



WAR LIES AND THE "NEW LEADER"

Dear Comrade,

I sent the following letter to Fenner Brockway, editor of the "New Leader" in reply to the attack on the "Socialist Appeal" under the heading "War Lies" in the August 14th issue of the "New Leader". He did not publish it and I am now sending a copy to you. Instead, an evasive reply to a letter from Rose Carson, (also not published) appeared in the "New Leader" attempting to justify what can only be construed as a mean and rather dishonest method of attack.

John Williams.

To Fenner Brockway, Editor, "New Leader," 318, Regents Park Rd., N.3.

Dear Comrade,

I read in the issue of the "New Leader," Saturday, August 14th, a violent criticism of an article in the "Socialist Appeal," which touched up on the state of affairs after the November blitz, 1940. The "Socialist Appeal" writer states "The Militia was called out, martial law was declared and the factories guarded by soldiers with fixed bayonets while the Riot Act was read. No civilians were allowed in or out of the city for several days." I am in the Army now, but at the time I lived and worked in Coventry and I must say that, except for the factual error, about the Riot Act being read and Martial Law being declared, the account in the "Socialist Appeal" is a correct picture of affairs in Coventry at that time, even down to the "fixed bayonets." The Home Guard to all intents and purposes took over the factories and in doing so aroused anger amongst the workers at the way they conducted themselves.

I remember at the Daimler "Parent" Factory, the way they pushed us about when we went to see if there was work for us. They aroused comments like "They're the same as the bloody Gestapo" when they forced us to line up outside the factory gates and wait for hours to get paid.

The Home Guard, Regular Army and the Observer Corps took over the streets. I remember distinctly them refusing people admission at places like Hereford Street, Corporation Street, Queens Road and Smithford Street. At night they angered hundreds of workers by holding them up in the streets with fixed bayonets and demanding their identification.

It is also true that they tried to stop people going in or coming out of the city by holding them up at the bus stations, sending them back if they were not satisfied with their reasons for travelling. I myself had to cycle out of Coventry to Birmingham in order to avoid being stopped. I heard a lot of workers complain about being held up by the Home Guard when they wanted to leave the town.

To conclude:—There was really every element of Martial Law and the atmosphere that goes with it. As a matter of fact a lot of workers were under the impression that Martial Law had been proclaimed and there were rumours that the Riot Act had been read, going round the town. The writer very likely got the information from some one who was in Coventry at that time and who repeated these rumours to her. Therefore to head your criticism "War Lies" and to talk of an "irresponsible and futile lie" is grossly unfair and an irresponsible attempt to make a mountain of a lie out of a mole-hill of an error.

Yours fraternally,

John Williams

ON THE A.E.U. CONFERENCE

Amalgamated Engineering Union, Glasgow District Office, W. Fyfe, 71, Carlton Place, Glasgow, C.5. 15th July, 1943.

The Editor, "Socialist Appeal", Dear Sir,

A copy of the "Socialist Appeal" for July 1943 has been under consideration by Glasgow District Committee of the A.E.U., and I have been directed to respectfully draw your attention to the distorted and prejudicial report of our National Committee meeting recently held at Southport.

Particularly you might note:— (1) That our Bro Clokey is not a member of the Communist Party.

(2) According to our records of last year's National Committee, Bro Clokey neither moved nor seconded the Wages Resolution.

(3) Bro. Clokey moved resolution at forenoon session (approx. 11 o'clock) on Tuesday, 22nd June, this year. There were six amendments. You state Bro. Clokey, choking with rage, and other C.P. members, bounced upon the Militant who had moved the first amendment for the 11% increase. The first amendment was accepted by Bro. Clokey and was incorporated in the resolution. None of the six amendments mentioned the 11% increase. It was (approx.) 5 hours later when

To the Editor,

Bro. Clokey closed the discussion on wages calmly and without rage not otherwise as you suggest.

