

Letters

To the Editor

GERMANS STARVING

A Soldier in Germany. 4.4.46.

Dear Comrade,
I am in Hamburg and here is an account of what is going on under the British Control. The food is keeping the people on a starvation diet, it won't be long before the German people will look like the inmates of Belsen. I have already seen their faces alter to very pale and thin features. Already people are fainting from exhaustion owing to the lack of food. The hungry children crowd around our canteen begging us to give them cakes or something to

eat, some in tears. The people are giving everything they possess to obtain food, only yesterday I heard of a woman giving a 15 jewelled wrist watch for a tin of sardines. This is the ration they are getting for a week: Bread 2 1/2 lbs., 3 1/2 ozs. fat, 3 ozs. Butter, 3/4 ozs. meat, 1/2 oz. cheese, flour cubic capacity to 1 pt. Potatoes are unobtainable and fish is sometimes seen once a month. The rest of the diet consists of one or two swedes those who are lucky. I write this in support of your article in the last issue of the Socialist Appeal.

Yours faithfully,
F.M.

L.P. WORKER SUPPORTS R.C.P. POLICY ON U.S.S.R.

Swansea. 1.5.46.

The Editorial Board "Socialist Appeal". Dear Comrades,

Article 9 of the Revolutionary Communist Party Programme has converted me to support your party's policy. I have long "had my doubts" but the growth of chauvinism, militarism, and devotion to a National Hero cult in the Soviet Union have effectively served to alienate many like myself from giving any degree of support to present-day Russian policies. But the world is now so obviously drifting, or being driven, at break-neck speed, into two camps—the pro-Russian and the anti-Russian—that the only realistic thing for the anti-imperialist worker to do is to line up with the pro-Russian (pro in the sense of your Article 9)—which must mean supporting the Trotskyists, whatever reservations he may have held in the past, be-

cause Trotskyism is the only logical policy which promises "unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against all imperialist powers", while holding itself free to criticise Stalinist policies and development.

I am a member of the Labour Party, and shall continue to give that party loyal support, except in such matters as can be calculated directly or indirectly to uphold the cause of American-led imperialism, which has so definitely marked Russia down as the enemy for World War No. 3.

Your Article 8 gives the correct line for all who take the anti-imperialist position. In short, I consider your policy deserves—indeed, in the critical circumstances of today—demands support throughout the whole Labour Movement.

Yours Fraternally,
John Jennings.

FORD STEWARDS RECOGNISED

What the Strike Gained

BY P. NORMAN

After their ten-day strike struggle, 12,000 determined Ford workers at Dagenham, Essex, have after a period of years of "Fordism", wrung from this arch-reactionary firm, the right to be represented by Shop Stewards of their respective Trade Unions.

This is the main gain of the demands put forward by the workers. Others included increased wages, the subject of the dispute which started in the cutter grinders shop, when higher paid workers from the Manchester plant were put alongside lower paid skilled men at Dagenham.

Never was the feeling so strong in Ford's as it was during the strike, which resulted in the plant becoming over 80% organised in approximately 14 unions.

At least five new A.E.U. Branches have been opened in that area. The struggle has done in a few days, what would have in the ordinary way taken years.

Outside Workers Show Solidarity

Outstanding acts of solidarity with the Ford workers were shown by Briggs Bodies workers who donated half a day's pay to the strike funds, and the move on the part of the London dockers in the Royal Group who decided at a special meeting not to handle any freight or cargo connected with Ford's.

The New Agreement

While it can be said that the new agreement is a step forward so far as trade unionism is concerned, what must be noticed by the workers of Ford's and elsewhere is the bureaucratic actions on the part of Scott and Deakin, along with other T.U. officials, in the signing of this agreement without first reporting back to the rank and file.

The agreement supersedes the cumbersome one of April 1944, which was heralded by the same Scott and Co., as a great advance forward, (the recent strike belied these contentions) and puts into operation one, which apart from the recognition of Shop Stewards, has a number of very insidious clauses which are only to the benefit of the Ford Motor Co.

CLAUSE 1 states that:—
The Trade Unions and the Company agree on the need:

(a) To achieve efficient production by all reasonable means; and

(b) For the introduction of labour saving machines and methods.

This in reality is putting the T.U. stamp to the methods of Bedeaux and "Fordism" which the workers are at this very moment revolting against.

Already the management have speeded up the belt conveyors, and cut tea and washing breaks as a part of a concerted attack they will launch under this clause.

