

Letters

To the Editor

From Disillusioned Soldier

Dear Comrade,

The general public in civvy street will probably have heard of the rise in pay for British Soldiers.

This in itself however, may cause a wrong impression on the people of the working class. I personally, am now getting an extra shilling per day, seven shillings a week.

All, very nice, but if the Government are going to raise wages of soldiers on the one hand, and take it off us again on the other hand, then we are, in actual fact no better off.

Let me explain. At the same time that we get our rise in pay, the Army Authorities suddenly decide that instead of giving the soldiers four Railway travel warrants per year they are to get, only three. At the present camp, that I am at, I shall be about two pounds worse off through that.

Then almost simultaneously the N.A.A.F.I. (The place, incidentally where most of the soldiers' pay goes) decides to raise their prices up to civilian rates.

Then on top of all this, the Garrison Theatres, decide to raise

the price of seats from, a shilling, and sixpence respectively, to two shillings, one and three-pence, and ninepence.

After all this load of raises in price, I have just recently heard a rumour, that all Y.M.C.A. canteens are closing down; now we shall have to frequent high priced cafe's for a meal.

I have tried to give a brief survey of the situation as it appears to a soldier. You can see, that with all the higher prices, closing down of Y.M.C.A. canteens, and a railway warrant less, etc., this raise in pay, isn't really going to be a raise in wages, at all. In fact I think, if anything, we shall be worse off. Why doesn't the Government really and truly give us a raise, by which we shall truly be better off?

It is up to the people in civvy street to closely examine these so called "Benefits", because there is invariably a "catch in it".

The working class in civvy street should demand that the Labour Government stop this wangling with wages and prices, and give the soldiers something concrete.

Disillusioned Soldier.

TRADE UNION ACT IN IRELAND

BY J. SMITH

Long and militant struggle, the organised workers in Eire have won a victory against the reactionary "Trade Union Act" imposed upon them by the De Valera regime in September, 1941.

Section Three of this hated Act, which violates the elementary democratic right of the workers to freely organise and join any trade union he wishes, was challenged in the Supreme Court as illegal and unconstitutional by the Irish N.U.R. The Supreme Court has been forced to repeal that section from the Trade Union Act.

The Act is divided into three main parts. The first deals with definitions of terms and meanings embodied in the Act itself. This part remains operative. The second part is of more consequence as it restricts the independent functions of trade unions. This part dictates that no trade union can carry on negotiations for the fixing of wages or other conditions of employment unless it holds a negotiating "license". Those unions that are thus "authorised", are compelled to deposit with the High Court, a sum of money varying from £2,000 for unions with a membership of 2,000 or under, to £10,000 for unions with a membership of 20,000 or over. This part also remains law.

Repealed Section

The repealed section, part three, provided for the setting up of an "impartial" Tribunal, which was composed of persons, allegedly independent of the employers and trade unions. This capitalist set-up had the power of deciding which trade unions were to be "licensed" and also, where such unions should be allowed to organise and take into membership, workers engaged in various categories of employment.

The aim of this measure was to eliminate small unions in favour of the large unions, as a concession to the interests of the bureaucratic leaderships of the large unions whose support the Irish capitalists needed in their policy of beating down the wages and working conditions of the Irish working class.

Corporate Model

In this manner the Irish capitalist class attempted to create national "house-unions" modelled on the reactionary-Catholic "corporate unions" as in Portugal. It was not accidental that, before this legislation came before the Dail, a group of experts had been sent from Eire to Portugal to study the structure of the social set-up there. By the creation of large national unions on these lines, DeValera sought to intergrade closer into the capitalist state, union bureaucrats and leading Catholic trade union co-operators who were prepared to "co-operate" with the capitalist class.

