

# THE NEWSLETTER

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## BELVEDERE: SELL-OUT AFTER 14 WEEKS

By HUGH BARR, former chief steward at Sir William Arrol's, Belvedere power station (Kent)

**U**NION officials have capitulated to the employers at the Belvedere construction site. They have agreed to the victimization of leading militants after a lock-out which lasted fourteen weeks.

The firms and the unions have agreed that 116 of the 240 men involved in the mass sackings of October 17 will be taken back on the basis of length of service.

Excluded from the first list are twelve workers from Brown's, most of them stewards and militants, and four from Sir William Arrol's—the shop steward, the deputy steward, a former steward and the chairman of the site committee.

The agreement is valid until May 26, when the firms will be free to employ whoever they like, regardless of the list.

**The steelworkers who were employed by Arrol's overwhelmingly rejected this agreement and were threatened with expulsion from the union if they dared to picket the site on January 26.**

The workers have now decided to accept the agreement under protest, but they intend to keep their liaison committee intact so as to carry on the fight for the reinstatement of all sacked workers.

### WORKERS MUST LEARN THE LESSONS OF THESE TWO SELL-OUTS

By Brian Behan

MOST of the Belvedere men I have spoken to are convinced that they have been sold out by the officials of their union, the Constructional Engineering Union.

Many of them are bewildered. They cannot understand why it was necessary to reach such an agreement with the firm when they themselves were showing no sign of weakening, and were quite prepared to remain out until the employer was broken.

The employer was in serious difficulties, with a site that had been held up for fourteen weeks, and with pressure on him from the Central Electricity Authority for work to be resumed.

Victory was snatched from the hands of the workers.

The men are also complaining that the union is quite prepared to arrive at settlements with the employer, but has not participated in the initiation or maintenance of the dispute.

When the men were sacked it was the site liaison com-

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### ENGINEERS FIGHT SACKINGS BY STAYING AWAY ONE DAY A FORTNIGHT

By Harry Ratner (Manchester engineer)

WORKERS' resistance to sackings in Manchester engineering factories is growing. In two well known factories the workers are opposing sackings and imposing short time against the employers' wishes.

At Ferguson Pailin Ltd the management declared eight fitters redundant and rejected the shop stewards' demand for spreading the work by reducing hours.

But 140 production fitters, at a mass meeting, decided to defy the management and to impose reduced hours on their own initiative by refusing to report for work one day each fortnight.

On Monday, January 12, not a single production fitter reported for work. The workers intend to repeat their action on Monday, January 26. The first notices expire on the following Friday.

Ferguson Pailin is part of the giant Associated Electrical Industries Ltd, which employs 100,000 workers.

In an attempt to blunt opposition to sackings the AEI group recently introduced a scheme based on one week's extra notice for every two years of service. The scheme was rejected by the shop stewards at Ferguson Pailin.

The redundancy at Ferguson Pailin is the first case in the AEI combine since then. A meeting of shop stewards from all AEI factories in Britain is being convened soon in London to consider a policy on redundancy.

At a nearby factory, Laurence Scott Electro-Motors Ltd, the 500-odd workers have taken a similar decision to impose short time in response to the employers' intention of sacking fifty workers.

These workers are loyally carrying out the policy adopted by the Manchester district committee of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, which was endorsed by mass meetings in many factories last November.

## FOR MASS ACTION AGAINST SACKINGS

**Liverpool Readers:**

Stork Hotel, Queen Square,  
Sunday, February 1 at 7 p.m.

Hear HARRY CONSTABLE, PETER FRYER and GERRY HEALY

**Wigan Readers:**

The Baths Lounge, Millgate  
Monday, February 2, at 7.30 p.m.

Hear GERRY HEALY

Chairman, JACK SMITH (member of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives)

## COMMENTARY

### WHY NO PROTEST?

**W**HY has the British Communist Party failed to organize any kind of protest campaign against the arrest of communists by Nasser in Egypt and Syria? This is the essence of the protest made by Erik Rechnitz, a leading industrial member of the Communist Party, in Monday's Daily Worker. The editor, J. R. Campbell, gives an evasive reply. He talks glibly about his paper's references 'on several previous occasions' to Nasser's attacks on communists. But nowhere does he commit the Daily Worker or the Communist Party to a forthright condemnation of Nasser's repressive measures. There are many Iraqi students in London, Communist Party members, who are rightfully indignant. So are many other members of that party. But Palme Dutt and the Colonial Department have not organized one single protest meeting.

And this is not surprising. The Communist Party is not a real international socialist party pledged to support the world working class against its oppressors. 'Support the Moscow bureaucracy right or wrong' is the rule for its agents in Britain. Because Khrushchev has a pact with Nasser the game of power politics must be played right to the end—which means the sacrifice of the Communist Parties in the Middle East if necessary. (This also explains why there has been no effective campaign on behalf of the outlawed west German Communist Party. The Soviet rulers wine and dine Herr Adenauer, while saying nothing about the imprisoned west German communists. King Street follows this line.)

