

The Newsletter

WEEKLY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

Vol. 9, No. 421

November 27, 1965

Price 6d.

WORKERS HIT BACK

Against Labour policies

by The Editor

AS the right-wing Labour leaders proceed to sell out the working class to the Tory Party, thousands of rank-and-file workers are moving into action against government policies.

Tens of thousands of bakery workers absolutely refuse to have anything to do with the Prices and Incomes Board, which has been set up by Brown and Callaghan.

Their president, Mr. Haynes, a member of the General Council of the TUC, added:

'Our claim has been in the pipeline since April, and my members, with whom I identify myself completely, have been miserably treated.'

He described the Prices and Incomes Board as a 'sort of super-arbitration body'.

'We will,' he said, 'never submit to the old, bad conditions again.'

No choice

Mr. Haynes is one of those trade union leaders who have always gone along with the right wing of the TUC, but now the militancy of the rank and file of the Bakery Union leaves him no choice but to fight.

This is all to the good because it brings home to these workers the impossibility of the present position occupied by the TUC.

This leadership hob-nobs with the Tories and right-wing Labourites calling for an 'early warning' system on wage increase proposals whilst millions of workers are living on a hand-to-mouth basis.

The TUC is silent about the bakery strike and Mr. Haynes, apparently, has not been able to push them to come out in support.

For Wilson, Callaghan and Brown this strike constitutes the 'writing on the wall' for their policies. The working class are in a fighting mood and are determined not to allow the monopolies and big business to solve their problems at the expense of wages and working conditions.

No going back

This is also clearly true of the South Wales miners, of whom 6,000 marched in the pouring rain last Saturday in Cardiff. They also do not want to go back 'to the bad old days'.

Their general secretary, Mr. Paynter, a leading member of

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AID RHODESIAN WORKERS!

Newsletter Correspondent

THE African working class of the country that still bears the hated name, Rhodesia, has taken the lead internationally in the struggle for an independent Zimbabwe.

Alone, unaided, with bare hands, and rocks against tanks and guns, they have come out on strike against that creature of British Crown colony rule, the unilateral declaration of independence regime of Smith.

The Bulawayo strikers know that British sanctions are a farce, designed to maintain the Smith regime in power while, at the same time, playing to the United Nations and Organisation of African Unity gallery.

By using the highest form of strike, the political strike, they show that they place no reliance on these organisations.

These heroic people increasingly face the grave danger of having to fight not only against the police and troops of Smith, but also the possibility of British

army intervention against them. The African workers of Bulawayo and Salisbury urgently need every kind of support.

British firms in Rhodesia have sacked strikers. These same firms operate in Britain. What is the TUC doing about industrial action against such firms?

What is being done to organise a refusal by British dockers to load or off-load ships to and from South Africa, Mozambique and Angola?

What financial aid is going to the real anti-Smith struggle, namely, that of the African workers and peasants?

The British labour movement must give every possible material assistance to the workers of Rhodesia.

Every additional day that Wilson remains at the head of the Labour government means another month added to the life of Smith's regime. British labour's best contribution to the Rhodesian workers is to throw Wilson and Bottomley out—once and for all time.

Labour Party youth at Malvern

A FARCE OF A CONFERENCE

Newsletter Reporter

FRANK CHAPPLE, one of the right-wing leaders of the Electrical Trades Union, was called upon to whip into line the Labour Party Young Socialists Conference at Malvern, Worcestershire, last week-end.

As a result the right wing were able to win support from the delegates for the National Executive Committee's policy statement 'Industrial Training of Youth'.

A left-wing resolution opposing

the NEC was defeated. This was the first significant success for the right wing at a youth conference since the Young Socialists was founded in 1960.

How is it that this happens in a year of the most blatant betrayals of a Labour government in power?

In the first place, the Malvern conference was in no sense representative of the socialist youth. It was a rump conference. The main body of Young Socialists held their own conference independent of the right-wing bureaucrats in Morecambe last Easter.

All that was left at Malvern was a residue of right-wing careerist elements and those 'lefts' who had opposed 'Keep Left' and its supporters for organising the conference in Morecambe. Malvern was a farce.

USED CHANGES

The NEC made full use of the constitutional changes for the Labour Party Young Socialists, adopted at the recent Labour Party Conference. There was no Standing Orders' Committee—conference business was in the sole control of the platform.

The chairman, a right-winger, was installed by the NEC on the flimsy grounds that he was a National Committee member for the West Midlands Region.

Throughout the conference any opposition to the platform was treated with scarcely concealed contempt.

When, at the secret session, the delegates voted to refer back the Chief Youth Officer's report, dealing with constitutional changes, they were told that they were wasting their time.

In any case the conference was given no power to elect a National Committee to fight for this decision. Future National Committees will be appointed and not elected.

In addition, all of the major debates were introduced and concluded by Labour MPs and members of the NEC. Although the NEC had submitted a document on foreign affairs, no vote was allowed on this document.

Opposition to the right wing at the conference was supposed to be centred around the papers 'Young Guard' and 'The Militant'. Both these papers have consistently attacked 'Keep Left' on the grounds that it is impossible to build a socialist youth movement outside the Labour Party. This theory received a nasty jolt at Malvern.

The fact of the matter is that Wilson and company are not at all averse to continuing with the Labour Party Young Socialists if its annual conference can be bureaucratically dominated in the way that this one was.

MUST BREAK

Only one conclusion can be drawn from Malvern. It is impossible to build a mass socialist youth movement without a decisive break from bureaucracy.

None but the most openly careerist elements are going to be attracted to the kind of movement that the NEC has in mind. For so-called left-wingers to adopt as the major plank of their policy the need to stay in the Labour Party at all costs is playing into the hands of the right wing.

An attempt was made by one of two delegates from the 'Young Guard' grouping to force a showdown with the right wing. The only way they can continue that struggle is to learn from the lessons of 'Keep Left' and its supporters and join the main body of Young Socialists in preparing their conference at Morecambe in April 1966.

Miners march against pit closures—see full story page 4



6,000 Welsh miners marched in the rain through Cardiff last Saturday against the pit closures proposed by the National Coal Board (full story see page 4). For a background article to the closures see page 2.

SLL PUBLIC MEETING—LIVERPOOL

Union law—an international fight

WHEN we fight to organise the working class against the anti-trade union legislation we take part in an international struggle, said Cliff Slaughter at a well-attended meeting in Liverpool last Sunday.

He spoke of the seven Spanish workers who were imprisoned last week. They had led a procession to the Franco-controlled trade union office to protest against the dismissal of workers from a Babcock and Wilcox factory in Spain.

The same capital oppressed workers in Britain as in Spain. In Spain it used the fascist state, in Britain it used anti-trade union legislation.

Cliff Slaughter said that in dealing with Rhodesia all other organisations except the Socialist Labour League left the four million Africans out of consideration.

It was the job of British workers to fight for unity with the Africans. This meant a fight against Wilson.

Kith and kin

Smith and Wilson were kith and kin politically. Wilson wanted to negotiate with Smith or some other group of whites on the basis of the 1961 Constitution and continue to oppress Africans.

Peter Kerrigan said that workers should support the bakers' strike. The price of bread was 1s. 4d., but it was the four barons who were cleaning up the profits.

He spoke of the history of struggle on the docks and how the Devlin proposals were meant to destroy the dockers' militancy.

Harry Nicholas, the acting General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, had called for the reintroduction of 1305 law under which dockers would be imprisoned for going on strike. Dockers had smashed 1305 before.

