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'BLACK MAC' HAS LOST THE FIRST ROUND

By PETER FRYER and BOB PENNINGTON

THANKS to an unprecedented and heart-warming display of working-class solidarity on the South Bank picket line on Wednesday, Sir Robert ('Weed out the worst militants') McAlpine lost miserably the first round of his battle with Britain's building workers.

The employers' own paper, the Financial Times, had prophesied that morning: 'Although these militant elements are not expected to accept the resumption without loud vocal protests, it is felt that they represent too small a minority to create any major obstacle to work today.'

But they had not reckoned with the determination and guts of the South Bank workers, powerfully backed by delegations of workers from a whole galaxy of building sites all over London, and even farther afield.

Hundreds rallied round to make the picket line around the Shell-Mex site a solid human barrier that no more than fifteen scabs found it possible to crawl their way through.

Fraternal pickets—120 of them—came from Abbey Wood, where the site had shut down for four hours in a solidarity token stoppage. They came from the Belvedere power station.

MOSLEY THREATENS A LIBEL ACTION

The printers of The Newsletter have received the following letter from Marsh and Ferriman, solicitors, of Worthing:

'We have been consulted by Sir Oswald Mosley in regard to the libellous statements regarding him contained in the pamphlet headed "Sweep the Racialists off the Streets", by Peter Fryer, and we have instructions to issue proceedings against the writer of the article, the publishers and the printers, and we shall be glad to know who will accept service of such proceedings.'

from the Bradwell atomic power station, from the Isle of Grain, from Beckton gasworks, from Harry Neill's, Stevenage.

They came from Barking power station, from Trollope and Coll's, from W. G. French's (Daily Mirror) site, from Lang's, Camberwell, from McAlpine's, Tottenham Court Road, from the Briggs site at Dagenham.

Members of Camden Town branch of the Electrical Trades Union brought their branch banner with its proud slogan: 'Light and Liberty'. Prominent too were the banners of the steel-benders' and fixers' branches of the Transport and General Workers' Union and of the Constructional Engineering Union's Scottish division.

It was more than a picket line. It was a tremendous demonstration that the building workers, despite the treachery of their officials, are going to resist the employers' offensive
(Continued overleaf)

SCOTTISH CONVENERS SPONSOR THE RANK-AND-FILE CONFERENCE

THREE leading Scottish shop stewards—two of them conveners—have joined the growing list of militants who are sponsoring the national industrial rank-and-file Conference called by THE NEWSLETTER at the Holborn Hall, London, on November 16.

TOM McLAREN, Amalgamated Engineering Union convener at Mavers and Coulson Ltd, and member of the Glasgow district committee of the AEU, says:

'I think the calling of a national rank-and-file Conference of militants in all industries can be a step towards achieving unity on a militant policy to fight the employers' attacks.'

'In the Glasgow area unemployment is reaching serious proportions. If the Newsletter Conference can rouse the rank and file on this and other issues it will be doing a good job.'

A. COURTENAY, stewards' convener at Howden's, Craigton, says: 'The Newsletter rank-and-file Conference will meet an urgent need in the Labour movement for militants of all industries to get together to work out a militant policy to meet the employers' mounting offensive.'

A. THOMPSON, Transport and General Workers' Union shop steward at Guest, Keen and Nettlefold, Hillington (Glasgow), says:

'We need a militant policy to fight unemployment. You can't fight when you're on the dole queue—the struggle must take place inside the factories.'

'The rank-and-file Conference called by The Newsletter can provide the medium for hammering out such a policy.'

CONFERENCE CAMPAIGN ON CLYDESIDE

Harry Ratner, Manchester engineering worker, has been addressing a series of meetings in Scotland on the November 16 rank-and-file Conference.

He has spoken at Leith Docks, Edinburgh, at Yarrow's and John Brown's shipyards and at Elderslie's repair yard, and at a meeting attended by conveners and stewards from Fairfield's, Sterne's, Harland and Wolfe's (Scotstoun), Howden's (Craigton), Drysdale and other Clydeside factories.

Lambeth Trades Council will Fight Evictions

Lambeth Trades Council has passed a resolution declaring 'its absolute opposition to evictions under the Tory Rent Act' and adding: 'We declare that we will do all in our power to resist the eviction of local people.'

COMMENTARY

BACK THEM TO THE HILT!

WE congratulate the South Bank building workers, and their brothers from other sites in the London area, on the splendid solidarity which put paid to McAlpine's efforts to reopen the Shell-Mex site with scab labour. These workers are fighting for the right to return to work as a body, militants and stewards included, and not be chopped to pieces by an employer who wants to 'weed out' the 'trouble-makers'—i.e., the lads who are chosen by their workmates as their spokesmen and champions. Judging by the excellent turn-out on Wednesday morning, and the spirit and determination of the pickets, an important lesson has been learned by London building workers: that if McAlpine is allowed to get away with his 'rephasing', other employers will follow suit, and there will be a full-scale attack on trade unionism in the building trade and in other industries too. *Defeat* on the South Bank would give the green light to the whole employing class to smash job organization and drive down conditions.

