

THE NEWSLETTER

Weekly Journal of the Socialist Labour League

Vol. 4, No 145

Threepence

April 2, 1960

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By JAMES BAKER

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Pass law victory

The suspension of the pass laws announced by the Verwoerd government is another tribute to the extent of the working class solidarity. Africans will now be able to move about freely and between the countryside and the towns without fear of arrest, the curfew will no longer operate and this will mean the end of forced labour on the farms. Although announced as a temporary measure, this law will never be re-imposed unless the Nationalists are able to defeat the working class in a full-scale civil war. The public burning of passes in Johannesburg and Capetown was a calculated act of defiance which has given the ruling class in South Africa an

acute attack of jitters.

The South African Nationalists have been under pressure from members of their own class from both within and outside South Africa. Twelve of the leading theologians of the Dutch Reformed Church, the main ideologists of apartheid, have made a surprising and belated discovery that this policy is in fact 'anti-Christian', and that it causes 'hatred' between Africans and Europeans.

Mineowners fear disaster

There have been attempts to form a coalition of Nationalists and the opposition United Party to ditch Verwoerd and to form a government pledged to make concessions to African 'moderates'. A Professor of Law in Capetown University acting as spokesman for the big mineowners of the Anglo-American Corporation, has demanded the complete abolition of race discrimination and the granting of political rights to Africans 'as the only alternative to disaster'.

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THE NEWSLETTER

186 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4

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SATURDAY, APRIL 2 1960

LONG LIVE THE AFRICAN REVOLUTION

WITH all the pathos and grandeur of human beings making history, the great African revolution swung into top gear. As a sorrowful people lowered the bodies of the Sharpeville martyrs into their graves, tens of thousands of the cream of the African youth began their mammoth march to Capetown.

The martyrs of Sharpeville will go down in history as the soldiers of the social revolution. It was their demonstration above all which brought to an end the hated pass system. The white racialists may sit smugly behind their well-oiled machine guns and in the safety of their Saracen armoured cars, but deep in their murderous hearts they know that the eyes of world Labour are now turned towards every action which they undertake.

The Africans are defenceless people. They have no weapons. Their only form of resistance is their human bodies. Is it not time that the Soviet Union and the East European governments broke off diplomatic relations with the Verwoerd government and issued a clear statement of support for the African revolution? Is it not time that these defenceless people should receive arms and such assistance as they require to resist the brutal racist police? China has arms, the Soviet Union, we are assured, has plenty of arms, Czechoslovakia produces the most modern military equipment. Ghana has arms. Is it not time that material assistance was extended to the South African people?

The African revolution is decisive for British imperialism. If the police and the Tories have changed their attitude towards demonstrations outside South Africa House, it is because they instinctively feel that a false move on their part would arouse a mighty protest movement to white-hot anger. This would be extremely dangerous for the Tories, who are aware that the real economic rulers of South Africa are the diamond, gold and commercial dealers of the City of London.

All movements in defence of the African revolution can only be effective when they turn their protests against the City of London. Verwoerd and the South African whites are but a racist cover for the city businessmen. They are the on-the-spot protectors of the property which brings millions of pounds into the coffers of British banks in the form of share dividends and profits.

It is not enough for British Labour to protest and to hold meetings. That is begging the question. Everyone feels proud of the great work which students and young people have done over the past ten days, but what about the big battalions of Labour? South African goods are still passing through the ports and the airfields. An immediate embargo must be placed on all such cargo. It is not enough to say boycott the sale of South African goods in the shops. Each shop that sells South African goods should be boycotted. These steps would have a powerful response amongst the people of Africa. Unity of the British and African people is above all unity against a common enemy.

The pass system has gone, but this is only a beginning. Every African must now have a vote. The right of political association and trade union organization must be guaranteed by law in South Africa.

Free elections must take place for a constituent assembly. The first steps of this assembly would be to divide up the land amongst the propertyless African farmers and ensure by law the same rates of wages for black and white workers.

All British property should be immediately confiscated and nationalized, under the control of those who work in the industries concerned. Not a penny piece of compensation should be given to the City of London. They have had enough.

The great strength of the African revolution is the strength of its people. Hand in hand with the working class of Britain it will march forward not only to its own victory, but towards a powerful contribution to the victory of socialism in Britain.

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From Britain, too, the South African government has been under heavy pressure. The Times of March 28 makes a desperate appeal 'to those whites who are not blinkered and straight waist-coated in the wicked myth of apartheid . . . an alternative to apartheid must be found . . . the immediate future is an open race between opponents of a now manifestly bankrupt policy and those who would save the Union from its consequences.'

The Financial Times itself, the capitalists' bible, sounds the retreat in South Africa. In its issue of March 29 it expressed the fear that the people of South Africa have learned a dangerous lesson which must be unlearned as soon as possible. 'The South African government . . . has taught the native people to expect nothing except what they can extort by the use of economic and policy power . . . it is much better at present that Verwoerd should retreat than that he should stand fast, but it is a long, slow and bitter retreat that seems in prospect.' (My emphasis.)