'The Wilson government has broken every pledge they made to the workers,' declared Gerry Healy, national secretary of the Socialist Labour League. 'The Times' had said that there was nothing in the Queen's Speech that could be opposed by the Liberals or the Tories.

By handing over the docks to the big shipping and stevedoring firms, the Labour government was coming out in favour of monopoly.

'There is talk that they are preparing to prosecute us when

YOUNG SOCIALISTS

★CHRISTMAS BAZAAR★

Royal Arsenal Co-op Hall
Rye Lane, Peckham Rye
South-East London

November 27

Open from 11 a.m.-5.30 p.m.
YS Stall - Mod Stall
Sideshow - Gifts - Toys
Food Admission 6d.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

NEWCASTLE

7.30 p.m., Sunday, November 28
Bridge Hotel, Castle Square
Speakers: Cliff Slaughter, Editor,
'Fourth International', Jack Gale,
Central Committee Member, SLL,
Chairman: J. Williamson, Young
Socialists National Committee

ABERDEEN

7.30 p.m., Monday, November 29
Music Hall
Speaker: Mike Banda, Editor,
Newsletter

LABOUR COUNCIL BANS SLL ANTI-FASCIST MEETING

By Newsletter Reporter

ON October 16, the Socialist Labour League and the Young Socialists booked the Shackleton Hall, Southall, for a protest meeting against fascist attacks on members of the Young Socialists.

Mr. Gerry Healy, the National Secretary of the Socialist Labour League was booked to speak and a leaflet explaining the purpose of the meeting was issued as follows:

'On September 25th four Young Socialists were savagely beaten up by a mob of fascists in Southall. These fascists promised to break up all other Young Socialist meetings.

This attack is the direct result of the vicious campaign against immigrant workers and against trade unionists conducted by the Tories and their newspapers.

The campaign has resulted in the shameful action of the Labour government in strengthening the Immigration Act and announcing that it will introduce legislation into Parliament in December in relation to trade union wage claims.

The fascists' aim is to smash the Labour and trade union movement for the Tories. The Young Socialists and the Socialist Labour League call upon all workers, local Labour Parties, Communist Parties and trade union branches to unite to resist the fascists!

Let the fascists feel the anger of the working class. Clear them off the streets!

Repeal the Immigration Act and all amendments to it!

No legislation against the trade unions!

Members of the Labour Party, Communist Party, Trade Unions, the Young Communist League, the Indian Workers' Association, and the Young Socialists: unite against the fascists!

Cancellation

Some time afterwards the fascists booked the same hall for a meeting, whereupon Ealing Council, which controls the hall, announced a few days before the meeting was to be held that they could not have the hall on the grounds that it might be damaged.

On November 24, two days before the Socialist Labour League meeting was due to be held, the local organiser of the

(Cont. back page, col. 1)

I am writing on behalf of the Ealing Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers Branch and, I might add, all the people who have logic and the sense of reason, when we denounce the fascists and all they stand for.

We deplore such attacks of physical violence that your members have suffered.

We deplore all forms of racial discrimination, after all we are all human beings so let us act as such and not like a pack of wild animals.

We support you unanimously in your fight against the fascists in this area and anywhere else they may be.

On behalf of my 190 members.

Yours fraternally,
D. J. Brakespear.

London tally clerk A. H. Vincent says

Dockers need united action to beat Devlin

ON Friday, November 13, Peter Kerrigan of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers' ('Blue Union') in Liverpool, and the elected leader of some thousands of dockers on the Merseyside, held a dock-gate meeting outside the Royal Group of docks in London urging London dockers to attend a meeting at the Canning Town Hall the following Sunday.

As he had nothing to hide—the meeting was to discuss the Lord Devlin Report on the docks and to invite the dockers to reject his Report—he handed some leaflets to the dockers on the Thursday.

The dockers who profess to be the elected liaison committee of the Royal Group of docks, that is Messrs. J. Dash and Co. decided to do their utmost to prevent such attendance and so, on the morning that Peter Kerrigan spoke at the dock gates, out came a leaflet issued by the London Liaison Committee advising the dockers not to attend this meeting.

Let us look into the reasons for this attitude.

Meetings

First, the London Liaison Committee has held a number of early morning meetings outside the dock gates of about ten minutes speaking time addressing a few hundred dockers (who have to be there anyway to wait for their jobs), inviting them to reject the Devlin Report.

Also, they held a meeting at the Canning Town Hall to which just over 150 dockers attended and offered the acceptance of the Dockers' Charter, which was a foregone conclusion.

Numerous U.S. soldiers were in jail for 5-10 years for refusing to fight.

The real answer in Rhodesia was to send arms to the Africans. Socialists must demand that the Soviet Union send arms.

Attacking the proposed legislation against the unions he said: 'The only purpose which the unions have is to fight for the working class.'

He ended by declaring that the Socialist Labour League was the only organisation which told the working class: 'Power is what you need' and based all its activity on that.

However, Peter Kerrigan held his meeting on the Sunday with members attending from Liverpool and Hull in the North and a few from the various docks in London.

He spoke of the necessity of the dockers standing together on the agreed policy on the Devlin Report, irrespective of politics, in order to bring about the best of conditions for the dockers.

He stressed the need for workers' control and nationalization of the industry for the betterment of all.

Leader

Although the attendance at the meeting was not all one would want, those present applauded him and many dockers who heard him speak outside the dock gates remarked that he was the kind of speaker and leader that is wanted in London. I agree with them.

Other speakers mentioned the possibility of the government bringing to life again the war-time emergency Order 1305 to suppress the workers' right to stop work.

Bill Johnson from Liverpool spoke strongly on this. He has every right to do so, seeing that he was one of the dockers who was on trial at the Old Bailey through active support of the dockers in their hour of need, instead of just talking at the dock gates.

One speaker pointed out that perhaps even Lord Devlin might take an interest in how the port employers are twisting the Report to bring it in line with their own way of thinking. Devlin will also see that the money and time spent on the Report is not being wasted by the actions of the employers and trade union leaders.

Even if the Report was accepted without any opposition, it

(Cont. back page, col. 5)

Pit closures: Miners must fight Wilson and leadership

In April this year *The Newsletter* said the plan of the N.C.B. was to obtain as much coal as is produced now with less men. This would mean 120,000 men would lose their jobs. This figure is now confirmed in the N.C.B.'s latest announcements examined here by a *Newsletter* INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

- 150 PITS TO CLOSE WITHIN THREE YEARS
- 120,000 JOBS TO GO
- HIGHER OUTPUT PER MAN SHIFT
- WAGES HELD DOWN

THIS IS THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAMME FOR MINERS.

THE Plan for pit closures announced last week is a shattering blow to the miners who have loyally supported the Labour Party.

In Northumberland and Durham 48 collieries will close and 24,600 men will lose their jobs. In addition a further 20 pits in this region are classed as having a doubtful future. Though Dr. W. Reid, chairman of the Divisional Coal Board, says redundant miners will be absorbed the fact is that there will be at most only 20,500 vacancies in the remaining pits in this area in the next few years.

In the North-Western Region 18 out of 38 pits will close and a further six have a doubtful future. 8,987 men are employed in the pits due to close and 6,178 work in the 'doubtful' ones. Not one of the five Cumberland pits is expected to survive and since there is already 5 per cent unemployment in this district there is no hope of jobs there for the redundant miners.

In Scotland 33 pits employing 12,266 men will certainly close within the next five years and the future of 13 more pits is in doubt. Only 5,000 vacancies are expected to occur in the remaining Scottish pits.