Wednesday was a good beginning, but it would be fatal to allow any complacency to weaken the ranks. The mass picket must be maintained and greatly strengthened. McAlpine is no newcomer to industrial strife. Leave just a tiny loop-hole and the scabs will be in there. The only answer to any provocations or try-ons is vigilance and solidarity. The building workers have it in their power to bring this employer to his knees, and so strike a powerful blow for trade unionism. Let them use that power.

Nothing would hearten the building workers more, and stiffen their will to resist, than deputations from other industries, bearing union banners, standing shoulder to shoulder with the Shell-Mex pickets. Local Labour Parties, too, have a chance to plunge into the thick of a vital struggle, with cash and with help on the picket line. What happens on the South Bank is being closely watched by the whole employing class, for it is a test case. Let it be the concern of the whole working class and of its organizations. Rally round the South Bank men! Back them to the hilt! *Victory* on the South Bank will be a victory for the whole working class.

THE NEWSLETTER earnestly hopes that the McAlpine stewards who attend the national industrial rank-and-file Conference at the Holborn Hall on November 16 will have an important victory to report. Whether they do or not depends not only on their own indomitable spirit. It depends no less on the help they get from other workers. Let that help be given quickly and without stint.

'BLOOD SPORTS GANGS'

WE don't want any of you blood sports gang through here.' With these words, it is reported, men of the Northamptonshire Regiment turned back the Quantock Staghounds when they tried to follow a deer through an army camp. There is more than one 'blood sports gang', of course, as the exploits of imperialist armies 'out of control' in Kenya and Cyprus show. But words no less simple and effective have often been used in the past by British soldiers. And will be again in the future, no doubt.

McALPINE'S (continued from front page)

now, and not when it is too late.

Men of different religious and political views found themselves with linked arms, together resisting the shoving and jostling of foot and mounted police, together wrestling with the police to protect their posters, together jeering at the handful of blacklegs who went on to the site to sell themselves to McAlpine—for as long as he finds it convenient to keep them there.

What united them was the feeling of working-class solidarity against an arrogant employer whose word for victimization is 'rephasing'.

This feeling was symbolized by the figures of the South Bank stewards—Hugh Cassidy, Matt Lynch, Mick Maguire—who went tirelessly from gate to gate, strengthening the line, encouraging the lads.

It was symbolized, too, by the three young Negroes, unemployed men, who had come along to the South Bank to seek work. Told that the site was 'black', they took posters and proudly joined the picket line.

Here is a minute-by-minute report from the picket line:

7.30 The pickets are gathering at the gates. Already several workers have gone away on realizing that the site is 'black'.

7.45 Two rather sheepish men are stopped by pickets.

'We are from McAlpine's job at St. James's,' says one. 'We were told there would be no trouble.' He adds:

'No, I am not going in, boys. Might as well tear up my union card first.'

Gap is soon blocked

7.50 The lads are singing 'Solidarity for ever'. Police try to force a way through. There is a sudden rush as a group of five scabs clamber over the railings. Soon the gap is blocked. No more will get through there.

7.55 Sub-agent Sam Hall tries to force his way through the crowd. Within seconds he is on the floor, with police dashing to his rescue.

'Go away, copper, and find Alfie Hinds,' cracks a worker from Abbey Wood.

8.5 A group on the other side of the road walks off. They have decided not to brave the pickets.

8.15 South Bank ETU members and their mates from Camden Town are arguing with some other 'sparks':

'Look, Bill, our full-time official says there is no dispute,' they argue.

'What do you think all these pickets are, Scotch mist?'

Finally it is agreed not to start. (The ETU later officially 'black' the site.)

9.10 Trucks of sand and granite start to arrive. Workers drag railings and posts to block the road.

As police push and thrust, arms are linked and a solid, immovable human wall confronts the drivers and the police.

A big Irish worker rolls a drum at the lorry. There are cries of: 'Don't scab,' 'Turn back,' and 'This is black'.

A cheer goes up

A cheer goes up as the first lorry turns away. From then on, no more try to enter the site.

9.45 Fifteen men at the most have started work—though it's doubtful whether any work can be found for them. A dejected little group can be seen standing under a large crane. Above their heads is a notice saying 'McAlpines'.

'Bloody appropriate,' says a picket. 'He must own those bastards.'

Through a loud-hailer, Hugh Cassidy and stewards from other sites addressed the pickets during the day.

Said Cassidy (who had earlier presented himself for work together with other stewards, only to be told there was no work for them):

'This is one of the greatest shows of solidarity that have been put up in the building trade for many years. You are doing much, much better than McAlpine ever expected.'

'If McAlpine gets away with this "rephasing" we all know he will "rephase" every one of his jobs later on.'

'The trade union officials have got to come here and see there is an organized return to work by the lads who have

been victimized.'

Brian Behan, a member of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers and of the Editorial Board of The Newsletter, declared:

'This is a great morning for the working man. We are standing out here so that men may go to work in a proper fashion.

'They call this Waterloo. Well, if this is Waterloo, McAlpine must be Napoleon.

'The demand of the McAlpine men is quite simple: for the reinstatement of all available men, including shop stewards.

'Let us keep this picket up. Get anybody you can to report down here. Get a picket round here in the next week that even the handful of scabs that have got in won't be able to pass. If we can keep it up, victory will be ours.'

