

THE NEWSLETTER

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BORSTAL SCANDAL UNMASKS TORY POLICY Labour and trade union inquiry demanded

by Bob Pennington

A declaration from the Socialist Labour League

United Action Will Defeat Tories

To all Labour, Trade Union and Peace Organizations

Dear Comrades,

THESE are anxious times for British Labour. The Tories are waging an offensive against the trade unions, and this is a source of constant friction in industry. It forms the background to general election preparations in which differences between Right-wing Labour and the Conservative Party are fading more and more. We have an offensive from the employers and their government, a strong rank-and-file Labour and trade union movement, but the established Right-wing leaders in retreat.

This situation can lead to a new 1926 with even graver consequences for us all. The Tory Party is busy engineering the election of what it hopes will be a new Tory government. The purpose of this government would be to step up the offensive against the trade unions in the factories and in industry, and at the same time assist the employers through the introduction of reactionary legislation.

Rank-and-file Labour wants to defeat the Tories, but this cannot be done without the widest possible unity around a policy which would bring into action all shades of opinion and sections of the community who have grievances, great or small, against the Tories.

Tens of thousands of people want to get rid of the H-bomb. Great numbers want the forty-hour week and improvements in working conditions. There is a powerful opposition to the intolerable bans and witch-hunts by the Right-wing in the Party and trade unions.

Everywhere there is a genuine desire for democratic discussion of all problems—discussion which can be carried out whilst people have the right to retain their differences and later review them in the light of experience. A sense of

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The Editorial Board regrets that owing to illness, Peter Fryer is unable to continue his duties as Editor of The Newsletter. The Board has appointed Gerry Healy to replace him temporarily as, and from, this issue. All Editorial correspondence should therefore be addressed to G. Healy 186 Clapham High Street, S.W.4. (Telephone MACaulay 7029)

HOME OFFICE officials, professional parliamentarians, property-owners and maiden aunts—who believe with equal fervour in the benefits of both God and the 'cat'—can feel safe again.

The attempt of eighty-one youths to draw attention to their treatment and conditions in the Home Office approved school at Carlton, near Bedford, has been brought to heel. With the aid of twenty squad cars, forty men and their fierce tracker dogs, and dozens of extra police reinforcements, 'law and order' once more prevails.

Those boys considered by deputy headmaster Mr Whitefield Dickenson to be the ringleaders and 'inciters' of last weekend's mutiny have been despatched to jail by the order of convenient and specially authorized night courts. Authorization for the courts was promptly granted by Home Secretary Butler.

Amongst the unfortunate youths thrown into jail is 18-year-old William Haines. It was the sobbing Haines who told the court: 'Anyone would think I was a hardened criminal. I am only here for a threepenny bar of chocolate.'

Sop of an inquiry

To deal with the boys and their alleged ringleaders, there is the combination of police dogs, law courts and jail. For the public there is the sop of a promised Home Office inquiry—an inquiry which has all the appearances of an officially doled-out tranquillizer intended to soothe any anger or disquiet that has arisen.

Mrs Williams, wife of American author Talcot Williams, who lives 200 yards from the approved school told me: 'When the incident first started two of the boys approached us to tell us what was going on.'

'They complained of swearing by the masters, ill-treatment, and that they are never permitted to wear any of their own clothes—not even at the weekends.'

'We invited them into the garden and I typed 'he list of complaints out for them which has been passed on to the Board of Management.'

Complaining was no use

I asked Mrs Williams why it was that the boys had gone to them and not taken their complaints to the masters.

'The boys took this action,' she said, 'because they wanted to draw attention to their complaints. They probably felt they had no other way. They consider that complaining to the masters is no use.'

Mrs Williams said that in her opinion they were 'a very good bunch of boys'.

'We live very near the school,' she added, 'and often leave our cottage, but never once has any of the boys broken into it or taken anything from it.'

According to Mrs Williams, feeling amongst the boys ran high over the length of time that they were kept at the school for what often are the most minor offences.

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THE NEWSLETTER186 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4
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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1959

NO PEACE AT THE SUMMIT

THE preliminary talks preceding the summit conference are designed first of all to confuse and later to defeat the working class in its desire for a genuine peace. All the propaganda media on both sides of the Atlantic are being mobilized to speak with one voice to create the impression that peace does not depend on the struggle for socialism, and that it can be achieved by the diplomats of the big powers.

Socialists have long since learned to expect this from the mouthpieces of capitalism. What is particularly nauseating in the present exhibition is the shrill cry of the Stalinist leaders. Commenting on the Macmillan-Eisenhower broadcast, the Daily Worker quotes the brass-hat chief of American imperialism with delight when he says, in demagogic language reminiscent of his predecessor Roosevelt, 'I think people want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of their way and let them have it'. 'What a tribute to the efforts of the world peace movement over the past years,' comments Daily Worker editor Matthews.

Please, Mr Matthews, tell us where this peace movement of yours exists. Take, for example, the peace movement in the United States; what has it done since Mr Khrushchev's famous Twentieth Congress speech? The Communist Party in the United States has dwindled to an almost non-existent force from a one-time membership of over 100,000. There has been no peace movement influenced by the Stalinists able to do anything in the United States in the last few years, and Mr Matthews knows that as well as anyone.

