

THE NEWSLETTER

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CITY SCANDAL SCARES TORY PARTY

Will labour leaders act?

By GERRY HEALY

THE Tories are anxious about the general election. All the careful preparations over the past nine months to create a climate of public opinion favourable to Macmillan are now in danger of being undermined. Ironically enough this threat comes from the heart of Tory financial support—the City of London.

The decision of the Stock Exchange Council to suspend dealings in the Jasper group of companies; the announcement by the State Building Society that it has lent £3¼ million to this group and the decision of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies to intervene in the affairs of this building society are causing alarm at Tory Central Office.

They are frightened that the financial speculations of their friends in the City will unmask the really filthy racket which is capitalism.

Speaking of the Jasper group of companies the Financial Times of September 22 puts the thing very neatly 'Thus Mr Jasper's account of the matter is that Mr Grunwald, acting as a solicitor, made the offer on behalf of Mr Jasper, acting as a banker, who was in turn acting on behalf of Mr Grunwald in his capacity as a private client.' The Jasper story is the story of the Stock Exchange in miniature except that not all these manipulations turn out the same way.

Contrast this speculation with the Tory opposition to Labour's old age pension proposals. The Times in its editorial of September 23 comments: 'Minor luxuries are the proper right of those who produce enough national wealth to justify them.' If this yardstick was applied to the City of London the business fraternity would be walking around with top hats and birthday suits.

But it doesn't apply to the City of London, it is directed towards the trade unionists who are wanting the 40-hour week and increased wages, towards the old age pensioners who want an improvement in their starvation standards and to the lower wage earners who are threatened with unemployment. We ask again: why does the Labour Party remain silent about these scandals? Is it taking Lord Hailsham's advice seriously? Or is it because one in every nine Labour candidates are company directors?

The electorate are ready to vote for a Bill abolishing the Stock Exchange immediately. This would be made more effective if Labour should declare for the nationalization of all industries, which are the basis of real wealth, without a penny piece of compensation to the present owners.

SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

MEETINGS

CATFORD

Monday, September 28, 7.30 p.m.

Lewisham Co-op Rooms, Devonport Rd.,
Rushey Green,

PADDINGTON

Wednesday September 30, 7.45 p.m.

'King and Queen' (public house), Harrow Road,

SOUTH OXHEY

Thursday October 1, 7.30 p.m.

Werrendell School, Gosforth Lane,

Dock Labour Scheme in Peril

By Our Industrial Correspondent

COPIES of proposed amendments by the employers to the National Dock Labour Scheme are circulating on certain docks. If these amendments become law, then the docks industry will be subject once again to all the ill-effects of casual labour.

It is becoming increasingly obvious to all that it is the intention of the employers to break the Scheme. At the moment it operates in such a way that many of the bad effects of a once casual industry have been lessened, but the time is coming when these safeguards to the docker will not be tolerated by the employers. They want a labour force that can be disciplined and hired or fired at will—with no interference.

The first step in the offensive was achieved when the employers introduced weekly workers. The dockers agreed that this was a good step because of the nature of certain regular weekly sailings and incoming cargoes. With the co-operation of the workpeople's representatives the weekly workers were established. Now this wedge is to be used to cripple the Scheme entirely.

Control by control, dock by dock

It was obvious that, when the employers had bided their time and lulled the suspicions of the dockers, they would make their next move to transfer the gangs of weekly workers from control to control, or dock to dock, thus denying jobs to the men waiting in the reserve pool, i.e., the dinting gangs.

In the latest amendments the employers hope to establish the weekly workers as the only registered dockers. The pool men or daily workers will be kept on a register by the National Dock Labour Board, but would only be used as a supplement to the registered dockers when the work in the port was too much for the weekly workers to handle. The Dock Labour Scheme would then be redundant and the National Dock Labour Board merely a miniature Labour Exchange. The weekly workers would fall outside the jurisdiction of the NDLB and would be responsible only to the port employers.

The new pension scheme is a softening-up for this process. The employers hope to get rid of a quarter of the dockers now in the ports. Of those remaining three-quarters would be weekly workers and only a quarter of the dock labour force

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THE NEWSLETTER

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1959

THE TWO AMERICAS

KHRUSHCHEV'S tour of the United States is certainly free from dull moments. As he travels from city to city, guarded by what must be the greatest muster of policemen in American history, one is forced to the conclusion that Mr Khrushchev is really on show before the forces of the world's most frightened ruling class.

As he moves between the City police chiefs, and what Alistair Cooke has described as 'political midgets', namely the mayors of the various cities, Mr Khrushchev in his own way disrupts the tranquility of American ruling-class life.

He is the bureaucratic leader of the Soviet Union, which is based on nationalized property relations, established by the revolution of 1917. The American ruling class hate Mr Khrushchev, not because they do not understand his policy but because the state which he represents is a mortal threat to the entire capitalist system.



So far as policy is concerned, Harrison Salisbury, writing in the New York Times of September 15 summed up Khrushchev's visit to the United States as follows:

'He arrives in the United States with certain well-defined conceptions about future relations between the two countries.

'He has said on many occasions that what he would like is a two-power world, directed by the United States and the Soviet Union . . .'

