

THE NEWSLETTER

Weekly Journal of the Socialist Labour League

Vol. 4, No 134

Threepence

January, 16 1960

LONDON RAILWORKERS SAY NO, NO, NO! One day strike for more money is on

Full support for the London District Council of the National Union of Railwaymen! Their decision to ignore the no-strike advice of Mr. Sidney Greene, their general secretary, and Sir Brian Robertson for the British Transport Commission is an important step forward in the wages fight.

Trade unionists everywhere are sick and tired of promises and courts of inquiry. London's rail workers have given a lead to the entire trade union movement. 'We want the money,' they say, 'and we intend to get it.' That is the only language the employers and their government understand.

Busmen waiting for the results of their pay claim will be heartened by this firm stand. Here is the opportunity to unite all London transport workers and so heal the breach which was disastrous during the 1958 bus strike. Not a moment must be lost before the Central Bus Committee contacts the London District Council of the N.U.R. Bus garages should establish a close relationship with rail workers. Let the one-day strike be a mighty demonstration of the determination of London trade unionists to win their just wage claims. There is every indication that Manchester will not be far behind.

London's rail workers have also struck an important blow in the struggle for shorter hours. If Sir Brian Robertson is considering giving a wage increase of some sort to railwaymen, and the engineering employers are considering a reduction in hours, is it not perfectly obvious that with a fight the 40-hour week can be won? Fords' management have beaten a retreat, and everything goes to show that the time is favourable for the struggle for shorter hours and higher wages.

Engineering trade unionists will watch Mr. Carron very closely. He has talked about substantial wage increases. They will want to know what he is going to do to get them.

MANCHESTER BUILDERS WANT ACTION

By E. Knight

'We've listened to this enough to this talk. What we want is action.' This interjection at the mass meeting of building trade workers held at Chorlton Town Hall, Manchester, last Monday evening, was without doubt the view of all the rank-and-file workers who had come in support of their wage demand and 40-hour week claim. A march through the city had preceded the meeting.

For more than half an hour they listened to Hugh Kelly, General Secretary, Plumbing Trades Union, speak on the 'soundness' of their demand, without one word as to what to do should the employers reject it. 'Unable,' 'not in a position', 'must not commit', were but few of the excuses he uttered on his inability to give a lead.

Such was the dissatisfaction with these evasions that after several such answers a worker moved that: 'we finish with questions as Bro. Kelly is apparently afraid to answer them.'

Men are ready for action

Answering Kelly's appeal, on behalf of the Executive of the National Federation of Building Trade Operatives, for the full support of the rank and file, one joiner replied: 'Year after year you go forward with a claim, are rejected, then ask for our full support, which is always given, but still you get nothing. It's some action that's called for.'

Another joiner, Bro. Langham, urged: 'If the employers reject the claim, then let there be a scrap. Better three

months' struggle and win than the position we are in now.'

Speaking on the lobby that was being planned Bro. Gantley asked: 'Are we going to London just for the ride, we've done that for years, or are we going to get positive action?'

The meeting unanimously passed a resolution demanding that should the talks with the employers produce no result then the whole question should be referred back to the rank and file for them to decide what action to take, thus cutting right across any suggestion of months of arbitration.

HAULAGE MEN LOCKED OUT

Over 1,000 locked-out British Road Service drivers marched on Transport and General Workers' Union headquarters this morning. The march was in protest at the agreement signed by T.G.W.U. leaders and Haulage bosses raising the drivers' speed limit from 20 to 30 miles per hour.

'Hayes' depot driver, Johnny Powell told me: 'We refuse to operate an agreement we never even voted for.'

F. Holden, a shop steward at Hayes said: 'Put in a nutshell the agreement means three things; A wages cut, extra work, speed-up and sackings.'

'With driving conditions of today the new agreement is a mental and physical impossibility,' commented truck driver Tibbles.