In reality Macmillan and Eisenhower are planning to engineer the defeat of the working class in Britain and the United States as a result of the summit talks, so that in such a situation they can effectively make war on the USSR.



Then take the British Peace Committee, which is a front organization for the Communist Party in Britain. Where, Mr Matthews, has this organization made a contribution since the Twentieth Congress? The great Aldermaston marches which demanded the unilateral abolition of the bomb were entirely independent of this paper committee, and its policy was contemptuously rejected by those who marched. If Mr Matthews is claiming that the British Peace Committee has influenced events in Britain over the past few years he only makes himself a laughing stock. This sort of language is fakery designed to cover up the class nature of the Macmillan-Eisenhower talks.

In 1941-45 in Britain the Communist Party subordinated everything to Churchill in the name of 'unity against fascism'. But have a look at the present balance sheet in Europe. In Hungary people are executed after secret trials. To the average person today who reads the newspapers there is more democracy in racialist South Africa than there is in the Hungarian Stalinist republic.

At least some pretence of a public trial has to be put up in South Africa.

Take Western Germany. Here the Communist Party is illegal. Adenauer is well supplied with all sorts of anti-working class legislation and in case there should be any difficulties about its administration he has all the old Nazi gang who escaped the net back in the saddle and doing nicely, thank you. In France, where you had the biggest Communist Party outside the Soviet Union, dictator De Gaulle is armed with Hitler-like anti-working-class legislation and the tortures of the Nazis seem almost refined compared with what is going on in Algeria. Over the Pyrenees in Spain, dictator Franco still lives the life of a country gentleman, whilst his prisons bulge with human beings, persecuted and tortured for any sort of activity in opposition to the régime.

Is Europe really the happy place that the Stalinists promised us at the end of the war—or were the Marxists, who insisted that it was impossible to defeat fascism and reaction in western Europe except through preparing the working class to take power, right all the time?



From covering up on the Eisenhower-Macmillan visit Mr Matthews then proceeds to turn the attention of his readers towards the Gaitskell-Bevan Moscow junketing. In doing this so uncritically he reveals, however, that he cannot be a regular reader of his own paper. On August 17 the Daily Worker announced that General Norstad was coming to England to make a war speech on the eve of the Labour Party conference. We recall that when the famous Aldermaston march was on the Easter of 1958, it was Gaitskell and Bevan who were at that time wining and dining with the same General Norstad at the NATO headquarters in Paris, and they expressed their complete satisfaction as to the general's good intentions. Now they have arrived in Moscow, complete with big hats, and we have no doubt that they will also express themselves just as satisfied with talks in Moscow as they did in the talks with Norstad, because these gentlemen have long ago shown that like social democrats all over the world their interest in foreign affairs is simply to work out ways and means of tying the working class behind their respective capitalists in matters of peace and war.

The summit talks contain a trap for international Labour. Only the Marxist movement can find a way out of that trap. The problem of peace cannot be separated from the struggle around a socialist programme which will mobilize the workers in all the countries of the capitalist world for taking power. That is why the fight which the Socialist Labour League wages for peace takes for its starting point the class struggle as it really exists in Britain to-day. We believe that the defeat of the Tories and the employers, whether on the electoral field or in strike action, constitutes a powerful blow for world peace. We believe that if the working class learns lessons from defeats and victories in the course of this class struggle, it will eventually assist in the development of a mass Marxist movement which will emulate the Bolshevik Party's historic victory of 1917. The fight for peace, so far as the working class is concerned, is the fight for power, and every day that a worker comes into conflict with his boss is a preparation for that fight.

BORSTAL SCANDAL (Continued from front page)

'The only bit of personal property they have is their belts. One boy hit another with his belt. A master then burned all the boys' belts.

'Trouble has been brewing for some time. Nothing has been done about it.'

The riot at Carlton is an exposure of the fraudulent electoral propaganda of the Tories when they talk about opportunities for youth.

Over the last ten years the population of the approved schools has almost doubled. 'Get tough' policies of magistrates has become the solution of capitalist society for dealing with youth confronted with dead-end jobs, low-paid apprenticeships, and the prospects of brutalization through military service.

Profit-hungry film makers and publishers joined by commercial television feeds young people on a diet of violence and super-men theories.

The old men of Transport House can offer nothing better. The only youth they know are the shiny-faced young men and women who, with eyes cast in the direction of a parliamentary seat or a job in the 'machine' are a million miles away from the youngsters in the factories, dance halls and coffee bars.

No confidence in Tories

The working-class movement must demand an inquiry into Carlton and all the other approved schools and remand homes. But it must be an inquiry conducted by representatives from the Labour and trade-union movement and one on which sits some working-class young people. We can have no confidence in inquiries run by Tory-minded Home Office officials.

Labour must demand that the youngsters imprisoned be released immediately. Their action arose because they had no other way to bring attention to their grievances and, like workers on strike, they should have the support of the trade unions and the Labour movement.

More than that however is required. A socialist policy which will attract youth to Labour's ranks is urgently needed. A policy that will inspire young people and teach them how to fight capitalism in a collective, class way and not in an individualistic way is necessary if socialists are to learn the real lesson of Carlton Approved School.