The two-power idea did not spring fully-blown from Mr Khrushchev's brow, it is a concept inherited from Stalin. According to Mr Salisbury: 'This would mean recognition of the communist status quo in Eastern Europe and Asia. It would recognize the capitalist status quo in Western Europe and the Western Hemisphere. The two big powers would take upon themselves to suppress any disorders or threats to the peace by the little powers.'

Wall Street imperialism recognizes that the bureaucrat Khrushchev would like to do a deal in which he would be willing, just as Stalin was, to sacrifice the revolutionary movements in the Western world, provided he was given a free hand to allow his bureaucracy to govern in the East.

All this is very clear. But there are other factors to take into account. Chief among these in the present tour are the working people of the United States itself.

Goaded by Wall Street politicians, Mr Khrushchev occasionally gave way to a burst of anger, and to outbursts of what can only be described as nonsense. Thus he greets Mr Spyros Skouras of 20th Century Fox as 'a friend and brother before Christ.' At the same time and the same place he tells Mayor Poulson of Los Angeles to go 'ride a horse'.

He complains at not being allowed to visit Disneyland—when from the reports in the Press it appears that Disneyland apparently visited Mr Khrushchev—to which he added the interesting note that 'humanity's face is more beautiful than its backside.'

The highlight of this comedy was reached when he met the leaders of the American trade unions. One worthy union leader raised the question of the jamming of American broadcasts to the Soviet Union. Mr Khrushchev demanded to know in reply what this gentleman liked to eat. Not to be outdone by such a learned reply Mr Phillips remarked that he 'didn't know what that had to do with the question, but he liked roast beef.'

'Well I like bortsch,' said Mr Khrushchev, 'and the people of the Soviet Union like bortsch.'

In many respects Mr Khrushchev's outbursts resemble those of Mr Bevan and his rantings during the period from 1952-1955, when such incidents as being kicked out of White's Club, together with all sorts of fiery statements, disclosed a Bevan humiliated on the one hand and feared on the other.

This is the dilemma of the bureaucrats and pet politicians who serve different social interests. In the background stand the working people of the United States, the steel strikers and the poor negroes. Occasionally during this tour the veil has lifted and the ordinary people stand by the wayside cheering Mr Khrushchev because to them he represents something which begins to kindle the spirit of international solidarity between the workers of the United States and the working class of the Soviet Union. This movement is reflected, moreover, in the widespread popularity of Mrs Khrushchev.

The ordinary people of the United States don't want to go to war for Wall Street, but they don't trust Khrushchev. Some of the main instigators of demonstrations against the Soviet Union are the large number of émigrés which the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy has encouraged. By drowning the Hungarian revolution in blood, Mr Khrushchev provided a powerful weapon for the American imperialists.



It is this which in many ways is the great barrier between the working class of the United States and the working class of the Soviet Union, but this barrier will not stand for ever. The class forces in the United States are beginning slowly but surely to come to grips. The steel strike is but one example.

If this most ruthless of all imperialist nations allows Mr Khrushchev to tour its main cities, it is because it is frightened of its own working class, and believes that a deal with Mr Khrushchev may assist it in defeating that working class. That is why Wall Street is drawn towards the policy of peaceful co-existence. That is why Tory newspapers such as the Evening Standard hope that Mr Khrushchev's visit will lead to a summit conference.

Mr Khrushchev will not really meet this other America, yet it is present just like the other Soviet Union. These are the real forces that make for peace, and not the diplomats and power politicians who represent the Soviet bureaucrats and the imperialists.

THE BATTLE FOR SOCIALISM

BY BILL PARRY

FINAL arrangements for the National Assembly of Labour campaign are now under way. One of the most important of these is the splendid response in sales of Peter Fryer's book 'The Battle for Socialism' (Socialist Labour League, 3s. 6d.). Already, with practically no publicity, the sales have reached 1,000 copies and it is confidently expected that by the time of the Assembly they will be over the 3,000 mark.

This book lays the foundation stones for the Assembly preparations. It is in every respect a party-builder and the number of recruits coming to the Socialist Labour League is already bearing testimony to this. Peter Fryer has done a splendid job for the Marxist movement in Britain.

A PROGRAMME FOR ACTION

Fryer first of all outlines a programme of action for the Labour movement. The main point of this consists of demands such as:

- (1) Clear out the Tory government. For a Labour government with a socialist policy.
- (2) No sackings. For the sharing of available work without loss of pay. For the protection of stewards and other militants.
- (3) For the nationalization of all major industries under workers' control.
- (4) For united working-class action behind all wage demands.
- (5) For united working-class resistance to rent increases. The nationalization of the land and the building industry.
- (6) For the ending of the manufacture and testing of hydrogen-bombs by international working-class action.
- (7) For a struggle against war and against the imperialist system which breeds war.

He then devotes a considerable portion of his book to discussing the type of party which is needed to lead the working class into action, so that this programme is realized.

A NEW LEADERSHIP OR DISASTER

'Either a new, revolutionary leadership is built, with deep and firm roots in the mass movement and mass organizations of the workers, participating to the full in all their experiences, supporting their partial demands and struggles, seeking to raise their level of consciousness and give them confidence in their ability to overthrow capitalism and conquer State power—either this is done or the working-class movement faces disaster.'