The employers are also proposing to stagger working hours. 'Some will start at six a.m., others at 10 a.m., six p.m. and 10 p.m. What time will that leave us for leisure?' asked a strike committee member.

Support for the strike is being sought amongst drivers employed by private contractors—in many cases private firms are doing B.R.S. work—and attempts are being made to get dockers to 'black' all B.R.S. work.

LIVERPOOL DOCK DISPUTE

By W. Hunter

If sixteen men are charged with misconduct and sent before the Liverpool Dock Labour Board, then fellow dockers will strike in protest.

This was decided today at a meeting of dockers from No. 5 Control in the north end of Liverpool's docks. Tomorrow, the sixteen men are to go before the port manager, who will investigate a complaint from an employer that they stopped work for an afternoon on December 30.

The men had been working on the S.S. 'Santander', unloading bulk nitre. There was a burst pipe in the hold and water had leaked on to the nitre making it difficult to shovel out. Dissatisfied at the smallness of the award they had been given for 'abnormal cargo', the men walked off the ship. Following their walk-off they were given another 'arbitration' and an increased payment. (Contd. at foot of page 21)

Fascist Hooliganism in Leeds

By G. GALE

Fascist hooligans have daubed swastikas and anti-Jewish slogans on shop doors and windows in Chapeltown Road, Leeds. This is a district where many Jewish people live.

I spoke to Mr. Jack Klineberg, whose optician's shop was one of the targets for this attack.

'This is obviously an organized affair,' he said. 'All kinds of reactionaries are now crawling out from under the stones, encouraged by the Tory election victory. It is up to the Labour Movement to nip this in the bud.'

A Jamaican factory worker, who was in the shop, nodded agreement. He felt that these were the same people who were responsible for the Notting Hill outrages.

Mrs. Korner came in from a neighbouring shop. She was very angry with people who suggested that this was just isolated hooliganism and should be ignored.

She pointed out that this was exactly how Fascism first began to appear in Germany. First, the daubing of Jewish shops and houses, then attacks on Jewish schoolchildren, painting swastikas on their satchels, then going on to more and more violence, culminating in the victory of Hitler.

In Germany, too, well-meaning people had said 'Ignore it—it's just hooligans—don't give these people publicity.'

Mrs. Korner, who comes from Germany, told me that her parents, her sister and her sister's children had all been gassed by the Nazis. She showed me marks on her arm where she too had suffered because 'hooliganism' had not been checked in time.

I also spoke to Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Gould, both active members of the Labour Party. Mrs. Gould is secretary of the Potternewton Ward Party, which includes the Chapeltown Road area.

Fascist danger

They, too, rejected the view that these were isolated incidents. They were the work of an organized political movement, which recruited amongst hooligan elements. Even if sometimes such outrages were committed by isolated hooligans, they were ripe for recruitment to a Fascist organization. Mr. Gould felt that this was a real danger, and expressed great dissatisfaction with the failure of the Labour Party to take any initiative in fighting it.

Chapeltown, where many very poor people live, and also many Jews and coloured people, is just the right sort of

hunting ground for a Fascist movement.

The Socialist Labour League believes that it is capitalism, by forcing people to live under the appalling conditions that can be found in parts of Chapeltown, that breeds Fascism. The Fascists seize on these conditions, and try to convince the unfortunate people who live in them that it is the Jews, the coloured people, the foreigners, that are responsible for them and not the landlords, financiers and capitalist politicians.

The role of fascism is to try to turn the working class against itself, to divert its anger from the capitalist class towards any minority that can be used as a scapegoat. 'Niggers' in Notting Hill, Jews in Chapeltown, foreign workers in the pits. Tomorrow, Irish workers, Communists, Trotskyites—anybody but the real enemy of the working class.

At present several Fascist groups are competing in the hope that as capitalism's crisis gets more severe, the ruling class will turn to them as a last resort.

Labour must act

That is why the swastika-daubing and Negro-baiting is not just a matter of a few hooligans. It is a political and class question. It is a threat to be met by the Labour movement.