(4) Bro. Clokey had a mandate from this District Committee to fight for consolidation and unity with the Joint Trades Movement and our Executive Council on wages.

(5) You failed to mention that one of the Militants and alleged Anti-Communist Party delegates, seconded the resolution on Communist Party Affiliation.

Yours faithfully, William Fyfe, District Secretary.

OUR CORRESPONDENT'S REPLY

1. The denial of the Glasgow D.C. that Bro. Clokey is a member of the Communist Party should prove interesting information for Glasgow militants who are familiar with his political record. We believe they are the best judges as to the validity of this denial.

2. The records of the District Committee are correct in their information regarding Bro. Clokey and the 1942 National Committee, and in acknowledging our error in this matter we hope it has in no way inconvenienced Bro. Clokey.

My main argument was that a climb down had taken place in relation to the wage demand, not so much that Bro. Clokey was guilty of this as an individual. As Point No. 4 in Bro. Fyfe's letter remarks: "Bro. Clokey had a mandate" from the D.C. on this resolution concerning the 6/- just as he and Bro. Sillars obviously had a mandate last year or the resolution for the 11/- since they supported it. What engineering workers are primarily interested in is that the Glasgow D.C., a body which is well-known for its sympathy with Communist Party policy, should have made such a miserable climb-down from supporting 11/- to 6/- in its wage demand in the face of opposition from the Employers' Federation.

It would be as well to note here that the demand for the 6/- was originally voiced in the April issue of the "New Propeller" and it was followed by a campaign in A.E.U. branches by that very unpopular strike-breaking body known as the National Council of Shop Stewards (controlled exclusively by the Communist Party). In putting forward the demand for the 6/- Glasgow D.C. were at one with the "New Propeller".

As far as a climb-down in the wage demand is concerned, "Socialist Appeal" lays the onus for such an act completely upon the Glasgow D.C., and makes no apologies for suggesting that this step agreed completely with C.P. policy.

3. Bro. Fyfe is correct when he remarks that no amendment for 11/- reached the floor of the Conference. What actually happened is that a resolution for the 11/- was tabled but was dropped in favour of the composite motion moved by Bro. Clokey. If the Glasgow D.C. were serious in their demand for 11/- in 1942, one would have imagined they would be only too eager to accept in 1943 what was after all their own demand. The fact that the 11/- was dropped in favour of the composite motion of the 6/- is just another illustration of the climb-down that took place. We note under this point the assurance that Bro. Clokey closed the discussion calmly, and the fact that this may be so in no way destroys the argument that a sell-out was made on the wages demand.

Finally, in relation to Point No. 5 we in turn respectfully draw Bro. Fyfe's attention to past issues of the "Socialist Appeal" which has continuously supported Communist Party affiliation to the Labour Party, along lines which would in our opinion greatly assist in the unity of the working class and the exposure of the bogus unity policy of the C.P. leaders.

G.H.

The "Socialist Appeal" relies almost entirely upon its worker correspondents for details of local and industrial disputes. It is not possible to check up on all the statements of fact made by our correspondents, we have to rely upon their appreciation of the need for objective reporting in a serious workers' paper.

We emphasise, therefore, that our correspondents should check up on all statements issued to the "Socialist Appeal" rather than leave out statements if not sure of their accuracy or at least indicate that the report has not been checked.

Editorial Board

PAMPHLETS BY TROTSKY

Table listing Trotsky pamphlets: WAR AND WORLD REVOLUTION (2d), TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME OF THE 4th INTERNATIONAL (6d), TRADE UNIONS (1d), L.P.P. & THE 4th INTERNATIONAL (2d).

CLYDE C.P. Disrupt Union

The attempt to smash the militant opposition which is daily gathering strength on the Clydeside against the false and treacherous leadership of the Stalinist and T.U. bureaucrats inside the trade union movement, has once again shown itself in the victimisation of 3 leading shop stewards of the A.E.U., Brothers Doherty, Menzies and Gray.