Wage Increase Forbidden

It is this part of the Act that has now been repealed, and it is a

definite but partial victory. Just as reactionary and anti-working class are the remaining effective sections of the Trade Union Act. As for instance, it is still forbidden for the workers to strike for more demands in certain categories. It is true that there is a provision forbidding employers to pay any wage increase to certain categories of workers! (naturally, the employers, law abiding men strictly observe this!). If the workers strike to enforce their wage demands they can be arrested and imprisoned, or fined for picketing.

T.U. Leaders' Self Interest

Instead of conducting a struggle against these reactionary measures, the Irish trade union bureaucrats have concentrated their opposition to only that section which directly affects their control over the rank and file union membership. An internecine struggle is conducted between the union leaders and in this struggle they have not hesitated to seek the support of the reactionary capitalist Tribunal. This was the main reason why the N.U.R. challenged the legality of the Tribunal when the Tribunal openly favoured and supported the native Irish Transport Union bureaucrats as against the N.U.R.

These trade union bureaucrats are selling out the organised workers by not conducting a genuine struggle against the whole of the Trade Union Act and demanding its repeal en bloc. They are soft-peddling on this issue in order that one set or another of the bureaucrats can gain the favour and support of the reactionary Tribunal. Such a situation plays directly into the hands of the Irish capitalists whose policy it is thus to split the organised workers and to further their own interests as against the interests of the working class.

This form of "gangster" politics which the Irish union bureaucrats wage against each other must be exposed and combated by the militant action of the trade union workers. The struggle for a new leadership in the unions that will conduct a genuine policy in the interests of the rank and file is one of the immediate tasks facing the organised workers if the trade union movement is to fulfil its purpose of defending and increasing the standard of living of the Irish workers.

The class duty of the organised workers in Britain is to support the struggle of brother unionists in Eire in their fight against those bureaucrats who aid DeValera's reactionary policy of breaking away the Irish trade union movement from the union movement in Britain; who refuse to conduct a genuine campaign for the abolition of the anti-working class Trade Union Act.

Support the demand of the organised working class in Eire for the immediate and unconditional repeal of the anti-working class Trade Union Act.

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

Whitton James' Strike

BY ANNE WALKER

Hendon, July 27.

The strike at Witton James factory in North West London is now in its 5th week and the strikers are as solid as when they came out on June 17.

A mass meeting of delegates from the Trade Union Branches and Shop Stewards Committees was called on July 17 by the Hendon Trades Council in support of this strike. Following a report from the Convenor Bro. Apin, and a discussion of the issues involved, the meeting unanimously adopted a resolution pledging full support for the strike until the management concede the principles at issue. These are: the reinstatement of the dismissed worker and the recognition by the management of the right of the shop stewards to negotiate with the management on the question of redundancy.

Since then, following a meeting of shop stewards and factory representatives with delegates from the Hendon Trades Council, a new Committee has been set up consisting of members of the Strike Com-

mittee together with delegates from other factories and the Trades Council. This Committee will organise the greatest possible support for the strike, moral and financial and undertake a campaign in support of the strike throughout the whole of the London Area.

Undoubtedly, the struggle which the Witton James workers have been waging against his subsidiary of the powerful monopolistic General Electric Company constitutes a remarkable episode in the history of struggle of the engineering workers. The issues on which they are fighting is a matter of vital concern for the whole of the organised working class movement. If the views of the management were to prevail, that the right of dismissal is a managerial prerogative on which they would brook no interference on the part of the organised workers, then the entire foundation of the trade union movement would be seriously undermined.

That is why it is a matter of deep concern that the official leaderships of the three unions involved in the dispute, viz., the A.E.U., E.T.U., and the T.G.W.U. have not yet thought fit

to give official recognition to the strike. Not a word of sympathy or support has been forthcoming from any of the Executives to encourage the men in the protracted struggle. The London District Committee of the A.E.U., having supported the strike in its initial stages reversed its position and called upon the men to return to work. Since then, pressure from the branches and the factories have forced the District Committee to abandon its strike-breaking activity. This pressure on the part of the rank and file has to be intensified in order to compel the Union Executives to give official recognition to the strike, grant strike-pay and bring the whole weight of the union organisation to bear to beat the anti-trade-union schemes of the management.