INDUSTRY**B.M.C. WANTS NEW CAR ON THE CHEAP**

From Our Birmingham Correspondent

'We'll go back when we want to—we're not going to crawl back like you want us to.'

These words by one of the 'Tractor and Transmission' (Birmingham) shop stewards in reply to Smith, an official of the General Municipal Workers' Union who had tried to get the strikers to return, summed up the feeling of all the 200 strikers from this B.M.C. factory.

B.M.C. bosses have trumpeted the new Mini-Minor car as a revolution in present day motoring. They have fixed the selling price of the car whilst workers employed on the drive transmission part of it, have had no price for their work agreed to! They are being paid on machines that do cycle operations a flat rate of 4/- an hour—which is precisely 1/11½d. an hour **below** pieceworkers in the rest of the factory. For 3½ months they have suffered this—they have been stonewalled everytime they have approached the management for negotiations for an increase and the chance to do piecework on an agreed price—No wonder they shouted Smith down when he talked about going through procedure!

In an interview with The Newsletter, Bro. Joe Whitehouse, whose section was the first to walk out, told me: 'When we complained to Mathews, one of the Higher Management, he turned round and said we were getting a good wage. They promised repeatedly we would soon go piecework—it was always 'soon'. Some good wage—4/- an hour as against an

average of 3/11 in the factory! We don't want to have to work overtime to get a just wage.'

At the mass meeting, Crowder of the AEU was more diplomatic than Smith, he just said: 'the management insist on a return to work but they have promised to negotiate within 24 hours.' Cries of: 'They have had plenty of chance to negotiate before we came out,' greeted his remarks. When Smith came in again to say: 'It has never been proved that militant and unconstitutional action has ever won anybody anything,' he was loudly interrupted with shouts of: 'That's a load of hogwash—we have won by militant action before.'

The men reaffirmed their determination to carry on the struggle. Workers in the rest of the factory are levying themselves in donations for the strikers.

Militants see this as the thin end of the wedge—as Joe Whitehouse put it to me: 'The issue is bigger than most people think. The new car drive is revolutionary. They will probably later convert all existing transmission drives. Therefore if they get away with keeping our wage low they will move on to driving down other prices in the rest of our factory—in fact over the whole of the B.M.C. factories.'

LANCS. BUILDERS STRIKE

From Our Manchester Correspondent

Building workers in the Manchester area are not prepared to put up with victimization and black-listing of trade union militants and the growing practice (already reported in The Newsletter) of shunting militants for the big jobs. This was demonstrated last week by the strike of joiners and steel fixers working on the new railway bridges between Manchester and Crewe.

Jack Gantley, a joiner and well known in the area as a trade union militant in the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, and the man who was victimized, told me the story at his home in Eccles.

'I started last Monday, the 24th, on the Fairfield Street bridge. I hadn't been there two hours when a representative of the contractor, Fairclough Ltd., came up and said 'aren't you Gantley who was Federation Steward at Agecroft?' I said "yes". Shortly after, the foreman came up and told me to take my tools as I was being transferred to another job in Stockport. This job was some distance away and when I got there and discovered that, contrary to what I had been promised there were no travelling facilities and an inadequate travelling allowance, I returned to Fairfield Street. There I was told "if you don't go to Stockport there is no job for you here. Collect your cards".'

Within an hour of Jack Gantley's dismissal 150 joiners, scaffolders, steel fixers etc., had downed tools. As a young Irish worker (T. & G. member) on the site told me 'we felt this was victimization because Jack Gantley had been militant on other jobs.'

The strikers immediately contacted workers on the other bridges and by next morning work on three bridges had stopped.

Decided to extend strike

A mass meeting on the Tuesday unanimously rejected the advice of A.S.W. organizer Heapey to return to work as the strike was unconstitutional. They decided to extend the strike by appealing to the workers on **all** bridges—there are 30 of them between Manchester and Crewe—to stop work. This afternoon another 50 workers had joined the strike. 'Given time' a worker told me 'we would have got the lot out'. But on Thursday the Union officials of the Woodworkers and T. & G. again instructed us to go back and though many of us were for carrying on the meeting decided under strong protest to resume work on the understanding that the matter would be negotiated between the employers and the Unions'.

Amongst several of the workers to whom I talked there was criticism of the attitude of the Union officials.

Jack Gantley himself, who considers the fight as by no means over, gave me this statement for The Newsletter. 'It is up to every building worker to get 100 per cent. organized. The

employers are still making millions out of practically slave labour. With all the new luxury and office building coming along they want to crack the whip and force the workers in line to boost their own profits'.

A SURPRISE PACKET FOR OFFICIALS BUSMEN PRESS NEW WAGE CLAIM

by G. Kennedy

Delegates representing 33,000 London busmen voted last week to press the Transport and General Workers' Union to a £1 per week wage claim. The delegates also went on record for shorter hours and payment for shift work.

The motion for a pay claim came as a surprise to most delegates. The meeting was expecting to discuss the ban on overtime moved by the Hounslow garage at the previous meeting. The Hounslow motion had been tabled by committee chairman Bill Jones who had overruled the protests of Prater, London district secretary of the TGWU Passenger Group that the Hounslow motion was 'unconstitutional.'