In South Wales 25 collieries are to close and 19 more have a doubtful future. The labour force here will drop by about 10,000. In some areas of South Wales there will be 33 per cent unemployment.

In Yorkshire, regarded as one of the rich areas, there was a shock for the miners. Thirteen pits—employing between 5,000 and 7,000 men—are to go and a further 10, employing 13,000 men, are listed as doubtful. This latter list includes large pits such as Ackton Hall (1,430 men), Bentley (1,990), Hatfield (2,247), Thurcroft (1,370), Dinnington (1,400) and Denaby (1,060).

Many miners realise that the rosy promises of alternative jobs held out by Robens and other Coal Board chiefs are not to be relied on. Even if men are prepared to leave their homes, the rich coalfields are not going to be able to absorb all those displaced.

What hope is there for miners from Scotland, Lancashire and the North-East finding jobs in Yorkshire when 20,000 Yorkshire miners may be looking for places?

'Commuters'

And the East Midlands, on present figures, can only take about 2,500 men.

The West Midlands has 2,000 vacancies, but 550 men will lose their jobs in this region from the two pits that are to be closed.

Coal Board officials say miners must be prepared to travel up to 20 or 30 miles each way to work.

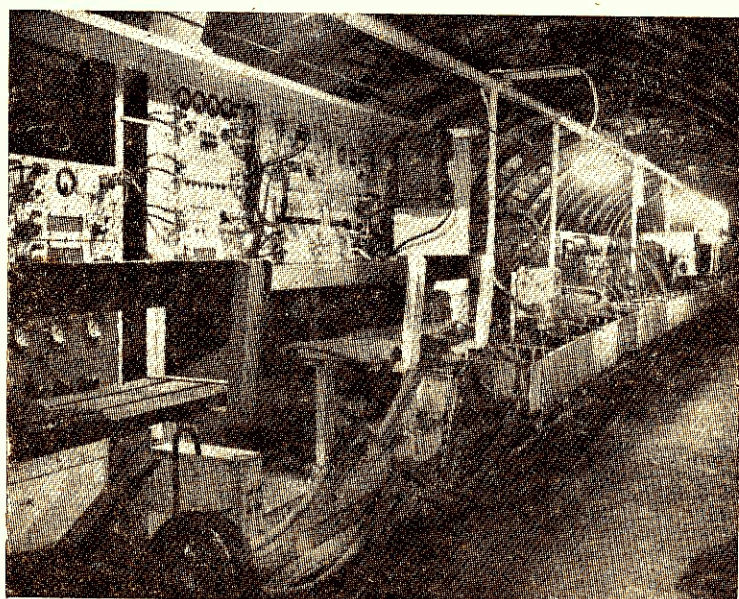
'The Guardian' says it is a question of whether miners 'are prepared to become commuters'.

But miners do not travel to work in bowlers and rolled umbrellas and sit behind a desk all day. They do one of the hardest, dirtiest and most dangerous jobs in British industry—and are now casually told that a couple of hours travelling time will be added to their working day—if they are lucky.

Moreover, many of the miners displaced will be over 50 years old. Are they going to find it easy to get another job?

What about the large number of miners who have been injured in the pit and at the moment have managed to get a job in the industry? Will it be easy for them?

How many men now working on the face will be expected to



Control panel of a longwall face mechanised unit.

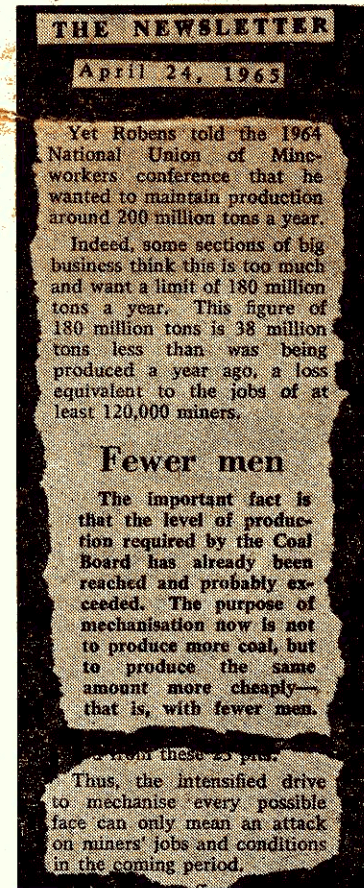
of 33 per cent in the labour force.

The threat to the miners' livelihoods makes nonsense of the government's claim that increased productivity means a prosperous Britain.

In 1964 productivity in Yorkshire increased by 5 per cent, in Scotland by over 4 per cent. Overall, in the last four years productivity in the mining industry has leaped up by 29 per cent. In the same time output-per-man-shift for face-workers has increased by 33 per cent.

Now a grateful Labour government is giving the miners their reward!

The Newsletter carried a warning about this six months ago. We wrote ('Conflict in the Coalfields', April 24, 1965) that production was well over 200 million tons a year, and we went on:



Mechanisation under capitalism means unemployment for the working class.

The Labour government, using the nationalized mining industry as a source of cheap fuel for the private monopolies, is carrying out measures which will bring hardship and suffering to thousands of miners and their families.

Mechanisation

Moreover, this is not the end of the attack on the miners. With the new longwall face

mechanised units it is possible to produce 23 tons per-man-shift, compared with 6½ tons produced on a normal mechanised face.

When Bevercotes Colliery in the East Midlands was first planned, it was estimated that it would employ 2,000 men using conventional methods. Now this first pit in the world to have fully mechanised control from coalface to surface will employ fewer than 800 men—and will get the same production.

When Lea Hall Colliery in the West Midlands was started in 1959 output was estimated at 1½ million tons a year using 3,000 men. Now they are getting 1½ millions tons a year—using 2,000 men.

Compensation

These are the pointers to the future.

Wilson, Robens and Brown, while 'regretting' that miners must lose their livelihoods when pits close, do not point out that compensation will continue to be paid to the money-lenders on these pits, as it continues to be paid for some pits which have been closed since 1947!

In 1947, when the mines were nationalized, £388 million was paid out in compensation.

Money was borrowed to make these payments and interest is still being paid on £300 million of this, at the rate of £40 million a year. That is why there is a financial crisis in the mining industry.

As we pointed out in *The Newsletter* on May 8 this year ('Conflict in the Coalfields', Part 3), depreciation payments are manipulated by the Coal Board in such a way that the real financial state of the industry is hidden.

Over £80 million a year is set aside for depreciation, yet this figure was designed to cover an industry much larger than the coal industry is today.

Thus, in 1962, the Coal Board figures showed a tiny surplus of £1.4 million. In fact, £80 million had been set aside for depreciation and £40 million had been paid out in interest, so that the real surplus was over £120 million.

In addition, we pointed out that the Central Obsolescence Fund was being used to justify closures on 'economic' grounds. This fund is raised by a levy on each region and is designed to cover losses through pit closures.

But since 1962 closures have been charged against normal depreciation provisions. Thus coalfields like Scotland are paying into the Central Obsolescence Fund and paying for losses incurred through closures from normal depreciation payments.

Miners must now challenge the right of the government and the Coal Board to ruin men's lives with no more consideration than if they were pawns on a chess board.

Grading

They must fight not only against closures but also against the system of grading pits which has now been introduced into England and Wales.