For issuing a circular condemning the strikebreaking policy of the "Communist Party" in connection with the Dubbs strike, these staunch trade unionists have been recommended by the Glasgow District Committee of the A.E.U. to the National Executive, A.E.U. that they be suspended from holding any union positions for 12 months. The voting for this motion was 13-11.

It must be strongly emphasised that the whole plot was mooted by the reactionary gang of Stalinists on the District Committee. An attempt to get disciplinary action begun early in the year, McLaren (C.P.er) failed at a District Committee meeting—the chairman refused to discuss the circular being outside union business. The C.P. tried other ways and Sillars put through a resolution at his branch which was sent to the National Executive. In this manner the executive referred it back to the Glasgow District Committee for attention.

The 3 victimised unionists hold important positions in their factories. Bro. Gray is General Convenor of the Menzies A.E.U. Convenor —, and Doherty member of the A.F.U. for 30 years, has been General Convenor of — Forge for 7 years, now a block convenor in the same factory. All are members of the Glasgow District Committee A.E.U. The foul tactics of the C.P. are not accepted by all the rank and file. The deputation of 5 Shop Stewards who went from the — to the Glasgow District Committee meeting to protest at the decision to deprive them of their convenor brought sharp rebukes from one of the 2 C.P.ers, who were a part of the deputation, at Sillars' whole attitude.

The increasing Stalinist bureaucratic control of the A.E.U. must be fought against by the union membership. Many Glasgow branches have sent resolutions of protest to the National Executive. Let every union branch, Shop Stewards' Committee, trades councils etc. send similar protests and demand an end to this vicious policy which victimises militant rank and file expression.

Successful Glasgow Meeting

A most successful meeting was held by the Glasgow Branch of W.I.L. at the Masonic Halls, on Sunday, September 22nd. The speaker was Jock Haston, National Organiser of W.I.L., who gave an inspiring speech on the revolutionary events in Italy and their significance for the British Working Class.

Leading up to present day revolutionary events, he gave an outline of the causes for the rise of Fascism and the terrible defeats suffered by the Italian Working Class. Today, he said, not only the Italian Revolution but the European Revolution has begun. Everywhere the workers are responding to the Italian events, in Spain, Portugal and in Germany itself. A move to the left is taking place all over the World as shown by the Canadian and Australian elections.

He stressed the fact that the American and British Capitalists would attempt to put down the Revolution by military means and that any appeal made to the Allies by the Working Class parties of Italy would mean a terrible and bloody defeat for the workers and peasants. Only by going forward clearly and decisively for the Socialist Revolution and relying on the support of the World Working Class could they attain their emancipation.

Comrade Alec Riach, sub-Convenor of a large Clydeside factory, who has recently broken with the C.P. to join the Fourth International, was in the chair. He opened the meeting by giving his reasons for his break with the C.P., caused by his practical experience of the reactionary role their policy is playing in industry today and dealt with the totally un-Marxian attitude of the C.P. towards the Italian Revolution.

Ample time was given for questions and discussion. There were many well known Clydeside shop stewards and militants present.

This was the most successful meeting that has ever been held by our tendency in Glasgow and everyone was inspired. The meeting was held on the Anniversary of the murder of Leon Trotsky and its success was one more indication that the ideas he fought and died for live on, and are daily growing stronger.