Negotiations for shorter hours and amendments to the present system of working an 11-day fortnight had been taking place for over three months. No apparent results had come out of these negotiations. The Hounslow branch, exasperated at the delay, had then urged that all overtime be banned until 'satisfaction was reached.'

The Negotiating Committee (representing diesel and trolley busmen) rejected this proposal. The Hounslow resolution had then been taken to the Central Delegate Conference which is the representative body of the diesel fleet.

Still prepared to fight

The Hounslow motion was not discussed. Instead the committee voted by sixty-nine votes for with five against for the £1 a week claim and for payment for shiftworking. The readiness of the delegates to press another wage claim shows that despite the experience of last years' seven week strike the men are still prepared to fight.

Whether the claim will ever reach London Transport is debateable. Before it stretches a long and tortuous road through the official machinery of the TGWU. First it must go before the meeting of the Negotiating Committee on September 8.

If carried at the Negotiating Committee, it then has to go before the newly-set-up National Trade Group Committee. The job of the latter body is to co-ordinate the pay claims for the London, municipal and provincial busworkers. The next meeting of the National Trade Group Committee is in mid-October.

From there it has to go to the union's executive council. Opposition to this claim can be expected from the Right-wing union officials. These were the very people who fought and headed off the demands of the rank and file for militant action against last years' bus cuts.

In the last twelve months, working conditions on the buses have steadily deteriorated. Staff shortage is at its highest since 1948. Long gaps have become a common occurrence in all the services which has imposed an even heavier burden on the crews.

Militant action is opposed

The Right-wing has no policy. All the officials can do is counsel the men to be patient and wait for the return of a Labour government. Militant action is opposed with reminders of what happened during the bus strike.

Busmen too must start from the experience of the strike. In the months that it will take this claim to go forward the opportunity to prepare ourselves for a real fight to win the claim must be taken.

Inside the union every branch must go on record supporting the claim and the overtime ban and the officials must not be permitted to shelve it.

The London Transport underground workers have also through their union the National Union of Railwaymen

recently lodged a pay claim.

By joining together, the underground workers and the bus workers can paralyse London's transport, and quickly bring the Transport Executive to its knees.

This job will not be done by the officials. It requires the action of the rank and file. Now it is necessary to establish liaison between the two sections at rank and file level building up a united front that can provide the basis for a successful wage claim.

LIBERAL PARTY SETS TRAP FOR PORTWORKERS

by Peter Kerrigan

When the chairman and the secretary of the Merseyside National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers (the 'blue union') issue a joint statement with local Liberals it is time to sound a danger warning.

The statement declares that recent claims of the Transport and General Workers' Union officials that dock employers have agreed not to engage non-TGWU labour are the 'culmination of a long series of discriminations against the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers.'

(Manchester Guardian, August 22).

That is true, absolutely true, Transport and General officials have tried by all means to drive the 'blue union' out of the northern ports, including attempting to deprive its members of their livelihood.

But how can it help militant dockers if the impression is given that the blue union on Merseyside is tied to the corpse of the Liberal Party in the fight against discrimination?

We went into the blue union because we wanted a militant democratic portworkers' union to defend the docker and advance his standards in the struggle against the employers.

But the Liberals certainly do not denounce the TGWU officialdom with the aim of building a militant instrument of struggle.

In one issue of their monthly trade union paper United (June 1959) you will find Arthur Deakin, Lord Geddes and Sir Tom Yates referred to as being among the 'best trade unionists of all ages.'

They oppose closed shop

Since last February United has given a great deal of publicity to the blue union. But although we have had few allies since 1955 there is no reason to grasp at anyone who says a good word about us.

What these Liberals call the tyranny in the trade unions includes not only some of the worst acts of the TGWU bureaucrats but also the 'tyranny' of shop stewards and the traditional methods by which workers protect themselves—the ostracizing of scabs.

They are opposed to the closed shop and the sending of blacklegs to Coventry because they believe in the freedom to scab it. No blue docker agrees with that.

United, like Moral Rearmament, stands for class collaboration and wants to create the illusion that there is a chance for every worker to rise to the top in the present system.

It is opposed to nationalization. It declares its childish propositions for 'co-ownership' of employer and worker will defeat militants.

Grimond the Liberal leader writes that 'co-ownership' would 'undermine the troublemakers and the so-called leaders who can think of an industry only in the terms of class warfare or the maintenance of a union closed shop'. (United, May 1959.)

One argument I have heard is: 'Why shouldn't we use the Liberals? The Labour Party is reactionary. We'll get no assistance from the Bessie Braddocks or the Simon Mahons. They're tied up with the O'Hares and other TGWU leaders.'

But we aren't using the Liberals by issuing joint statements or bolstering up a little prestige for them. They're using us, angling for a few votes on the eve of an election.

And it isn't a question of the Mahons and the Braddocks. It's a question of hundreds of thousands of rank and file

Some Thoughts on the TUC

WHEN I last attended the Trades Union Congress at Blackpool the general council had as their headquarters the use of the Imperial Hotel, one of the biggest, if not the dearest, joints in the town.