Speaking in more detail about the kind of party workers need Fryer forcefully insists: 'It cannot be a collection of individuals each marching in a different direction. It has to be an organized movement . . . it cannot be a loose grouping of friends. It has to be cemented by a discipline based on political and ideological conviction The title of Marxist is properly applied only to those who act as well as discuss—and who act in an organized and disciplined way, under the guidance of elected and accountable leaders, with an agreed policy, a division of labour, and democratically planned and centrally co-ordinated activities in the mass movement.'

A WARM TRIBUTE

He concludes by saying: 'A loosely-knit, amorphous, undisciplined association cannot accomplish the task of leading a revolution. A workers' leadership cannot be a rabble, a coterie or a mutual admiration society; it must be a general staff.'

In this connection, perhaps the most valuable section of

Peter Fryer's book is his comment on the role of the intellectuals.

'The first thing,' he says, 'a revolutionary intellectual has to learn—whether he is working-class or middle-class in social origin—is the need for a certain humility before the working class. If he bases himself on the real position and needs of the workers; if he seeks to serve them in struggle; if he realizes that he has much to learn from them as well as something to teach—then he will acquire genuine prestige and authority among workers of a kind unknown in the world of bourgeois values.'

Peter Fryer remarks that 'The intellectual, in particular, often chafes at the need for discipline.'

He concludes by paying a warm tribute to the old Trotskyist movement. He says: 'What is surprising is that these groups survived at all. It is less important to criticize their defects than to pay tribute to the fortitude of their members who carried the torch of Marxism through more than a decade of darkness. It often flickered; it never went out. We shall always be in their debt.'

UNBREAKABLE UNITY

Peter Fryer's book is itself an indication of the unbreakable unity that constitutes the Socialist Labour League between those who left the Communist Party after Hungary and those who carried forward the banner of Marxism from the fight of Trotsky and his colleagues of the Left Opposition.

Lastly, Fryer makes, perhaps, the greatest declaration in the whole book. 'We who are Marxists have made our decision, in the teeth of all the pressures, bribes, inducements and sanctions of capitalist society. We have decided that we are with the working class to the very end, because the entire future of mankind depends on this class doing what it alone has the power to do: overthrowing capitalism. For us this is the only road. In face of the cataclysm that looms before humanity, individual prosperity, prestige or position count for nothing at all.'

DOCK LABOUR SCHEME (Continued from page 269)

would come under the Scheme. The employers' final stage would be to wipe out the weekly workers, who had served their purpose, and the docks would be back to 100 per cent. casual labour.

The need for solidarity between weekly and daily workers has never been greater.

By means of mechanization, that is the introduction of stacker trucks and palletization (where the goods are loaded on to lorries at the factory), the employers could cut the labour force to a tenth and the dockers' livelihood would be threatened. It is to be hoped that the dockers will not resist more efficient methods of working, but there must be a guarantee that they will not result in wholesale redundancy for the dockers and enormously enhanced profits for the bosses.

A pernicious amendment

One of the more pernicious amendments would enable the employer to bring quite legally on to the docks outside labour, even when there is a dispute on. All the employer would have to do to get away with this would be to guarantee to the new men daily work with a six-day notice to terminate.

Furthermore discipline is to be tightened. Suspension is to be stepped up from a maximum period of seven days to a new maximum of twenty-eight. A docker might as well be sacked as try and live on nothing for a month, with all the accompanying degradation that his wife and family would have to go through to get relief.

Dockers will be asking what is being prepared to prevent these amendments from becoming law. Why are the leaders so silent?

THERE'S BLOOD ON COAL

By TED KNIGHT

HOPE had faded, but they still waited. Wives, grey faced from grief and lack of sleep, stared ahead at the pall of smoke which belched from the earth. Children played around the buildings normally out of bounds to their games, too young to realize the cause of their apparent freedom. The men stood around in groups. Here and there discussions, elsewhere silent thoughts.

This was Auchengeich colliery, scene of Scotland's worst pit disaster for 70 years. On Friday morning 47 men left the pit-head in bogies for the coal face. Within minutes all but one had met his death. Death had come in the form of carbon monoxide fumes and overbearing heat choking the life from its victims.

The fire, which was raging 48 hours later, started in a booster fan about a mile from the pit bottom. A short circuit, seconds before the shift came on, is believed to have started the fire. Smoke and fumes were blown along towards the men.

A first batch, realizing the danger, were able to escape into a fresh-air intake, but the second train of cable-hauled bogies was rapidly engulfed. The trapped miners gave the warning signal, but though the train started its haul back, the operator himself was soon overcome, and the bogies halted in the fumes.

So overpowering was the heat that rescue teams were unable to reach the bogies, though they were only 200 yards from the shaft bottom. The one man who escaped, Tom Green, after

staggering through the choking fumes, was picked up by men nearer the pit bottom who were also making their escape. But there was no chance of saving any of the other miners.

Before lives can be risked to bring out the bodies of the dead men attempts are being made to control the fire by sealing the air intake which is feeding it. A 'dip' in the section is being flooded to do this.

How did the fire start? That is the question discussed by the miners. Paddy Burke, miners' representative, would not commit himself. 'There will be an inquiry and we will put our point of view then.'