This system, which has operated in Scotland for some time, divides pits into Categories—A (with a secure future), B (with a doubtful



All miners must now carefully consider the programme of the Socialist Labour League which has fought through *The Newsletter* for the rank-and-file miner.

future), C1 (to close within five years) and C2 (to close immediately). Miners are told that it is possible to upgrade or downgrade pits.

This system is a whip held over the miners' heads.

There is a constant threat to Grade A pits that they will be down-graded—as happened some time ago to Polkemmet pit in Scotland after a number of disputes there.

But no fight can be carried on against the government and the Coal Board without a fight also against the existing union leadership.

The right-wing and Stalinist leadership has put up no resistance to pit closures in the past. Over the last four years 154 pits have closed without the slightest fight from these 'leaders'.

Particular attention should be paid by miners to the statement of an official of the South Wales NUM.

'Dramatisation'

According to a report in the national press on November 19, this official described the publication of the list of closures as 'an overdramatisation of a situation known to us and the Divisional Coal Board'.

After pointing out that the union and the Board had been successful in improving produc-

Not only have the leaders of the NUM failed to lead any fight against pit closures and failed to establish any safeguards for their members against the advance of mechanisation, they have allowed the wages of miners to drop behind.

Wages have not increased anything like the rate of productivity in the mines.

The average day-wage is still only £11 10s. The minimum underground wage is still around £13. In the last five years the average weekly wage of underground miners has increased by 11 per cent while the cost of living index has risen by 15 per cent in the same period.

Pay rates

Many miners are divided by different rates of pay in different areas, and even in different pits in the same area.

The NUM has just agreed at national level to a pay settlement for men working on remote controlled faces. They have accepted an offer from the Coal Board of 80s a shift in the Nottingham area and 72s. 6d. a shift in the Yorkshire area.

Although this has been agreed at national level it has been rejected by both the Nottingham and the Yorkshire miners.



The latest NCB proposals envisage 120,000 fewer miners in the pits.

tion in many pits, he went on:

'We see no reason for publishing this document and none for the Coal Board at national level changing its methods of giving information. It might undo months of good work.'

Thus there is trouble brewing not only over closures, but also over pay, even in the most prosperous coalfields.

But miners must remember that in 1964 it was Will Paynter who did not follow a clear call from the ranks to fight for a decent wage increase for day-wage men.

It was Paynter's speech, in which he declared that he was speaking for himself and not just the executive which was circulated round every NUM branch in Lancashire by the right-wing Lancashire leadership.

Today the fight for survival that faces the miners is not just a fight against the management and the Coal Board. It is a fight also against the Labour government, which can attack the miners while running away from steel nationalization. And it is a struggle against the union leaders.

The Socialist Labour League puts forward the following programme for miners:

- Workers' Control of the Nationalized Industries

Workers' control over all questions of closure, grading of labour, introduction of machinery, safety and deployment of labour. Where pits are genuinely worked out, miners' wages must be maintained until suitable alternative employment is found.

- Open the Books

Why should miners accept the figures produced by NCB officials who are faithful servants of capitalism? The miners themselves, through sympathetic experts, must examine the industry's books to discover the real financial situation and thus decide on pricing policy, etc.

- Suspend Interest Payments

If the industry is really in a financial crisis then the yearly burden of interest payments must be suspended. It is better that the rich should wait for their money than men, who have worked for years in the industry, should lose their jobs and their homes.

- Extend Nationalization

All talk of a 'National Fuel Policy' is just rubbish as long as private capital dominates the economy. All industries connected with fuel and depending on fuel must be nationalized. This would include oil, steel, chemicals, mining machinery and coal distribution.

- Shorter Hours and Increased Pay

Miners today are still working longer hours than were recommended by the Sankey Commission in 1919! As a guarantee that mechanisation will not be at the expense of the miners, there must be a demand for shorter hours and longer holidays for all miners without loss of pay. There should be an immediate increase in pay for all day-wage workers to bring them to a decent wage level, and wage increases for all miners must keep pace with the rapidly increasing productivity in the industry.

- Unity of all Workers Against Attacks on their Conditions

The miners today do not face the old coal owners but a state body backed by the government. The attacks on the miners are being carried out by a Labour government acting on behalf of the capitalist class as a whole and dictated to by international capitalist finance. The attack on the dockers through the Devlin Report, the appointment of a 'trouble-shooter' in the motor industry, the preparations to axe the shipbuilding industry and—above all—the planned legislation against the unions and the right to strike, are all part of the same thing.

Miners should unite with these workers and link their struggles by supporting the lobby of Parliament called by the Lambeth Trades Council for January 26.

- Build a New Leadership

None of these demands can be won under the present leadership of the National Union of Mineworkers or the Labour Party. A new leadership must be built in struggle against these old leaders, around the policies listed above. The Young Socialists have already shown how to wage such a struggle.

All miners should now examine the record of Wilson, Brown, Ford and Paynter and consider carefully the programme of the Socialist Labour League.

READ Miners and Mechanisation

A Newsletter Pamphlet by Peter Jeffries

Price 3d.

available from 186a Clapham High St., London, S.W.4

Stalinists in a panic

THE news that Russian historians are to write a new history of the Revolution, in which the role of Trotsky will be given more prominence, has caused consternation inside the British Communist Party.

Leading Stalinists, such as Bert Ramelson (the Yorkshire Area Secretary of the Communist Party and a member of its National Executive), have been saying for 30 years that Trotsky was an agent of Hitler and played an insignificant role in the Revolution. These people are now having to eat their words and seek desperately for flimsy excuses to cover up for three decades of lies.

At a meeting of the South Leeds Communist Party branch recently, Ramelson delivered a so-called 'lecture' on Trotskyism. He was unable, however, to prevent a member of the Central Committee of the Socialist Labour League from attending that meeting. Here, in a series of three articles, is every point made by Ramelson, answered from the standpoint of Marxism.

I According to Ramelson, Trotsky was for years opposed to a Revolution in Russia. Before the Revolution, says Ramelson, the Bolsheviks argued that the working class must ally with the peasants, the Mensheviks that it must ally with the middle class, whereas Trotsky said you could trust neither the peasants nor the middle class and that the Russian working class must wait for the Revolution in the West.

To back this up he gave a quotation from Trotsky without revealing its source:

'Without the direct state support of the European proletariat, the working class of Russia will not be able to remain in power.'

This, Ramelson declared, proves that Trotsky was telling the Russian working class to sit back and do nothing until the working class had taken power in the West.

This quotation, in fact, comes from 'Results and Prospects', written by Trotsky in 1906.

A reading of this pamphlet makes it very clear that Trotsky was arguing that it was possible for the working class in Russia, in alliance with the peasantry, to be the first to seize power; that the bourgeoisie of Russia was incapable of completing the democratic revolution and that the working class would have to carry this through to the socialist revolution, without waiting for the working class in the West; and that this would give a stimulus to the socialist revolution in the West.

It is a pity that Ramelson not only did not tell his members where to find this quotation, but that he did not read a little further himself.

For Trotsky goes on to say:

'This will from the very outset impart an international character to the development of the events and open the broadest perspectives: the working class of Russia

by leading in the political emancipation will rise to a height unknown in history, gather into its hands colossal forces and means and become the initiator of the liquidation of capitalism on a global scale.' (My emphasis—J.G.)

2 Ramelson claims that the Trotskyists have 'created a myth' that Trotsky was always the ally and supporter of Lenin. 'They do not tell their young 17-year-olds' says he, 'about the opposition between Lenin and Trotsky before Trotsky joined the Bolsheviks in 1917.' Trotsky and his supporters suppressed this, according to Ramelson.

