

The Newsletter

WEEKLY JOURNAL OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

Labour must support Powerworkers' fight

Bring the Tories down now!

By our
Industrial
Correspondent

BRITAIN'S 130,000 power workers are heading for a sell-out if the electricity supply chiefs, the Minister of Labour, Mr. David Godber, and union representatives who met on Wednesday begin negotiations behind their backs.

The meeting was promoted by the Trades Union Congress general purposes committee, whose members include George Woodcock, general secretary, Victor Feather, assistant secretary, Fred Hayday, Sir William Carron, Frank Cousins and Robert Willis.

Last week negotiations between five unions and the power bosses broke down at a national joint council and on Monday the threatened go-slow and work-to-rule was enforced in the country's 240 power stations.

Overtime

The Newsletter has pointed out for the last few weeks that power workers are poorly paid and have to work many hours overtime to make up a living wage—some work 12 hours a day, seven days a week.

Overtime is essential to maintain two-thirds of the supply to industry and a third to domestic



Woodcock: arranged meeting

consumers. Some workers claim there are too few stations to provide this necessary power.

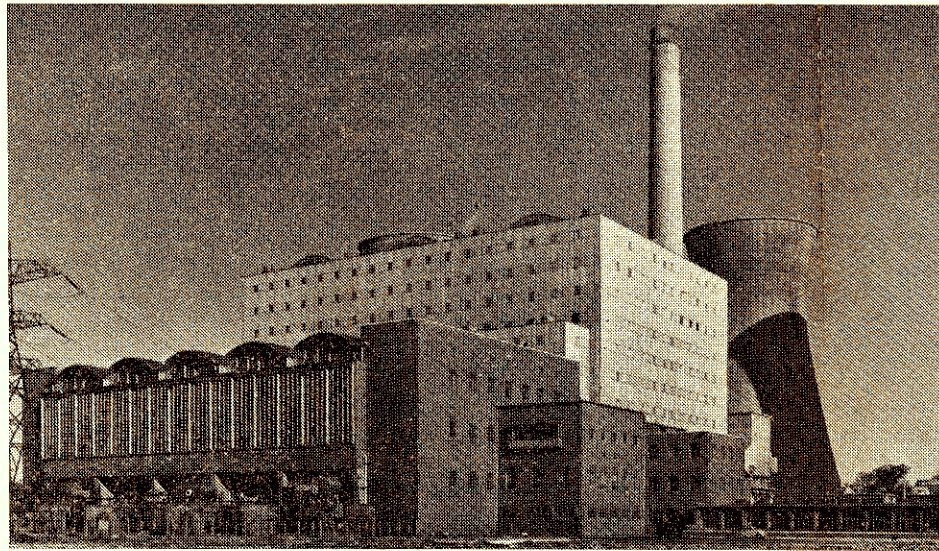
The deliberate policy of the Tories is to provide a certain output of power on the basis of sweating these workers to the maximum while keeping investment down to the minimum.

Claims

The men are claiming a 40-hour week, higher differentials for craftsmen, an extra week's holiday and long-service payments.

But participation by Woodcock, Cousins and other union leaders in the National Economic Development Council and the National Incomes Commission will bind them to a

This gigantic power station at Ferrybridge, Yorkshire, is one of 240 similar stations in Britain that have been hit by the work-to-rule and overtime ban by members of five unions. Picture reproduced by permission of the Central Electricity Generating Board.



'wage freeze' policy which they will be forced to impose on their members.

Power union leaders, posing as militants in their Council of Action, were quite willing to call the work-to-rule a day after summertime began because they knew there would be no great crisis in the supply—all peak periods between Monday and Wednesday were passed without cuts.

Hound

For leading last year's 'unofficial' work-to-rule in the depth of winter, ETU member, Charles Doyle, was hounded by the press—and union leaders.

This time the press, radio and television are taking the full opportunity to press home that each peak period is only just being passed so as to swing the public against the power workers.

Not too sure about the effects of the workers' action though, the government had troops standing by with mobile generators to send to crisis spots in the event of power cuts.

Denial

Why have the Labour leaders been so silent over this dispute? When pressed last week a Transport House spokesman admitted that George Brown had met William Tudor but denied that Wilson had told Tudor that disruption of power supplies could damage the party's election prospects.