I was told that it cost up to seven guineas a day to rest your weary bones in this place. My general secretary, fearful of wild tales of corruption being spread by younger members of the delegations, hastened to assure us that the council had only paid fifty bob a skull, the cheap rate for block bookings.

He spoke with disgust of one trade union M.P. (no names no pack drill) who went a la carte at dinner. He paid 14 shillings for a piece of steak, and we were left to imagine the total cost of going the lot on the me and you.

A rumour went round the delegation that Lady Williamson, wife of the chairman that year, was kipping in the very suite graced by Her Majesty.

That particular TUC was described by Peter Kerrigan, the National Industrial organizer of the Communist Party, as a 'victory for the left', 'the right wing, being unable to resist the forces of the left, had to give way gracefully', so he implied.

Undoubtedly at that TUC amid wind and thunder some resolutions were passed on wages, hours and conditions. Not a single one of these resolutions has been implemented by either the left or the right.

Since that TUC the rate of wage increases has been driven down from five to three per cent., this in spite of the fact that output per man has risen by four per cent.

The profits of the employing class have swollen enormously to a position where the Financial Times of August 22nd reports an increase of trading profits by 10 per cent., of earnings by 11 per cent. and, best of all, dividends leaping forward by 33 per cent.

More workers are jobless than there were then and this very week the government announced that there are no jobs for 38,000 young people.

At the same time the employers, owing to the absolute failure of the leadership to do anything, press forward with their plans

members of the trade unions and the Labour Party.

Many of them—like the printers—will have experience of struggle for the first time in the future. They will have sharp experience of the nature of the trade union right wing and thus feel a greater sympathy for dockers who have been fighting bitterly against trade union bureaucrats for years.

There are more, a great deal more, friends of the blue union among printing workers in Liverpool after the assistance blue union dockers gave in collections for their strike.

It is among militants in the trade unions and militant socialists generally that the only real sympathy and assistance for our cause will be found.

An alliance with the Liberals, implied or open, cannot fight for the aims for which we joined the blue, it can only repel militant trade unionists in other industries and give disastrous weapons to Right-wing leaders.

Campaign Notebook

THE campaign for the National Assembly of Labour is now swinging into action. Regular outdoor meetings are being held outside building sites and docks. These will be followed up by meetings outside engineering factories.

Last week, speakers from the Socialist Labour League

for the coming year.

They announce on the one hand the projected sacking of quarter of a million workers in mining and aircraft. On the other the Bow Group of Tory intellectuals in their journal Crossbow call for action against trade unions who support the closed shop or inter-union disputes.

Kerrigan's 'victory' was followed by the revelation of Palme Dutt in Labour Monthly that the 'majority of the trade union leadership were decent, honest, respectable men anxious to do a job on behalf of their members.' Faced with the treachery of these same 'honest' men in the bus and print dispute the line has wavered a little. Both Pollitt and Mahon now feel that there are 'certain trade union leaders' who are obstructing the wishes of the rank and file for united struggle.

The hard fact that all militant workers have to face is that neither the right nor the fake left will lead.

Despite the war of words between the TUC and the Electrical Trades Union, in practice their efforts on behalf of the working class are pretty much the same. For example on wages last year the communist-led electricians in the building industry got the same penny an hour as the building workers led by Sir Richard Coppock.

In the fight against sackings it is Foulkes in the Confederation who sends the Broughton De Havilland men back to work in a stoppage against sackings which the capitalist Press had to openly admit was absolutely 100 per cent. solid.

In the mines Paynter joins with the rest of the Executive committee of the National Union of Mineworkers in declaring that his lips are sealed on the union's reaction to the latest sackings.

The construction of an alternative leadership began with the calling of the National Industrial Conference by The Newsletter last year. It will be carried forward in an extremely critical period at the National Assembly of Labour on November 15th next. It will be the alternative parliament of the rank and file trade unionist, Labour Party member and all those who want to end capitalism.

BRIAN BEHAN

addressed building workers at the Token Constructional Site, Southwark and the Shell Mex Site, Waterloo. Sixty-five Newsletters were sold at the Shell Mex meeting and the men contributed 35s. towards the costs of the Campaign for the National Assembly.

Busman members of the League on Friday sold over 40 Newsletters and 20 copies of the pamphlet 'Busmen in Battle' outside Stockwell garage. Sales were also held at Holloway and Hendon garages.

LEAGUE JOINS IN H-BOMB MARCH

On Sunday, members of the League marched in the demonstration protesting against French H-bomb tests in the Sahara. Organized by a group of coloured peoples' organizations and the Direct Action Committee for Nuclear Disarmament the demonstration was supported by 1000 marchers. The posters and slogans of the League which read: 'No work on H-bombs —No work on Rocket bases', 'Down with De Gaulle', and 'Freedom for Algeria' were carried by many coloured people who were not members of the League.

Sales of The Newsletter topped the 100 mark. Twenty copies of the Newsletter pamphlet: 'Black the Bomb' and seven copies of the book 'Battle for Socialism', were also sold.

Before the meeting left Hyde Park, speakers from the Socialist Labour League showed how the fight of the colonial peoples against imperialism helped the struggle here against nuclear weapons.