Of course, the Leeds Labour Party officials, complacent as ever, intend to do nothing. 'It will soon blow over', they say.

However, it is well known in Leeds that as far as liveliness is concerned the local Labour Party offices compare unfavourably with Madame Tussauds. And other people are remembering an incident that occurred before the war.

The Mosleyites intended to hold a march in this same district. But masses of Jewish youth and other anti-Fascists formed a solid block across the road—not a single Fascist got through.

That is the method that is needed today. The Fascists must be swept from the streets.

THE NEWSLETTER

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 16, 1960

WITCH-HUNT IN SHEFFIELD

MR. GEORGE CABORN, a Sheffield engineer, is a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party. He is also shop stewards' convenor at an important factory in Sheffield and a member of the Amalgamated Engineering Union's district committee. Several weeks ago Mr. Caborn set out to organize a rank-and-file shop stewards' conference to discuss how best to implement the policy of his union.

The Executive Council of the A.E.U. is now under the control of an extreme Right-wing caucus whose methods of organization in the union have brought them into high office at a very critical time for engineers. These gentlemen stepped in and banned Mr. Caborn's conference. Unfortunately Mr. Caborn beat a retreat, because the Executive Committee of the

Communist Party feared that a frontal showdown with the Right-wing might endanger their position in other unions.

They were, of course, completely wrong and Mr. Caborn's experience proves this to the hilt. You cannot fight the witch-hunters of the Right-wing by retreating, especially when the rank and file of the trade union movement are waiting for a lead. To imagine that members of the Communist Party and militant socialists can somehow maintain their positions inside the unions by silence is nonsense.

Mr. Caborn has been unjustly penalized by the Right-wing and it is up to engineers everywhere to mobilize the widest possible campaign to see that his stop steward's card is immediately restored and that he is returned to the Sheffield district committee. It is also a warning that we must stop retreating. This was the keynote of the National Assembly of Labour organized by the Socialist Labour League last November. The experience of Mr. Caborn has proved that we were dead right. Now is the time to make a united stand of Trotskyists and Communist Party members against the Right-wing.

(SOME ANTI-LABOUR TENDENCIES—II)**MORAL REARMAMENT EXPOSED**By **BOB PENNINGTON**

This is the second of two articles explaining how Moral Rearmament operates in the Trade Union movement.

Moral Re-Armament works hard to convince workers that it has their interests at heart. One of its boasts is that it is responsible for creating better relations between workers and management.

Let's see how this works in practice. Take the case of M. Jacques Hilst, a French building employer, and his workers.

As a result of being inspired by M.R.A., M. Hilst's workers actually volunteered to forego all travelling expenses when they were working out of the district. They also offered to work an extra hour per day without any pay. Naturally enough, M. Hilst is now thoroughly convinced of the advantages of Buchmanism.

In return for the co-operation of the workers the generous M. Hilst set up a Works Council.

Who got the money ?

M.R.A. has also extended its activities to India. The M.R.A. Information Service publication for April 9, 1953, quotes a Madras director of a film company as saying, 'the new spirit in his studios made it possible for him to have work done in one and a half hours for which he had previously had to allow eight hours.' This saved the director £420.

Whether Buchman, the director, or God got the £420, the report neglects to say.

John Riffe, a Right-wing union boss in the American Congress of Industrial Organizations, told a U.S. Senator: 'Senator, you must tell America that when Frank Buchman changed John Riffe he saved American industry 500 million dollars.' That of course is the type of 'absolute unselfishness' American employers like.

Commenting on Riffe's statement, Buchman asked, 'can this be the answer to inflation?'

The M.R.A. film, 'Light of Tomorrow', was shown in New York to the Brooklyn dockers by courtesy of Tony Anastasio, a vice-president of the International Longshoremen's Association.

Tony is the brother of the late, unlamented Albert Anastasio, whose colourful if rather gruesome nickname was 'Lord Chief High Executioner.' Albert performed his executioning duties for Murder Incorporated.