CLAUSE 3, dealing with the Shop Stewards, states that only 75 can be elected for 12,000 workers and that each one must have served two years continuously with Ford's; and that the Shop Stewards must be 25 years old. Also that all complaints to Shop Stewards must be made in the workers' own time. (tea breaks, etc.). Yet in every factory it is universally the custom and practice to consult the Shop Stewards directly the foreman has heard the complaint, in the firm's time.

Such is the contemptuous manner in which Deakin and Co. have let this pass without consulting those whom they claim to represent.

CLAUSE 4—The wages policy in this clause is a further sell-out because the Trade Union officials failed to use the military of the workers to obtain overtime payment which has never been paid at Ford's, and is still not provided for in the new agreement.

CLAUSE 8 provides for the procedure for a "failure to agree" from the John Negotiating Committee. Here again the Scotts and the Deakins sign their names to Arbitration Tribunals, which if the war time procedure had taught us nothing else, it has shown the

workers clearly that such tribunals act only on behalf of the employers. They will continue to do so despite the fact that there is a Labour Government in power.

It was naturally not hard for the bureaucrats to put their name to Clause 9 which states that "there will be no stoppage of work till the matter has been fully dealt with under the terms of the Agreement." Having separated themselves from the real struggles of the workers, they will do anything for a solution rather than lead a struggle against the employers with the only effective weapon they have—the strike.

Aftermath and the Lessons

It is directly in the interest of the Ford workers, if they are to maintain their wages and conditions, to campaign against these pernicious clauses, which have been signed behind their backs. By attending their trade union branches and moving resolutions they can demand that the clauses outlined above must be withdrawn from the agreement.

The strike alone, a marvellous show of spirit and militancy on the part of the Ford workers. Only by an extension of such action in the future linked with the Manchester plant, can new gains be made. The stoppage has proved that even the "great" Ford management can be brought to their knees by a solid, determined body of workers. This is the answer to the boot-licking policy and role of the Trade Union and C.P. officials.

For 100% Trade Unionism.
Build strong rank and file committees!

Demand through your trade union branch that the Labour Government nationalise the big industries including Ford's, without compensation, and under the control of the working class.

HELP THE FUND SET YOUR TARGET

Comrades,

The Fighting Fund must raise at least £120 a month. We appeal to the Party Branches, to every comrade, and to every sympathiser to help us reach this goal.

During the month of April, including the overlapping from the March Fund £101 was raised. This is not bad, but we can and must do better if we are to maintain the regular appearance of our press.

It is not proposed to allocate targets for the Branches, as we aim to try and maintain a regular monthly fund, rather than a series of special spurts. **OUR TARGET IS £120 A MONTH.** We appeal to everyone to set their own targets. To give the maximum and to seize every

opportunity of making or collecting a few shillings or even a few pence, for the Fighting Fund, is the moral obligation of every comrade and friend.

A word to the servicemen now being demobbed. All those who are being demobbed will receive gratuities. We make a special appeal to these comrades to start their return to "civvy street" by giving a donation from their gratuity to the "Fighting Fund".

Comrade reader! Make collecting for the Fighting Fund a daily habit. Utilise your collecting cards to the full. Give your donations to the "Socialist Appeal" sellers, or post to:

Harold Atkinson,
256, Harrow Road,
London, W.2.

From a Singapore Worker

We print below an article giving an account of the formation and the valiant struggles of the Singapore General Labour Union written for the "Socialist Appeal" by one of the Chinese members of that Union.

General Report of the Singapore General Labour Union of all Nationalities.

When the war came to an end and peace was restored, the people of the world turned to the task of building and developing that Democracy for which they had fought so long. But here in Malaya, as in the numerous other Colonial countries, the heavy hand of Imperialism has not been stayed by the Charter of the U.N.O. The struggle for even the most elementary human rights continues unabated.

We, the Singapore General Labour Union of all Nationalities (mainly Chinese, Malays and Indians) became established under such circumstances and in the true spirit of democracy. The organisation consists of 14 departments such as, rubber, communication, transportation, technicians, electricity, seamen, hawkers, attendance, shopkeepers, salesmen, shipping, municipal, harbour board, food provision, and pineapple, etc., in all consisting of 108 branches. Among which 45% are Chinese workers, 40% Indian and 15% Malaysians.

On October 25th, 1945, the Singapore General Labour Union was founded: at a time when 8,000 dock workers went on strike as a protest against the shipment of munitions to Indonesia.