'By supporting the colonial revolution. By building a united front of workers in the Western countries with the colonial peoples struggling against imperialism, we can strike a real blow against the nuclear war plans of Britain, America and France,' said the League spokesman.

He went on to state: 'The National Assembly of Labour can help to unite the working-class movement in Britain against its enemies the employers and the Tories. We therefore urge opponents of nuclear war to come to our conference where they can help build an alliance with trade unionists and socialists. In this way they will strengthen the movement against war.'

IRELAND

THE 1913 LOCKOUT

(Continued from previous issue)

THIS struggle, like 1926 for the British, was a decisive one for the future of the Irish working-class movement. Given the support of the trade union and Labour movement in Britain the employers could have been defeated.

The Irish Transport Union had mass support among its members because it had lifted them out of conditions of slavery and given them the dignity of men. It had a leadership that was absolutely incorruptible, a leadership of men like Connolly who was a socialist of international standing.

The union fought for its survival under conditions which corresponded more to armed war than an industrial dispute. After three months the employers, faced with a refusal of the workers to abandon their union, determined to smash the working class by force.

Beaten to death

They killed two strikers. At the inquest on one of them a Mr William Galligan was reported in the Irish Independent (September 2, 1913) as giving the following evidence. He said he saw the deceased outside Liberty Hall (headquarters of the Transport Union).

He was trying to get away from the police, who followed him and struck him down. He tried to get up on his knees and they struck him down again. The witness was questioned: 'Do you suggest that the police made an attack on this hall without any provocation?' He replied:

'I do. The police followed this man and beat him to death.*

The following Sunday the police made charge after charge with drawn batons on the crowd assembled to hear Larkin in the city centre. They then sealed off the slum area and smashed all before them, beating men, women and children indiscriminately.

A reporter for the Evening Telegraph described the scene in the city centre. 'Soon there were scores of people scattered all over, lying on the ground their hands to their heads and bleeding from the wounds inflicted.'

Unmoved by suffering

The working class fought back like lions. They replied to police terror by forming their own protection squads of burly dock labourers armed with heavy sticks.

Later this was to become the Citizen Army and some of its members were to die fighting with Connolly in the rebellion of 1916.

So great was the savagery of the employers that the leading citizens of Dublin, including the Archbishop, issued an appeal to the employers to show a little mercy to starving women and children. The employers ignored all such sentimental rubbish and pressed on to try and destroy for ever the menace of a

* 'Jim Larkin: The Rise of the Underman', by R. M. Fox, p. 87.

union based on class action and led by socialists. The employers understood that such a combination threatened to rouse every worker to fight for a socialist republic.

The reformist leadership of the British Labour movement then, as now, acted quite openly on the side of imperialism. Like the employers, they were not moved an inch by the sufferings of the Dublin working class.

For example in December 1913, when the lock-out had been on for three months, Larkin attended a special meeting of the British TUC called to consider what should be done about Dublin.

Here the proposal for strike action was decisively defeated. The conference, composed very largely of union officials, settled down to condemn Larkin for his disruptive tactics, for all over the country he was rallying the young militant rank and file against their leaders.

One after another Labour officials attacked Larkin. Even the men regarded as advanced, such as Robert Williams and Ben Tillet, had nothing to say in his favour.

Facing his enemies, Larkin dealt with them one by one as the time permitted. 'Mr Chairman and human beings,' he began. 'You said we were human beings,' protested one later, wriggling under his lash.

Wriggled under the lash

'Yes,' said Larkin, 'but you are not giving much evidence of it now.'

The defeat of the Transport Union meant that it was impossible for the working class to secure the leadership of the rebellion of 1916.

The participation by Connolly and the Citizen Army was really only a token one. The mass of organized Labour did not fight and the Irish Trades Union Congress held in the year of the rebellion refused to endorse Connolly's stand in Easter Week.

This weak state of the movement also facilitated the execution of Connolly by the imperialists. The ruling class of both nations were determined to finish with him.

Because he was badly wounded and unable to stand to face the firing squad, rumours spread that the military authorities were considering remitting the death sentence. Like jackals baulked of their prey, the leading Irish newspapers demanded his execution and condemned any sign of mercy as unpatriotic.

The Labour reformists whom Connolly fought all his life also had a hand in killing him. One of the members of the cabinet that sent Connolly to his death tied to a stretcher was Arthur Henderson, a prominent British Labour leader.

The middle class betrayed the national revolution and from 1923 to the present day the working class and small farmers have followed Fianna Fail, the middle-class party of De Valera.

The Labour party in the north split into at least four pieces. In the south it just rotted. Today it joins from time to time in a coalition government in which its major ally is Fine Gael, the party of the big farmer and the most reactionary industrialist.

(To be concluded)

RENTS

6,000 TENANTS DEMONSTRATE

Six thousand council tenants demonstrated through the streets of St Pancras in a giant protest movement against threatened Tory rent increases. As they marched on the St Pancras Town Hall to a meeting called by the tenants' central committee, the streets were a sea of banners and posters.