Here in a nutshell is what 'peaceful coexistence' between the Kremlin and the Egyptian rulers means: the abandonment of internationalism; the abandonment of solidarity with Nasser's victims. At the same time large numbers of workers, potential communists, in Israel are driven into the arms of the Zionists. There is no fundamental difference between Stalin's Great Russian nationalism and the foreign policy of Khrushchev. Both in the long run strengthen imperialism—because they fail to support the workers and poor peasants of the Middle East. Yet it is these millions of exploited and oppressed who were the main driving force behind Nasser in his opposition to imperialism. For a time it suited Nasser to make use of this force for his limited nationalist objectives; it now suits his purpose to come to terms with imperialism. So he attacks communists and militant socialists.

By its silence the British Communist Party is helping imperialism achieve its aim of stifling revolution in the Middle East. Members of the Communist Party should speak out, like Erik Rechnitz did. They should demand a full discussion. They and others who want to demonstrate their solidarity with the comrades imprisoned by Nasser can do so at the protest meeting arranged by The Newsletter in the Caxton Hall tonight.

### INTELLECTUALS AND WORKERS

**T**HE relationship between intellectuals and working-class politics and culture is discussed in a recent number of the New York Nation by the critic Raymond Williams. Using the first person plural, he apparently claims to speak for an important body of Left-wing intellectual opinion in Britain.

With what he has to say about the place of the working class in present-day society, and the sense in

which it is the carrier of the new, socialist society, no Marxist would disagree. If anything, apart from the fact that many workers would just not know what he is talking about, he errs in making it sound more romantic than it really is:

We base our values on the working class because it is the main carrier of the principle of common improvement, as against individual advancement. The working-class movement, in its characteristic institutions, offers the example of community; collective action and substantial equality of condition as against the prevailing ethos [spirit] of opportunity and hierarchy. We believe, in fact, that the spirit of these working-class institutions—the co-operatives, the trade unions, and numerous voluntary associations—is the best basis for any future society.

We can agree, too, with his estimation of the narrowness of the Fabians and their 'overvaluation of experts and undervaluation of ordinary people' and sympathize with his well-founded suspicion of the top manipulators of both the Labour Party and Communist Party. Socialism 'from above', handed out or engineered by some distant apparatus which uses people, is a contradiction in terms.

Where, then, lies the weakness of Williams's approach? In that, while he accepts that (if only to save 'culture') 'social ownership must replace capitalism', the means of achieving this goal dissolve into a mush of fine words. 'The transfer of power in the name of a class is not our objective,' he writes. But if what he says about the working class is true there is no alternative to the transfer of power to a class which not merely speaks in the name of the whole society, but is in fact the carrier of the new way. Of course we do not want to see a new 'managerial *élite* mixing with an old owning class', after the fashion of so many bright young Labour Party 'new thinkers'. But to be 'interested in the politics of power only in so far as change gives choice and the means of choice to ordinary families from which we have come' risks, in practice, letting the manipulators get away with it.

Williams gives the impression that he feels politics is a dirty business, after all; that power corrupts; that clean hands and poetry are infinitely preferable. If that leads him and his friends to be fastidious, admiring the working class but standing aloof from its struggles because there may be some dirt flying about, then they can be discounted as a political force. While they are dithering things are being done at both poles of society. If they contribute towards the building of a movement with specific political objectives as part of the working-class movement, and with no trace of condescension, they will be defending culture at the same time. But to try to short-circuit this is self-defeating—and reveals that the confidence in the working class which is expressed in elegant prose is in reality less than complete.

### G. D. H. COLE

**W**HATEVER differences one may have had with G. D. H. Cole on political questions, or however one may estimate the role he played in the movement at different times, it is impossible not to regret the passing of the most outstanding historian of the British working class and its organizations. Now more than ever the movement needs to revive interest in its own history and the lessons to be drawn therefrom—and the numerous products of what somebody once called 'the Cole industry' provide ready and substantial fuel for this purpose.

**BELVEDERE (Continued from front page)**

mittee, a rank-and-file body, which held them together, issued leaflets, maintained a constant picket and fought the employer.

The union at no time gave official recognition to the dispute. Nor did it pay a single penny in dispute benefit.

No one could argue that the men were bleeding the union in a long-drawn-out struggle. They were maintaining themselves with the help of rank-and-file workers up and down the country.

The only reason for the sell-out is the one that has been consistently put forward by The Newsletter: that the trade union leaders, by and large, are not prepared to lead a struggle against the employers.

No stewards were allowed to take part in negotiating this settlement. The settlement was not put as a recommendation, but as an instruction to the men in dispute.

The Belvedere sell-out should answer once and for all the argument about 'political intervention' marring the chances of winning a dispute.

Some people argued that on the Shell-Mex site the chances of the men gaining a victory would have been greater if The Newsletter had not supported them and printed broadsheets for them.

But at Belvedere and at Stevenage non-participation by The Newsletter did not prevent the sell-out taking place.

The point was made by Brother Hugh Barr at the mass meeting held to discuss the Belvedere settlement that the officials had blamed The Newsletter at Shell-Mex—whom could they blame here?