The 'absolutely honest' Buchmanites neglect to inform us that the I.L.A. is a racket-ridden union, whose officials, including Tony, maintain their rule by the use of muscle-men, guns and cement-jackets.

Swedish dockers, too, have enjoyed the dubious privileges of M.R.A. A shipping employer at Goteborg promised full managerial support to M.R.A. after two leading docker militants who had formerly opposed their boss, ended their 'bad ways' and joined a local M.R.A. group in the city.

M.R.A. and Docks

For years the pink-cheeked and sartorially elegant young men who act as ambassadors for M.R.A. have done their best to win British dockers. During the Canadian Seamen's Strike, M.R.A. called a special conference in London. They invited the strike leaders, promising to pay all expenses. Their attempts to break the strike were unsuccessful.

During the 1951 dock strike over wages, they constantly visited the homes of the Merseyside leaders. Danny Brandon, who was secretary of the strike committee, told me how they offered to take him and his wife to the Adelphi Hotel—the best hotel in Liverpool—for dinner. Always their line was the same: 'We sympathise with your aims but you are going about it the wrong way. You should stop fighting each other (bosses and dockers) and get together.'

Put bluntly, this meant end the strike, and go back to work.

Brandon asked one M.R.A. representative how did he get the messages from God which he claimed to receive. The answer was: 'I sit down with a pencil and some notepaper and God communicates to me.'

They agreed that Brandon should try this method. After a time Brandon handed him his 'God-given message.'

It read: 'B——r off!' Faithful to the Lord's dictates, he did.

A candid appreciation of the work of M.R.A. was given by the President of the Association of Cut Sole Manufacturers. He tells how in a factory influenced by M.R.A. 'manpower was reduced by 25 per cent., the remainder worked so well that production did not suffer.'

Recently a group of Ruhr miners have been cavorting around Europe performing a play for M.R.A. In France these 'militant' trade unionists were greeted by none other than M. Vandenberg, the secretary of the local Employers' Association.

Their invitation to Paris came from Guy Mollet who, during his spell as French premier, helped to fill the jails of France and Algeria with Arab trade unionists.

'Yellow unions'

M.R.A. has not confined its activities simply to working within the unions. In 1952 they reported that dockers from Genoa were among the dockers from 13 other major ports who had 'sent invitations to their colleagues to form a dockers' international at Caux.'

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions issued a statement on September 15, 1953, dealing with M.R.A. and its work. The I.C.F.T.U. found M.R.A. not only interfered in trade union activities, but were guilty of 'anti-trade union efforts, even to the extent of trying to found yellow unions.'

It is of course inevitable that M.R.A. should pursue policies which are diametrically opposed to the interests of the working class. Their philosophy of 'change yourself' ascribes the faults of the world as being due to man's inner selfishness and not to the social system.

This means that instead of organizing working people to remove capitalism, socialists should spend their time and energies on convincing workers of the need to co-operate with the employers.

Giulio Pastore, the I.C.F.T.U. representative of the Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori, commenting on M.R.A.'s programme, said, 'the workers are full of good faith and belief in human solidarity, but unfortunately they have found it otherwise with the employers.'

Pastore explained how many employers had visited Caux and delivered fine speeches about social progress, but once they had returned to Italy they forgot all about them. He commented succinctly: 'This proves the old Italian proverb: the wolf can lose his hairs, but not his viciousness.'

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NUM LEADERS ATTACK LANCS MINERS

By our Industrial Correspondent

The Lancashire Area Committee of the National Union of Mineworkers has seen fit to ban a rank-and-file paper called *The Miner*, produced by the Bradford pit branch of the union. This decision is one more example of how this banning of newspapers is beginning to spread. It is becoming a very important weapon for the Right-wing's witch-hunt against the Left, whether in the Labour Party or the trade unions. That it has now spread from the Labour Party to the trade unions is no accident. More and more the problems confronting the Labour Party and the trade unions are beginning to emerge so that the bureaucracies in both sectors resort to similar methods of witch-hunting.