SOLIDARITY COMMITTEES WILL HELP THE SOUTH BANK MEN

By Jim Rand (Merseyside building worker)

EVERY worker who thinks at all about the future of his class must rally to the side of the South Bank men in this vicious lock-out.

Sir Robert obviously thinks the time has come to attack the conditions which have been won in the years of full employment.

Like every employer, he is afraid of strong organization at job level. It was a sign of the times that the first dispute on the South Bank was for the recognition of a works committee.

'Rephasing', 'modifications', 'sub-contracting' are all smart moves that come in useful for clearing out militant stewards and smashing organized sites. We have experienced them all on Merseyside.

And Sir Robert is capable of fighting. That is why every one of the 1,250 must be backed to the hilt by all workers.

Solidarity committees should be set up in all localities to help our Shell brothers put their case, collect cash and mobilize support.

In Liverpool, as reported in the South Bank Special last week, we have formed such a committee. Our first meeting, called at short notice, attracted a solid nucleus of militants.

Unity in action can make McAlpines climb down. And a victory will make the next boss think twice.

Our solidarity committee has decided to organize collections on jobs and in branches, to arrange if possible for a representative of the South Bank workers to address meetings in our area, and to raise the matter in our unions.

WOMEN STRIKERS ARE DETERMINED TO 'STICK IT OUT'

From Our Scottish Correspondent

'By your vote today you have shown your confidence in your stewards' actions to defend our shop organization,' said convener Peter Murray after an overwhelming vote for the continuation of the strike at the Olivetti Typewriter Co., Glasgow.

Full opportunity was given at the meeting for opposing points of view. Significant was the determination of the women workers, new to trade unionism, to 'stick it out'.

The strike—caused by the sacking of militant Electrical Trades Union shop steward Joe Black for an alleged breach of discipline—is now in its third week.

The employers' action is seen as an attempt to weaken the shop committee following a recent trade union recruitment drive in the factory. A retooling project has just been completed, which would lead to a revision of job times; so this attack is no coincidence.

The mass meeting heard a report on the informal discussions between representatives of the employers and of the unions involved in the dispute.

The management insisted that there must be a return to work first and then they would consider placing Bro. Black under suspension while his case was reviewed.

The shop stewards recommended rejection of this proposal and a continuation of the strike. 'We'll go back only when Bro. Black goes in with us,' is the general feeling.

The stewards reported many promises of financial support from other factories and yards. Money was beginning to come in.

They thanked The Newsletter

'If we go back now we admit defeat. If we stay out we can win,' was the convener's call as he put the motion for a continuation of the strike.

The Newsletter was warmly thanked for placing its loud-speaker van at the disposal of the shop stewards' committee, and for the support given in its pages.

Eighty-five copies of the issue carrying a report of the dispute were sold at the meeting, and a donation from the sale was made to the strike fund.

ECONOMICS

DEPRESSION MAY TAKE A DRASTIC TURN FOR THE WORSE

By Tom Kemp

THOSE who want to know how deep the current recession will go must understand that there are so many unknowns in the situation that no firm answer can be given. But there must be continuous appraisal of the symptoms.

Capitalist prosperity in the 1950s was a product of an investment boom, jumping off from a high level of public expenditure, notably on arms.

In the most recent phase business men expanded plant from high profits, anticipating more from the exploitation of new techniques. It was a classical capitalist expansion, with the seeds of its own exhaustion within it.

This is now history. The boom has faded and will certainly fade still further.

It seems likely that in Britain a number of special factors have intervened to hold back decline. The picture is much more complicated than the platitudes and evasions of the platform speakers at Scarborough might lead one to believe.

To see the source of the crisis in deliberate 'Tory stagnation' is a fallacy—a fallacy that must be upheld in order to justify the 'shadow' policy of the shadow Chancellor.

Employers' hand held back

Some aspects of the industrial situation which have been stressed in recent publications need to be considered carefully.

The London and Cambridge Economic Bulletin suggests, for example, that the demand for labour has been maintained by 'hoarding' on the part of employers, a switch to higher quality products in order to retain markets and continued high investment within firms.

In fact there is now a great deal of below-capacity working and hidden surplus labour. The full possibilities of newly-installed machines have not yet been taken advantage of.

This means that a considerable increase in output, and in productivity, is possible without an increasing demand for labour. More, large-scale dismissals could take place without a fall in output.

For the moment the hand of the employers is held back, for numerous reasons. They may be simply waiting for favourable market conditions, for possibilities of dividing the workers and striking at the most favourable moment at the gains made by the workers under full employment.

All these possibilities need to be carefully watched as a part of militant industrial strategy.

Another factor concerns the rise in stocks, particularly of

Scarborough has Resolved Nothing

By WILLIAM HUNTER

WATCHING the Labour Party conference was rather like watching a group of shipwrecked mariners on a barren island discussing the finer points of table etiquette—so great was the air of unreality about most of the discussion at Scarborough.

Away from Scarborough, in the cold world of increasing unemployment, higher rents, dearer meat, dearer coal and rocket bases, what can the ordinary Labour Party member count as the positive achievements of this conference?