In their groups the miners were discussing it. Safety conditions at the pit will be a key point in the inquiry.

Meanwhile many of the dead miners' wives still waited. Others had returned to their homes to comfort their children and wait for the bodies to be recovered. An immediate grant of £200 goes to the widows. A public fund is being set up. But as one watched and waited one knew there could be no financial assessment of the tragedy wrought in those few minutes. Over a hundred children fatherless, families cruelly broken. Stories of impending marriages, of emigration arrangements, birthdays and the thousand details of workers' lives snapped.

Auchengeich is yet another grim reminder of the daily danger in which the miner works. A reminder which the working class must not allow to go unheeded when attempts are made to cast these men on to the dole queues and drive down their **conditions**.

A Socialist Policy for the Miners

By JIM ALLEN

BRITAIN'S miners are threatened with a return to the unemployment and poverty of the thirties. What are the miners' leaders doing to stop this? At the Scarborough Conference in July a resolution was carried, instructing the Executive to oppose further pit closures, but this resolution was not even mentioned when the leaders met the National Coal Board on August 20, when the future sacking of 85,000 miners was announced.

'Strangely enough no one on the Executive mentioned the resolution passed at the Scarborough Conference, calling on the leadership to oppose any further closure of pits for economic reasons.' (Manchester Guardian, August 21)

The man who could have raised this on the Executive, Abe Moffat, the Scottish miners' 'communist' leader, was the mover of this same resolution at Scarborough. Did he lose his tongue in front of the employers?

That other 'communist militant' Will Paynter, general secretary of the union, has a similar record. On December 17, shortly after the announcement that the NCB would close 36 pits, Paynter moved a resolution which read, 'We demand full employment or full wages and will fight against any man going down the road, a victim of government policy.'

Leaders co-operate

Today it is no longer a case of 'any' man going down the road but of 85,000, and Paynter is obediently co-operating with the Right-wing and the NCB in closing pits and sacking miners.

The Communist Party fears that a rank-and-file movement might get out of hand, as they showed clearly in the strike at Devon pit.

Towards the end of June, 60 miners employed at the Devon pit in Scotland staged a 'stay-down' strike in protest against the closure of their pit. Immediately 20,000 miners working in 43 pits came out in sympathy. The statement issued by the Coalfield Campaign Committee read: 'We call on workers everywhere, whatever their trade, to express their solidarity with us and support us not only because we have a just case, but also as part of the fight of all workers to defend their jobs from attack We are prepared', said the strikers, 'to stay down until the whole coalfield is out.'

But Moffat intervened. On his advice the strike was called off, and Moffat led a deputation to the NCB. The result—Devon Pit is still to be closed

The same bosses

The NCB represents the same employing class that defeated the miners in 1926. Their strategy is the same, and the official leaders of the Labour movement are helping them.

Miners need a strong organization of rank-and-file committees throughout the coalfields to go into action on the only policy that can defeat the Tories.

1. No sackings!
2. 7-hour day for underground workers and a 40-hour week for surface men.
3. Three weeks' holiday with pay.
4. No wage-cuts.

The miners cannot win this fight alone. The only way is for them to forge links with the rank and file in other industries where unemployment, shorter hours and wages are also the big questions. All miners should support the National Assembly of Labour, and take the first step to a united socialist rank-and-file movement to fight the capitalist class and its government.

INDUSTRY

UNOFFICIAL STRIKES

Part I: A New Period

By Brian Behan

FOR some months now the capitalist Press has directed a steady stream of propaganda against unofficial strikes.

The aim of this propaganda is to smash the unofficial strikes that are on; secure a return to work; and create a climate of opinion that will later assist in getting through Parliament legislation providing for the gaoling of unofficial strikers.

This fits in with the next stage of the employers' offensive. They know that in the coming struggle to reduce wages and worsen conditions, they will meet with no organized resistance from the leaders of the trade unions. But recent disputes have shown that the rank and file, even with the burden of the Right-wing trade union leaders on their backs, are a formidable force.

It is obvious to the employers that they need additional weapons to hit back at the rank and file if they are to crush resistance.

Anti-strike legislation

It became clear in the bus and print disputes that the longer the workers were out on strike the more determined they became to secure their full demands. Even the patched-up compromise in the print dispute was ratified only by a bare majority of printing workers.

So for the next round of the struggle the employers need to take on the trade unions saddled not only with a treacherous leadership, but also with anti-strike legislation.

Every Tory rag is now calling for a clean-up in the unions. The last issue of Crossbow, organ of the Bow group of Tories, openly calls for legislation to deal with the closed shop, demarcation disputes, etc.

This cry is now taken up by those who assist the Tories in the Labour movement. Hutchinson, a so-called Labour writer, in the Daily Herald of September 3, called upon the trade unions to take advantage of this year's Trades Union Congress to clear some blots from their copy book. Woodcock of the TUC is quoted as saying that the blots are: 'Unofficial disputes, demarcation disputes, closed shop rows and noisy demonstrations of trade unionists on strike.'

'None of these,' declared Woodcock, 'are part of the policy of responsible trade unionists.'

A response to employers

From all this it can be seen that the announcement by the TUC that they are considering an inquiry into the activities of shop stewards is, in fact, a direct response to the needs of the employers.