The *Miner* was banned for two reasons. Firstly, it called for an active campaign for the policy of the National Union of Mineworkers, that is the seven-hour day, a 40-hour week for surface workers and three weeks' holiday...The leadership of the N.U.M. would like to confine this question to the field of negotiation, but *The Miner* called for action to force the Coal Board to accede to these just demands.

The Miners' case was strengthened by the threats of pit closures arising from the re-organization policy of the Coal Board. In this respect it went beyond the policy of the union by disagreeing sharply with the measures proposed by such miners' leaders as Will Paynter and Ernest Jones when they call for the boycotting of public houses and cinemas using oil. *The Miner* maintained that in the first place the leaders of the N.U.M. should have full access to the Coal Board's plans and in turn should place these plans before the members of the union for approval or rejection.

Secondly, *The Miner* supported the strongest possible action to prevent sackings, but where it was proved that pits had to close because of the finishing up of the coal seams, then instead of throwing the men concerned on to the Labour Exchange, the unions should see to it that they were transferred to employment elsewhere in coalfields under conditions which were similar to what they previously enjoyed. The money for such transfers should come from the suspension of interest payments of the compensation to the ex-owners.

A question of policy

The policy of the paper in its issue of January 8, 1960, summed up as follows:—

A real fight against pit closures. Implement official N.U.M. policy that no miner lose his job or suffer as a result of pit closures. Deeds not words.

Find the money for the modernization of the pits and the keeping or the re-training on full wages of 'redundant' miners by suspending payment of interest on the compensation of ex-owners.

A real fight for the N.U.M. policy of the 7-hour day, the 40-hour week for surface workers and 3 weeks' holiday.

For unity and contact from pit to pit and coalfield to coalfield.

For solidarity and support for miners anywhere fighting to defend their conditions.

For unity of miners with other workers in a united front against Toryism.

The real reason for banning the paper, therefore, was that it was gaining support for a policy which is more positive and socialist in character than that of the official leaders of the N.U.M.

For unity amongst miners

The circulation of *The Miner* is growing, particularly in the Yorkshire coalfield. It seeks to break down the isolation existing between various coalfields; to acquaint men in Yorkshire with the problems of men in Lancashire; to build up strong rank and file relationships between the miners in both coalfields. In the eyes of the N.U.M. leadership this is impermissible, because part of their strategy is to deliberately keep the miners segregated into areas so that it is impossible for the rank and file to work out a common strategy of struggle. Under such conditions it is easier to reduce the number of miners employed in one coalfield and increase the amount of coal produced in another. *The Miner* was exposing this type of approach, so it had to be banned.

Rank-and-file miners in Lancashire and Yorkshire are determined that the paper will continue and a campaign is now being organized in both coalfields to extend the circulation and win new supporters for the paper. The next wave of struggle in the pits will demonstrate the correctness of the paper's policy. Neither bans nor witch-hunts will succeed. Just as the ban imposed by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party on *The Newsletter* has, if anything, increased the sales of that paper, so the ban on *The Miner* will do likewise. It is one thing to ban at the top, but it is quite another thing to succeed with a ban in the ranks.

Sin, Strikes and Sir Tom O'Brien

By BOB PENNINGTON

'Go ye amongst the sinners,' says the good Book. Not loth to accept the advice, the ex-president of the Trades Union Congress, Sir Tom O'Brien, is now writing in the 'News of the World.'

Midst the sex and sin, the portly, sybaritic O'Brien denounces unofficial strikes.

Assuring his readers and editors that: 'The strike weapon . . . is no longer of the same validity as it was two generations ago' Sir Tom prattles on about 'far-sighted industrialists and good-spirited public men.'

Unfortunately for our prophet, events have lodged a sturdy and accurately-placed boot in the centre of his well-upholstered posterior.