Belvedere should begin to answer another argument, too. The Communist Party leaders say that workers must unite behind the trade union leaders against the employers; that to suggest that the trade union leaders will not lead a struggle is to disrupt and destroy working-class unity.

**How to strengthen unity**

At Belvedere (and at Stevenage) the workers on the job were solidly united in struggle against the employer, with no idea of retreating.

It was the trade union officials who in fact split the movement, by reaching both settlements and instructing the men to return to work. Bro. Kent, reported to have threatened men with expulsion if they threw a picket-line round the site on January 26, is a member of the Communist Party.

Such officials not only split the movement, but create confusion and demoralization in the ranks.

The socialist who tells workers what he has learned from the past about the nature of these leaders—that they will not lead struggles—is preparing the rank and file for the eventual sell-out, and strengthening the unity of the working class.

Belvedere shows the future pattern. One of the most significant decisions reached for many years was the decision of the National Union of Hosiery Workers to accept a wage cut.

Every trade unionist must ask himself the question: will not the same leadership that sold out at Belvedere and Stevenage accept wage reductions in due course?

Unity must never mean that trade unionists do not struggle against being thrown on the scrap heap.

The lesson of Belvedere is that we need to build a strong rank-and-file movement in the trade unions, led by socialists, who alone can arm the working class from the past experiences of the Labour movement.

### **UNION SENDS BACK STEVENAGE STRIKERS: PANEL TO DISCUSS STEWARD'S JOB**

*From Our Industrial Correspondent*

ON the instructions of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers, the strikers on the Harry Neal's job at Stevenage agreed to return to work on Monday.

The question of the reinstatement of Bill Sullivan, chief

labourers' steward, will now go before an arbitration panel.

Although the men agreed to return and were prepared to start that day the firm told them they could not begin work until Tuesday.

A meeting of the joiners was called—they had not been involved in the dispute—which decided to stop work until the bricklayers and labourers returned the next day.

Last Friday, following the freeze and the frost, Carltons, Marriotts, Mowlems and Sindals, other contractors in the new town, invoked Rule 2 (b) and sacked their workers.

Although on the Monday the weather was once again suitable for building work none of these firms had begun to take on workers again.

A number of stewards and other militants I spoke to on the site feel that these firms will probably try to use this opportunity to 'weed out' stewards.

**FOOTNOTE. A stop-press report on disputes on three other contracts in Stevenage, telephoned in by a building worker there, appears on the back page.**

### **CRAWLEY ENGINEERS ARE 'ONE HUNDRED PER CENT. DETERMINED'**

*By Bob Pennington*

MASS sackings and the issuing of writs against shop stewards Lawton and Kirrage have failed to weaken the fight of the eighty-six strikers at the Universal Pattern Co., Crawley (Sussex).

A statement issued by the strike committee says: 'We are still 100 per cent. determined to defeat these allegations.'

On Saturday, strikers, their wives and families and members of the local trades council demonstrated through the town.

Although it was a bitterly cold day with drizzling rain, about 150 marched behind the maroon, gold and blue banner of the Amalgamated Engineering Union's Croydon district committee.

In the square a public meeting heard speakers from the AEU emphasize the importance of the fight against sackings.

Vic Parker, assistant divisional organizer, said: 'We can assure the members at Universal Pattern's that they will get the full support of the 900,000 members nationally.'

'The Universal Pattern workers are fighting for the working class throughout the length and breadth of Britain.'

After the meeting, Alf Pegler, Labour's prospective parliamentary candidate for Horsham, himself an AEU member and chairman of the union's organizing committee, told me:

'The Crawley Labour Party is backing this fight to the hilt.'

'We have to think of all the youngsters in this town who will soon be leaving school. If sackings and redundancy continue to grow there will be no future for them.'

Mr. Pegler added: 'The employers must be taught a lesson. What they are trying to do is to put the burden on the working class and we cannot permit that.'

**Support continues to grow**

I understand that the AEU will be responsible for giving legal help to the two stewards. Now the writs have been served the defendants will have to file their defence before the matter can come before the High Court, where it will be tried before a judge and jury.

A legal spokesman for the firm has stated: 'Without research I would say that this is the first case of this nature for many, many years. I certainly cannot recall a similar case coming before the court.'

Support for the strike continues to grow. Vic Lawton, chairman of the strike committee, told me:

'Men are getting out and around the country to raise cash and explain our fight. Besides London and the Midlands' speakers are putting our case in South Wales.'

'On Tuesday the AEU executive council have another meeting and our case will be discussed then. In fact we expect it will be on top of the agenda.'

## BEST BOOK YET ON HUNGARY'S REVOLT

By PETER FRYER

IT is a sad comment on the present state of publishing in Britain, and on the real feelings about the Hungarian workers' struggles and sufferings of many of those who claimed to support their revolution in 1956, that far and away the best book yet to appear about that revolution could find no London publisher.

Many of the well-printed books that came out about these events were of only ephemeral value; one at least—Noel Barber's—was tripe from beginning to end.

Dora Scarlett's 'Window onto Hungary',<sup>1</sup> for all the austerity of its duplicated pages, stands head and shoulders above these—indeed, above any other eyewitness account of the uprising and its suppression that exists in English.