The truth is that the Right-wing trade union leaders abhor any strike, official or unofficial. Sir Tom Williamson once told an AUBTW conference that the engineers' strike of 1957 was a 'needless operation' and that the men had gained nothing that they couldn't have had as a result of stopping at work and negotiating. This, in spite of the fact that the dispute was an official one backed by his own union and only called after the employers had refused four times during negotiations to grant a halfpenny.

The aim of the reformists is to prevent any strike, good or bad, to hold back the working class and to allow the employer to do as he pleases. In pursuit of this aim they have constructed, together with the employers, the most elaborate procedure imaginable to prevent disputes and hoodwink the rank and file.

The Socialist Labour League, in common with many trade unionists, starts from the standpoint that a worker's only real weapon is the withdrawal of his or her labour and that everything possible must be done to organize matters in the trade

unions so that when such a withdrawal takes place it gets the fullest possible support. We have not the slightest faith in the so-called disputes machinery.

The York Memorandum in engineering and the Green Book procedure in building were both imposed by the employers at a time of defeat for the working class. A condition of both agreements is that there shall be no stoppage of work while the matters in dispute are referred to the machinery.

In practice this leaves the initiative with the employers and is no protection to the men. The case of Frank Horsman, the victimized shop steward at Morris Motors, is still going through procedure—while he has been transferred from the factory.

At Jaguars in Coventry another shop steward was sacked. His 'crime' was the same as Horsman's; telling men not to work overtime on a disputed operation. The management at Coventry say that they are quite happy to allow the thing to go through procedure.

The disputes machinery is a screen behind which the Right-wing can hide from the class struggle and sell it out.

It is essentially based upon class collaboration. Whatever crumbs may have been gained in the past owing to the boom, these are now going to be few and far between as the struggle sharpens.

We are entering a new period in industrial struggle; a period characterized by the famous declaration of the engineering employers. 'We were prepared twice in the last four years to fight it out with the unions.'

(To be continued)

MINERS' RANK AND FILE ORGANIZATION LAUNCHED

By Our Industrial Correspondent

THE most significant step since the National Coal Board announced its intention to reduce the number of working miners, was taken at Doncaster on Saturday, September 19.

A meeting of representatives from some of the main collieries around Lancashire and Derbyshire decided to launch a rank-and-file organization of miners whose main objective would be to fight for the policy of the National Union of Mineworkers, the main points of which are: a seven-hour day, three weeks' holiday with pay and increased pensions.

This meeting was chaired by Jim Swan, editor of the rank-and file paper The Miner, and the main statement was made by Jim Allen on behalf of the editorial board.

Yorkshire miners were concerned over the effects of power loading, the difficulties of maintaining adequate safety in the pits and the speed-up which the Coal Board is demanding from them.

Jim Swan, from the chair, summed up the problems and explained how in Lancashire no miner would work if it was considered that the safety in his pit was inadequate. He felt that it was also necessary for miners to lay down an overall target of production for their pit along realistic lines and to ensure that this was done and nothing more.

The biggest applause was for a railway worker who insisted that there should be unity between the rank and file of all trade unions who face similar problems in the fight for the shorter working week. The miners present recalled the great struggles of the 20s and there is no doubt that the spirit of the Triple Alliance still lives in Yorkshire.

During the evening Gerry Healy, national secretary of the Socialist Labour League, was given permission by the meeting to make a statement on the National Assembly of Labour and this was well received by everyone. 'The great task before the Assembly,' he said, 'is to unite in action all sections of the Labour movement around a programme of demands which will lead to socialism in this country.'

The new rank-and-file committee is now going ahead to organize its work and develop the sales of its paper, The Miner.

246 NOTTS RAILMEN REDUNDANTBy **BOB SHAW**

246 railwaymen employed at Colwick Sidings have been notified that they are redundant.

A typical case is that of Shunter Linley whose take-home pay last week after deductions, including rent of a railway-owned house, was £7 6s. Shunter Linley has a family of three small children. He was notified in a duplicated circular that on September 14 the job he occupied would no longer be required and he would 'fall to be dealt with under Standard Redundancy Arrangements'. All the redundant men have received a similar notice.

The men at Colwick are in the dark about the future. According to redundancy agreements signed with the railway union if single railwaymen are declared redundant then they must be prepared to travel over great distances to fresh jobs.

Under this procedure 24 firemen were sent to depots in the London area during the summer. They were lodged in a Church Army hostel and obliged to sleep in beds just vacated by someone else.

The fate of a married man is even more uncertain. He must be prepared to travel any 'reasonable distance' to other work. According to the shopmen's conditions this is anything up to an 'average of two hours in each direction.'

The situation at Colwick is made worse by the failure of the unions concerned to give leadership. This is one of the main complaints of drivers, shunters and shopmen alike.

For example, the redundancy agreement stipulates that alternative employment in the same grade can only be found in the same region. Because of this, one of the goods guards at Colwick was told at the employment exchange that though there were guards wanted at the Midland depot only four miles away, he could not transfer there. This seems to be a matter for the railwaymen to get together over.

A fireman, one of the local officials of the ASLEF, described the situation as follows: 'Everyone is in the dark, even the shed master, but if there is to be large scale redundancy at the depot then trouble can be expected.'