To prove this Ramelson quoted from Trotsky attacking Lenin in 1909, 1913 and 1917, and Lenin attacking Trotsky in 1910, 1914 and 1917. But he never said just where Trotskyists are supposed to have claimed that there were never any differences between Lenin and Trotsky. Nor did he explain what these differences were about.

The truth is that in his book 'My Life', Trotsky deals very fully with his break with Lenin at the 2nd Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in 1903. On page 161 of this book Trotsky writes:

'Revolutionary centralism is a harsh, imperative and exacting principle. It often takes the guise of absolute ruthlessness in its relation to individual members, to whole groups of former associates. . . . It is only the most impassioned, revolutionary striving for a definite end—a striving that is utterly free from anything base or personal—that can justify such a personal ruthlessness. In 1903 the whole point at issue was nothing more than Lenin's desire to get rid of Axelrod and Zaslulitch off the editorial board of 'Iskra'. My attitude toward them was full of respect and there was an element of personal affection as well. Lenin also thought highly of what they had done in the past. But he believed that they were becoming an impediment for the future. This led him to conclude that they must be removed from their position of leadership. I could not agree. My whole being seemed to protest against this merciless cutting off of the older ones when they were at last on the threshold of an organised party. It was my indignation at his attitude that really led to my parting from him at the second congress. His behaviour seemed unpardonable to me, both horrible and outrageous. And yet politically it was right and necessary, from the point of view of organisation. Lenin understood this before anyone else did.

'My break with Lenin occurred on what might be considered "moral" or even personal grounds. But this was merely on the surface. At bottom, the separation was of a political nature and merely expressed itself in the realm of organisational methods. I thought of myself as a centralist. But there is no doubt that at that time I did not fully realise what an intense and imperious centralism the revolutionary party would need to lead millions of people in a war against the old order. . . . At the time of the London Congress in 1903, revolution was still largely a theoretical abstraction to me. Independently, I still could not see Lenin's centralism as the logical conclusion of a clear revolutionary concept.'

How does this become 'creating a myth' that there were no differences between Lenin and Trotsky? How is this 'suppressing' the split between Lenin and Trotsky? But this book was written in 1929.

Are we to conclude that Ramelson delivers a lecture without reading one of the most im-

portant books written by the man he is lecturing about? Or that he has read this book but chooses to ignore it and repeats charges which he knows are completely untrue?

What is most important is that Trotsky absorbed this lesson.

That is why Trotskyists are struggling to build such parties today in Britain and throughout the world, while the Communist Parties make continual compromises with the Church, with nationalism, and with opportunism of all kinds.

One other question needs answering. Why, when dealing with the years before 1917, did Ramelson omit all mention of 1905?

Could it be because in the Revolution of 1905 Trotsky was the leader of the Petrograd Soviet?

Or because the Bolshevik faction on the Soviet worked completely in harmony with Trotsky, and Lenin himself had no differences whatever with Trotsky during this revolution?

Or because when Trotsky was arrested after the revolution he rejected the advice of the Mensheviks that the members of the Soviet should plead that they had not planned an insurrection and instead led the defendants, with the full approval of Lenin, in declaring boldly in court that they had the political responsibility to lead an insurrection?

3 Even Ramelson now has to admit that Trotsky played a leading role in the Russian Revolution.

'It is a pity,' he now says, 'that the contribution of Trotsky between 1917-1920 was totally ignored.' He has to admit that Trotsky was brought straight on to the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, that he was a Bolshevik Minister, that he played —to quote Ramelson's own words—'a magnificent role in the Red Army'.

First of all, let us get the record straight.

Trotsky was arrested on July 23, 1917, and was brought onto the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party while still in prison.

On September 23, 1917, he was elected President of the Petrograd Soviet.

On October 9, 1917, he was made Chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee which planned the actual insurrection.

When the Bolshevik government was formed, he became Commissar for Foreign Affairs, and in December 1917 he led the Russian contingent at the Brest-Litovsk negotiations with the Germans.

He became Commissar for War in which capacity he built the Red Army from a few thousand Red Guards in October 1917 into an army of five million men in two and a half years. He directed this army in defeating the invasion of the White Armies and the imperialist troops.

In 1919 he was responsible for the reorganisation of the entire transport system of the Soviet Union. This had been in a state of ruin and, had it not been pulled round, the entire economy would have collapsed.

Amidst dozens of other jobs, he had charge of anti-religious propaganda throughout the Soviet Union.

A Marxist is required to explain the political basis on which Lenin and Trotsky came together. The facts are these:

The February Revolution did not bring the Bolsheviks to power but created a dual power between the Provisional government (which included capitalist Ministers and was eventually led by the fake 'socialist' Kerensky), and the Soviets, in which the workers, peasants and soldiers were organised.

The Provisional government continued the imperialist war, with all the sufferings for the masses that that involved.

When Lenin returned to Russia in April 1917 he demanded the overthrow of the Provisional

The lies about



Trotsky are wearing thin

by Jack Gale

government. He found himself in a minority of one on the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party.

Indeed, the Party newspaper, 'Pravda', then edited by Stalin and Molotov, carried articles supporting the Provisional government and at one time suppressed Lenin's articles.

When Trotsky returned to Russia, in May 1917, he also demanded the overthrow of the Provisional government.

It was this fundamental political agreement on the need for proletarian revolution which brought Lenin and Trotsky together. Since that time, Lenin said, there has been 'no better Bolshevik' than Trotsky.

4 Trotsky, says Ramelson, became 'too big-headed' and fought against Lenin over Brest-Litovsk and the trade unions. Stalin gained his position in the Soviet Union because he fought for Lenin's ideas against Trotsky.

According to Ramelson, Lenin was for signing a peace with Germany while Trotsky was for continuing the war. It was Trotsky, Ramelson says, who led the opposition to Lenin with the result that the Bolsheviks finally had to accept much worse terms than the Germans had offered in the first place.

This statement is a very interesting distortion. What are the facts?

Trotsky led the Russian delegation at the Brest-Litovsk negotiations. After one month's negotiations he reported back to the Bolshevik Central Committee on January 8, 1918. Lenin urged acceptance of the German terms while Trotsky urged not a revolutionary war, but drawing out

The first of three articles answering a lecture

by Yorkshire Area Secretary of the Communist Party, Bert Ramelson, on Trotskyism

the negotiations, neither war nor peace, on the grounds that anti-war strikes had broken out in Germany and Austria. Hostilities were not taking place at this time.

It was not Trotsky, but Bukharin, who advocated a revolutionary war.

It was not Trotsky's position but Bukharin's which was carried at that Central Committee meeting. The actual voting was: for Bukharin's position 32 votes, for Trotsky's position 16 votes, for Lenin's position 15 votes. It was not Trotsky who carried the party against Lenin, but Bukharin.

Why does Ramelson substitute Trotsky for Bukharin in this dispute? Because for many years, up to 1928, Bukharin was allied with Stalin against Trotsky.

It was Bukharin who produced the theory of 'Socialism in One Country', so beloved of the Stalinists. Similarly, it was Dzerzhinsky, also a close supporter of Stalin against Trotsky, who accused Lenin of surrendering the whole programme of the revolution.

In fact, in January 1918, Lenin proposed in the Central Committee that Trotsky be authorised to delay the signing of a peace for as long as possible.