Mind your own business, but . . .

We can be certain that South Africa was one of the subjects discussed by Macmillan and Eisenhower at Camp David and that they decided on steps needed to make South Africa safe for capitalism. So much for the policy of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other States! As Macmillan said in Capetown at the beginning of February: 'mind your own business, but mind how it affects my business, too.'

The business of Britain's capitalists is too much tied in the Union of South Africa for them to permit the stupid Nats to ruin it. Two-thirds of the capital invested in South Africa is from Britain. And the Americans, too, have more than one million dollars invested in South African gold mine companies. The capitalist class wants a temporary truce with the working class in South Africa so that they can re-establish stable government.

So far the whites in South Africa seem determined to commit suicide; they have banned both the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress, and have arrested hundreds of people of all shades of opinion. But there is no sign of the African people losing their initiative.

Defeat the common enemy

Last Sunday's demonstration of international working-class solidarity in Trafalgar Square, and the picketing which has gone on at South Africa House during the week, provides an effective means of fighting the capitalists both in Britain and in South Africa. Industrial action by dockers, railway workers and airline workers in Britain would help to defeat the capitalists in South Africa and here. The common enemies of the South African people and the British people are the capitalist class, of whom Macmillan and Verwoerd are both representatives.

INDUSTRY

MIDLANDS COALFIELD PROBLEMS

By R. Shaw

No major strike has taken place in the East Midlands coalfield since 1926, productivity at the face per man has increased from 3.73 tons in 1938 to 5.2 tons in 1958. Profits netted the National Coal Board £18,800,710 in the latter year, an increase of £1,200,000 over 1957.

The NCB are confident that with the assistance of full employment and the right-wing leaders of the Notts. Area of the National Union of Mineworkers, any major conflict with the miners can be avoided. £120 million were invested from 1947-59 and a further £80 million is to be used for development during the next five years, mostly in the Notts. area. This is to become one of the most highly mechanized coalfields in Britain, 70 per cent. of the 48 million tons planned production is to be obtained by mechanized methods in 1965.

The miners themselves have given the lie to reassuring statements made by officials of the NCB and NUM. The drift from the pits continues in growing numbers. Young workers leave in disgust to sign on for the army; family men take factory jobs at less pay; there is a steady stream of deputies and other minor officials who 'pack it in'. In fact, beneath the surface calm there is seething discontent.

The miner carries the burden

The miner in the Notts coalfield is made to feel the weight of £200 million investment on his back. To make sure that the NCB sweats enough out of each worker to repay this amount, plus an annual profit for the banks, the miner is watched, timed, harried, by four times the number of officials as pre-war.

At Rufford pit it was the special task of an overman to see that no day-rate worker receiving £9 per week, made overtime. His job was also to force the face worker to work as many hours as the management dictated. Other officials have no other job than that of watching the face worker doing his job so that some pits have become known as the 'slave camp'.

This strict industrial discipline is backed by a monstrous system of fines, wielded by the Manager in the manner of a feudal baron. The Manager also has other disciplinary measures at his disposal, such as transfer to work off the face or at the pit top involving a wage drop of £10 a week or more.

Miners' leaders help NCB

Militants can be dealt with this way and isolated from all contact with their fellow workers. They are banished to work in a remote corner of the pit on permanent nights.

Such a case arose from a demand put forward by 70 young miners at Calverton Pit. Their main grievance was that they were offered no prospect of face training and therefore their low wages would remain low. They also complained of the ignorant and dictatorial methods used towards them by deputies and overmen.

Safe in the knowledge that the union officials would do nothing, the Manager replied with bland statements and appealed to the workers' deputation to pull together and work harder for the good of the industry. After the meeting some of the lads were warned about 'agitators' and the leading militants were victimized.

The hard discipline is accompanied by the maintenance of a very low day-rate wage with no prospect of overtime. Face contracts are continually under attack, and where new contracts are drawn up the Managers have instructions to force a very keen bargain with the miner. The role played by the

leaders of the Notts. miners in this business is that of loyal watchdogs of the NCB.

At Wollaton colliery a strike developed when the Management adopted a take-it-or-leave-it attitude over a new contract being drawn up. The strike was supported throughout the pit but not by the area official, who supported the Management's proposals. He indicated that if the contract was disputed and put on the agenda for the negotiating machinery, then he would not fight for a better contract. No trade union leader could state his service to the employers more clearly than that.

The miner on contract knows that if he fights the NCB he cannot be sure of union support. His protests may be followed by weeks 'on the market' and thus a drop in wages. Pit closures in other areas ensure for the NCB a reserve of labour and he is probably living in an NCB tied house and therefore cannot leave the industry without losing his house.

After 1926 the policy of the leaders of the Notts. Miners' Federation was, up to the time of the formation of the NUM, to collaborate with the employers and maintain slightly higher rates of pay than in other coalfields. This policy, known as Spencerism (Spencer being the President of the Notts. Miners' Federation at that time), was responsible in large measure in maintaining a split in the miners' organization.