CONCESSIONS TO LONDON BUSMENBy **G. Kennedy**

Two concessions, one on wages and the other on hours, have been granted by London Transport Executive to its road services staff. Negotiations have been going on between the Transport and General Workers' Union and the LTE for some eight months. The proposals put forward by the branches and adopted by the Joint Delegate Conference of all London busmen would have meant a 40-hour week and many improvements in weekend penalty payments.

The LTE said NO! And a special sub-committee was set up to continue the discussions with the Executive. The Transport bosses made clear that they would give nothing that would substantially increase costs or increase labour requirements.

The resulting agreement was handed to last week's Joint Delegate Conference and hailed in the Press as a new deal for busmen.

This new deal amounts to a few minor concessions on weekend work; which curtail some of the worst features of existing schedules but leave the original proposals almost untouched. The maximum spell of duty on a Sunday is reduced from 10 hours 20 minutes to 9 hours 20 minutes. Spreadover on a Saturday is reduced by 20 minutes to 12 hours. Where a duty exceeds eight hours on the road during the week, the maximum spell of duty without a relief is not to exceed four-and-a-half hours. For other duties this remains at five hours.

The 40-hour week for London busmen is dropped for a new formula that is as ineffective as it is unsatisfactory. At present the average fortnight must not exceed 81 hours 30 minutes, but the individual working fortnight can be scheduled up to 90 hours 45 minutes. The new agreement is that the

average for each garage or depot shall not exceed 81 hours and some odd minutes, This means a few minutes' concession at the most!

With the hours agreement out of the way the LTE offered a new deal on wages. In the past each busman had to serve two years' probation before getting the full rate for the job. This meant that new drivers earned up to 12s. a week less than other drivers and conductors about 8s. a week less.

From September 18 the probation period is cut to 12 months, after which staff receive the full rate. What is interesting is that the Negotiating Committee didn't even ask for this. The LTE offered it out of the blue, obviously alarmed at the growing staff shortage now above the 3,000 mark and rising.

The Trade Group Committee is meeting on Wednesday, September 23, to discuss the £1 claim and payment for shift working. With the Right-wing making the most of its negotiating abilities what comes out of this conference will be important, but only if the full weight of the rank and file is led into action, clever negotiators notwithstanding.

RENTS**HUYTON RENT INCREASES EXPOSE LABOUR COUNCIL**By **Bill Hunter**

'We can't pay the increase. We want to fight it. If you don't, then leave the meeting. All you want to do is to tell us why we can't fight it.' These were the words of an angry worker at a rents meeting last Monday, after the stormy events in Huyton, Liverpool. He was speaking to two supporters of the Labour Council who repeated Harold Wilson's argument that the Government and not the Council was to blame for rent increases.

It is true, of course, that the cost of building by local authorities has risen steadily as a result of Tory policy and that this is the main reason behind the general rise in council rents.

But if Labour councils are simply to pass on the results of Tory policies, what is the difference between them and the Tories?

'What can we do?' The chairman of Huyton housing committee recently asked one tenant.

The answer is simple—the job of a Labour councillor should be to fight Tory policy, not administer it.

If a Labour councillor is going to serve the working people how can he vote to lower their standards in order to maintain those of profit and interest?

If Huyton Labour councillors really want to fight government policy they will withdraw the rent increases, even if it means running up a deficit. They will campaign for support among the working people and the Labour movement locally and nationally to meet any action the Government may take against them.

CND GOES UP A BLIND ALLEYBy **Bob Pennington**

THE twelve thousand people gathered in Trafalgar Square on Sunday listened once again to the oft-repeated truisms on the horrors of a nuclear holocaust. But if they were seeking a lead from the platform on how they could do something effective to end the threat of nuclear war they were disappointed.

The speeches were impassioned, sincere and eloquent. They were however, directed more towards persuading the establishment of the errors of its ways than towards mobilizing the working class.

Midway through the meeting, nine snub-nosed jets zoomed

across the Square. The impudent arrogance of their low flying and the ear-shattering impact of their flight expressed quite adequately what the establishment thinks of passion, sincerity and peaceful persuasion.

After the meeting, marchers headed from the Square through the deserted streets, past the banks and counting houses in the City. The silence of the big buildings and the absence of angry or incensed black-coated insurance brokers, indicated that high finance had decided not to disturb its normal Sunday activities, in order to be persuaded of the 'incorrectness' of its government's policies.

The march reached its climax—some would say its anti-climax. Its point of termination was St Paul's Cathedral.

How ironical that this anti-war movement should be led to the steps of the very cathedral where Queen Anne went to thank the good Lord and his red, white and blue angels for the victories of Marlborough.

Throughout the ages the obedient clerics have blessed the weapons and generals of imperialism in this very cathedral. No doubt, if another conflagration arises they will also securely attach the H-bomb to the chariot of God.

Occupying the chief place of sepulture in the north crypt, entombed in a masthead battle trophy, lies Horatio Nelson; alongside him reclines the Duke of Wellington. In the north aisle is a cenotaph to Gordon, murderer of the Sudanese people.

St Paul's stands as a symbol of the church's marriage to imperialism. To encourage the belief that the capitalist state and its ecclesiastical soothsayers can be relied on to prevent war is to lead the movement up a blind alley.