Within 24 hours of O'Brien's article appearing, came the announcement from British Transport Commission boss, General Sir Brian Robertson, that any wage increase to railway men will be made retrospective. The *Financial Times* described this as an 'unprecedented step.'

The railwaymen have secured this because they ignored the advice of their general secretary Greene and the philosophy of O'Brien and threatened the B.T.C. with a one-day stoppage.

Last week the Fords (Dagenham) management blandly informed their press shop workers that they were introducing a three-shift system. The workers in the the press shop retorted by walking out.

On Monday morning over 5,000 men had been laid off and production at the giant factory was being rapidly brought to a halt. Now Fords have decided to postpone the three-shift system.

What made the B.T.C. bend and Fords retreat was not the reasonableness of O'Brien and the other Right-wing leaders but the strike weapon—old-fashioned or not!

Denouncing strikes is not a new practice for O'Brien. On the eve of the last general election he made headlines in the national press with a statement attacking the British Oxygen Strike.

RENTS

BIRMINGHAM TENANTS MEET

By Harry Finch

Two hundred Birmingham municipal tenants attended a meeting held at the Town Hall to protest at the rent increases being imposed by the Right-wing Labour Council.

Rent increases are scheduled for 73,800 houses, ranging from a few shillings to 12s. a week, with the threat by the Council that each year there will be further increases in rent.

The meeting, which was organized by the Birmingham Tenants' Association, was chaired by S. Goldberg. On the platform were representatives of the St. Pancras Tenants' Association. Lacking were any of the original seven Labour Councillors who defied the Right Wing Labour Whip by voting against the Rent Scheme in open Council.

The St. Pancras spokesmen urged that after January 4, when the first part of the rent increases become due in Birmingham, all tenants should refuse to pay the increases.

Jessie Eden, spokeswoman for the Birmingham Tenants' Association, urged lobbying of councillors, deputation to the Minister, pressure by M.P.'s to make the Government change its financial policy regarding council housing, and called for big industrialists to pay their full rates.

MR. ROBINSON IS BEHIND THEM

By Alf Hardy

St. Pancras Borough Council tenants have now been threatened with eviction by the Tory council unless they pay the new increases.

Next Monday, tenants will receive a letter from the Council informing them that unless they pay up they will be evicted four weeks from that day.

After a week the strike of the tenants remains solid. Very few tenants are paying the increase. A number that paid the first week are taking heart from the stand made by the others and have announced their intention of joining the strike now.

The local tenants' associations are holding meetings and criticism is strong about the inactivity of the two Labour Parties in the Borough.

Many tenants are considering joining their ward parties 'in order to make them fight.'

The Labour M.P. for St. Pancras North, Kenneth Robinson, sent the tenants a telegram on September 1 saying he was 'behind them' in their fight.

A Long Meadow tenant said: 'You can say that again. He is behind us all right. So far behind you cannot see him.'

Robinson's activity in the debate around the new plans for Piccadilly Circus stands in contrast to his rather aloof attitude to the fight of his constituents.

DAILY WORKER HOLDS A CONFERENCE

By our Political Correspondent

Delegates representing the Socialist Labour League will be attending the Daily Worker Conference in London this week-end.

We consider the most urgent task today is to develop a programme and strategy that will assist the working

class to defeat the attacks of the employers. We therefore consider that all conferences which bring together delegates and representatives from the factories, sites, dockyards, trade union branches, tenants' organizations and peace organizations to discuss policy require the attendance of militants and Marxists.

We certainly hope that out of this Conference will come a strengthened movement to fight against bans and proscriptions. For us this means all sections of the left uniting together, irrespective of their other differences, against witch-hunting. We consider it the duty of all members of the Socialist Labour League to fight against the 'black' circulars imposed by certain union executives on members of the Communist Party. A responsibility that is incumbent upon the Communist Party leaders is to ensure that their party and their members, oppose with equal vigour the bans and proscriptions imposed upon the Socialist Labour League.