The policy of the present leaders of the NUM will be equally disastrous in its consequences. All general or partial struggles for improvement in wages or betterment of conditions are either openly betrayed or smothered in talk.

Militants are hounded and pilloried and all criticism becomes a threat to the power of the union bureaucrats.

The hold of the right-wing leaders can only be met by the growing strength of a movement of the rank and file. The first task of such a movement must be to fight back in the branches, to link up militants in all pits in the area and with miners in other coalfields, and begin a campaign for the Miners' Charter, better wages, shorter hours, miners' control of safety and discipline, no closures without full investigation by pit committees.

The building of such a movement has now begun under the leadership of the socialist paper 'The Miner'. Its aim is to bring militants together in a number of meetings in Notts. and Derbyshire, and to link the struggles locally with the experiences of miners in other coalfields.

EVICITION AT SCAWTHORPE — WELFARE STATE AT WORK

By Jack Gale

Ernest Shorthouse, a married man with six children, has been evicted from his NCB house in Scawthorpe, near Doncaster.

His crime is that he was injured in the pit and is no longer able to work for the NCB.

When I spoke to Mr. Shorthouse, he told me that in February, 1956, he was run over by a truck in Armthorpe Colliery. He is registered as a disabled person, and left the pits under doctor's orders.

Until a year ago he worked at the NCB workshops at Carcoft, but this was heavy work, pulling big drums of cables, and on doctor's advice he stayed away from work.

He was then dismissed by the NCB, he told me, because he did not send in enough medical certificates.

His rent was then raised from 25s. to 38s. per week.

Mr. Shorthouse has been out of work for the past year, although he has sought work—any work—at Armcroft, Bullcroft, Bentley, and Brodsworth collieries.

Early this year the NCB took him to court. Mr. Shorthouse tells me that at the court the NCB said they were not concerned at the arrears of rent, but wanted possession of the house for an able-bodied miner.

The Coal Board got a possession order and Mr. Shorthouse was instructed meanwhile to pay the current rent of 38s. He was then brought to court again when he fell behind on this and the possession order was brought forward. Mr. Shorthouse and his family moved out the day before

the bailiffs were due. They are now living in rooms in Highfield.

Had he been able to get a job in the pits, the arrears of rent would have automatically been cleared off, by double rent being stopped out of his wages.

Miners in the area are disgusted at this treatment of a disabled man. It seems that a miner has no guarantee of his home. An accident can happen to a miner any time—and that now means his home can go as well.

The men in this mining area are convinced that Mr. Short-house's arrears of rent had nothing to do with his eviction. Only a few weeks ago, I was told, there was another eviction of a man who was not a penny in arrears, but who had contracted a skin disease which prevented him from working any more in the mines.

'You never had it so good' has a hollow ring in Scawthorpe.

A Newsletter reporter went to Scawthorpe at the request of a group of miners there, who wrote in to this office.

FURNISHING TRADE WORKERS IN SHORTER HOURS FIGHT

By a Leeds Furniture Worker (NUFTO)

Workers in the furnishing trade (including 75,000 members of the National Union of Furniture Trade Operatives) have been on a go-slow for a 40-hour week without loss of pay. They have rejected the employers' offer of 43 hours.

The strength of the feeling for the 40 hours was shown by the attendance at a meeting in Leeds last week. Almost 1,000 workers turned up.

But some workers feel the go-slow is a bad tactic. It can cause disunity, especially between piece-rate and hourly-rate workers. The union leaders, however, seem afraid of stronger action and they refused to put a resolution calling for a strike to the Leeds meeting.

Today (Monday), we learn that the go-slow has been called off for further negotiations with the employers. A compromise on a 42-hour week now seems likely, instead of a real struggle for the 40 hours.

LANCASHIRE WORKERS DEMONSTRATE FOR SOUTH AFRICAN FREEDOM

By Ted Knight

A blaze of coloured posters showed on the Deansgate blitz site, Manchester, the centre of last Saturday's protests against the murders at Sharpeville, South Africa.

At 10.30 a.m. the Manchester branch of the Socialist Labour League set up its platform, and a meeting was held continuously until 2 p.m.

In the course of the meeting Brian Behan, National Chairman of the League, speaking as he had done at meetings on the site earlier in the week, denounced the fascist-type government of Henriek Verwoerd. He showed that the terror of white imperialism was carried out with but one purpose, to maintain a source of cheap African labour for the white employers and the sharks of the City of London. 'Profit not the colour of skin is the deciding factor. To divide the working class they will whip up hatred against the Irish, coloured or Jew.'

Under the slogan of 'White and Coloured Workers Must Unite', other speakers from the League stressed the need to smash the growing menace of fascism here in Britain, too.

The large crowd around the platform was then joined by student demonstrators who had taken part in a march organized by the Nigerian Union.

Immediately the students were offered the platform of the Socialist Labour League so that they might address the crowd.