It does so for three reasons.

**MATURE REFLECTION.** First, it is not a testimony put down straight after the events it describes, and still glowing white-hot with their impact, but the fruit of mature reflection.

Perhaps its comparative lateness was what the publishers objected to—the market is cold, you see, and there have been so many books on the subject.

Secondly, Miss Scarlett's account of the revolution is preceded by a careful, detailed and exceedingly readable account of Hungary's history, and of economic, social and political conditions under the régime of Matyas Rakosi.

**SOLIDLY FACTUAL.** This is far more interesting than the conventional type of 'background' information, often so dull and so stereotyped. It is writing at once solidly factual—and enriched and enlivened by Miss Scarlett's own exper-

<sup>1</sup> Broadacre Books (Bradford), 15s. Copies can be obtained from New Park Publications Ltd, 266 Lavender Hill, London, S.W.11.

iences.

And thirdly—and, to the best of my knowledge, unlike any other British journalist who saw the Hungarian revolution and its aftermath; and for that matter unlike any other British communist who was there, Coutts, Russell and Fryer included—Dora Scarlett learnt the Hungarian language.

Not only that. She spoke it and understood it very well indeed—and, so equipped to talk to people, overhear their conversations, make friends with them and understand them, she travelled widely outside Budapest as a radio reporter and on her holidays during the three years and nine months she worked in the country.

This fact alone makes her evidence of unique value. She did not merely go about the city and stand in queues and crowds during those days of great hope and great despair; she caught the mood of the people; she was alive to practically every nuance of their thinking; and she conveys not what she or anyone else thought the Hungarians ought to have been thinking and saying, but what they were in fact thinking and saying, before, during and after the uprising.

**NOT A MORSEL.** No wonder that when Miss Scarlett, on her return to London, went to see John Gollan and told him what she had seen, he smiled politely and thanked her—and not a morsel of her evidence found reflection in the statement issued by the British Communist Party's executive committee on December 15-16, 1956.<sup>2</sup>

The British Stalinists did not want the truth. They wanted statements backing up their reading of the Hungarian events as an imperialist plot and a counter-revolution.

Though Dora Scarlett nowhere conceals her love for the Hungarian people and her admiration for their heroism, her book is quite sober in tone. Its easy, conversational style

<sup>2</sup> Miss Scarlett was kind enough to let me use her comments on this statement in my pamphlet 'Hungary and the Communist Party' (1957), pp. 36-40.

carries conviction: again and again the argument is clinched with some homespun story.

This book brings out even better than Fejtő's does—and his is the one with which it really merits comparison—the atmosphere of rule by security police, the gradual swelling of popular resentment till the torrent burst its banks, the crumbling of the party, the way new organs of working-class democracy sprang up and assumed control.

There is no attempt to conceal the brutality of the hunt for AVO men, or of the retribution that was visited on them. But the book makes nonsense of the tales about white terror. The people were jealous of the good name of their revolution:

**HOUSEWIFELY CARE.** 'An old lady, with housewifely care, looked at some cakes in a broken window, and said she would take them out and use them before they spoiled. The passers-by would not allow it; better let a few cakes spoil than set an example which might look like looting.'

Were communists being massacred? Dora Scarlett shows how in fact the revolution was led by anti-Stalinist communists.

Had the situation deteriorated in the week before the second Russian intervention? She shows how in fact Budapest was returning to normal, how the buses had started running again on the Saturday, how work was beginning again in the factories.

**REVOLUTIONARY COUNCILS.** Did Mindszenty encourage fascism in his broadcast? No, nine-tenths of it was 'just what might be expected from the head of the Church' and 'the one paragraph in which he dealt with the social structure is so vague and apparently self-contradictory that no one knows exactly what it means'.

Was the restoration of capitalism in prospect? On the

contrary, 'the general expectation was that the large concerns at least would remain public property, with the revolutionary councils playing a decisive part in running them'.

Dora Scarlett does not give the exhaustive analysis of the origins and methods of work of these councils that someone will have to undertake one day, and that will add tremendously to our knowledge of the soviets as forms of working-class organization.

What she does do is scarcely less valuable. She takes us into the meetings of the particular revolutionary council that she attended, the one in the radio, and shows how it discussed and decided things.

There are points of detail here and there with which I would disagree, but Dora Scarlett knows so much more about Hungary than I do that I do not want to press them.

Her book says so much that I should have liked to be able to say, but through ignorance of the language either had not realized or had not got in proper focus, that I can only urge every socialist to get it, read it and learn from it, as I have done.

There are some who say, along with the bourgeois publishers, that the Hungarian story is over, and there are more important things to read about and think about these days.

**INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY.** But the struggle of the workers of eastern Europe against bureaucracy and terror needs our understanding and support, if international solidarity means anything at all.

Hungary's communist and socialist martyrs are now being slandered by the same men who slandered the victims of the Moscow trials in the thirties—men like D. N. Pritt, for instance, who writes in the January issue of New Hungary: 'I say Nagy was a guilty man.'

Pritt and Co. have learned nothing and forgotten nothing. Dora Scarlett's book shows who in fact are the guilty men. It helps to redouble our resolve that the workers will one day settle accounts with them.