The central committee suggestion adopted by the meeting, that the tenants hand in their 'declaration of income' forms to the committee is already receiving the support of the tenants. By last night, 1,000 forms had been handed in and a campaign

is under way to collect every form in the borough.

A showdown is obviously growing up between the tenants and the Tory council, who have declared that all those who do not hand their forms into the council go into arrears.

The central committee should immediately begin to canvass support from the trade unions by campaigning in the branches and on the jobs for backing in their fight.

All over London, Tory councils are plotting rent increases. Now is the time to set up an all-London tenants' defence committee so that the fight can be co-ordinated and neither St Pancras nor any other borough is left to fight in isolation.

LETTERS

PHOTOGRAVURE WORKERS MUST PREPARE

Next June the photogravure periodical agreements come up for renewal.

These agreements apply to four printing firms—Odhams Press, Sun Printers and Rembrandt in Watford and Eric Bemrose in Liverpool.

It is clear that, among the workers in these firms there is a strong feeling that there should be amendments made to these agreements.

During the recent dispute when Liverpool printers demonstrated with Watford workers, the news was given to them that the master printers were demanding there should be no special claims from the photogravure magazine workers next year.

The boos and jeers when this was announced certainly showed the feeling of the men against any foregoing of claims next year.

It is obvious that the employers will be wanting to amend these agreements to serve their own ends.

By the time June comes round the present rush of printing orders will be over and stocks replenished.

Having seen how our leaders fell down on the national dispute they will try a 'get tough' policy.

It is highly possible they will come out with conditions which they will seek to string on to new agreements, also that they will try to reduce the differential between the photogravure periodical industry and general printing.

What is urgently needed is preparation on the part of the workers in these firms. There is not much time.

The first thing is to get a liaison between the Watford firms and Liverpool.

I suggest that we need immediately a joint meeting of all Fathers of the Chapel in these firms to discuss the amendments that may be needed to benefit the workers and to prepare the fight for them.

Printing worker

Liverpool

NOT A HOPE OF WINNING

I SENT the following letter to Peace News on August 21 regarding their issue of that date. It was not published by them so I have modified it slightly and wonder if you would publish it?

In the excellent issue of the August 21, Peace News said: 'The only possible means of achieving disarmament is by changing the system: by gearing production to world need instead of profit.'

This one sentence holds the only answer to world peace, and all the talk of appealing to the politicians' and armament makers' morals is a sheer waste of good time.

The CND is leading us all into a battle which we haven't a hope of winning, simply because of the way the leadership want us to fight it. Unilateral nuclear disarmament can only be achieved by a change in society.

Deliberately or accidentally the Cousins resolution has wrecked any hopes of a win for unilateralism at the Labour Party conference. Already trade union leaders in the CND

have agreed to his compromise with the right wing, by signing a letter in Bradford's Labour Voice giving his resolution their support. No positive announcement by the leadership of the CND on their attitude to the Cousins resolution has yet been made.

Peace News also said that the Labour Party indicates its 'readiness to act swiftly and unscrupulously against unilateral action'. Need the right wing be aided by those people we trusted as being 100 per cent. behind unilateral nuclear disarmament? The Communist Party are jubilant because of the attitude of their hero and the success of their policy in wrecking unilateralism.

A further point. Is there to be no demonstration at the Labour Party conference by CND this year? Are our CND leaders going to compromise on that too? Let us march into the conference chamber proud of our cause and demonstrate against the guilty men who will be on the platform.

Pudsey, Yorks.

R. A. Florey

SECTARIANISM

THOUGH a firm supporter of The Newsletter and its political aims I wish to criticize the front page treatment of last week's edition.

The report from 'our man in Kerala' was in fact an analysis of a struggle that had been completed, temporarily at least. For a journal, claiming to be Marxist and aiming to inform and win the masses, to feature this report as front page news was surely an expression of sectarianism. We expect this thing from the Daily Worker not The Newsletter.

Just because a report is received, no matter how politically correct it may be, from one who has 'seen the light of Trotskyism' in far off Kerala, to feature it as the main story is to fall into the traps of all those enemies who are waiting to paste the label of sectarianism.

Let the Editorial Board think for a moment of the many people, myself included, who week after week are trying to push the sales at factory gate and doorstep. Surely the many industrial disputes or even an article on the myth of 'great leaders' and their summit talks would have been more constructive for selling the paper and winning workers to our movement.

A comrade in Middlesex

UNITED ACTION (Continued from front page)

toleration is above all necessary if British Labour is to succeed. The Socialist Labour League is organizing a National Assembly of Labour to which are invited all members of the Labour movement, irrespective of their party and political associations. This will be held at the St Pancras Town Hall, London, N.W.1., on November 15, commencing at 10 a.m. Applications for credentials for delegates and visitors will be circulated during the next few days to the largest possible number of organizations.

The following resolution will be submitted for discussion: This conference pledges itself to unite in common struggle against the Tories all those who desire:

- (1) An end to the manufacture of the H-bomb;
- (2) The strengthening of the fight for the forty-hour week, higher wages, defence of jobs and defence of shop stewards;
- (3) A fight for the extension of nationalization;
- (4) A fight against oppression in the colonies and against racialism in Britain;
- (5) A fight against the bans and proscriptions inside the Labour Party and the trade unions.