The stage managers gave him unity and Hugh Gaitskell. Hugh Gaitskell moving the Quemoy emergency resolution. Hugh Gaitskell replying to the debate on 'Plan for Progress'. Hugh Gaitskell replying to the foreign policy debate. Hugh Gaitskell shaking hands with Aneurin Bevan.

BOTHERED AND BEWILDERED. The well-produced, well-printed penny paper of the Tavistock Constituency Labour Party, a copy of which I bought outside one of the conference meetings, expressed the feelings of active party workers before Scarborough.

'We in Tavistock,' said its editorial, 'have long realized from the many contacts we have in this vast constituency that people everywhere are both puzzled and concerned at the miserable political performances of the Labour Party.'

'Constituency parties have been flooded with a welter of words, booklets and leaflets, but the net result is that party workers are bewitched, bothered and bewildered . . . The Labour Party lacks appeal in its approach to the public—we are lacking in socialist policies and ideals.'

Did these members get the socialist policies and ideals they were demanding? There was, of course, much hot air from the platform—anti-Tory propaganda more suitable for the hustings than for a conference seriously concerned with working out Labour's policies.

FRUSTRATED MEMBERS. As one delegate remarked outside: 'If the leaders think that one or two anti-Tory phrases are a substitute for positive policies to resolve the crisis of purpose then they'll pretty quickly be proved wrong.'

The unity asked for was unity around the same policies which led to the frustration of the rank and file before Scarborough.

Gaitskell declared that the foreign policy statement—issued to delegates as conference began—had received a more friendly reception than any other for some time.

That may have been so at the top. But rank-and-file delegates had very little opportunity of expressing their opinions on it.

Sydney Silverman said the leaders had now adopted many ideas which he and others had been pressing for many years.

NATO AND H-BOMB. But in this statement the leaders stand for a policy continuing the main lines of the Anglo-American alliance. They stand for NATO and the H-bomb.

How can Labour have a distinctive socialist foreign policy (or domestic policy, for that matter) unless it is grounded firmly and unequivocally on the struggle of working men and women and oppressed peoples?

These are the forces which will bring socialism and defeat imperialist policies.

But the task of organizing these forces, of helping them to conquer their own emancipation from the evils of capitalist society, was completely ignored by the plat-

form. It is something entirely alien to their outlook.

That was nowhere more plain than in the H-bomb debate. 'We can't leave the nuclear club, because then we would have no power behind our policies,' said the leaders.

John Horner of the Fire Brigades Union gave the answer. Moving the composite resolution against the manufacture of the bomb, he said:

'The greatest power the world has ever seen is greater than the bomb. It is the desire and will of millions of men and women all over the world who believe, even now, that under Labour leadership Britain can save this and future generations.'

'The voice of organized Labour and not the bomb will prevent Dulles from launching his attack on China.'

VERY LITTLE SOCIALISM. What home policies came out of Scarborough?

The promise of a few reforms in education, among them smaller classes and comprehensive schools. For a moderate expansion in agriculture, against land nationalization; for full production and an expanding economy on the basis of controls. No clear pledge on wage restraint.

Very little socialism in these policies. Where the thunderous change in these policies as compared with those before Scarborough? Indeed, where the change at all?

It was a tongue-in-cheek conference. Left-wing MPs and 'Victory for Socialism' leaders walked softly so as not to disturb the unity baby.

Yet, though smothered by the Scarborough atmosphere, the desire for fighting socialist policies remained as keen as ever among the mass of delegates.

APPLAUSE—AND SILENCE. That was shown at the Tribune meeting. Loud applause greeted Bevan's statements that expanding production, expanding social services and a 'nation of opportunities' were not possible in a capitalist economy.

It was shown in the way Bevan was received in silence later in the week, when, opening the debate on foreign policy, he said a very few words about the H-bomb.

In three or four confused and vague sentences he asked for 'freedom to manoeuvre', as it was absolutely impossible with the amount of knowledge that Labour possessed as an Opposition to say whether they would manufacture the H-bomb or not.

The majority of constituency delegates continued to demand an end to H-bomb manufacture. The vote for the composite motion was higher than last year.

UNITY IN ACTION. And so, in reality, Scarborough has resolved nothing. The Tory offensive will continue. Workers will resist. The struggles in industry and against unemployment will push forward again and again the demands to break the power of capitalism, which the leaders tried to stifle at Scarborough.

The unity that is needed is unity in action around socialist policies.

There is need to link local Labour Parties with the struggle in industry and turn the parties into campaign centres on rents, the H-bomb, unemployment and all aspects of the Tory offensive.

All the efforts of the leaders to blot out the class struggle in the Scarborough discussions will neither prevent this struggle developing nor stop the growth in power and influence of the Marxist Left.

some semi-finished or finished goods. The government Bulletin For Industry (Sept. 1958) draws attention to the function of stock-piling as a cushioning factor over the past year, enabling production to grow while sales have not grown at the same rate or have even fallen.

Could clog the market

The significance of this is clear. Now stocks may be drawn on, while production falls. A strike or lock-out could be borne more easily by the employers in some trades—might even be welcome, to enable excess stocks to be cleared.