Still the leaders remain silent while the powermen carry on their struggle against the Tories. The Labour Party and the whole labour movement should back this action in an all-out effort to bring the Tories tumbling before Home deigns to announce the election date.

British workers want an election now to rid the country of a party which can only muster a one-vote majority on an amendment to Resale Price Maintenance.

What about it Wilson?

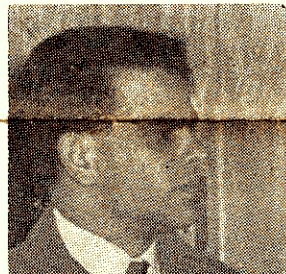
GOLLAN PROTEST

GENERAL SECRETARY of the British Communist Party, John Gollan, published a letter in Wednesday's 'Daily Worker' disassociating himself and his party members from an anti-semitic cartoon in a book on Judaism, published by the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. He has announced that he will write to Soviet communists on the matter.

(See story page three)

Newsletter editor at Leeds meeting says:

'Clear choice for Labour'



Mike Banda

IF it became a choice of the Labour Party supporting the power workers and postmen in their struggles and losing the election, they should choose the former, said Mike Banda, editor of The Newsletter, speaking in Leeds on Sunday.

At a 200-strong public meeting in Leeds Art Gallery Banda said Labour should stand by the working class no matter what the consequences would be.

He outlined the history of The Newsletter since its first issue seven years ago and described the way in which it helped the fight of the busmen and printers in 1958 and 1959.

'It was the first paper to warn of the anti-union activities of Edward Martell,' he added.

Of the Profumo affair, Banda said that the paper had helped to expose Rachman and other property racketeers and link this up with the whole corruptness of the ruling class.

'The Labour vote will mean that people are considering an alternative to capitalism. But the only future for the working class is to use its struggle against the employers not just its vote.'

'The mass redundancies on the railways, together with the big struggles which are developing in the motor car industry, on the docks, in the steel industry and with the post office and power workers make it clear that the capitalists are beginning to wage big attacks against the working class.'

Slaughter pointed out that the struggle of workers throughout the world must be linked up in an international war on capitalism.

The workers have nothing in common with their own ruling class and everything in common with the workers of other countries.

'But the Labour leaders do nothing. They want to have their cake and eat it too. They want socialism and the Royal Horse Guards.'

'But the experience of 1945 to 1951 has shown that capitalism cannot be administered by socialists to the benefit of the working class.'

'What really confronts us today is this. The whole labour movement must have a plan and a strategy to bring down the Tories and set up a socialist government.'

'The main task of leadership in this struggle will fall upon the youth.'

'We have to prepare a big fight against the reintroduction of conscription which will be used to decimate the youth movement,' he concluded.

Cliff Slaughter, a leading member of the Socialist Labour League, explained that all the

CND: the end of the road?

New Marxist
journal—
successor to
Labour
Review

THIS Easter will be the first since 1957 without a four-day march from Aldermaston by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Instead, there will be marches by two contingents through London on Monday, and various events on the other three days.

This marks the virtual collapse of the first post-war movement which was able to attract young people in large numbers.

Its decline is not due to a lack of rank and file enthusiasm, but the unwillingness of most of its leaders to turn to the labour movement and its fear of embarrassing the Labour Party.

The Newsletter has repeatedly called for this turn and for a militant fight against 'defence' programmes that protect a system which cannot even guarantee the right to work.

Streamline

It is this same system which defends the paradise for slum landlords and property racketeers, an economy which 'streamlines' miners, railwaymen and dockers out of jobs, and which hounds youth from the dole queues into sweat shops then calls on them to throw away their lives in the service of British imperialism.

The H-bomb is a product of capitalism in an epoch of decay and, as such, can only be got rid of by putting an end to capitalism itself.

In its six years of existence

CND has mobilised thousands of people on demonstrations of all kinds.

But it is no nearer to getting rid of the bomb than the day the movement was conceived.

Successive Tory governments have shown they are not open to persuasion by logic and reason. The power of prayer has proved inadequate against police dogs. The militarists have remained unmoved by the public flaunting of pacifist consciences.

Bandwagon

Several of the 'left' Labour MPs who eagerly jumped on the Aldermaston bandwagon in 1958 and 1959 have slipped quietly away as the prospect of a Labour government comes nearer.