This opportunity was taken up by Anyso Kalu, who explained the conditions in which the African lived under Apartheid. 'We do not want to drive the white man out of

Africa, but we mean to be free, to live and to control our own lives, free of foreign exploitation.' As he told of the misery and poverty of the African, he also told of the tremendous determination of his people. 'We shall be free, but your support, members of the Socialist Labour League, the Labour Party and other organizations who are today protesting, will help us to that end. We shall not forget you.'

Another African student, E. Agu, also took up these points, seeing the demonstrations as necessary expressions of unity.

At 2 o'clock, a united march took place through the town. Members of the Socialist Labour League, the New Left Club, student organizations, Young Communist League, boycott committee, trade unionists and by-standers, with their posters and banners took part.

THEATRE

POSTERITY BE DAMNED — Dominic Behan — Metropolitan Irish Theatre, Edgware Road, London

Proletarian plays are all the rage just now. Fortunately for those concerned with the production and the profits, the audiences have been dominantly non-working class, and this includes those of the Theatre Royal, Stratford, quaintly situated in the East End of London. But on the opening night of Dominic Behan's play, the Irish audience in the 'gods' avenged many insults.

This is neither a good nor a bad play, because it isn't a play. People's random actions in a pub, consisting largely in drinking, superlative and hypocritical talk, occasional maudlin or patriotic singing, all of which is formlessly thrown together, do not constitute drama. One searches in vain for the integrating backbone, and because the author describes himself as an 'angry mature man whose job as playwright is to fight social evil', one must assume that the bits and pieces about the IRA are meant to constitute the kernel of the work. Ridicule of the IRA and its methods is not a new theme to Irish drama. The hero of this piece dies symbolically amidst the dust-bins, crying to Mother Ireland to get off his back. Previously he had complained of her bad breath constantly before his face.

If this chaos is intended to suggest the confusion of Irish political life, it succeeds only in being itself confused. With every character in a permanent or semi-permanent alcoholic stupor, the impression that the chaos stems from the degeneracy of the people, is unpleasantly strong.

Although there was wit and boisterous fun, the author seems still to be groping for his medium. The influences of Brecht and early O'Casey are ill-digested, and those of brother Behan far too obvious.

Dramatists on the left yearn for 'the people' to participate in their plays. Monday night's Irish audience still know that the role of an audience is not fulfilled by mere polite applause. And so they laughed, abused, ridiculed and drowned the playwright's curtain speech, surely providing an experience to the inveterate first-nighters who had come down 'to Harlem in ermine and pearls'.

'Is there any sober man in Ireland?' cried an Irish voice. 'Only an imperialist country would allow such a play to be put on', called another. And afterwards a bard spoke on the wet pavements: 'What human beings spend 24 hours a day in a pub? So-called artistic and literary geniuses dish us up this trash. It's an insult to human dignity.' There is dignity left in Ireland, but Dominic Behan has yet to discover it.

BENITA TEPER.

A New Pamphlet on Clause Four

From MacDonald to Gaitskell

By ALASDAIR MacINTYRE

Price 3d. from 186 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4

Yorkshire Assembly Calls For Industrial Action on South Africa

By OUR LEEDS CORRESPONDENT

DELEGATES and visitors from Leeds, Hull, Doncaster, Sheffield and Bradford attended the Yorkshire Assembly of Labour last Sunday.

There were miners, building workers and engineers amongst the delegates.

There were members of the AEU, ETU, Tailors' and Garment Workers' Union, NUFTO, NUM, AUBTW, ASW, AESD, General and Municipal Workers' Union, NUPE, CAWU, and Typographical Association.

Opening the Assembly, **GERRY HEALY** condemned the witch-hunt against the ETU. The SLL opposed outside interference in the affairs of the ETU, despite our differences with its leadership. But, he went on, the Communist Party had been silent on the proscription of the SLL. And so had the New Left. Such silence condones the witch-hunt.

The Labour leaders wanted to stifle all criticism because they did not want to challenge Capitalism. The struggle over Nationalization began in 1948 with Morrison's 'consolidation' policy. This was more than a fight over words. An extension of nationalization to industries like engineering implied a real challenge to Capitalism.

Workers were prepared to fight, but they needed leadership and a policy. They had to be shown that they could win—otherwise the Tories would be at their throats as they were after 1926.

The middle-class was not frightened off by action, but by indecision. Many of the demonstrators outside South Africa House were middle-class.

Referring to CND, Healy said this movement must fight the Tories—not take banners to London Airport wishing God-speed to Macmillan. Protests alone were not sufficient—there were now more rocket bases than ever before. Action was needed, and workers would only be moved into action when they could see that something could be gained.

On South Africa, Healy said that the finest thing that could happen was a strike on the docks against South African goods to show the support of British workers for the Africans. There was no way out for the Africans but violence. That was unpleasant, but so was life in South Africa. We must support every action the Africans had to take.

A building worker, a delegate from the ASW, asked why the programme of the SLL did not mention old-age pensions. Healy replied that we were in favour of higher pensions, but did not want to exploit in a propaganda way the plight of the old-age pensioners.