In addition, big buyers may hold off from buying in anticipation that prices will be reduced; or panic sales could clog the market.

There are, therefore, a number of possibilities of both an intensification of the depression and of blows being struck at the organized workers.

When we look at particular industries these symptoms can

be seen clearly enough.

Steel, for example, looks very far from achieving the level expected of it in the early 1960s and some dismissals have already taken place.

The Bulletin for Industry draws attention to another aspect when, noting this, it adds: 'Anything like a long-term stagnation would be politically unthinkable against the claims of economic expansion in the communist bloc' (my emphasis—T.K.). In other words—capitalism must avoid a crisis or else . . .

The motor industry, so far super-prosperous and building up enormous capacity, is no longer so confident. Ford's half yearly report, while reporting bumper profits, shows this clearly.

They may doubt whether even Mr Gaitskell could get a car into every garage quickly enough to prevent profits falling in the future!

(To be concluded)

WHY THE FRENCH LEFT LOST SUPPORT

From A Correspondent in Paris

HOW long it will be before de Gaulle follows up his referendum victory with an onslaught on the working-class movement, and the form this onslaught will take, remains to be seen. In the November elections to the National Assembly everything will be done to reduce working-class representation to a minimum. In any case, under the constitution, the Assembly is merely a phantom body without real authority.

The real blows will be directed against the trade unions, both from without, and from within on the part of the leaders of Force Ouvrière, many of whom are Gaullist in sympathy.

The referendum has revealed the full extent of the loss of support for the Left among the working class. Almost everywhere the number of NON votes was below that of the Communist Party in the elections of January 1956, sometimes by a very high margin.

The main exceptions were those areas in which the local socialists, in defiance of the Mollet leadership, also came out against de Gaulle.

I. THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Some figures recently published in France-Observateur show how in some working-class districts the maximum communist vote was below that of 1946, while in the 1950s fewer votes have been polled than in 1936. Communist support has stagnated or declined in its very strongholds.

For example, in the 13th arrondissement of Paris the vote in 1936 was 45.2 per cent. In 1956 it was down to 37.5 per cent.

Smaller losses over the twenty years were recorded for the 1st, 3rd and 5th sectors. In the area of the Renault factory, Boulogne-Billancourt, results were similar.

Stagnation or decline in electoral support can be seen, too, in the Paris industrial belt. The growth of support in other areas, especially in rural areas, while compensating electorally, cannot erase the effect: the Communist Party has not gained increasing support from industrial workers, but has tended to lose it.

What are the reasons for this? Full employment and relative prosperity—explained by the Communist Party as 'increasing misery'—may have something to do with it.

CGT only a shadow

But in Britain the same state of affairs has led to the growth and increasing power of the trade union movement. In France this is not the case.

Trade union membership has fallen and the CGT, the Communist-led federation, is now only a shadow of its former

self. Its impotence was shown in the weak response to its strike calls in May, preceding de Gaulle's accession to power.

The real cause has to be sought in the policy of the Communist Party. There is significance in the fact that in some working-class districts maximum confidence was placed in this party in 1936 at the time of the sit-down strikes, which showed an upsurge of class power.

With the slogan 'It is necessary to know when to end a strike' the Communist Party played the leading part in keeping this movement within the confines set by its middle-class Popular Front allies of the Radical Party.

Again, having won remarkable popular support in 1944-45, it used it to bring de Gaulle to power, disarm the partisan movement and call for maximum production at a time when black marketeers and profiteers were waxing fat and the people were cold and hungry.

The party leaders swung from adventurism (after losing their seats in the government in 1947) to efforts to win allies in the middle-class parties for the pursuit of policies in the interests of the USSR.

In all the many efforts by the militants in the ranks of the working class to carry forward a real class programme in the factories, or against the Algerian war, the Communist Party was there—warning against 'provocation' and damping the movement down.

Thus the great strike waves of 1953 and 1955 were undertaken by the rank-and-file without and against official Communist Party support, at any rate in the crucial stages of the battle.

Workers' confidence has waned

And so the workers' confidence has waned. They have silently left the CGT and given up reading Humanité. They may still vote communist because they see no class alternative, but that is all.

Even the number of militants has shrunk compared with the halcyon days of 1945 and 1946 when Maurice Thorez was handing out the millionth party card each year.

The party has not lost its support primarily through dogmatism or Stalinism or Hungary—though there are many who say: 'Yes, it took a good stand on the Rosenbergs and the American Negroes, but what does it do about the frame-ups

and abuses in the USSR?

Primarily it has forfeited support for lack of a class policy. Even now it is emphasizing parliamentary methods. In the referendum campaign it was, in effect, calling for nothing more than the defence of bourgeois democracy.

But all this time the National Assembly has been steadily falling into disrepute and contempt; and the Communist Party's emphasis on Parliament has only increased the cynicism of working class people.

Nor has middle-class support been won by the policy of compromise. Many petty bourgeois were impressed by communist strength just after the war—by the devotion of the militants, the sense of dynamism which was felt in the party ranks and at its meetings.

Ceased to impress them

They were not merely scared away by cold war propaganda: the policy of the party, which became increasingly unconvincing, even to its stalwarts, ceased to impress them with a sense of power and purpose.