ALGERIA

MESSALI HADJ: THE END OF THE ROAD

By Tom Kemp

MESSALI HADJ has played a great role in the building up of the Algerian national movement. A dangerous man to several French régimes, he has spent many

years in prison and exile. His record of struggle and sacrifice led many to see in him the hope for a democratic and socialist Algeria.

Messali's conduct and declarations over the past eighteen months leave no further room for illusions. Welcoming de Gaulle with unctuous phrases in June, 1958, he was subsequently released from detention—though not free to move about—and has subsequently made a number of political declarations testifying to his confidence in the leaders of the 5th Republic. Any remaining doubt was dispelled by the welcome he gave to the 'new' de Gaulle plan for Algeria. Under the cloak of liberal gestures and what is called 'auto-determination' French imperialism seeks to build up a basis of support among Algerians in order to preserve its stake in the country and the privileges of the European settlers. This is the 'political solution' which is in fact a product of the stubborn resistance of the nationalist forces and which was discussed in a previous issue.

With facilities from the French broadcasting system, Messali's press conference on the plan was carried by the radio network. And no wonder. The man who at one time received from the French authorities the most despicable treatment has now been tamed. What he said was in the best tradition of the 'beni-oui-oui', the yes-man stooge. Messali endorsed the de Gaulle plan, leaving no doubt that he had been wholly sold on the General's proposed sincerity and liberal intentions. He thus accepted 'auto-determination'—which in fact means the preservation of all the economic and social positions of French colonialism—and presented himself as a willing helper in carrying it out. Of course, he had a few reservations, especially on the four-year time lag before the Algerian people would be called upon to 'choose'—in elections under the shadow of the paratroopers' helicopters. Such criticisms only increase his value.

Messali's teeth have been drawn. After stoutly bearing himself in decades of struggle, after a life of hardship, uncertainty and dedication to his people he ends as a living shadow, a 'beni-oui-oui', first class.

This breaking and humiliating of a once imposing leader is one more crime that the Algerian people will have to lay at the doorstep of French imperialism.

Constant Reader The Litvinov Touch

Khrushchev's call for total disarmament in his address to the United Nations recalls Soviet deputy foreign commissar Litvinov's famous appeal to the same effect, at the end of 1927. That was made to the preparatory commission of the world disarmament conference in Geneva, then the headquarters of the League of Nations. It sounded the keynote of the first movement in the distinctively Stalinist phase of Soviet foreign policy.

When this first, semi-pacifist movement was interrupted by the victory of Hitler in Germany, in 1933, the transition began to the second movement, the theme of which was to be 'collective security'. Litvinov conducted both movements, on Stalin's behalf, but was replaced by Molotov to mark the opening of the third (Nazi pact) movement in 1939.

The futility of the 'why-not-let's-all-disarm?' tactic was pointed out by Trotsky in an interview with the Chicago Daily News, printed in their issue of May 18, 1932.

'That Litvinov is expressing at the Geneva Conference the honest desire of the USSR not to go to war cannot be questioned by any close observer. But I should like to hope that the Soviet delegation will find a moment to go over from technico-pacifist proposals which, even from an educational point of view, are of no great importance, to a more active policy—that is, to say openly to the conference what is, and thus to warn the peoples of the danger that threatens them. For if there exists on our planet a force capable of "limiting" armaments on land and sea, that force is the will of the masses.'

'To say what is'—that was the guiding principle of Lenin and Trotsky in foreign relations as well as in domestic politics. As regards the problem of disarmament, it means showing the real causes of the drive to war and rousing the

forces which can alone impose peace. Avoiding these tasks means, willy-nilly, confusing and misdirecting the masses, helping the enemies of the Soviet Union to create the political basis for an onslaught that will make Hitler's in 1941 look like a mild tiff.

Wrong angle

'When I watched the lovely stars of 20th Century Fox dance before the Premier and his family in Hollywood I could have thought well, now I've seen everything.

'The performance had the quality of a midsummer night's fantasy, yet in many ways it was profound and meaningful drama.'

—Joseph North on Hollywood's reception to Khrushchev, Daily Worker, September 21.

'Mr Khrushchev came through the train and told me last night: "I thought last night's dancing at Hollywood of the Can-Can girls was tasteless and immoral. Surely normal people don't like that sort of thing?"'

—Olga Franklin on same subject, Daily Mail, same day.

Empiricism and empire

All too rarely do historians of the British Labour movement, even those who draw upon Marx, Engels and Lenin, show awareness of the contributions by Trotsky on this subject. I was therefore particularly struck by a reference to that 'interesting and neglected volume' *Where is Britain Going?* when I noticed it in an article in the June number of the *Political Science Quarterly* by Neal Wood, of Columbia University.

The article is a section of a book, *Communism and British*

Intellectuals, to be published in the near future. What interested Professor Wood in Trotsky's book was the passage about the character, causes and consequences of the tradition of empirical thinking in the British labour movement. This Wood sees as one reason why 'intellectuals' have never played an outstanding part in the affairs of the British Communist Party, even before Stalin in the late 1920s and early 1930s 'de-intellectualized' the leaderships of Communist Parties generally, as part of his drive against the Left Opposition.