The dispute was resolved in the following way. The Bolsheviks withdrew from Brest-Litovsk, without signing peace terms, on February 10, 1918. The Germans

Trotsky was the one who first proposed that incentive payments should operate in the countryside in order to encourage the peasants to feed the towns. This idea, although rejected at first, was later adopted by Lenin in the New Economic Policy.

But meanwhile Russia was in an economic blind alley. In these circumstances Trotsky, who was reorganising the transport system by military discipline, considered that the trade unions had no independent role and sought to include them in the system of state administration of industry and state distribution of products.

Lenin considered that Trotsky over-simplified the relation between the working class and the Soviet state. In his speech on December 30, 1920, Lenin said:

'Comrade Trotsky speaks of the workers' state. Permit me, this is an abstraction. . . . Our state is in reality not a workers' state but a workers' and peasants' state. . . . Our present state is such that the inclusively-organised proletariat must defend itself, and we must utilise these workers' organisations for the defence of the workers against their state and for the defence of our state by the workers.'

In other words, it was precisely because of his vigilance against bureaucracy in the state that Lenin corrected Trotsky on this point. Proof of this is to be found in his remarks a few weeks later, on January 19, 1921.

He wrote:

'I stated, "our state is a workers' and peasants' state" . . . On reading the report of the discussion I now see that I was wrong. . . . I should have said: "The workers' state is an abstraction. In reality we have a workers' state with the following peculiar features (1) it is the peasants and not the workers who predominate in the population and (2) it is a workers' state with bureaucratic deformations".'

Where Ramelson extracts and isolates one important point of difference for his own purposes, he ignores the main content of the period—the struggle for the

establishment of a workers' state against bureaucracy, a struggle begun by Lenin and continued by Trotsky.

How true is Ramelson's claim that Stalin fought for Lenin's ideas against Trotsky? It is not true at all.

In his last years Lenin began a fight against Stalin and urged Trotsky to join him in it.

Lenin had had to oppose Stalin (when he was Commissar of Nationalities) for brutal methods against national minorities, particularly in Georgia, and had accused him of a 'Great Russian Nationalist Campaign'.

He launched a strong attack on bureaucracy in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection—which was headed by Stalin. And in the postscript to his will—long said to be a forgery, according to many British Stalinists, but finally admitted to be genuine by Khrushchev in 1956—Lenin said this about Stalin:

'Stalin is too rude, and this fault, entirely supportable in relations among us Communists, becomes insupportable in the office of General Secretary. Therefore I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and appoint yet another man who in all respects differs from Stalin only in superiority namely more patient, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc.'

Since in his will Lenin had declared that the two most able men in the Party were Stalin and Trotsky, who did this leave to be Lenin's choice for leader after him, Mr. Ramelson?

Add to that that Lenin had urged Trotsky to accept the post of Vice-Premier; that he had written to Trotsky urging him to form a bloc with himself against bureaucracy; that he had appealed to Trotsky to take up the fight against Stalin on the Nationalities question—and where does that leave your picture of Stalin as the fighter for Lenin's ideas, Mr. Ramelson?

Will Mr. Ramelson try to say that it is a Trotskyist lie that Lenin lined himself up with Trotsky against Stalin? Be careful, Mr. Ramelson, so many of those Trotskyite 'lies' have turned out to be true.



Lenin (extreme right in this picture) was in a minority of one on the Bolshevik Central Committee when he returned to Russia in April 1917. His position was strengthened when Trotsky returned and demanded, with Lenin, the overthrow of the Provisional government.

then resumed their offensive.

There was still a majority of one against Lenin on the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party until February 18 when Trotsky, seeing that the anti-war strikes in Germany and Austria had failed and that the divisions in the German ruling class had not prevented an offensive, voted with Lenin and gave him a majority.

The Bolshevik Central Committee then charged Lenin and Trotsky with the task of framing a message to the Germans suiting for peace. The entire Central Committee unanimously voted for Trotsky to remain Commissar for Foreign Affairs until the peace was signed.

What was the truth about the trade union dispute?

According to Ramelson, Trotsky was contemptuous of the working class and thought that under socialism the trade unions should be organs of the state.

But the facts are much more complicated than this convenient over-simplification.

After the Revolution the entire Russian economy was in decay. The Bolsheviks had instituted war Communism, under which food was requisitioned and collected from the countryside by the state forces, all distribution of products was by government order only, and production was carried on under military discipline.

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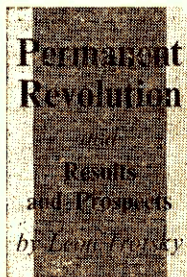
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Support the fight for a socialist 'daily' — says Mike Banda in Birmingham

By Sylvia Pick

THE vital need for a daily communist newspaper which could be used as 'the battering-ram of the working class' in their struggles against monopoly capitalism, was stressed by Mike Banda, Editor of The Newsletter, in Birmingham last Sunday.

He was speaking at a joint meeting organised by the Young Socialists and the Socialist Labour League.

To all workers, young and adult alike, he appealed for support in the campaign to build such a paper, which would have to be fought for by the working class and its role would be to fight on behalf of the working class.

Political conditions inside and outside Britain were working mightily for such a paper, Banda declared.

Wilson's complete subservience to the instructions of President Johnson and Lord Cromer, Governor of the Bank of England, would destroy the Labour Party altogether.

The Communist Party, 'running around like a chicken without its head', was unable to organise any opposition because it supported the policies of Wilson and was therefore serving the cause of monopoly capitalism in this country.

'Fake lefts' were making all kinds of noises about Vietnam and steel nationalization, and pleading with Smith to release political prisoners in Rhodesia, but they were nothing but 'lobby fodder' in the Labour Party.

END EXPLOITATION

'The League's policy is one worth fighting for. Why should we endure unemployment, exploitation, colonial wars and repression of workers in the colonies? All this can be ended by a revolutionary struggle in collaboration with working people in all countries.'

Wilson was no friend of the working class in Britain, in Africa or anywhere else. Rhodesia had been a haven of big business for many years, a privileged sanctuary for parasites who enslaved, oppressed and humiliated four million African people.

The continuation of Wilson in office endangered the safety alike of African workers and workers in this country. The Socialist Labour League stood by The Newsletter headline of 'Arm the Africans'. This was the only way to support the interests of African workers. It could act like a clarion call and end apartheid in a very short time.

Aileen Jennings, Editor of the youth paper 'Keep Left', spoke to the large number of young people present of the leading role of youth in the world-wide struggle against monopoly capitalism.

The Young Socialists and the Socialist Labour League were the only organisations which had warned and fought against the betrayals of the Wilson leadership.

SLL MEETING BANNED

League was informed that the meeting was also being cancelled on the same grounds as that applied to the fascists.

In a statement to the press, Mr. Healy, secretary of the SLL, said there was absolutely no truth in the suggestion that there would be damage done to the hall.

'We are going to assemble at Shackleton Hall and will demonstrate through Southall as a protest. Meanwhile we will take the matter up through every channel possible,' he said.

'The fascists in Southall are a cowardly gang who crawl out of dark alleys to hit workers from behind. They dare not face a meeting of the working class and the labour movement.'

'The action of the Ealing Council is an evasion and a hiding behind the coat-tails of the fascists in what is nothing more than an attempt to prevent a workers' organisation from voicing its disgust at fascist brutality.'

'A large sum of money was spent in publicising the meeting, yet the Council had to wait for almost five weeks before they could make up their minds. We do not intend to let the matter rest there. We are convinced that the real story has not yet come to light.'