During the past few months, the control of trade by the British Military Administration has caused increased unemployment and those employed earn only 50-80 cents. (\$1 = two shillings and fourpence sterling) per day to help them in their struggle against high prices and meagre rations. At the beginning of December, the Municipal, Nightsoil-service, Fire-service, Public Work Department, Tele-Com. Dept. Gas Department, Hospital workers, Electricity and Engineering, Provision, Bakery, Brewery and Slaughter-house (32,000 labourers) forwarded to the authorities their proposals for a general increase in wages. These were ignored and the situation culminated in a General Strike.

The strikers, 16,000 strong marched to the Padang in the centre of the city on the 27th to hold a meeting requesting an early and favourable settlement. On reaching their destination, 2,000 fully armed police conducted a lathi-charge against the strikers seriously injuring seven, inflicting light injury on 31, and arresting 11—of whom 3 Indian workers were sentenced to 3 months rigorous imprisonment. The strike was successfully concluded by negotiations conducted by the Singapore General Labour Union together with representatives of the Malayan Communist Party and the Chinese community leader; Mr. Tan Kah Kee. Work was recommenced on December 31st, when the authorities promised to implement wage increases before the 15th January, 1946.

However, the improvements were not forthcoming. Discontent spread throughout Malaya, and two weeks after the expiry of the agreement a second General Strike was called in an effort to obtain concrete results and in protest against the misrule of the British Military Administration and the four years prison sentence passed on Mr. Soong Kwong, General Secretary of the Selangor Anti-Jap Union. On that day approximately 170,000 workers struck in Singapore. The police were

ordered to fire on the strikers. In Singapore a 17-year-old member of the Youth New Democratic League was beaten to death in front of the Beach Road Police Station and in Selatar an Indian worker was shot in the leg and wounded so seriously that it had to be cut off.

On February 14th, the premises of the Singapore General Labour Union, the Singapore City Committee of the Malayan Communist Party, the Youth New Democratic League and the Ex-Servicemen of the Malayan People's Anti-Jap Army Union were raided by the police. Subsequently, members of the S.G.L.U. were arrested: Messrs. Tan Chin Choon, Han Ah Choon, Seah Thian, Wong Boon See and Mei Siew.

The following day the police opened fire at a Public Assembly in Bras Basah Road, two persons were killed; many youths in the assembly were arrested; also the representative of the Malayan Communist Party in Singapore, Mr. Lin Ah Liang, who remains imprisoned.

Later, on March 7th the Chairman of the S.G.L.U. and General Secretary of the Pan-Malayan Labour Union: Mr. Lu Chong, was kidnapped by plain-clothes officers (Chinese) at 6 p.m. while on his way home. Mr. Lu Cheng, together with the Treasurer of the S.G.L.U. and eight other leading Trade Unionists have been deported to China.

Since the re-occupation by the British we have suffered a suppression of the fundamental human rights all too reminiscent of the Fascist occupation. In fact the authorities are employing former Japanese collaborators and tools of the notorious Kempeitai* to suppress political activities and arrest those who valiantly fought against them. The Military has now been replaced by Civil Administration, but simultaneous transfer of a number of the former does not inspire confidence.

Are such methods adopted by the British Government in accordance with the United Nations Charter? Are the fruits of three and a half years' struggle and hardship to be ruthless re-imposition of the old Colonial system? These are the questions we have been asking ourselves and now ask you. We are convinced that you will be in full sympathy with us and will not hesitate to render us your full assistance. We have done the utmost to secure the release of our Trade Union leaders and all political prisoners, but in vain. Hopefully, we place our case before you.

* Kempeitai — Japanese Gestapo.

Communist Party Internationalism

The C.P. held a meeting in the Bullring, Birmingham on May 1st. The speaker declared that they sent greetings to the French, Belgian, Dutch, Greek, Scandinavian and Balkan workers.

A voice from the audience: "What about the German workers?"

Speaker: "... and the German workers in the Russian occupied zone."

WILL LAWTHER THE CHAUVINIST

BY FRANK ROWE

If any one thing can be said to unite the Trade Union Bureaucracy with the Boss Class it is their common hatred and fear of the class struggle and of Internationalism.

This fact is demonstrated beyond doubt by the poisonous speech made against international working-class solidarity by WILL LAWTHER in a recent lecture delivered to assembled Trade Union Delegates at the Co-operative Hall, Ilford.

In his attempt to place the responsibility for the crime of the Second World slaughter on the backs of the German workers, he remarked:

"They must fully understand that they cannot expect to get off scot free."