Among the intellectuals the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party and the Hungarian Revolution caused some notable defections. Others have simply drifted away over the years.

Those who remain have become adept in casuistry, but defeatism is rife and they are not all so monolithic in private as they appear in public.

But the Communist Party has ruined a whole generation of young intellectuals—some from middle-class or even reactionary backgrounds—who, during the Resistance and the post-war upsurge, were genuinely attracted to Marxist ideas and policies.

It has turned them into dried-up husks or made them despondent.

No doubt defeat and the expectation of blows to come will rally the militants to the support of the party. But they will take up their battle stations with a growing feeling that in the past they have been unnecessarily held back, or exposed, for no good purpose.

Healthy rank and file

Criticism must grow, and many of the elements of the future leadership must come from the healthy rank and file.

At the same time, until there is proof of such a new leadership and new policy the mass of the workers is unlikely to be shifted from its present indifference, or even sympathy for Bonapartism.

The vital struggles will come in industry, around wage questions, around unemployment—if the recession develops—and in defence of trade union rights.

II. THE SOCIALIST PARTY

Despite the betrayal of the Mollet leadership there is no doubt that the Socialist Party continues to retain working-class support in some areas.

There is also the new autonomous Socialist Party which may contribute to breathing some life into those who have been disgusted by the failure of the old leadership.

It is evident, however, that Mollet and his friends no longer represent a working-class trend; their real nature will become increasingly apparent.

Already their 'policy' is expressed in a resolution of the recent party congress: 'In present circumstances and in the immediate period the Socialist Party considers the definition of a detailed economic and social programme to be superfluous.'

'What can I do for you, my General?' That sums up the political thinking of the Socialist Party leaders at present.

Although it is clear that they contributed to bringing in votes for de Gaulle, they are likely to become increasingly ineffective as he shows himself incapable of the kind of results which many of his middle-class and working-class supporters expect.

On the other hand, it would be foolhardy to expect that Mollet and Co. will not use every opportunity of further misleading and confusing their party's genuine working-class supporters.

III. THE PARTY OF LEFT SOCIALIST UNITY

The relatively new Party of Left Socialist Unity (PUGS) was recognized as taking part in the referendum and allotted its five minutes of radio time.

Its spokesman was Claude Bourdet, the acutely intelligent editor of *France-Observateur*, and a masterly analyst of all actual and hypothetical political combinations in France.

He and the other main spokesmen for the PUGS appeal mainly to intellectuals, although some working-class youth seem to have been attracted into the party's ranks.

Certainly the main weakness of this organization is its failure to build a bridge to the ordinary people, which it will probably never succeed in doing.

Thus it was significant that in an article for English readers on the French Left contributed to *Universities and Left Review* Bourdet had little to say about the trade unions and the industrial struggle.

Like many French intellectuals, the leaders of this group can produce excellent sociological studies of the proletariat but have little real acquaintance with it and its needs.

They have attached far too much importance to conciliating the leaders of the Communist Party or working out just how much common ground they have with Mendès-France, and not enough to the real issues in the factories. They have been 'rethinking' and writing learned papers on Marxism now for ten or twelve years without being able to build a barrier to de Gaulle, or even to explain fundamentally why he has won large parts of the following of Left-wing parties.

IV. THE BOURGEOIS LEFT

The position of Mendès-France, and some of his friends in the Radical ranks, can easily give rise to misunderstanding. In reality Mendès is on the Left flank of the French bourgeoisie, that part which prefers to rule through the classical medium of parliamentary democracy and dislikes putting its trust and its riches in the power of dictators.

At the same time there are many points of contact between them and the moderate Gaullists, perhaps with the General himself.

They both want to modernize French capitalism and give it a new lease of life: they differ on methods—chiefly on political rather than economic methods.

Mendès-France's support for the NON resembles, in fact, his resignation from the de Gaulle government after the war when it would not follow his advice about a drastic reform of the currency such as that which, a few years later, helped to instil new vigour into west German capitalism.

V. CONCLUSION

No doubt there will be all kinds of reactions within the Left to the crushing referendum figures. For the moment the working class has been defeated, partly because, having lost faith in the capacity of their own leaders, large sections were swung over by an unprecedented campaign of psychological pressure to the side of Bonapartism.

There is no point in disguising the fact that not only the middle class, but also sections of the workers, have reacted in this way. This survey of the main Left-wing parties helps to explain why this was so.

It suggests that the existing leaders have either betrayed the movement or have been ineffective.

New leaderships are not built in a day and it would be folly to assume that the working class is quickly going to find a new leadership and strike back at reaction.

Much more immediate is the danger of further blows and the need to parry them in order to be able to survive and move into line for the really decisive battles of the future.

In the mean time the capitalist class has been strengthened by the paralysis of initiative and combativeness for which the Communist and Socialist Party leaderships are responsible.

NIGERIA

NIGERIAN STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE FOR A UNITED, INDEPENDENT NIGERIA

By Ekiomenesekenigha

THE capitalist Press boycotted a demonstration organized by the Nigeria Union outside London's Lancaster House last week against 108 delegates from Nigeria attending the resumed Constitutional Conference.