We have many criticisms of the Communist Party and we have no intentions of dropping such criticisms in order to achieve a fake unity. It is our opinion, however, that by uniting together on issues where we have agreement and by discussing in an objective and comradely manner those issues which divide us we jointly can make a contribution to strengthening the fight against British capitalism.

Need for a programme

It would in our opinion have been better if the Daily Worker Conference had been called to discuss a specific resolution such as we had before us at the National Assembly of Labour held last November. Unity in our submission is based on agreement on specific points, not on general goodwill. Nevertheless if the Conference is run in such a way as to permit a genuine discussion and a free interchange of opinions where arguments and ideas are assessed on their merits and not dismissed with suitable swear-words such as 'Trotskyist disrupters' or 'Fascist beasts' it can serve a useful purpose.

RAILS OVERTIME BAN IN MIDLANDS

By A. Stanley

Railwaymen on the old Great Central (Marylebone-Sheffield) line are to be urged to refuse all restored overtime and Sunday working unless the British Transport Commission suspends its closures and withdrawals programme. The ban is to come into force as from February 21.

This decision was taken at a meeting of the Leicester and District Joint Action Committee, a rank-and-file body representing workes on this line. Members of A.S.L.E.F., N.U.R. and T.S.S.A. were present at the meeting.

The meeting also decided to call upon their National Executive Committees to take 'urgent and drastic action if the railways are to be saved as a public service.' The resolution continues: 'We are not prepared to continue actively assisting in the destruction of our own industry.'

LIVERPOOL DOCK DISPUTE—(Contd. from front page)

Last Saturday, however, these dockers received a letter summoning them to attend the area office of the Dock Labour Board. Here the port manager will decide whether or not a charge of breach of discipline against these men should go forward to the local Dock Labour Board.

Dockers in the area are saying there is an attempt underfoot to intimidate them and rob them of their right to withhold their labour.

A resolution passed at today's meeting demanded the squashing of the complaint made against 'the men who stopped work with a just demand' and went on to declare:

"For a disciplinary complaint to be laid in an industrial dispute is, we consider, an attempt to prevent men taking action in support of their rights and to leave the employer free to impose the worst of conditions."

FRANCE

FIFTH REPUBLIC AT WORK

By our Political Correspondent

'Completely terrorised inmates'. A prisoner with broken ribs and multiple wounds, inflicted during interrogation, lying untreated in an isolation cell. Prisoners detained in 'sorting out' camps for over a year. 'Treatment in flagrant contradiction with the most elementary humanitarian principles.'

No, this is not Belsen or Buchenwald, but the Algerian concentration camps of French Imperialism. The quotations are taken from an official report of the International Committee of the Red Cross. A summary of the report appeared last Monday in the French paper 'Le Monde.' Large extracts were published in Tuesday's 'Guardian'. The authenticity of the report has not been questioned. The French Government issued a communique in which it took credit to itself . . . 'for giving such full facilities to the International Red Cross.'

For several years Left-wing French journals have been denouncing the widespread use of torture by both civil and military authorities in Algeria. The French ruling class repeatedly retaliates by 'seizing' the offending journal . . . doubtless one of the 'rights' secured by the Allied 'victory' over Fascism. Trotskyist and Communist Party, Anarchist and even such discreetly critical journals as 'L'Express' and

'France Observateur' have been impounded. 'Le Monde,' a kind of Gallic 'Guardian' and the very pillar of propriety, has not escaped. Hordes of special police descend upon the printing houses, distribution centres, newsagents and kiosks. On this occasion suppression was no doubt impossible . . . short of a military expedition against the Geneva headquarters of the International Red Cross.

The most revealing aspect of the whole affair, however, is the reaction of the Red Cross to the publication of its own report. One of the functions of organizations such as the Red Cross is to bolster up the 'democratic' facade of Imperialism. This is done by stressing the deeply humanitarian concern of capitalist governments (whether they be dropping atom bombs on one another, or waging colonial wars).