'CURLY' OWEN, delegate from Brodsworth NUM, said the answer to redundancies in the mines was a shorter working week. Mechanization should be for the benefit of working people and not a threat to them. The coal industry need not be in a financial crisis. Four million pounds profit had been made in one year from Brodsworth pit alone. Plenty of money was being made out of the mines. The low price of coal at the coal face proved that. Labour failed at the last election because they had not said where the money was coming from to make good their promises. They could have got the money from compensation and interest payments and by extending nationalization to industries like coal distribution.

Mr. TAYLOR, deputy-convenor at International Harvester, Bradford, spoke of the recent strike for TU and Shop steward recognition, and of the concessions wrung from the management. Trade unionists should support the Labour Party, he said. But Harvester workers were disgusted at a Labour coun-

cillor who had attacked the strikers, saying they were being bribed and led by 'communist ideas'.

RON FLOREY, delegate from Bradford CND gave notice of a resolution calling on workers to stop work on nuclear weapons. He said the SLL did not put enough emphasis on this. He disagreed with Gerry Healy's criticisms of CND, whose propaganda had been effective.

A Ward Labour Party delegate spoke of the opposition in the Labour Party to the Fylingdale early warning installation.

FRANK GIRLING then moved a resolution on behalf of the Socialist Labour League calling for support for the African people.

The resolution called for:

1. For solidarity with the African revolution, for immediate colonial independence, and against Racism in Britain.
2. For industrial action in support of the African people—for dockers to refuse to handle all goods to and from South Africa—for railwaymen, transport drivers, and airline workers to refuse to carry South African goods.

We will campaign for such action because only the fight of the African people allied to the industrial and political strength of the British working class can smash racism and colonialism.

This resolution was seconded by an African student who said he was deeply impressed by the support for the African revolution contained in it.

An observer from Leeds CND—a clothing worker—said any attempt to make the CND into a political party would split it. Healy had not given the whole picture about the demonstration at London Airport. The banners called on Macmillan to bring back an agreement to ban nuclear tests. Mankind faced extinction—but the SLL placed the H-bomb below the 40-hour week. We should welcome everybody into the struggle against the bomb and not lay down conditions for them.

He agreed with Healy on the ETU witch-hunt. There was not a single union whose ballots would bear scrutiny, he said. And he knew of cases where union members had been forced to withdraw complaints under threat of being driven out of their trade.

MICK DEAN, NUFTO, spoke of his union's campaign for a 40-hour week. The official policy of a go-slow caused disunity, but the leadership was afraid of a strike and stifled discussion to prevent it. He cited a case where the Right wing and Communist Party members had come together to prevent discussion on a strike demand.

JOHN WALLS, factory convenor and delegate from George Mann's Engineering, condemned the Confederation leaders' failure to fight for the 40-hour week and £1 increase. This demand, coming at the same time as a threatened rail strike, could have been won. The AEU officials were now asking for a £6 per week increase for themselves.

RAY BRADBURY, from Hull, spoke of the recent dock strike against basket filling and the role of the leadership of the T & GWU and Blue Union in heading off the strike.

RAY JOLE, observer from Leeds CND, said the achievement of socialism was of no importance compared with the need to get rid of the H-bomb. He appealed to SLL members not to fragment CND by trying to turn it in a political direction.

CLIFF SLAUGHTER said the points in the SLL programme were related to each other as part of the class struggle. Capitalism was trying to solve its crisis by increased exploitation of the working class, and there was a crisis of leadership in the Labour movement. The NUM, for instance, had paid no strike pay for 23 years and was pledged to make no strike official.

'The Trade Union and Labour leaders are Tories in a different suit', said **JACK STONE**, from Brodsworth colliery. They spent more time trying to victimize militants than fighting the employers.

ALASDAIR MacINTYRE said all the forces of revolt should be brought together—separately they could be defeated one by one. We cannot abolish the H-bomb by appealing to a Tory PM, but by abolishing the system that produces it. No party or group could do that—only the working class. The task of Socialists is to prepare the working class, and to grasp the opportunities of struggle.

RON FLOREY then moved a resolution which pledged the Assembly 'to encourage all people engaged on work on nuclear weapons to withdraw their labour in the interests of world peace and humanity.'

Replying to the discussion, **GERRY HEALY** said we did not want to make the CND a political party, but it was a political movement because it was against government policy. The SLL was not anti-CND, but claimed the right to put its position inside the CND.

He repeated the opposition of the SLL to the witch-hunt on the ETU, but pointed out that many of the people now witch-hunting the ETU were themselves ex-members of the Communist Party.

The Communist Party had trained them in opportunistic politics and this was rebounding on them. The ETU leaders should never have agreed to an enquiry. Nobody had consulted the members of the union to see if they wanted an enquiry.

Macmillan would never abolish the H-bomb because he was the representative of the class that produced it. The working class was the force to get rid of the bomb. This class was on the offensive—he quoted the railway and bus workers—and each victory of this class was a victory over those who make the bomb.

At the close of the Assembly the resolutions on Africa, the H-bomb and on Assembly policy were carried unanimously.