R. R.



LABOUR MUST SUPPORT CIVIL SERVANTS

BY BOB ALLEN

The differences which have arisen between the Civil Service Association and the Government on the question of affiliation to the T.U.C. in defiance of Section 5 of the Trade Disputes Act are not accidental. These differences spring from a completely new orientation produced in the Civil Service Associations as the result of a long and deep seated process which has been happening during the war. The Civil Service in 1943 bears an entirely different character as regards membership from the Civil Service of 1938. The Government now employs over 800,000 Civil Servants. In 1938 there were 200,000 civil servants. The social make-up of the influx of over 600,000 temporary civil servants is in many respects entirely different from the social make-up of the original 200,000. None of the 600,000 who have entered since the war began can hope for establishment, but most of the original 200,000 are established, that is, permanent civil servants. Further, owing to the tremendous increase in the technical departments of the Civil Service, a large number of the new civil servants have come directly from industry and have the outlook and ideas of proletarians. The relative standard of life of the civil servants as compared, for example with the engineering industry, has consistently dropped, for example, a technician in the aircraft industry employed by the State in 1938 received a rate of pay approximately 50 per cent above that obtained in his equivalent in industry. But a technician in 1943 receives approximately 50 per cent less than his equivalent in industry. Again, where before the war a civil servant was accustomed to one month's leave with pay, unlimited sick leave with pay, good conditions with regard to allowances on moving, security of tenure, good pay, now none of these advantages exist. These facts are apparent to all civil servants, both temporary and permanent, and during the last two years a tremendous amount of discussion has taken place, the results of which we are now seeing.

desperate. The first big step that they have undertaken has been to orientate themselves towards the organised workers' movement. The illusions of the erstwhile most reactionary sections, are being dispelled with lightning speed. Their cherished beliefs of a fair deal from the government, the impartiality of the State, are being completely shattered. The government's crude and shameless attempts to split the Civil servants, is glaring. The Statement from 10 Downing Street that the government would dis-establish the established civil servants if they affiliated to the T.U.C. applies only to a quarter of the civil servants. Three quarters of them are not established, particularly in the Post Office, the great majority of the engineers are unestablished. This statement therefore was an attempt to frighten the established workers and to play them off against the great mass of the unestablished.

The militant workers, both inside and outside the civil service, welcomed the position taken up by the civil service. The Union of Post Office Workers, the Civil Service Clerical Association, the Inland Revenue Staff Association were carrying on the actual negotiations but most of the other civil service associations are behind them.

The organised working class has a tremendous responsibility on this question. At present the middle class is moving towards the Labour movement as a means of halting the terrific fall in its standard of living caused by the impositions of Big Business using the war as a basis on which to enrich itself at the expense of the masses. But unless they receive a fighting lead, in the spirit of solidarity and support, in order to achieve their aims they will turn in a different direction; in the direction of reaction as did the German and Italian middle class. It was the failure of the working class movement to give a solution to the problems of society, the misery and insecurity caused by capitalism, that led the middle class to fall for the fascist demagogues in those countries as a means of salvation. Now, instead of giving a fighting lead the Labour and Trade Union leaders have capitulated to the blackmail of the Tories. The Labour members of the government instead of resigning on this issue, have supported Churchill and the capitalist class. Thus they demoralise and weaken the faith of the Labour movement in its own strength. And thus they can drive the despairing middle class away from the Labour movement altogether.

Every class conscious worker and trade unionist must demand the unconditional right of civil servants to freely affiliate industrially and politically to the Labour movement.

The horse-deal that the Trade Union and Labour leadership is preparing by secret discussions with the government is only intended to save its face, under the pretence that the government is acting without the mass pressure of the Labour movement. "Concessions" which the government will probably announce after a long delay will then be claimed as liberal and generous relaxations of restrictions. In reality of course they will amount to very little indeed.

Workers must demand the immediate repeal of ALL the provisions of the Trades Disputes Act without exception. Workers must demand the right of the civil servants to engage in political and industrial activity together with the workers organised in the T.U.C. without restraint or restriction of any kind.

Demand a strong and militant stand by the Labour and Trade Union leaders.

TRANSFER OF GIRLS CAUSES STRIKE

JOCK MILLIGAN

On the 29th May, 1943, a number of girls working at a factory in London, were instructed to attend the Labour Exchange.