### PROTEST AT ARRESTS OF COMMUNISTS IN SYRIA AND EGYPT

Michael Banda, a member of the Editorial Board of The Newsletter, will be the speaker at a meeting in the Lancaster Room, Caxton Hall, tonight at 7.15 p.m.

The meeting has been called to protest against the jailing of Syrian and Egyptian communists by Nasser.

### OVER 40 HULL DOCKERS SUSPENDED FOR REFUSING SATURDAY AFTERNOON WORK

From Our Industrial Correspondent

WELL over forty dockers have now been suspended from work for three days without pay in Hull as a result of their refusal to work on Saturday afternoons.

The show-down on overtime is long overdue: but it is the employers in this instance who have taken the initiative—with a vengeance.

The employers say that they want the same gangs to work until the unloading of a ship is finished.

This in many cases means working after 5 p.m. on a week-day and often Saturday afternoons and Sundays.

The bosses say that this ensures a quicker turn-round. But this depends on the time of the tide, and with good organization could be arranged without any overtime at all, especially as there are so many men on the docks who are unemployed

each day.

The bosses' real reason is that it saves them taking on a new gang for whom they would have to pay a minimum of one turn.

**So they are prepared to make the few sweat while the rest freeze.**

While dockers are not prepared to do compulsory overtime, they will work until 7 p.m., which is two hours over the normal day. But after that, they say, the employers should pay the night gang a full shift's pay. And week-end work should all be voluntary.

### THEY DON'T WANT TO GO CAP IN HAND TO AN OFFICIAL

From Our Industrial Correspondent

THE National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers (the 'blue union') in Hull has started proceedings against one of the dock employers.

It is seeking to force him by law to produce, for any docker who demands it, the terms of his work and conditions.

The usual reply up to now to any docker who has asked for this information has been: 'Go and see the officers of the Transport and General Workers' Union.'

But portworkers feel it is beneath their dignity to go cap in hand to an official of a union to which they do not belong

and do not want to belong. Rank-and-file members of the 'blue union' have no confidence in officials of the 'white union'.

If the action is successful, 'blue union' members will be able to demand that the employer gives the necessary information. Moreover they will be able themselves to appoint the person who is to receive it on their behalf.

## CANADA

### IT'S A BRAZEN MISHMASH ON A SLIPPERY PATH!

Under the heading 'Fighting the Revisionist-Trotskyist Bloc', the following appears in the January issue of World Marxist Review, the English edition of the international Stalinist journal Problems of Peace and Socialism:

HAVING suffered a crushing defeat at the Sixth Congress of the Labour-Progressive Party of Canada the revisionists, in conjunction with Trotskyites and an anti-party group of bourgeois nationalists, are trying to knock together a new political party.

The national executive committee (political bureau), in addition to their measures for drawing communists into actively combating revisionists of all hues, has circulated a

letter to the party membership calling upon them to expose this unprincipled alliance which is based on the struggle against Marxism-Leninism and socialism, while covering itself with the mantle of Marxism.

The letter warns that 'in Canada there is a very serious tendency to ignore the activities of this Trotskyite group.'

'Many of our comrades assume that, because the group commands limited support, it is not necessary to combat its anti-communist activities.'

### 'Direction on international scale'

'This attitude is completely erroneous. It is quite clear now that the anti-communist groups are receiving direction on an international scale. They are joining forces on the completely unprincipled basis of opposition to the Soviet Union, that is, in fact, against the socialist world system.'

The letter goes on to say that this revisionist-Trotskyite activity is 'the Canadian aspect of attempts being made by heterogeneous elements in several countries.'

**'The leaders of the Yugoslav League of Communists are trying hard to create at least an appearance of world-wide support for their anti-Leninist, anti-socialist positions.'**

'They want to claim organized support in a number of countries for their mishmash of brazen revisionism and double-talk. Their position is quite acceptable to the United States government . . .'

Continuing, the letter calls upon the party members to develop a militant ideological offensive against the revisionists. The party press shows where the class roots of opportunism lie; how the Right and Left variants of opportunism objectively serve the same ends and, eventually, join forces to fight Marxism-Leninism and socialism and so enter the slippery path leading to renegacy.

The party has come out of these struggles stronger, with a leadership and membership whose understanding of the

principles and method of Marxism-Leninism has been greatly strengthened, with a deeper appreciation of the need to combine the concreteness of Canadian reality with the general laws of the struggle against capitalism and for socialism, which are common to all countries.

The letter expresses confidence that the new attacks of the Trotskyites and revisionists against Marxism-Leninism will be defeated.

## The Dilemmas of the National Bourgeoisie

By TOM KEMP

THE national liberation movement in colonial and semi-colonial countries is led by men and movements issuing from one section or another of the 'national bourgeoisie'.

Where political independence has been achieved this 'middle' class, or part of it, becomes effectively the ruling class, whether or not in coalition with 'feudal' or tribal notables.

Because these countries are economically backward such a class remains, as it were, a thin sliver off the social trunk.