ECONOMICS

BUDGET WILL SEEK TO PASS BURDEN ON TO WORKERS

By Tom Kemp

The renewed expansion of the past 18 months, stimulated by the give away to big tax payers, business and the banks in the last Budget, now threatens to upset the precarious balance of British capitalism.

Business interests are peremptorily calling for correctives. Spending must be cut. Costs must be kept down. Sterling and the balance of payments must be protected.

They speak as though this were a national concern; they mean that they need policies to defend the profits and investments of their class.

Whose spending must be cut? Some businessmen look to government economies. At the present stage not much can be done there. Today, State expenditures cannot be com-

pressed without provoking a crisis in the system. Indeed, growing supports have had to be provided for big industry by the Exchequer and more are promised. Arms spending is moving steadily to the summit—wherever that is! Big cuts in social expenditure are difficult; they would mean a popular outcry, much better to raise insurance contributions or health service charges.

In any case the Budget isn't just an occasion for some smart juggling with tax rates, so much on the fags, so much off the super-tax. It has a distinct and definite role to play: to stabilise British capitalism, correct its underlying weaknesses, protect it from its own excesses. Needless to say it cannot do these things, but it has to be made to try. And since the system generates swings and vagaries of various kinds and Britain is struggling to retain a place in an ever more competitive world market, the successive Budgets cannot but reflect the contortions to which the custodians of the system are obliged to resort in its defence.

More, an error in the Budget can contribute to build up strains within the system, or for its external position—a run on sterling, inflation, a fall-back in investment, unemployment, wage demands.

Of course the Tories have a successful election contest behind them and an Opposition incapable of fighting on the main issues. But still they cannot altogether neglect the electoral battalions of suburbia—all the 'little people' who identify themselves with Toryism and have never had it so good. Hefty tax increases, which would mainly fall on this section, such as higher car tax and petrol duty must be very tempting to the Chancellor. But despite the urgings of the big business press he may very well be restrained by colleagues thinking of their Parliamentary seats.

Budget will satisfy big business

The 1959 Budget made a hefty gift to the bigger incomes: it will be difficult to claw any of that back; in fact more such gifts are likely. However, a move to limit the more obvious forms of tax evasion would leave Her Majesty's loyal Opposition without their main talking point and obviously commends itself to the politically astute Tories.

In fact, by a process of elimination it is not difficult to see whose standards will be trimmed to enable British capitalism to face the coming troubled year. Though the working class had a minor share in the 'prosperity'—minor because production, productivity, profits and share values outstripped wage increases at an unexampled rate—there is no doubt that the Tories intend that it shall bear the entire brunt of the next round. The Budget, naturally, is only one weapon; it has to be geared in with others.

The whole point is that the system must be kept in balance, not so that everybody's needs can be satisfied, but so that it can continue to extract unpaid labour from the workers and realise it on the market under the most favourable conditions.

At present, given the international context and the trends in the economy, that means a curb on the artificially-created debt-ridden expansion of the past year. When the press talks of a check to spending, it means spending by wage earners primarily. To balance out the system Budget measures will deliberately run the risk of increasing unemployment and speeding up the onset of recession, which is on the way for other reasons. In fact, there is no other way.

Budget strategy thus seems crystal clear. It is simply a technical problem to devise the detailed measures fitted to the purpose and to dress them up in a way in which that purpose will not be too obvious. There are divergent interests within the capitalist camp to be smoothed over as well as possible, but the dominant note will accord with the tune of the big business and financial oligarchy.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF LABOUR CAMPAIGN: AREA ASSEMBLY

BOOK THIS
DATE NOW!

BIRMINGHAM: April 24 ...

Typographical Hall, Bath Street, Birmingham.

Constant Reader No Smoke Without Fire

'FROM Trotskyism to Counter-Revolution', the headline reads above an article in the March-April number of *Marxist Review*, theoretical journal of the Canadian Communist Party. Once upon a time such titles were commonplace in the Stalinist press, but since a certain speech was made, back in 1956, they have been quite rare. So the Canadian article is of some interest.

It tells how the evil Trotskyites used to spoil efforts to form People's Fronts, 'making the class question an issue to disrupt the alliance', and how 'today the Trotskyites are attempting to exploit the growing militancy and growth of class-consciousness arising out of a new world situation'. It seems they have opened a bookshop in Vancouver which 'peddles their insidious wares' (that's what the man says, I swear I didn't make it up). They try to lure party members into discussions in 'forums' (ah, we know all about those sinks of ideological iniquity, from our own 1957 experience). 'In some instances they use half-truths as a basis for their attacks as being, in their opinion, more effective than outright lies' (no, honestly, you can read it for yourself if you don't believe me).

All this leads to the grim conclusion: 'there cannot be any united front with Trotskyites'. One doesn't have to be a Sherlock Holmes to discern behind such an article as this some serious worry about the susceptibility of party members to the arguments of our Canadian brother-Marxists. And there would certainly seem to be grounds for the party members to be getting dissatisfied with the official line.