'It is well known that leading white members of the Communist Party in the Southall area, much to the disgust of other immigrant communists, have been playing a double game on the question of racism.'

'Outwardly they oppose it, but secretly and behind the scenes they run to the right-wing Labourites to ban meetings and to keep the whole thing hidden in the background.'

'Such actions only strengthen the fascists and make them more arrogant in their attacks on the working class and the labour movement.'

'This is what the Labourites did in Germany, but they wound up in prison, just the same as the revolutionary communists. A retreat before the fascists is nothing more than a strengthening of fascism. They must be driven off the streets for good.'

the strength of the working class to resist attack,' she declared. 'Proof of their full strength is that Wilson has to crawl to the monopolists and try to bring in legislation against the trade unions.'

It was most important that the working class began to mobilise against this attack. She urged all young workers to support the January 26 Lobby of Parliament.

Jack Gale, Central Committee member of the Socialist Labour League, declared that it was not inevitable that Wilson would get away with the proposed legislation against the trade unions. He could be stopped by the mobilisation of the working class against it.

SIT-DOWN STRIKE AT B'HAM FACTORY

NINETEEN toolmakers at the press tool firm of Birmingham Engineering Company received letters last week giving a week's notice after they had been on strike for four days over a wage claim.

After the management had allegedly refused to concede the workers' demand of 1s. 6d. an hour increase, the men, members of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, decided to have a sit-down strike. The toolmakers clocked in every day and said they would make themselves available for work on condition that 'the firm would discuss the claim seriously'.

No satisfaction

In spite of a statement by the District Secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, after three days of dispute, that the firm was prepared to agree to a discussion on the claim, the strikers claimed that they could get no satisfaction.

The letter received by the men after four days' strike stated that 'due to the fact that we are unable to carry on business under the prevailing conditions and the present unofficial strike, we have no alternative but to give you one week's notice.'

'You can if you wish work the week's notice, and the works will be open as usual on Monday.'

'If you do not wish to work next week we must refuse to allow you to enter these premises...'

The toolmakers, however, have said they are determined to fight the claim through and they are receiving support from the women workers employed at the factory.

A CALL TO ALL MINERS Mandate MP's to vote against pit closures

By Our Industrial Correspondent

LAST Saturday morning, thousands of South Wales miners marched through Cardiff in a massive demonstration against pit closures.

The demonstration was given added importance by the National Coal Board's announcement, two days before, of further closures, putting more South Wales collieries on the danger list.

Over a quarter of all pits in the area are destined for closure in the immediate future—this is apart from the large number of mines on the NCB list of 'probables' and 'possibles'.

The Stalinist policies of the Communist Party were apparent on the mass-produced placards carried on the march—'Direct alternative industries to Wales' was one of the commonest.

The treacherous policy of 'loyal opposition' to capitalism and the right-wing of the Labour Party was the main feature of the mass meeting after the march.

Leo Abse, lawyer and Labour MP for the mining constituency of Pontypool, protested that 'working people have always paid for technological change, and it is our job to see that they do not have to do so again'.

But he did not say how this is to be done.

Will Paynter, Communist general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, repeated the same combination of militant phrases.

He made strongly-worded statements about the closure policy:

'Maximum resistance'

'We have to develop the maximum resistance to it, and, if necessary, produce a situation as a union where we are not submissive or crawling abjectly to the government in our defence, but where they have to come to us to discuss what the future of the industry will be.'

Yet he apologised for having to 'engage in public criticism of a government of our own choosing'.

In fact, neither he nor Abse mentioned once the Devlin Report, the unemployment threat to railmen and steel workers, the incomes policy, or the proposed legislation to restrict trade union rights.

They did not show the pit closure policy as part of the political attack on the working class as a whole being carried out by right-wing Labour on behalf of the employing class.

Many miners rejected the resolution of the NUM area executive which was carried at the end of the meeting. This was a 'pledge to the Labour government', calling for a slowing down of closures and a meeting between the NUM leaders, Wilson, the Power Minister and the NCB.

This resolution was completely exposed by miners, many of whom want to prepare for strike action.

But there is a real danger that militancy could take narrow, anti-political forms.

This must be avoided by showing that the fight against pit closures is inseparable from the campaign against anti-trade union legislation and the construction of an alternative leadership for the labour movement.

As one miner leaving the meeting said: 'We can bring down this government, and we should.'

Miners must add the demand: **Mandate NUM-sponsored Labour MPs to vote against the government on pit closures, anti-trade union legislation, and all anti-working-class measures to those outlined on page 2.**

WORKERS HIT BACK

From page 1

the Communist Party who has consistently sheltered behind the right wing in the Mineworkers' Union, was forced to criticise the policy of the government over pit closures.

He made some militant statements at the meeting which the miners, we are sure, will not take too seriously.

The fact that they were able to bring 6,000 out on the streets with scarcely two days' preparation, reflects the feeling of men in a fighting mood.

Like the bakers, they are to be relied upon to fight the government all down the line when it sets out to implement its reactionary policies.

This will also be the case of the dockers. Not a single meeting of rank-and-file portworkers has endorsed the Devlin Report.

Every meeting held in the Northern and Southern ports has rejected this Report.

A serious struggle will undoubtedly begin when the government tries to implement it.

What is needed now more than ever is the closest possible relationship between all workers engaged in struggle.

'Unity in action' is the slogan of the hour.

Scottish mine closures — rank and file must demand militant action

THE government's 'national plan' for the mines will mean that 33 pits in Scotland at present employing 12,266 men will close in the next two or three years.

R. W. Parker, chairman of the Scottish Division of the National Coal Board, claims that the Scottish coalfield is in a better position than ever before to offer redeployment to the displaced miners.

It is very clear from the figures given by Mr. Parker that the National Coal Board intends to extract a much higher output and profit from fewer pits, with fewer men over the next few years. Only if this is achieved will the pits on the 'B' and even the 'A' lists, keep open.

Judge on results

Pits on the 'A' list are described as 'pits likely to continue if potential results are realised'.

At present these pits, 25 in Scotland, employ 24,196 men and produce 8,066,000 tons of coal. Their potential by 1970, with a labour force of 29,434 is estimated to be 14,137,000 tons.

In other words, unless a much higher output can be

achieved by relatively lower manpower, even the pits on the 'A' list may be closed.

The pits on the 'B' list are not assured any particular length of time. Their position is described as 'doubtful—due to economics of working'.

In this situation how can any miner accept the glib-tongued assurances of the government and the NCB that they will be redeployed in other pits, and meanwhile compensated against undue hardship?

Many miners, particularly the older men, the injured and the sick, have no prospect of obtaining fresh jobs in the pits when the closures begin.

The leadership of the Scottish Area of the National Union of Mineworkers, has stated that if there is an opportunity of opposing closures on economic grounds, the union would do so.

Meanwhile they ask the miners to accept the NCB's assurances that every miner will be redeployed in Scotland, and appealed to them 'on the basis of that guarantee, to remain in Scotland in the pits'.

Many of the miners employed in pits now due to close have already been transferred from pits which shut down previously. Thirty-four pits have

Newsletter Correspondent

closed since 1962 in Scotland.

One is prompted to ask the leadership of the NUM what it is going to do to prevent the government and the NCB imposing the closures with consequent untold hardship on the miners.

NUM powerful

The NUM is a powerful union, it has the strength to defeat the attacks of the right-wing Labour government and the Coal Board on the miners. This means, as a priority, mounting a campaign against the anti-trade union legislation being prepared by the Labour government.