The European-educated intelligentsia, perhaps the most characteristic human product of 'combined development', forms its most articulate component, and usually assumes political leadership.

Its commercial and industrial segments tend to be relatively weak, dependent to some extent upon foreign capital, though often anxious to push ahead with accumulation and capital investment for the internal market.

Such a 'middle' class tends to be divided from the workers and peasants by its alien culture patterns, by great disparities in consumption levels, such as the purchase of expensive motor cars and similar conveniences of advanced countries.

Needless to say, in any particular case a host of specific factors will determine its social position and political strength and outlook.

The important thing is that once this class takes political control, as in India, Ghana or Egypt, it faces a complex of

**This is the first of two articles. By 'national bourgeoisie' is meant the native capitalist class in a colonial or semi-colonial country; the 'urban petty bourgeoisie' is the middle class of the towns—shopkeepers and professional people; a 'semi-colonial country' is one that has formal political independence, but is under the economic and often military domination of an imperialist power.**

problems, and the ambiguities of its position stand revealed.

Internally it takes over the heritage of imperialism and economic backwardness. It is brought to power by, and continues to lean upon, the mass of peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie and working class, which provided the sinews of the national movement: and these followers expect to see big changes in material conditions.

It is confronted with demands which its means do not enable it to satisfy properly, partly as a consequence of its own class position.

For example, political independence does not automatically bring economic independence.

Not only do property relations, including the rights of the big foreign companies, remain intact—and could be tampered with only at its own peril—but essential tasks, such as land reform, are left undone.

The astute upholders of economic imperialism in the advanced countries recognize that 'decolonization', in a political sense, whatever risks it may involve, is the only way in which their profitable investments and markets can be retained. They know the vulnerabilities of the national bourgeoisie.

The international context contributes to the problems and the possibilities of the new rulers, or potential rulers.

For one thing, the existence of the USSR and the Chinese People's Republic has an important bearing on the weakening of the older imperialisms and the achievement of political independence.

It also provides possibilities for manoeuvre and alternative sources of economic aid; but to make the best of these requires skill and circumspection.

Outside economic aid appears as a major force making for economic development and the satisfaction of political supporters' expectations.

Though it would be illusory to think that it could be dispensed with, the inevitable failure of the bourgeoisie to fulfil its 'historic' tasks makes it loom much larger than it need do in plans of economic development.

### At least non-alignment

Economic dependence of a new kind raises acute political problems: especially how to secure aid with the least strings attached, whether or not they are visible.

Thus aid from the west means that you must respect the property rights and earnings of foreign companies and assumes, though it cannot ensure, a policy of at least non-alignment with the Soviet Union.

What the national bourgeoisie can do depends upon what cards they hold—and they have not all got a Suez Canal up their sleeve.

The entry of the USSR on to the scene as purveyor of aid, so far on a modest scale, introduces a new element. It provides scope, notably, for bargaining and manoeuvre which would otherwise be non-existent. But the Kremlin bureaucracy is no more disinterested than the western governments.

It does what it can to weaken the influence of imperialism and strengthen its own diplomatic bloc. So far it has depended to a large extent on inexpensive expressions of sympathy at Bandung, Cairo and Accra.

Promises considerably exceed goods delivered, and emphasis upon joint aid at the United Nations by the Soviet representatives suggests that on the basis of a 'peaceful coexistence' package deal the USSR would abandon all pretence at political support for the extension of the colonial revolution.

**And Khrushchev knows (for surely Nasser will have taught him) that the national bourgeoisies are equally prepared to make use of Russia, and to go elsewhere when a better bargain is available.**

Such poker players as Nkrumah and Bourguiba have also recognized what can be gained by playing on differences between the imperialist countries. They have a whole school of disciples—Sekou-Touré, Ferhat Abbas and so on.

### Bigger share of profits

The national bourgeoisie manoeuvres to survive in internal politics and on the international scene. Often the best that it can hope for is a bigger share of the profits extracted from its own peasants and workers by the big foreign companies.

In some places it comes into collision with the old land-owning class. In others it is torn into factions—with one or more leaning on foreign support.

Its own experience; the spread of corruption; inability to contain popular discontent: these may lead to the intervention of its 'own' military wing.

Rule by majors, colonels and generals is becoming increasingly common. It becomes a provisional, 'Bonapartist' solution to growing crisis (Iraq, Pakistan, Syria—with Egypt as the prototype).

The army officers, mostly younger members of the bour-

geoisie, free from the taint of corruption, able to reawaken the original enthusiasms of the national movement, provide a reserve team able to take over when the crisis reaches a breaking point.

Essentially the army officers defend property relations, social order, national integrity ('honour'). They act to save the bour-

geoisie from the consequences of its own excesses and divisions, as has so often happened before in history in one form or another.

They find allies in the technical intelligentsia, who are politically realistic. But the same internal and external problems remain on the agenda.