'World Marxist Review', the neo-Comintern journal published from Prague, carries in its March number an article by Tim Buck, leader of the Canadian Communist Party. It is as open a confession of bankruptcy as I have read for a long time. Buck wails and moans because the 'capitalists who favour peaceful co-existence and trade with the socialist countries are, in the main, supporting the capitalist offensive no less energetically than are those fighting to maintain the cold war and dependence on armaments'. This makes it very hard, of course, to sell the workers the line that these capitalists are somehow nicer than the others and ought to be treated as 'allies'. Buck pleads for help: 'Those capitalists who advocate policies of peaceful co-existence would serve the interests of Canada better if, instead of joining the anti-labour offensive of the big monopolies, they supported internal policies which correspond to the foreign policies they now favour.'

Yes, and if pigs had wings they would fly.

A Red Professor

London University students who are taking part in the Anti-Apartheid movement are carrying on a tradition begun by one of the finest men ever associated with their university: E. S. Beesley, who was professor of history at University College in the 1860s. He was in the forefront of the fight for solidarity with the anti-slavery movement in the United States, at a time when the British government of the day wanted to intervene on the side of the South in the American civil war. For a while he was the best-hated man in ruling-class circles, and efforts were made to unseat him from his professional chair. 'Punch' characteristically wrote to him as Professor Beestly.

A distinctive thing about Beesley (who was a friend of Karl Marx) was his combination of the fight for Negro freedom with the fight for the rights of the British workers. This was what made him such a figure of fear and loathing to the ruling class. In 1867, when a campaign to restrict trade union freedom was being worked up following some incidents known as 'the Sheffield outrages' (compare the current boosting of the film 'The Angry Silence'), Beesley spoke at a public meeting called by the London Trades Council, and contrasted the attitude of the capitalists to these events with their reaction to the massacre of Negroes which had recently been carried out in the British colony of Jamaica.

'The wealthy class of this country,' he said, 'had been called on to express their opinion on the crimes committed by wealthy men in Jamaica just as the poorer classes in London were now called upon to express their opinion on the crimes committed by poor men in Sheffield. And what opinion did they express? Did they summon a meeting in Exeter Hall and proclaim aloud that they abhorred the crime, and that though they wished to protect property and wealth they repudiated such means of protecting it as Governor Eyre had adopted? Did they do so? No! but they offered him banquets; they loaded him with honours; they made his deed their own.'

An account of Beesley's contribution to the working-class movement, by Royden Harrison, is included in 'Essays in Labour History, in Memory of G. D. H. Cole', edited by Asa Briggs and John Saville (Macmillan, 42s.). Harrison tells of Beesley's views on industrial arbitration: 'When arbitrators succeeded in preventing a conflict it was usually because they had made an intelligent assessment of the relative strengths of the contending parties and had split the difference accordingly. To look for arbitrators who would be impartial in some higher sense than this was a waste of time! At a time when politically conscious workers were still mostly Liberals, Beesley agitated for independent labour politics and warned against any dilution of a class programme in vague, general 'radicalism'.

Among the principal trade union officials of his day Beesley was looked on as an awkward customer. They wanted to tag along with the Liberals and make careers that way. Beesley said the trade unionists 'should put forward their own working-class candidates and undertake, if they were elected, to pay them the average wage of their trade, plus a small amount for expenses'. When the trade union officials turned their backs on the Paris Commune of 1871, Beesley stood up for it—'the first act', as he called it, 'of the most momentous drama of modern times'; and he infuriated the bureaucrats by pointing out to them that Gladstone's Criminal Amendment Act, with its new penalties upon peaceful picketing was what came of their 'indifference to the fate of working-class Paris.'

BRIAN PEARCE

Correction

Insertion of the word 'of' made nonsense of a sentence in the paragraph 'Never So Good—25 Years Ago' in last week's Constant Reader column.

It should have read: 'The general luxury of today would amaze the property-owning classes of 50 years ago far more than would the workers' standards those who were then toiling in the factories, mines and fields.'

YORKSHIRE REGIONAL LABOUR PARTY SENDS OUT LIBERAL CIRCULAR

The latest batch of correspondence to Constituency Parties from the Yorkshire Regional Office of the Labour Party includes a circular advertising a Liberal Party Day School on April 2.

The circular—headed Bradford Liberal Federation—listed a lecture on Africa to be given by Donald Wade, Liberal M.P. for Huddersfield West, and a lecture on 'A Property-Owning Democracy' by S. E. Graham, Liberal Parliamentary candidate at Roxburgh and Selkirk in 1955.

The circular also carries the date of the Young Liberal Dance and a list of Liberal candidates in the Bradford municipal elections.

The Yorkshire Regional Agent of the Labour Party—John Anson—was prominent in the witch-hunt against the Socialist Labour League, and recently travelled to Hull to supervise the expulsion of Ray Bradbury from the Labour Party—for association with a proscribed organization!

Presumably, John Anson is now liable to be expelled from the Labour Party for co-operating with enemies of Labour.