It is time the Union leaderships were made to understand that they were put into office not for anything else but to support the membership in this struggle against the employers. They must either do their job or be replaced by militants who will.

What the Witton-James men have been denied in the way of

official support, has been amply made up for by the expressions of solidarity and assistance which they have received from individual branches and workshops. Financial contributions from these sources have passed the £1,000 mark. Much of the money has come from areas outside London. Recently, when members of the Strike Committee visited Scotland, they were surprised by the generous response which they received from the factories they approached in Glasgow including Parkhead Forge and the Vactric. But despite the support which has already been given, the time has come for all trade-unionists irrespective of whatever branch of industry they are engaged in, to intensify and widen the campaign of solidarity on behalf of the Witton-James workers. "An injury to one is an injury to all." That must be our motto.

Southall Trades Council Protests Rail-Fare Rise

The following resolution was unanimously carried by the Southall Trades Council:

"The Southall Trades Council strongly protests against the proposal to increase fares on the L.P.T.B.

Thousands of workers travel daily in Buses, Trolley Buses and the Underground. The recent small increase in wages won by the workers would be nullified if the proposed increased fares were to take effect.

We demand that under no circumstances should the workers be penalised to safeguard the interest of the Shareholders. We further ask the Government to institute an Inquiry with the purpose of reducing the high interest rate paid to the Shareholders out of the pockets of the workers who use the means of travel on the L.P.T.B. System."

	£	s.	d.
Birmingham	...	8	0
Edinburgh	...	3	0
Liverpool	...	10	0
Newark	...	1	4
Newcastle	...	3	7
Nottingham	...	7	10
Sheffield	...	1	0
P.H. Sheffield	...	2	18
Stoney Middleton	...	8	0
SEAC and India Forces	...	10	0
North-West London	...	5	3
West London	...	5	8
Midlands D.C.	...	1	0
Thames Valley	...	9	0
Charlie White	...	2	0
East London	...	1	4
Joe	...	1	12
Freddie	...	3	0
"Bon Ami"	...	25	0
C.L.	...	5	0
Miscellaneous	...	18	13
Croydon	...	8	7
Eastbourne	...	4	16
North London	...	10	1
Total for July	...	£125	15



"Arise Ye Stahvlings From Your Slumbahs..."

From LEFT and RIGHT

BY AGITATOR

Worse than the Pharoos

Reading through the British prosecutor's eloquent denunciation of the Nazi miscreants arraigned at Nuremberg, one pauses involuntarily at the name of Sauckel. The very mention of the vast organisation of slave labour of which he is accused, turns one's thoughts immediately to the plight of the half million German war prisoners held here as slave labour by the very Government for whom Sir Hartley Shawcross speaks.

Jenny Lee on Lenin

"The key-note of Labour policy, as everyone knows, is a solemn assurance to the wealthy and the well-to-do that full compensation will be paid for every scrap of property that a Labour Government might decide to nationalise.

"I could never quite figure that out. From what source would a Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer raise money to pay compensation for property nationalised, for vastly improved social services and all that in addition to gargantuan debt charges for past, present and future wars?

"The literal answer proffered by official Labour is that all this is to be done by increased death duties, income tax and super-tax. Oh Yeah! And what in the meantime will a Tory controlled press, industry and banking system be doing?

"There is not much doubt about the answer to that. Most certainly not holding special religious services to pray for the success of Labour.

"Why can't we be a bit more honest! Who does Labour think it is fooling? Certainly not its Tory opponents. These gentlemen

have not the slightest intention of allowing themselves to be taxed out of existence by a Labour Government carrying through financial feeding the dog of its own tail."