**'LENIN BECAME THE UNQUALIFIED LEADER OF THE MOST REVOLUTIONARY PARTY IN THE WORLD'S HISTORY, BECAUSE HIS THOUGHT AND WILL WERE REALLY EQUAL TO THE DEMANDS OF THE GIGANTIC REVOLUTIONARY POSSIBILITIES OF THE COUNTRY AND THE EPOCH' (Trotsky, 1930)**

## Lenin's Writings Will Help Us Build New Leadership

By CYRIL SMITH

**V**LDIMIR ILYICH ULYANOV, also known as Lenin, died in Russia on January 21, 1924. That was a long time ago, and a long way away; but Lenin still lives today, and his life has significance in every part of the globe.

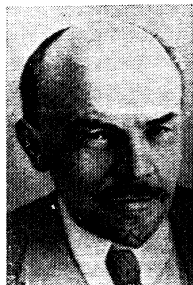
For he devoted his energy and talents to the cause of the struggle of the workers and peasants of the world. So long as this struggle goes on, Lenin will live in his practical and theoretical contribution to the socialist movement.

Lenin built the Bolshevik Party which led the Russian working class to victory. Working illegally, imprisoned and exiled by the tsar's police, Lenin and his followers strove to raise the level of the workers' struggle in every way.

The independent action of the working class—this was the way to smash tsarist oppression.

For this task a party was needed, a party based upon principle, in which questions could be freely thrashed out so that united, disciplined action could be taken.

Lenin's fight for this conception can be read in his works 'What Is To Be Done?' (1902) and 'One Step Forward' (1904).



To Lenin the theoretical principles of Marxism were sacred—not because of a love for abstract discussion, but because they involved the issue of how to fight.

The fierceness with which he battled for his ideas extended even to the realm of philosophy, to which he attached the greatest importance. This may be seen in 'Materialism and Empirio-Criticism' (1908).

He spent considerable effort in analysing the developments within capitalism.

In 'Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism' (1916) he shows that the growth of monopolies and of the influence of the banks went hand in hand with the export of capital to colonial territories.

With the division of the whole world between the great powers, an epoch of war and revolutions opened up. This could only end with the victory of the working class, the overthrow of capitalism and the building of world socialism.

Today we find world imperialism at the stage where its continued existence threatens to transform mankind into a mushroom cloud. Only the power of the world working class can meet this threat.

### Gaitskells of his time

Lenin's internationalism was thus not a sentimental belief in some mystical 'brotherhood of man' but was based on the need for international Labour to fight international Capital.

He denounced all those traitors to socialism who, on some pretext like 'defending democracy', made peace with their own ruling class for the duration of the inter-imperialist bloodbath of 1914.

In pamphlets on opportunism and social chauvinism (1914-16) and (with Zinoviev) 'Socialism and War' (1915) he argued for the need to build a new International, free from the betrayals of the Gaitskells of his time.

In his view the victory of the working class could not be achieved along the parliamentary road.

In 'State and Revolution' (1917) he examines the capitalist State and looks at the role of the workers' State which must supplant it.

He broke off from writing this because 'it is more pleasant and useful to go through the "experience of the revolution" than to write about it'.

In the Russian Revolution, all Lenin's ideas were tested. His attitude to the war, the role of the Bolshevik Party, the relationship of the working class to the peasantry, the nature of the State—all these theoretical questions received their answers in practice.

### A world without bosses

The Russian workers, by setting up their Soviet State and heroically defending it against capitalist armed intervention, demonstrated the ability of international Labour to reshape human society, to build a world without bosses.

In 1917 Lenin showed the importance of being able to change his ideas rapidly when facts made this necessary.

He saw very quickly that the Russian Revolution had to go beyond the capitalist stage and had to be the starting point of world socialist revolution.

He thus took up the position of Trotsky, to which he had been opposed previously—just as Trotsky at this period found himself in agreement with some of Lenin's ideas which he had rejected before, and joined the Bolshevik Party.

Lenin never lost sight of the international setting of the Russian Revolution. His speeches and writings relating to the newly formed Communist International continually emphasize that the fate of the Soviet Union depended on the struggle of the workers and the colonial peoples all over the world.

The job of the Russian workers was to hold on to State power until the capitalists had been overthrown in the advanced countries of western Europe and America.

### Last fight—against bureaucracy

But history proved more complicated than the Bolsheviks could foresee. The failure of the Revolution to spread outside the USSR began to result in the growth of a privileged bureaucracy, alien to the working class.

Lenin's last fight was against the political representatives of this group. In his last writings, suppressed for thirty-five years, we can read how Lenin started the struggle against Stalinism.

In Britain today it is vitally important to build a working-class leadership which can apply the lessons contained in the works of Lenin.

By fighting big business and the Labour bureaucrats who represent them, we can help to complete the task which Lenin began.

## Constant Reader | The Price of Silence

WHAT a scoop it would be if The Newsletter could publish the price paid by private industrialists—the steel kings, say—for their coal.

Many people believe that a major factor in the financial troubles of the nationalized coal industry, to which miners are now being sacrificed, is the concealed subsidy it is obliged to pay to private industry by accepting an absurdly low price for its products.

I must be careful, however, not to seem to incite any reader who has access to the actual figure to supply it to us, as this might cost him a long stay in the Tower; though you and I know well enough what we pay for coal, the price paid by big business is a closely guarded secret.