In a few months' time the Labour leaders will, once again, be in charge of defending Her Majesty's dominions—with the aid of V-bombers.

Wilson has made it quite plain that his only differences with Home on the defence question are purely technical.

Pressure

The Communist Party, too, have 'used' CND to exert 'pressure for summit talks' and other diplomatic gimmicks.

The Socialist Labour League has associated itself with this struggle from its very inception. Under the slogan 'Stop Work on H-Bombs! Stop Work on H-Bomb Bases!' it has striven to mobilise every bit of support in the labour movement against this integral part of imperialism.

It was responsible for carrying this fight right into the Labour Party despite its proscription as an organisation by that body.

From this struggle it has gained considerable strength.

Appeal

We are making a direct appeal to all our readers on the many demonstrations this week to take this opportunity to familiarise themselves with our political policies and join us in the struggle to wrest power from the Tories and destroy once and for all the very cause of war and threat of war.

Mass sackings in Mersey shipyard

THE QUEUES are longer this week outside the Employment Exchange in Birkenhead following the sacking last week-end of several hundred workers at the shipbuilding yards of Cammell Lairds.

Local union officials are angry at the attempts being made by the local press to blame the sackings on the 160 members of the Boilermakers' Society, who have been on strike for two weeks for higher wages.

The District Organiser for the Boilermakers' Society told a Newsletter reporter that in fact the strike had had little to do with the employment situation in the shipyards. There has been a growing number of redundancies for some weeks and the mass redundancy now occurring is only a continuation of that trend.

Mr. Stephen Kalong Ningkan, Chief Minister of Sarawak, who is in Kuala Lumpur for a conference of Malaysian leaders said Indonesian troops had already made attacks in the south of Sarawak.

Indonesian workers took over a British rubber estate on March 18. They have asked for the government to recognise their management of the estate.

THE FIRST number of a journal of international Marxism is to appear this week.

It will be called 'Fourth International' and will be published by the International Committee of the Fourth International of which the Socialist Labour League is an affiliate.

A prominent feature of the first number is the report to the International Committee, held in September 1963, by Cliff Slaughter. This conference was preceded by the desertion of the Socialist Workers' Party from the policies of that Committee to the Pablo revisionists.

It examines the roots of revisionism in our movement and its relationship to the class struggle and bourgeois ideology.

The article takes up the degeneration of the Socialist Workers' Party as a leading section of the International Trotskyist movement and subjects the history of its theoretical degeneration to a close analysis—with very revealing results.

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It provides the key to an understanding of the degeneration of a section that was once the pride of the International and serves as a warning that a like fate awaits others who take the path of revisionism and unprincipled politics.

Another article by Michel Varga is entitled 'The Consequences of Peaceful Co-existence'.

This takes a close look at the sources and later development of Stalinism in international relations.

It relates this, however, to the Leninist attitude to the same situation as that confronted the Stalinists—of pacifism and imperialism.

Another article 'Trends in Soviet Literature' by a young French student, Jean Simon, takes up the theme of the struggle of the Soviet writers to break free from the grip of bureaucracy.

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This is only the first part of the article. It covers the period of Zhdanov, Stalin's attorney in the field of art; the period of the thaw—that is, the period following the death of Stalin and up to the Hungarian Revolution.

All in all, this bumper number of the 'Fourth International' (52 pages and illustrated) has got off to a good start.

It augurs well for the extension of the work of reconstructing the Fourth International from the existing bases of the parties of the International Committee.

Work on these contracts has been unaccountably delayed, with the result that there is no continuity of work between the structural and fitting-out stages.

Cammell Lairds have repeatedly publicised the fact that their order books are fuller than they have been for several years.

These orders include a heavy tonnage bulk carrier, two Cunard boats, an oil tanker for Shell, one conventional submarine and two nuclear-powered Polaris submarines for the Admiralty.

The Polaris submarines alone are estimated to be costing £30,000,000 and have involved the building of a new slipway.

It is significant that the sackings now taking place should occur just at the end of a massive £17,000,000 reconstruction and modernisation programme at the Birkenhead yards which have equipped Cammell Lairds with one of the most modern shipbuilding yards in Europe.