Miners, organising to fight against the harsh conditions imposed by the closures, would be amongst the first sections of workers to suffer from such legislation. The whole strength of the NUM must therefore be mobilised against such a Bill going through Parliament.

It means immediately starting a campaign against any closures until rank-and-file committees, elected by the miners, have examined the position of every pit due to close.

Bakery men tell Brown — 'freeze your own wages'

By NEWSLETTER REPORTER

LAST week bakery workers in various parts of the country came out on strike for a decent living wage. Below The Newsletter prints reports from correspondents who interviewed workers on picket lines at the bakery gates.

Birmingham bakery workers came out solidly on Thursday and Friday of last week in support of a claim for £15 for a basic 40-hour week.

Pickets, many of them young workers, at one of the bakeries said that the present rate of £11 10s. was completely inadequate. In order to earn £20 per week it was necessary to work up to 72 hours while starting work at 6 a.m.

The question of a higher basic wage is especially important for the confectionery workers, as these workers do not have the same opportunity for earning extra money as do the bakers.

Continue strikes

Bakers plan to continue the two-day strikes for four weeks and, in the event of no response from the employers, hold a national stoppage.

The comment of one worker — 'Tell George Brown to freeze his own wages'—shows clearly the reaction of the workers to the attempts of the Labour government to head off their struggle.

Workers in all the main bakeries on Merseyside came out on strike on the same two days.

At one of the biggest bakeries, large groups of men, women and young workers were on picket duty from early in the morning. No one, however, went in to work.

The secretary of their union branch told The Newsletter: 'The turn up outside here, early in the morning, shows how disgusted they are with the basic wage of £11 10s. Some of these men and women have come long distances.'

He declared that the bakery workers want a real 40-hour week instead of being forced to work long hours of overtime in order to get a wage they can live on.

Union organisation at this bakery had been built up only since the beginning of last year. The workers won a closed shop last July and now these bakery workers are no longer prepared to accept the old conditions.

The last conference of the

union decided to withdraw from what was virtually a no-strike agreement with the employers. (It was an agreement that any dispute with the employers should be referred to arbitration which the union would be bound by law to accept.)

Low wages

Low wages in the bakery industry are clearly connected with this. It is a lesson to other workers of what to expect under compulsory arbitration.

Last Thursday workers on the picket line attacked the Labour government as instrumental in having the wage claim turned down.

While Brown consulted the employers in a joint effort to get the claim taken to the

Prices and Incomes Board, Callaghan attacked the strike, as 'deplorable' and likely to lead to a rise in the price of bread. Not a mention was made of the vast profits made by the three leading bakery firms and their suppliers.

The trade union leaders say they would prefer the claim to go through the Ministry of Labour's 'conciliation machinery'. This is dangerous hair-splitting.

There can be no 'conciliation' with the bakery employers. Bakery workers must stand firm on their wage claim. The employers have so far refused to give way to their demands for a living wage.

The bakers must use their full strength to win victory as swiftly as possible.

Scotland teachers hold one day stoppage

SIX hundred young teachers from 78 schools in Glasgow and the West of Scotland held a one-day strike on Thursday, November 17 in support of their claim for salary increases.

T. & G.W.U. workers fight for recognition

ONE hundred and ninety workers stopped work on Saturday, November 20, over the refusal of a Birmingham brass foundry firm to recognise the Transport and General Workers' Union for negotiating purposes.

The firm, Wright-Bingley and Gell, make various kinds of brass valve components. They claim that as parties to the Brass Founders' Association they will only recognise the Metal Mechanics for negotiating purposes.

Strikers report that there are only a small number of workers who are members of the Metal Mechanics Union.

Many of the 190 men on strike are very recent recruits to the Transport and General Workers' Union and they know that if they win this recognition strike they can then go forward to fight for improved wages and conditions.

The strikers are appealing to the Transport and General Workers' Union shop stewards to help them win this fight for recognition.

The teachers have formed an 'association called the Young Teachers' Action Committee. If no satisfaction is gained within a short period of time on the question of increased salaries, it is anticipated that not only will strike action be repeated in Glasgow and the West of Scotland, but that it will spread to the other areas where action committees are being formed.

Already there are reports that similar committees have been established in Edinburgh, Stirling-shire and Ayrshire.

The action committee is demanding an increase of 25 per cent in the lowest starting salary of £600 a year, with proportionate increases for other grades at the lower end of the scale.

DEMANDED INCREASE

At their strike meeting the teachers adopted a resolution demanding that the Secretary of State for Scotland announce an increase in young teachers' salaries within ten days.

Failing satisfaction on this demand they authorised the calling of another one-day strike.

It was also agreed that a meeting of the Glasgow local association of the Education Institute of Scotland should be requisitioned to demand a statement of the Executive Committee of the Institute on the present salary negotiations being conducted of Scottish teachers.

At the bottom of the scale technical teachers receive £600 to £1,190 a year. Physical education teachers get £655 to £1,370. Ordinary graduates in primary schools £730 to £1,370 whilst ordinary graduates in secondary schools get £820 to £1,470.

The young teachers in Scotland are absolutely right to put up a fight for better wages and conditions of employment. But, along with all other sections of workers, they should realise that such a fight means also challenging the present social system, Labour government and the monopolists and bankers who place profit before the education and well-being of working people.

It means, in the event that closures are proved necessary, fighting for full wages to be paid to all miners who lose their jobs, for the whole time that they are unemployed, and their re-training and re-employment at wages not less than those previously earned.

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would take at least two years to bring into operation.

Fail it surely will if the employers try to force their will on to the dockers without giving a thought to what the dockers need.

Many thousands of dockers in London are going home daily with no work and it is only a few weeks to Christmas when their children need clothes and toys.

They are going home with £9 less stoppages after having to spend badly-needed money on fares and extra food when even the people at the Labour Exchange and the National Assistance Board can have their money sent on by post.

Not wanted

Men are being brought down to the docks daily when the employers, the Dock Labour Board and the trade unions know that these men will not be wanted for work.

The Prime Minister has, for political reasons, to pay the pension rights and salaries to the

of all industries supplying mining equipment and the distribution of coal.

The NUM is strong enough and the miners experienced enough to take control of the pits and run them in the interests of the miners and the working class. This should be the aim for which a struggle should now commence.

Dockers ...

civil servants and others in Rhodesia who lose their jobs over the situation out there, but the same is not promised to the dockers in this country who are losing his wages over the political and economic conditions here.

Wages paid

The other day, 70 firms had to close down owing to the lack of foresight of the gas and electricity boards. The people in charge will still be paid their wages.

Many workers at factories have in the past and present stopped work and gone home because it was too cold to work. The government and the press outburst to this was almost nil.

Dockers, however, work on in the same freezing cold under worse conditions. They dare not stop work for that reason, or for any other reason or else the outburst would be in capital headlines of the BLOODY-MINDED

AND ARROGANT DOCKERS. They would be accused of preventing the Christmas dinner being on the plate, but it does not matter if the port employers fail to help the dockers to put a dinner on his own plate.

It is not any good bringing food and clothing to someone who has already died through cold and hunger.

The dockers who are out on the sick-list due to working in cold, wet weather are not getting any bottles of whisky or turkeys sent to them for Christmas or any pay whilst out sick.

Those shipowners who are handing out £2 million pounds to Japan instead of to their own country will not be short of food for Christmas, nor will their children be short of presents.

It is action that is wanted from a Labour government or a united action from the dockers in the North and the South, no matter what colour politics or union card.

UNITE NOW.

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