I understand that Arthur Horner once admitted that the executive of the National Union of Mineworkers had been given the figure in question—but in strictest confidence.

If Horner had not kept that confidence I suppose he would not be (as someone put it at The Newsletter's 'Solidarity with the Miners' meeting in London the other day) the only old miner leaving his job this year who will be making a trip to Australia and back.

### Horner, 1928

Talking of Arthur Horner reminds me that thirty years ago he brought out, in collaboration with Allen Hutt, the historian of the working-class movement and now chief sub-editor of the Daily Worker, a very useful little book about the mining industry and the miners' union, called 'Communism and Coal'.

Some of it reads quite topically today:

'Most of the officials received their training when the industry was expanding and are like fish out of water in the new situation. Hence their pathetic attempt to cling to the old policy and to their old privileges . . .

'When self-interest is added to deeply ingrained prejudice, and interested officials are mostly elected to paid jobs for life and have special privileges in the organization, the resistance to the fundamental changes of leadership, outlook and policy which the new situation in the industry demands, is tremendous.'

Horner and Hutt were particularly indignant about miners' agents being elected for life and having power to vote at national conferences.

'Hopelessly undemocratic' and 'a gross scandal' were their epithets for this position, which remains, I understand, essentially unchanged today, though the Communist Party, for obvious reasons, has lost interest in challenging it.

### The third man

Victor Zorza's articles on eastern Europe in the Manchester Guardian are always worth reading, and this is certainly true of his discussion of evidence about the social conflicts underlying Khrushchev's struggle with the so-called 'anti-party group'.

He suggests that what is at issue is the question of how benefits and burdens are to be distributed between the industrial workers and collective-farm peasants.

Missing from Zorza's analysis, however, is the third main element in Soviet society—the bureaucracy, which is estimated to absorb between 20 and 30 per cent. of the national income through its disproportionate salaries and miscellaneous perks and privileges.

Whoever gains, they mean to gain more, and whoever loses, it mustn't be them—that is their permanent outlook.

It is these people, who seek to live now mainly at the expense of the peasants, now mainly at the expense of the workers, who are the real 'underminers of the worker-peasant alliance'.

Only by overthrowing the bureaucrat can the Soviet worker and peasant ensure harmony between themselves.

### Why do they need to lie?

'Cruelty', a novel by Pavel Nilin, is now available in English. This was one of the relatively frank novels

about Soviet life which were published in Russia during the brief literary 'thaw' that came to an end after the Hungarian revolt.

One of the characters, protesting against a political frame-up, says: 'I refuse to believe that there is a thesis according to which one should lie and punish an innocent man in order to prove something to somebody. That's impossible. I think that the man who lies is the man who is afraid of something.'

That is quite a profound thought, in its bearing on politics. Communist Party members should ask themselves why it was necessary for their leaders to invent and spread the slanders about Trotsky and 'Trotskyists' which nowadays have quite disappeared from the party's publications, in shamefaced admission of their falsity.

Incidentally, there is now a significant difference between what appears in the communist Press and what is still said by certain party members.

For instance, I heard recently that a British employee of a certain Soviet institution in London was 'explaining' that if persons associated with The Newsletter had been beaten up by the police, arrested, fined and given prison sentences by the capitalist court for their activity in connexion with the South Bank dispute, that was just an elaborate spoof, designed to delude the workers as to the true character of these 'Trotskyists'.

They wouldn't dare put that in print nowadays—or would they?

### Batista was once a 'progressive'

A correspondent points out that a considerable part in the consolidation of the Batista tyranny in Cuba was played by the Communist Party.

At a critical stage in his progress towards full power, constitutional as well as actual, when Batista needed to present himself as the nominee of a 'broad alliance', he legalized the Communist Party, sure that it would support him. It did.

That was in 1939. John Gunther wrote in 'Inside Latin America' (1942) that Cuba was 'the only country in Latin America, Chile excepted, where the communists support the government in power. But they have very little power themselves. By bringing them into his coalition, Batista hamstringed them'.

BRIAN PEARCE

### THREE STEVENAGE EMPLOYERS ATTACK: 'IT'S CO-ORDINATED', SAY WORKERS

BUILDING workers downed tools on two Stevenage new town contracts on Wednesday.

The men on Marriot's contract are demanding the reinstatement of Bro. Cunningham, the deputy federation steward and leading bricklayers' steward, and of twenty others who were discharged two weeks ago.

When the workers tried to open negotiations with the firm the agent said: 'For the record: under no circumstances will Cunningham be taken back on the contract, because he was a steward.'

On Carlson's contract there has been a bonus dispute for fifteen weeks, and the men have been working to rule. The firm now say that will take on only men of their own selection, so the workers have downed tools.

On the Gilbert Ash contract the men were discharged and told to report back on Monday for subsistence pay. When they did so they were told there would be none.

The workers feel the employers are pursuing a co-ordinated policy to drive down conditions.

### BEHAN AND LYNCH: APPEAL POSTPONED

The appeals of Brian Behan and Matt Lynch against sentences of imprisonment imposed for picketing during the South Bank dispute have been postponed to the next appeals sessions, on February 17.

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