No doubt this was because the Nigerian students were demonstrating, not only against our political leaders, but against imperialism as well.

'Tourists go home', 'Traitors go home', 'Stop squandering the taxpayers' money by attending endless and fruitless conferences', 'Independence for Nigeria, April 2, 1960—no compromise' and 'We want one Nigeria, one people, one country': these were some of the slogans.

As the police tried to break up the demonstration, the students began shouting. There were cries of: 'Go home with your robes and feather hats' and 'Scrap regionalism and end imperialism now.'

The true nature of Nigeria's present leaders is now being seen.

The Northern People's Congress is only interested in preserving the interests of the emirs, the feudal rulers of the north.

The Action Group Party fights for the interests of the land-owning chiefs in the western region.

And Dr 'Zik' (who was once the spearhead and leader of the liberation movement in West Africa) and his cohorts are only interested in building up native capitalism and becoming in some cases junior partners in imperialist firms that are exploiting Nigerians.

Nearly every Nigerian thinks the conference will be a failure and that independence is not around the corner.

Whether the imperialists in fact make some concession to grant independence in 1960 or not we shall still have the country divided into five or more parts. Our tax money will still be wasted on maintaining a huge parasitic class.

British imperialism will still own and control our wealth.

What Nigeria needs is a new leadership, a new programme and a new policy, that will draw the workers, farmers and educated youth together in the interests of the whole country—and lead them in the taking over of the imperialist firms.

CEYLON

BIG MISTAKES ADMITTED BY CEYLON'S STALINIST LEADERS

From Our Colombo Correspondent

CEYLON'S Communist Party, led by Cambridge graduate Pieter Keuneman, has issued a self-critical analysis of recent policy and announced a 'turn'.

From now on it will take a strongly critical attitude towards the government, it says, and will even be ready to join hands with the ('Trotskyist') Lanka Sama Samaja Party on specific issues.

The party admits that during 1957 it made a big mistake in soft-peddling the question of official recognition of the Tamil language—the language of the biggest minority in Ceylon—and the rights of the Indian immigrant workers, and that it did wrong in trying to sabotage strikes led by trade unions under LSSP influence.

This significant statement results from the success of a series of public meetings held by the LSSP to denounce the corruption and jingoism of the government.

It results also from the continued progress of the LSSP in the industrial field, and from increasing recognition by the middle class in town and country (on whom the Ceylon Stalinists' eyes are always cocked) that the LSSP is the only non-communalist party, just when they are wearying of communal disorders.

Constant Reader | Breakfast in Bed for McAlpine the First

LIBERAL leader Jo Grimond dropped a mighty clanger when he spoke recently of the alleged abuse of patronage by the Labour and Tory parties.

For the last Liberal-led government this country has known went out in a stink of corruption connected with the sale of honours.

From 1917 through to his fall in 1922 Lloyd George awarded an unprecedentedly large number of peerages, baronetcies and other honours, mostly to men of large fortune who in many cases had little obvious claim to public recognition.

Some of them had past histories that would not bear close examination.

It was widely understood that the secret lay in this: that in return for their honours the recipients made contributions (so much for a baronetcy, less for a knighthood and so on) to Lloyd George's political fund.

Eventually the scandal became so foul that the ruling class jettisoned the Liberal Prime Minister and his associates as a dangerous liability to the Establishment.

Good things of life

Among the 'Lloyd George creations' was Sir Robert McAlpine, 1st baronet (1918). He got his honour, the citation stated, for 'meritorious work in the construction of shell factories'.

There were said to be specially close ties between him and the government. In January 1918, some months before the King found himself raising McAlpine to his baronetcy, a question had been asked in Parliament about an 'advantageous contract' secured by the McAlpine firm for erecting army huts: had this anything to do with the fact that a member of the firm was related to a Cabinet Minister?

This first Sir Robert McAlpine was a well-known race-horse-owner and lover of the good things of life.

When he died, in 1934, *The Times* recalled that 'he did not believe in early rising, and it is said that he had got up to breakfast a dozen times in thirty years'.

The story of the 'Lloyd George creations' and of Maundy Gregory, who was the go-between for these sordid deals, is told in 'Honours for Sale', by Gerald Macmillan (1954).

The 1859 building lock-out

THE dispute on the McAlpine building site on London's South Bank has come as we near the centenary of the historic building lock-out of 1859.

It was from the struggle around this that the London Trades Council emerged, in 1860; this lock-out was a major landmark in trade union history—as the Shell-Mex dispute may well prove to be, too.

In 1859 the London master builders tried to smash the men's unions by means of a general lock-out, presenting every

worker with what came to be known as 'the document'—a declaration he must sign renouncing membership of a trade union.

The entire movement rallied to the builders' support, and it was the standing committee of unions formed to organize this support in the capital that developed into the London Trades Council.

After several months' bitter struggle, the masters had to give in and allow work to be resumed without any signing of 'the document'.

The building workers came through strengthened by their fight, uniting their two unions into the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners.

A feature of the 1859 trial of strength was the splendid support given the workers by their wives, in spite of the hardships involved.