At the Labour Exchange they were interviewed by the National Service Officer—one, J. Clarke—who under regulation 58a of the Defence (General) Regulations 1939, directed them to Messrs. —, at —, on the following schedule:—

Employment as a factory worker with — at —, beginning on Monday, 31st May, 1943, particulars of which are as follows:—

"The rate of remuneration and conditions of service will be:— 20 years, 45/- plus 25% of 23/- plus bonus; 19 years, 43/- plus 25% of 21/- plus bonus.

Further particulars, after 8 weeks 53/7d. After 32 weeks 85/-, Hours 8 to 6 Mondays and Tuesdays, 8 to 8 Wednesdays and Saturdays. Alternative Saturdays one o'clock.

Incidentally, all the girls are about the same age, 19 or 20 years, and were regarded as semi-skilled at Messrs. Samuel Jones, receiving top rates as such.

Some of the girls voiced minor protestations to the National Service Officer against this instruction, who replied, that they should consider themselves fortunate in being sent not too far from home, as he had the power to direct them further North—even Scotland if he so desired.

On receiving this reply from the N.S.O., (which clearly contains a tendency of intimidation) and being ignorant of the procedure of appeal, the girls reported at —, as per instruction.

They were presented with the following conditions:— Girls under 21 years of age, 43/- per week. Girls over 21 years of age, 45/- per week.

For a training period. The reason being given, that Messrs. — would not accept them as semi-skilled, and they had to start from scratch.

The girls pointed out that this was a violation of the instructions laid by the N.S.O., and referred to the schedule E.D.421 (Revised).

The Supervisor or Managers, thereupon asked all the girls for their schedules, and they complied. After perusal of same, she informed them that this instruction was all wrong, and that they did not know what they were doing at the Labour Exchange, and retained the schedules.

At a loss what to do, the girls accepted the conditions, under protest, and immediately informed their respective Union branches in London, who in turn acquainted the branches

at —, who informed the Shop Stewards.

Conditions appertaining to board and lodging at — were a difficult problem confronting the girls, anything from 25/- to 35/- per week. This in some cases included one meal in the morning and one in the evening, and this at times, not always acceptable. Whereupon the girls had to go hungry or if their means allowed it, supplement their rations at the canteen.

Here is a case in point. After hunting around, the best that could be obtained was three girls to share one bed. With a couple of sandwiches in the morning and a meal in the evening for the sum of one pound per week each. This they accepted. After a few weeks of this, and when about Wednesday or Thursday they were reduced to having a penny plate of rice for their mid-day meal at the canteen, also the union did not appear to be making any headway, matters came to a climax.

One day the girls ceased work, surrounded their Shop Steward in the shop and demanded an interview with the manager. The Steward took the matter up with the convenor and both spent the whole of the day working on the case. On the following day, the Manager, Mr. Hallpike, asked the girls to send four delegates to see him. The girls complied, but unfortunately did not notify the Shop Steward due to a misunderstanding of procedure on the part of the girls. On hearing of the interview, the Shop Steward and Convenor went to the Manager's office and demanded admittance. On being refused, they immediately telephoned the A.E.U. District Secretary, and were finally admitted. After further negotiations, the Shop Stewards obtained specific guarantees. One, that girls be paid £3. 2. 6d., for a forty-seven hour week for the first eight weeks. Two wages arising in steps thereafter. Whilst the Shop Stewards accepted the first part, they opposed the second and they are still demanding concessions on this point with the assistance of the A.E.U. District Organiser.

From the legal standpoint, undoubtedly, the girls were sent to Messrs. — under false pretences, but such is the power of the N.S.O. The girls realised this and when it was suggested that they simultaneously fill in release forms they replied "What?—and be sent to Scotland!" To sum up, the girls have had a raw deal. First the violation of the schedule issued by the N.S.O., and being reduced to coolie level as a consequence thereof; secondly, the lack of initiative on the part of the unions to force the issue on behalf of the girls for immediate recognition of the schedule demonstrates, quite clearly that, had it not been for the militant action of the girls themselves by resorting to strike action, nothing would have been done.