What's on

Attend the NORTH LONDON BRANCH Discussion Meetings Every Thursday at 8 p.m. Co-op Hall, Seven Sisters Road, (Room 3)

CROYDON BRANCH Wednesdays Fortnightly Rise and Fall of the Communist International 1917-1928 Wednesday, 22nd May.

SOUTH EAST LONDON Tuesday, June 4th, at 7.30 p.m. "Our Attitude to the Labour Government" 71 Perry Hill, Lewisham, S.E.

EAST LONDON BRANCH R.C.P. Discussion Circles every Wednesday, at 7.30 p.m. Working Lads' Institute 279, Whitechapel Road, Adjoining Whitechapel Station. All readers invited — Special invitation to members of the C.P.

GLASGOW R.C.P. Every Wednesday Evening at R.C.P. Rooms 47, Oswald Street. Open during the day.

SHEFFIELD R.C.P. Wednesday Evenings at 7.30 p.m. Burngreave Vestry, Burngreave Road, Sheffield. Lively Discussion Classes

LAWTHER completely glosses over the fact that the world slaughter was fought, not for the benefit of either the German or the British worker, but solely in the interests of the retention and conquest of markets, and the sources of raw materials, in the interests of the capitalist class.

In a further effort to destroy the international unity of the workers, LAWTHER continued:

"As a British Staff Officer said—the more sentimental you become, the more they (German workers) will laugh at you."

From this we can see that Lawther takes his class logic not from the archives of Marxism, but rather from the representatives of the boss class, whose interests are diametrically opposed to those of the British and German working-class.

In his endeavour to justify the completely degenerate and bankrupt capitalist system, Lawther places the onus of the world food shortage—once again—on the German workers:

"The people who are talking about giving up their rations should remember that the miners in England could do with some extra."

He pretends to forget the restrictive measures, such as the burning of grain and the dumping of fish, which was carried out by the capitalist class in the pre-war years. He also forgets that in America to-day there are thousands of tons of grain, which is not being sent to Europe because the farmers want higher prices. Capitalist society requires blood money before it is prepared to assist in relieving starvation.

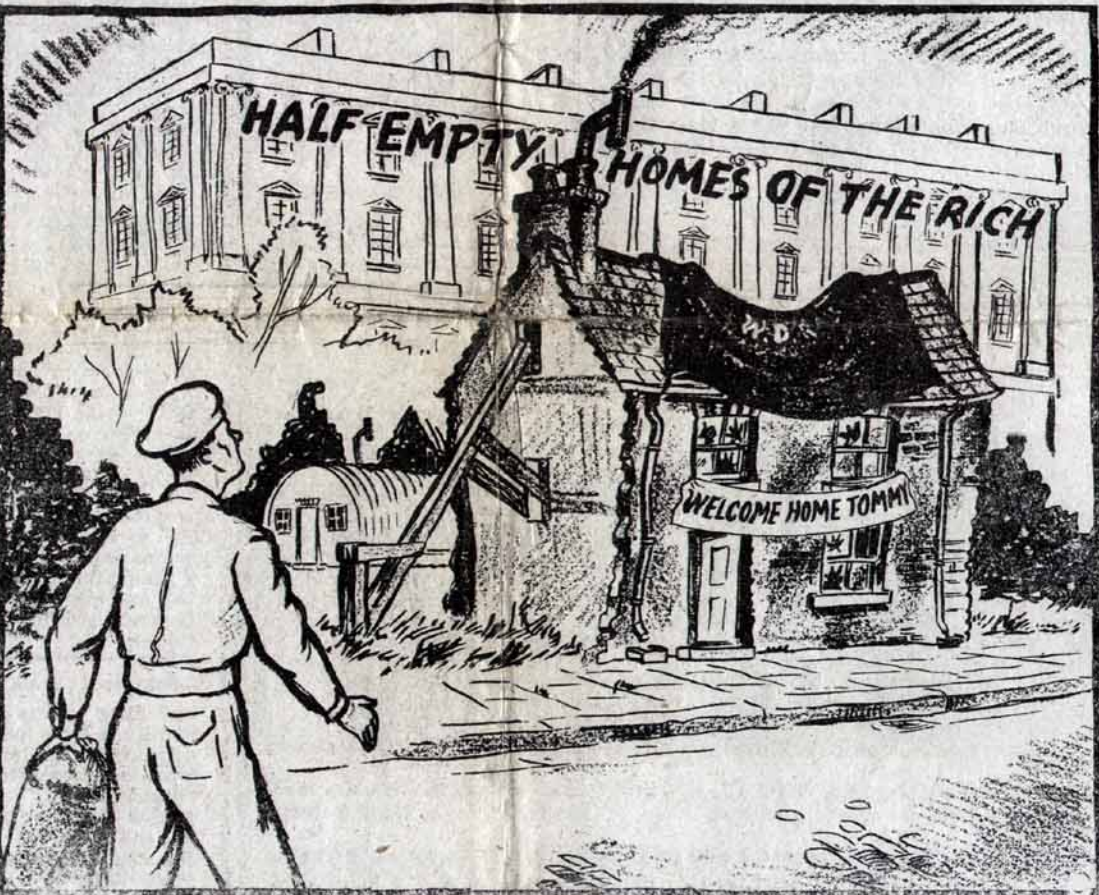
The most ironical was his remark in relation to the German Trade Union Movement:

"The German Trade Union Movement has a great love for centralization. They fail to appreciate that the real basis of the Union is the Branch Meeting."

Apparently, Lawther wishes the workers to forget that, during the course of the war, the bureaucracy of the Mineworkers Union consistently refused to support the legitimate struggles of the miners; fought against the democratic Lodge decisions, and flouted the wishes of the rank and file.

This speech clearly indicates the complete betrayal of the Labour and Trade Union bureaucracy, together with the Stalinists. It shows that, in the place of internationalism, which unites all workers irrespective of race, Lawther and the Trade Union bureaucracy attempt to raise the standard of "national unity" between boss and worker.

Workers! Reject racial antagonism—support the slogan of Karl Marx—"Workers of all lands unite"—This includes the German working class.



TAKE OVER THE MANSIONS!

LAGONDA STRIKE FOR A CLOSED SHOP

BY DAVE WEST (Thames Valley)

When on April 25th, 1,200 workers at Lagonda Motors, Staines, came out on strike, a tradition of many years class collaboration established by a long series of Stalinist Shop Stewards during the war years, was broken.

Lagonda Motors became one of the main Stalinist strongholds in the Thames Valley area. Today the situation has changed. One by one the Stalinists have been replaced by militants and only a small minority of C.P. stewards remain in office.

The cause of the dispute at Lagonda was the attempt of the management to break 100% tradition of the Tool Room, which has always been a closed shop, by the introduction of a non-trade unionist.

After the management had refused the workers' demand that the non-unionist should be taken out of the tool room until he had joined the Union, the tool room struck and explained their position to a mass meeting of the workers who at once downed tools in support. Of the 1,200 workers in the factory less than 30 remained in.

The Strike Committee formulated demands which included the point that no further work of Broom and Wade, High Wycombe (also on strike on a similar issue) be handled, and that negotiations be opened to make the factory a closed shop.

The Strike Committee suffered from inexperience, but although they missed opportunities of making the most of the issues involved, there can be no doubt of

their sincerity and tribute must be paid to their work during the five days of the strike.

A mass meeting of practically every man and woman on strike which was followed by a march through Staines High Street, brought the struggle home to many hundreds of housewives and to the workers of Staines Lino, the other big factory in the area.

Speakers were sent to neighbouring factories to give publicity to the issue at Lagonda and arrangements were in hand for broadening the publicity.

However, by Monday, April 29th, the Trade Union officials were on the job. The District Secretaries and Organisers of the A.E.U. and the T. & G.W.U. arrived to get the workers back on the job. The Strike Committee were no match for these smooth-tongued bureaucrats, who proposed that the workers should go back in order that negotiations could commence.

The Strike Committee, to their credit fought for eight hours against these infamous proposals, but at length, worn out, consented to advise the workers to go back.

At a mass meeting held on April 30th, the District officials addressed the strike meeting. Of course, they praised the magnificent solidarity of the workers, and at the same

time pleaded with them to accept the resolution to return to work. The issue of the Labour Government and the need for production for the export drive being given great stress.

Of all days, the bureaucrats sent the strikers back to work on May 1st! They had not even the decency to respect May Day.

However, it would be untrue to say that the Lagonda workers gained nothing as a result of the struggle. The man who had been the initial cause of the dispute joined the union by the time the factory returned to work. The Broom and Wade dispute had in the meantime been settled. In addition to this 60 hitherto unorganised workers took out trade union cards.

The strike has moreover, provided many valuable lessons. The strength of a well-knit shop organisation and the value of mass action has been proved. It has also demonstrated the necessity for a consistent struggle on the part of all members in the branches and the workshops to remove from office all bureaucratic officials and replace them with militants prepared to fight the bosses.

It is to be hoped that by the time the next issue arises at Lagonda Motors, the workers and their Shop Stewards will have learned these lessons.