A receiving officer who visited the home of a locked-out builder reported:

'I visited this man's lodging; he was out, but his wife was in bed, with scarcely a rag to cover her, evidently sinking from want; the room contained scarcely an article of furniture and presented a most destitute and neglected and dirty appearance.

'She said: "We are starving, sir; we have neither fire nor food."

' "Why," I replied, "does not your husband go to work?"

' "What?" she exclaimed, with considerable energy, "to become worse than a slave?"'

Unfair to Red Clydeside?

HENRY PELLING's pioneer 'The British Communist Party. A Historical Profile' is a work that calls for serious criticism: not at the level of James Klugmann's review in the Daily Worker of October 2.

Klugmann professes indignation because Pelling mentions that, at its foundation, the party 'consisted to a memorable extent of persons of non-English origin'.

'For Mr Pelling,' he witheringly observes, 'men like Gallacher, MacManus, J. T. Murphy and Robin Page Arnot are aliens.'

I don't think either Arnot or Gallacher would be pleased if Klugmann were to call them 'Englishmen'. He is not likely to try it on Murphy (characteristic English name, that), since the latter was expelled in 1932.

MacManus is dead, his ashes in the Kremlin wall, but if he were not, and Klugmann called him English, I expect he would reply as on a famous occasion he replied to another James (J. H. Thomas): 'Ye mauna say that, Jimmy!'

The prominent part played by Scots, Irish and Welsh in the militant Left of the British Labour movement is, of course, a long-noticed fact.

Klugmann will find an illuminating discussion of its significance in Trotsky's 'Where is Britain Going?', published in 1926 by the Communist Party of Great Britain.

'To beat the Reds, go for sterling'

HAROLD WILSON seems to have startled some people at the Labour Party conference with his warning about a possible run on sterling being organized by the Tories in the event of another Labour government.

Yet Marxists have long since shown that history gives us every reason to expect the British ruling class will use all its economic power, at the very least, to frustrate any serious threat to its fundamental interests.

Naïve unawareness of this springs eternal in the Right-wing Labour breast.

During the General Strike the trade union leaders were shocked to learn that for the workers to use their economic power in opposition to government policy was 'unconstitutional', and hastily called the whole thing off.

Kingsley Martin, in his 'The British Public and the General Strike' (1926) pointed out that the very constitution itself was founded on a capitalist equivalent of the General Strike.

In 1832, when the Duke of Wellington began to form a government opposed to the Reform Bill, Francis Place and his friends plastered London with posters saying: 'To beat

the Duke, go for gold'—an open incitement to depositors to withdraw their gold from the banks and create a currency crisis.

A real socialist government must expect at least similar methods of struggle to be used against itself, if not also the sort of military blackmail used against the Liberal government in connexion with Irish Home Rule in 1914; and the movement should prepare in advance to deal with such moves.

BRIAN PEARCE

LETTERS

CLEANSE THE UNIONS OF OFFICIALS WHO DO NOT WANT TO FIGHT

THE building industry is crying out for nationalization. Of that there can be no doubt. Today, through its being split up into hundreds of large firms and thousands of small and one-man concerns, the amount of waste is colossal.

Take the case of machinery, for example. There are often cases of two firms working on the same site: one has a piece of machinery lying idle while the other firm sends fifteen or twenty miles for the same machine. Perhaps it is a crane or perhaps it is only a wheelbarrow.

Often a worker will be working in another town hundreds of miles from home, while workers from that town are working in the town he lives in.

Tenders cost thousands of pounds to prepare sometimes, and yet forty or fifty firms may tender for the same job. Wasted expense, all adding on to the cost of housing and roads, airports and factories.

Under nationalization whole schemes could be planned and built in the most economical way, with workers controlling the foreman and helping in the planning of the job by making suggestions as to the best way to do certain operations.

Today building workers have one of the most insecure of jobs. Because sites are scattered, employers have a better chance of weakening the workers' fight for better conditions.

Victimization of militant workers is a regular occurrence. It is necessary for workers to fight together if they are to stand a chance of winning. The officials of our unions do not want to fight.

The no. 6 divisional secretary, Spencer, comes along to a strike in Coventry and says: 'I am here to reach an amicable agreement to suit both sides. A fifty-fifty responsibility is the best way.'

The assistant general secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers, Learnard, thought it was strange that members involved in a dispute had condemned the executive for still not having paid dispute benefit twelve weeks after the dispute had been won.

Our union must be cleansed of all officials who do not do the bidding of the members and who weaken the fight of members against the boss.

A link between all jobs must be forged capable of uniting, around a common policy of action, all building workers determined not to go back to the conditions of hire and fire which existed in the 1920s and 1930s.

Let us hope that the rank-and-file Conference called by The Newsletter on November 16 can go even further and link workers in all industries in the fight for no redundancy, no loss in wages, and ultimately for a socialist Britain freed from the grip of rich men.

R. Perry (President, Coventry branch AUBTW)

CONSTANT READER IS EGOTISTICAL EXHIBITIONISM

The Newsletter is marred by the feature called Constant Reader. This seems to exist in order to afford an opportunity for egotistical exhibitionism by its writer.

If there is a place for a column like this at all, its subject-matter should be confined to the industrial struggle and to points that are of direct and immediate political use.

Glasgow

J. M'Atcer