These words were written by Jennie Lee in the New Leader of March 14, 1940, before she left the I.L.P. and became a Labour Party M.P. Time, and a seat in Parliament as a representative of a Government Party, have changed Miss Lee's ideas on this question. In the latest issue of Tribune she tries to seek in Lenin support for these ideas which she now rejects. She writes:

"How far is it the Maxton quality in British public life that gave substance to Lenin's dictum that this is the one country where Socialism might be achieved without an intermediary phase of bloody civil war?"

This is the exact opposite of Lenin's position! Marx, way back in 1871, raised the possibility of a revolution taking place in England without the workers first destroying the "ready-made state machine". On this Lenin wrote in his book State and Revolution:

"Today, in 1917, in the epoch of the first great imperialist war, Marx's conception is no longer valid. . . . Today, both in England and America (American Jennie Lees please note), the 'essential' thing for every 'real peoples revolution' is the smashing, the destruction of the 'ready-made state machinery' (brought in those countries between 1914 and 1917, to general 'European' imperialist perfection)."

We suggest to Jennie Lee that she make sure of her references to the teachings of the founders of scientific socialism before lightly invoking their authority to support her reformist conceptions, the very conceptions they spent a lifetime in fighting.

MINERS MUST TAKE CONTROL

BY N. PENTLAND

The Coalowners, as a reward for their wrecking of the industry, are to be paid £164,660,000 compensation with £64,559,559 in royalties. A total sum of £229,219,559 will be paid for nationalising the pits. In fact, the original money invested in the mines has been paid back over and over again in enormous profits in the last century through the blood and sweat of the miners.

The Coalowners claimed an average profit of £12,000,000 a year, which means that the original money invested must, at the very least, have been paid back every generation.

Because of the ruin to which the coalowners have brought the industry, the Government will have to invest £150,000,000 for modernisation and technical improvements.

In a statement to the House of Commons on Wednesday, July 25, Shinwell, Minister of Fuel and Power, made it clear that coal stocks were 5 million tons below "safety margin", which means domestic coal users will face another lean winter of coal supplies.

A week previously the Coal Act was finally passed and became law, with only a few rumblings from the Tories.

The Economist of July 20, comments on this:—

"By general agreement, which is not confined to Labour ranks, coal is the most suitable candidate for nationalisation."

Such is the quite pleased attitude of the more farsighted sections of the employing class to the "socialist" methods of the Labour Party. Why is this so, workers will ask? It is because the employers and coal capitalists realise that, as the Economist continues, to point out, they are looking forward to the technical reorganisation of the mines financed by the State and ending of "deteriorated labour relations". They are looking to the Government to keep the miners quiet by sops and threats, because, as the Economist realises, the miners will push the Government for better conditions:

"On the labour issue the miners' first reaction seems to increase rather than reduce their claims."

What every miner quite correctly demands, is that the nationalised mines must be democratised from below in order to create far better wages and conditions than now obtaining.

While the Labour leaders shed crocodile tears over the events in imperialist dominated Palestine, 146 miners were killed and 543 injured during the second quarter of the year. But what does the great miners' champion, one-time Left critic Shinwell, do about these "atrocities"?

He only threatens, exhorts and coerces the miners to work harder than ever and pays scant attention to the even inadequate demands of the Miners' Charter. On the other hand he legalises thousands of pounds in compensation to the coal-parasites who have robbed and exploited both miners and consumers for over a hundred years.

Shinwell's latest measure of importing Irish labour will not solve the problem. The social effects will lower production.

It is necessary for the miners, as it is for all workers, to demand that the only methods which will increase production in the interests of workers and consumers alike, is by placing the mines directly under control of the workers themselves and not left in the hands of the agents of capitalism, in the present Coal Board. Only by complete expropriation of the coal owners without compensation can the out-of-date mines be modernised; only by workers' management and control can the mines be run in the interests of the working class.

LENIN LIVES ON IN TROTSKYISM—Trotsky Memorial Meeting
CONWAY HALL, Monday, August 26th At 7 p.m. Speakers: **E. Grant, G. Healy, G. Hansen**