Among other factors explaining this feature of British Communism (which to some extent it shares with other sections of the British labour movement), Wood mentions the circumstances that 'the British working class has always contained a relatively high number of very literate and articulate self-educated men who could provide competent political leadership' and that 'a large body of alienated, discontented, declassified intellectuals has never existed in Great Britain'—partly because of the outlets provided by the Empire!

Change of life

'Officialdom in the trade union movement has become a vested interest, so much so that questions which arise are viewed from the point of view of their own interests as much as, if not more than those of the rank and file of the trade unions

'Starting off with great promises whilst the workshop memories are fresh, they soon feel the effects of a new environment, develop a superior pessimism which soon expresses itself in terms of disgust with the rank and file, and of a susceptibility to any appeal for peace and quietness.

'This coincides nicely with a desire for their own security, a permanent office or a parliamentary career, and a "cushy" government job becomes more attractive as the days pass.'

—J. T. Murphy, 'Compromise or Independence?' (1918)

LETTERS

THE EASTER RISING DISCUSSION CONTINUES

A FRIEND has asked me why I ascribe such importance to the 'bloodletting' of Easter 1916 as a reason for the 'weakness and disorientation' of the Irish Labour movement in the following six years, in view of the fact, pointed out by Brian Behan, that workers' participation in the Easter rising was only a token participation.

The killed and executed of 1916 were few, but they were key men. The labour movement did not lack militancy in the years of the Anglo-Irish war and the Civil War—but it lacked a revolutionary leading cadre. All through that period we see the contrast between the spirit of the rank and file and the dead hand at the top.

Workers let down

J. Dunsmore Clarksoin brings this out very clearly in his 'Labour and Nationalism in Ireland' (1925). After the splendid one-day general strike against conscription, in April 1918, the Irish Labour Party leaders decided not to take part in the general election as an independent force! In April 1919 the executive let down the workers of Limerick, whose local general strike had tied up the city for ten days. The wonderful response to the call for a one-day stoppage, everywhere outside the Belfast area on May Day 1919, was not followed up.

When the dockers of Dublin and Dun Laoghaire and the railwaymen of Dublin in May 1920 followed the example of the 'Jolly George' men in London, and refused to load or unload any military equipment, their leaders advised them 'to offer to carry everything that the British authorities are willing to risk on the trains.

The seizures by the workers of the creamery at Knocklong

(Co. Limerick) and the coal-mine at Arigna (Co. Leitrim) are merely the best-known incidents of many such that occurred in 1920, 1921 and 1922, expressing the desire of the rank-and-file workers to take over Irish industry. Clarkson writes: 'A violent epidemic of seizures of industrial and even agricultural enterprises broke out. The executive committee of the Transport Union was seriously embarrassed; its members had no stomach for that sort of guerilla warfare.'

Ripe for revolution

Of the 1922 election he observes: 'Coupled with the manifestations of undirected energy displayed by the trade union rank and file, the electoral figures seem to indicate that the country was reasonably ripe for the much discussed "social revolution". Thomas Johnson, the ablest of the Labour leaders, and most important official of the Labour Party and trades union congress, had no intention, however, of giving a lead in that direction. And so the boat was missed.

When the Free State government selected Liam Mellows and the four men closest to him for a reprisal shooting in 1922, everyone knew that they had been selected because they were thinking along Connolly's lines of linking the national struggle with the revolutionary struggle of the workers and poor farmers. The Irish capitalists correctly saw that they owed everything to the absence of a leading cadre worthy of the rank-and-file workers of Ireland—and they were determined to do their damndest to keep things that way. B.P.

INDIAN SOCIALIST SENDS GREETINGS TO THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

ON the eve of this General Election in your country, I wish to convey my greetings to you for giving the right lead to the workers of your country and for so boldly and clearly championing the cause of peace and socialism.

By advocating unilateral renunciation of A and H-bombs you are only stressing the importance of workers' intervention in the mad capitalist politics of war. You are thereby assuming the leadership of all the working masses of the world. This force is too big for the imperialists to ignore. By assuring the world working class that you will not let the imperialists play their dangerous game, you are also showing in action that you will not allow the imperialist intervention in colonial revolutions and in the political revolutions in the Soviet sphere. This is the boldest socialist politics yet on the horizon.

I must also congratulate you for giving the fight for socialism immediate reality in the workers' life. By not confining yourself to the preaching of socialism from the text books, but by giving it life in the workers' movement in the fight for a reduction of working hours and for trade union democracy you are translating Trotsky's transitional demands into reality.

I am sure you will score a big success.

R. N. ARYA

(Member of the Central Committee,
Revolutionary Workers' Party of India).

MOTORS: A NEW DEMAND

In the article 'The facts behind the motor crisis', I feel that one important point has been omitted. The nine main points would certainly cover most of the problems, but the continuous victimization of shop stewards certainly weakens any development of the possibility of their achievement and I think that the only way we can ensure shop stewards being able to advance these demands is for a fight to be made on their behalf; that is a fight for a return to work on the basis of the status quo, both where stewards are being victimized or in any dispute.

The fight around this point alone would certainly sharpen the class struggle, if it achieved nothing else.

Leeds

Charles Parker