted by the 'lefts' in the Labour Party who still look to him as the new Messiah.

WORK-SHARING CALL FROM GARMENT WORKERS

AT the December meeting of the Leeds No. 2 branch of the National Union of Tailor and Garment Workers, the following resolution was passed:

'When unemployment threatens clothing workers the policy of work-sharing must be put into practice, not only in single factories but amongst groups of factories. This policy must be propagated now throughout the industry.'

This will be going to the Bi-annual conference of the union. Another resolution was passed calling for a £2 wage increase and for a 40-hour week.

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How to fight Unemployment

STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

THE Tory government and the employers have opened a new stage of their offensive against the labour movement. In a period of deepening economic and political crisis, the capitalist class is determined to drive down costs of production in order to maintain the rate of profit on its investments. This means intensified attacks on the conditions and organisation of the workers.

Spurred on by a powerful group of extreme right-wing back bench MPs, the government is preparing legislation against unofficial strikes. Under the guise of a so-called 'Workers' Charter giving very modest employment guarantees to a section of the working class, a clause stipulates that those who go on strike without two weeks' notice will lose any benefits from such a Bill.

The purpose of this legislation is first of all to divide the working class and feel out the ground for the possibility of introducing more definite anti-strike legislation at a later date.

The legislation comes at a time when speed-up in the factories is growing and unemployment figures are rising to a post-war record. Fearful of the consequences which these issues might have on the working conditions of their members, the Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions have decided to open immediate negotiations for a 40-hour week. This is correct, and the unions concerned should enjoy the fullest support from the trade union movement as a whole.

But it is impossible to separate this fight for the 40-hour week from industrial action to bring down the Tory government. The open and hostile intervention of Tory ministers in the case of the 40-hour week negotiated by Scottish building workers indicates that right from the start the government will stand with the employers in resisting the demands of the trade unions. You cannot fight for the 40-hour week without challenging the Tory government.

The Tories wanted unemployment in order to weaken the trade unions. They will now resist every effort to reduce hours, in a way that would make more jobs available for the unemployed workers.

Meanwhile, the employers continue their offensive. The announcement that the steel plants of the Steel Company of Wales are threatening a shutdown rather than make concessions to the genuine grievances of the bricklayers is another crack of the whip designed to have the same effect as that of the Ford bosses in Dagenham.

Faced with growing competition, the employers are working might and main to help the government build up unemployment and at the same time force the workers who are employed to

work harder. Every effort is being made to take advantage of the situation to attack shop organisation and working conditions. The offensive must be met by uniting all sections of the labour movement.

The National Committee of the Socialist Labour League calls for the maximum unity between the employed and unemployed workers. This is the only way that the threat of unemployment can be defeated. Unions must ensure that unemployed workers are not cut off from the trade union movement. Those out of work must be given associate membership of the appropriate union until they are re-employed.

In every locality threatened with unemployment, trade unionists must mobilise themselves in their organisations to reduce working hours by cutting out all overtime, and actively campaign for the full employment of those who are out of work.

We call upon workers everywhere to support the Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions' demand for the 40-hour week. Workers in the engineering unions should back up the demands of their leaders by preparing for all-out strike action if the 40-hour week is not granted. The fight of the engineers is directly connected to the fight against unemployment.

Workers fighting against redundancy and in defence of victimised shop stewards must be backed by solidarity action wherever possible. The union organisation at every place of work must be kept intact, and the policy of opposition to all sackings, sharing the available work, is the only way to achieve this.

Employers who pretend that redundancy is inevitable because they cannot afford to keep workers on the payroll must be forced to open their accounts to scrutiny by trade unionists and their representatives. In nationalised industries, like the railways, this should be linked with the demand that the inflated compensation and interest payments be stopped if the industry is in economic difficulties.

Public work schemes, financed by the government and by local authorities, must be started in areas where unemployment is high. In particular, Labour-controlled councils must extend their direct labour schemes to employ more building workers and produce council houses at a faster rate.

The National Committee of the Socialist Labour League urges trade unionists to demand a clear statement of policy from the Labour Party, that upon being returned to power at the next election it will immediately prepare legislation for the nationalisation of the basic industries, the introduction of workers' control and the establishment of a planned socialist economy in Britain.

16.12.62

'We won't give in' say Sheffield strikers

Newsletter Reporter

'WE have a good case. The men are solid and we'll stop in the lane till next July, if need be, to beat this lot.' These were the words of Bill Walker, the convenor of shop stewards at Davy United, Sheffield, where more than 600 men have been on strike for over three weeks following the sacking of 44 workers.

Mr. Steve Baker, director and general manager of the firm, said last week that a few trouble-makers were responsible.

'There will be no climb-down,' he went on. 'This strike does not have union backing. The men have been advised to return to work by their unions and have not done so.'

THREAT

Baker has threatened to issue dismissal notices to all the workers and then re-engage only those he wanted if the strike continues.

Speaking on behalf of the strike committee, Bill Walker issued a challenge to Mr. Baker. 'Let him name the trouble-makers,' he said.

Bill Walker himself has been working for the firm for 25 years and was on top merit money. One of those made 'redundant' had worked at Davy's for 27 years and had received a medal and £25.

The executives of two unions, the Electrical Trades Union and the Heating Domestic Engineers Union, have recognised the strike as official.

When members of the strike committee went to York last Thursday they met the AEU Executive Committee delegates to the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions meeting. Four of them contributed to the strike fund.

HOPEFUL

The strikers are hopeful that the Boilermakers' Union will declare the strike official before long.

'We are ready to go back under the following conditions,' the chairman of the strike committee said: 'that while the recognised procedure is being followed, either the dismissed men should be re-engaged or that the firm should continue to pay their wages in full until the procedure is exhausted. We are also ready to submit this matter to arbitration, again provided that the notices are withdrawn.'

In the men's present mood and with the support they are receiving from other engineering firms in different parts of the country, they will carry on for a long time.

Their only fear is that Bill Carron and his friends may step in and repeat the tactics they used at the BLSP dispute last year, which effectively smashed the strike.

VITAL

The Davy's United strike is of vital importance for engineering workers and for all workers everywhere. If the employing class are helped to get away with a policy of 'selective sacking', wages and conditions everywhere will be lowered.

The cause of the Davy United strikers is the cause of the working class as a whole. The committee needs urgently donations and messages of support.

They should be sent to: Bill Walker, Chairman Davy United Strike Committee, AEU Club, Stanley Street, Sheffield, 1.