The Socialist Labour League believes that real unity can be established in the struggle for these demands.

All organizations supporting the Assembly will have the right to amend or add to this policy statement.

Constant Reader Geese and Ganders

NEWSPAPER readers learnt on August 27 that the Chinese Communist Party had publicly admitted that a number of China's production claims for 1958 had been grossly exaggerated—output of grain, for example, had been 250 million tons, as against the 375 million tons originally claimed. From the category of newspaper readers we must, however, except those who read the Daily Worker and no other paper.

The Daily Worker (headlining the story 'More Aid for China's Farms. New Ministry Created') omitted to report this astonishing contrast. It gave only the new claim and commented blandly: 'It was found that the output figures for last year's bumper harvest had been rather too high, because of lack of experience in assessing such unprecedentedly large crops.'

Who would suppose that behind those words 'rather too high' lay a 50 per cent. exaggeration?

Why does the Daily Worker do this sort of thing? Mainly because its editors know that there is a section of its readers who read no other paper and believe nothing that does not appear in the Daily Worker.

The value of these blinkered fanatics to the Communist Party leadership was demonstrated during the 'party discussion' of 1956-1957, when they could be relied on to shout down any members who tried to raise awkward questions. These are the

Well played, sir or comrade!

'Jolly old Winchester! Jolly old New College!
Cream of our fine middle classes!
By cheerful unbendings in soccer and social clubs
We can get on with the masses.'

John Betjeman (prophetically) on
Gaitskell in Moscow.

people who still deny the authenticity of Khrushchev's anti-Stalin speech at the Twentieth Congress on the grounds that it was never reported in the Daily Worker!

To preserve the faith of such devoted 'old believers' it is worth while—so the Communist Party leaders calculate—to risk making a fool of oneself before the rest of the world.

For there is danger in printing these admissions which have a way of bursting forth from time to time in the present critical period.

The first seeds of doubt in the Stalinist myth were sown in the minds of a number of those who were to break with the Communist Party in 1956-57 in the speech addressed by Malenkov to the USSR Supreme Soviet on August 8, 1953, when he said that it was 'essential to put an end to the incorrect practice of evaluating the results of the work of collective farms as regards the production of grain and other produce, not on the basis of the amounts actually harvested but merely on the basis of apparent yields. We should not forget that our country, our collective farms, can only be rich in crops actually stored in the barns, not in crops still out in the fields.'

Western economists had for years been alleging that Soviet grain production figures were phoney, being based on estimates made before the grain was actually harvested, i.e., without taking into account the actual loss due to weather, vermin and waste, which might amount to as much as 25 per cent.

Earnest Stalinists had always repudiated this suggestion—yet here was the Soviet premier himself admitting that it was true. When so fundamental a production index was discredited, what other official Soviet claims could be taken on trust?

The Communist Party leaders who have so painfully rebuilt the mood of blind acceptance among their followers during

the last two years are determined not to risk damaging it now. Hence their ludicrous suppression of a major item of news.

Geese and ganders

I AM as much in the dark as anyone about what is actually happening on India's north-eastern frontier. But a wartime experience makes me feel sick at the hypocrisy of the propaganda against China now being put out in this connexion by American imperialist circles.

In Chiang Kai-shek's heyday, official Chinese maps showed not only the area now in dispute but also parts of north-eastern Burma as belonging to China. And the Kuomintang régime did not stop at maps either.

In 1945, during the final phase of the war in Burma, quite a nasty little 'war-within-the-war' was fought along the river Shweli. Chiang's troops in that area had taken advantage of the departure of the Japanese to move boundary-stones, begin levying Chinese taxes and generally treat what the British regarded as part of Burma as a part of China.

They were not dislodged without a diversion of forces and a battle—on which no communiqués were issued by the British headquarters.

What made the episode particularly ticklish, and what recalls it to my mind now, was that the Kuomintang bandits were operating with the tacit approval of the American commander in northern Burma. So long as 'China' meant Chiang, Wall Street and its general had no objection to Chinese expansion at the expense of countries in the British sphere.

Elizabeth II and 'the class struggle

Is the attitude of the Labour leaders to the British monarchy compatible with a serious intention to do away with capitalism? Some sincere socialists shrug the problem off with remarks about the monarchy having purely formal significance nowadays. But, in the first place, that is far from being true, and in the second place, even if it were true it would not be decisive.

The British bourgeoisie knew better when it abolished the title of the Mogul Emperor and banished him from Delhi in 1857, 'despite the fact that that title had become a purely nominal one by that time. For the British bourgeoisie understood that given certain conditions the Great Mogul might focus the struggle of the Indian upper classes against the British sovereignty.' They saw 'the danger of even the most fictitious monarchy.' (Trotsky, 'Where is Britain Going?', 1926).

BRIAN PEARCE

A MEETING

Introducing

Peter Fryer's new book

THE BATTLE FOR SOCIALISM

will be held at

THE STORK HOTEL, LIVERPOOL.

Sunday, September 6, at 7 p.m.

Speaker: **Cliff Slaughter** (lecturer at Leeds University) member, National Committee of the Socialist Labour League

All Liverpool readers are warmly invited to attend