FASCISTS ROUTED AT TRAFALGAR SQUARE

By R. Pennington

FISTS flew. Fascists went flying. Demonstrators at Sunday's mass South Africa protest meeting, incensed by strutting, arrogant racialists, screaming: 'Keep Britain white', angrily grabbed the fascists.

The police in Whitehall had no time to move. A fascist was dashed to the ground. Blood spurted from his face. An Action seller whimpered 'don't touch me' as a demonstrator's fist smashed towards his face. The plea was unheeded.

Within minutes, the fascist attempt at a counter-demonstration had petered out. Other fascists scampered away. Forgetting their slogan: 'Stand by the Whites', they forgot to stand by their own beleaguered colleagues.

From the fascist-cleansed Whitehall pavements, the roar went up: 'Now to fascist headquarters'.

Pouring out of Whitehall, the demonstrators swung into the Mall. Across in Trafalgar Square, a forlorn poster proclaimed: 'Boycott is a Peaceful Weapon.'

At least 1,000 people surged under Admiralty Arch, along past the Admiralty buildings, down the wide-sweeping Mall at the bottom of which lies Buckingham Palace.

The air was rent with the strains of 'The Internationale' and 'Solidarity'. Again and again the crowd roared: 'Down with Fascism.'

A police cordon suddenly appeared at the entrance to Buckingham Palace. Perhaps the police thought the angry crowd was going to present a petition to the Queen. If so they were mistaken. This was no humble petition-bearing crowd. Their attention was turned towards Verwoerd's supporters here.

Fascists bolt the doors

Streaming across St. James' Park, the demonstration was in no time into Victoria Street. There a line of 40 police barred the way. Not bothering to stop to discuss the sessional laws (during parliamentary sessions, all demonstrations are forbidden within one square mile of the House of Commons), the crowd simply swept them to one side.

In Vauxhall Bridge Road, site of the Union Movement's headquarters, another and even bigger line of police were gathered. Inside the building, behind locked doors, protected by the police, covered the fascists. Their counter-demonstrations were over for that day.

Every attempt to get to the office was blocked by the police. The lesson did not go unheeded. The crowd began to chant: 'Who protects Mosley?—The Police. The Police', came the answer.

The demonstration was mainly a youthful one. Many of the demonstrators were members of the Socialist Labour League, the Young Communist League and the New Left. Others came from Young Socialist Groups.

Students and young workers combined to make it clear that, if the Right-wing leaders pinned their faith in appeals to Macmillan and Verwoerd, youth entertained few illusions in the effectiveness of such methods.

The anti-fascist character taken by Sunday's protest showed there is a growing awareness that to defeat apartheid and colonialism you have to fight its supporters here in Britain.

For many this was their first experience of a clash with the fascists and the police. Most recognised afterwards that policemen do more than escort old ladies across roads or chase bank robbers. They also look after fascists.

SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE PAMPHLET END SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE TERROR!

By James Baker

2/- per dozen from 186 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4

SOUTH AFRICA THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE IN ACTION

First off the mark in support of the African revolution was the Socialist Labour League. On Tuesday evening, the League's executive committee issued a special statement, condemning the Sharpeville massacre and calling for British Labour to support the South African workers. Copies of this leaflet were distributed that same evening to pickets outside South Africa House.

The next day, Wednesday, March 23, the League produced a 2d. printed pamphlet: 'End South African White Terror', written by The Newsletter's special Africa correspondent, James Baker. Over 800 copies were sold in the evening.

Every day teams of League members picketed South Africa House and sold the pamphlet. On Saturday and Sunday, street sales were organized in Brixton and North Kensington. During the mass demonstration from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square on March 27, over 1,000 copies of the pamphlet were sold, making a total sale in London by Sunday evening, of 3,457 copies. Sellers will again cover Brixton and North Kensington this week-end, as well as running meetings and sales on the docks.

★

After holding a meeting at Hyde Park, prior to the demonstration, where the League speakers emphasized how the struggle against apartheid and racialism required the British Labour movement to fight Toryism and fascism here, the League marched as a contingent. Many coloured workers and sympathizers marched behind the red, white and black banner of the League, which read: 'Down with Imperialism: Support the African Revolution'. Another League banner read: 'Smash Apartheid. Smash Fascism'.

In all the main provincial centres, the Socialist Labour League organized pamphlet sales and open-air meetings. Over 2,000 copies of the pamphlet have been sold in the provinces already and repeat orders are continuing to come in.

The campaign must be pressed forward now. Our meetings and sales will continue and we shall, in both London and the provinces, make a particular drive to run meetings amongst dockers, railwaymen and other transport workers.

As in all such campaigns we need money. Here we appeal to every member of the League and to every seller and reader of The Newsletter; make a special donation now, to give us more power and means to build support for the struggle of the African people and to intensify the struggle against Toryism.

Come and hear JAMES BAKER speak on

The African Revolution

on

SUNDAY, APRIL 2, at 7.30 p.m.

at

186 CLAPHAM HIGH STREET, S.W.4
(Clapham Common Tube Station)