RED CROSS, A PARTY TO SILENCE

According to the 'Guardian' the Red Cross had sent seven previous missions to Algeria. Seven previous reports had no doubt been prepared and presented to the French Government (who, of course, did not publish a word of them). The Red Cross was a party to this conspiracy of silence.

By some accident the contents of the eighth report reached the Press and became hot news. A spokesman at the Headquarters of the Red Cross Committee in Geneva publicly proclaimed his 'shocked surprise' (not, of course, at the crimes of Imperialism, but at the publication of the report!).

Such protests will fortunately be of little avail, and the facts will be widely quoted. They will carry the full, if reluctant, authority of the International Red Cross.

Constant Reader | Join the Army and See the World

Bob Pennington's article on Moral Rearmament has probably reminded other readers besides me of the efforts made in the Army during the latter part of the last world war to 'push' this stuff among the troops. Certain generals who had, one supposes, been saved spiritually by Buchman made it their concern (and exploited their power) to try to win converts. I had an experience of this sort of thing while in Burma in 1945.

Sent to attend a conference in Calcutta, I was ordered to bring back with me some crates of books which would be waiting at a depot there. Innocently I imagined these to be textbooks of various useful arts and sciences as might help soldiers who were then thinking of preparing themselves for civil life. However, after escorting those awkward great crates many miles by rail, air and road, I was furious to find when they were opened that they contained—copies of 'Ideas Have Legs', by Peter Howard, a popular exposition of Buchmanism. It was directed first and foremost against 'materialists' who exploit grievances 'for party ends': 'within the ranks of Labour, two sections struggle for mastery. Shall extremists there, who love an alien ideology more than their own country, control the men who wish to maintain and recreate the best traditions of Trade Unionism? Sound Labour needs an ideology and faith to answer the faith and ideology of the extremists' This was what Moral Rearmament was in business to offer.

The least I could do to atone for my bringing this muck into Burma was to write a letter to 'SEAC', the Forces' newspaper then edited by Frank Owen, exposing the Moral Rearmament racket to the best of my ability. Shortly afterwards I was posted to Ceylon. There I learnt, through an indiscretion, that this letter of mine—coming on top of unauthorized contacts with the Burma National Army, saying the wrong thing in 'current affairs' discussions, etc.—had given grave offence in high quarters. Apparently at least one general was working, together with the Bishop of Rangoon, to use 'M.R.A.' propaganda not only to offset left-wing tendencies among British troops but also to influence certain Burmese politicians who were in search of an ideology; and I had rocked the boat a little.

In a way, that was where, or rather how, I had come in, so to speak. For my original posting to the East, in 1943, happened like this. One day the general commanding a district of England where I was then stationed gave a confidential address to officers of all units in the district on the importance of a new so-called educational programme 'The British Way and Purpose.' The military successes of Soviet Russia were causing far too many soldiers to deduce that the Bolshevik revolution must have been a good thing, and it was necessary to counter these dangerous thoughts by selling them, hard but with subtlety, 'our own' traditions of parliamentary democracy, His Majesty's Opposition, and all that. When a verbatim report of the general's remarks appeared in the next day's Daily Worker some embarrassment ensued.

Shortly afterwards I was posted to India. From an inside source I learnt that the security boys had decided that, though they had no positive proof, Pearce must be the guilty man who had carried the general's great thought to a wider audience than had been intended; and a long sea voyage would do me good.

The purposeful general was also posted east at the same time, and travelled out in the same convoy with me; though not, which was just as well, in the same ship or to the same destination. Though he had been responsible for introducing 'the padre's hour' into Army routine, he might, who knows, have reacted to me in an un-Christian way had we been obliged to meet socially.

Clyde Assembly of Labour

SUNDAY, MARCH 20, CENTRAL HALLS,
GLASGOW, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sponsors' Meeting, Wednesday, January 20

Full particulars from the secretary:

Alex McLarty, 3 Anderson Street, Glasgow, W.1.