

THE NEWSLETTER

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a service to socialists

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ARBITRATION? THIS RACKET IS BUST FOR GOOD!

By Our Industrial Correspondent

THE busmen's strike did more than force an 11s. increase from the bus companies. It burst through the whole racket of arbitration. It may well have changed the whole pattern of settlement of wage claims.

Up to now the reference of union claims to arbitration or courts of inquiry has been a favourite device of the employers and the Government. By this means they have either avoided strikes or brought them to an early end with the help of Right-wing trade union leaders.

If the workers could be induced to return to work before the court or tribunal sat, concessions could be kept at a bare minimum, and the employers could save face—and cash.

The result was an award by the Industrial Disputes Tribunal within less than 48 hours—while the workers were still on strike. Taken with a 5s. increase last November, this award means a total increase of 16s.—the largest gained by any major group of workers during the last twelve months.

Now the British Employers' Confederation has reacted by declaring that compulsory arbitration militates unfairly against the employers and should be abandoned.

They refused to submit

The whole system of arbitration can work only if the trade unions co-operate. This is well understood by the Employers' Confederation. Their statement on the busmen's strike declares:

'The trade unions concerned refused to submit to arbitration and continued the strike after reference of the dispute to the IDT. Under the order [Industrial Disputes Order] there is no effective sanction by which a trade union or its members could be obliged to observe the award.'

The Manchester Guardian of August 2 added: 'Although the tribunal's award is legally binding, and can be enforced through the courts, it is impractical to do so when the union opposes the award. It would involve taking each of its members separately to court for breach of contract—a gigantic and foolish task when perhaps 100,000 men are involved.'

The growing militancy of the workers and their determination to defend their standard of living have struck a blow at union-employer co-operation.

The busmen broke with the old procedure of a return to work pending a tribunal or court of inquiry. They won because they stayed on strike till they got a settlement.

This is the pattern which seems likely to be more and more adopted by other sections in future cycles of wage demands.

SOVIET JOURNAL CHANGES 'EXPLAINED'

CURRENT issue of the *Soviet History Information Bulletin* of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR contains an almost complete translation of the 'editorial' in *Voprosy Istorii* [Problems of History] No. 3 of this year, which was mentioned in *The Newsletter* of July 15.

This is the article that denounced the 'de-Stalinizing' trend of the journal during the past two years.

A possible sign that the SCR is being sharply brought into line following the recent showdown is the note introducing this translation.

This appears to identify the SCR editor with the standpoint

of the article (which explains the reasons for the changes in the editorial board, indicating some of the mistakes perpetrated by previous members of the board).

USA

FIRE-HOSES PROTECT U.S. AMBASSADOR

The United States Ambassador to Cuba was protected by police, soldiers and fire-hoses from two hundred women dressed in black and shouting 'Freedom! Freedom!'

The women gathered in a park in front of Santiago's city hall to protest against U.S. support to dictator Fulgencio Batista, as Ambassador Smith received the keys to the city.

When Smith left the building, the women rushed toward him to submit their petitions but were kept back by soldiers as he escaped in his motor-car.

CONSUMER CREDIT ROCKETS IN USA

Consumer credit in the USA is now equivalent to 42 thousand million dollars' worth of goods 'sold'.

This is two-thirds of the annual cost of running the Federal Government, and six times as great as in 1939.

The Wall Street Journal is complaining that productive activity, including such raw materials as aluminium, steel and paper, is outrunning demand.

HUNGARY

THREE FASCIST ARISTOCRATS RELEASED

Following international protests, another three young Hungarians reported to be under sentence of death have been released—'provisionally', pending completion of the investigation of their cases.

They are Albert Lachy (23) and Jozsef Burgermeister (19), both toolmakers, and Attila Olah (20), a labourer.

SWEEPING WAGE CUTS IN HUNGARY

ACCORDING to Budapest radio the Kádár Government has ordered a general reduction of industrial workers' wages throughout Hungary.

All wages are to be stabilized by August 31 at the level of wage rates during the third quarter of 1956—i.e. before the revolution.

The twelve per cent increase later agreed by the Government is to be wiped out. The radio said that this measure, though certainly not popular, was necessary because in most factories the prescribed wages fund has been exceeded through the continual rising of wages.

This was upsetting the balance of the economy and there was danger of inflation.

Once wages have been reduced no further increase will be permitted. Later increases will be possible only when the factory concerned has raised its level of production above that of

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COMMENTARY

INDUSTRY AND SOCIALISTS

THE debates on nationalization will be the central feature of this year's Labour Party conference. There are some signs that the Left wing has a first-class opportunity of scoring an important victory. Opposition is mounting against the Labour Party National Executive's plan for socialist stockbroking. Two weeks ago, in *Reynolds News*, thirty-two Labour MPs expressed their 'disappointment' at the pamphlet *Industry and Society*. They demanded its withdrawal and the substitution of definite proposals for more nationalization. *Tribune* has categorically stated its opposition to NEC policy. Last week an editorial note bluntly said: '*Tribune* certainly does not support the policy document *Industry and Society*—particularly after the interpretation of it made by Hugh Gaitskell. We strongly welcome the militant demand from the constituency parties and other quarters on this issue.' This important declaration was in response to a letter from the London 'Friends of *Tribune*'. The editors' unequivocal statement of opposition shows how revolt is growing among Labour Party members. *Tribune's* statement can only help forward that opposition.

The Right wing are now attempting to rally their 'theoreticians' to back up Transport House. Thirty-four Parliamentary 'new thinkers' declared in last Sunday's *Reynolds News* that the document was 'another important step towards socialism'. But all they could do was weakly repeat the proposals of the document without any attempt at an argument. Among the signatories to this apologia were John Strachey, Bessie Braddock and Wilfred Fienburgh. Fienburgh will be remembered as the mover of a famous resolution at the Morecambe conference of 1952 calling for more socialist plans.

BUT of greater importance are the developments in the trade unions. Last week we summarized the agenda of the coming Trades Union Congress. This agenda shows an increasing number of demands for more nationalization. (Again, a feature of the letter of the thirty-two MPs in *Reynolds News* was the number of trade union MPs who signed it.) The prospects of the Left wing in the Labour Party are intimately connected with the developments in the unions. The swing of the National Union of Mineworkers decided the election of Bevan as treasurer at last year's Labour Party conference. This swing also had a deeper significance. The NUM, National Union of General and Municipal Workers and the Transport and General Workers' Union were for many years the main props of the Right wing of the Labour Party. The first leg of this 'tripod' went when the NUM had to withdraw its support for a Right-wing nominee, after miners' conferences in every part of the country had decided in favour of Bevan. This year Frank Cousins is expressing in his speeches the rank and file's growing opposition to Tory policy; the Right wing stand in danger of a further weakening.

It is from the discontent in industry that the Left wing draws its strength. The industrial struggles of the last twelve months have raised the question of the socialist control of industry and made nationalization the issue which will dominate the Brighton conference.

The Week at a Glance

ALGERIA: Three times in eight days French troops suffered severe losses at the hands of Algerian liberation forces in the mountains forty miles south of Algiers.

HUNGARY: Minister of Culture Kallai called for a fresh purge of artists and writers in order to 'free the cultural life of Hungary from the counter-revolutionary elements'.

USSR: Pravda said some of the 92 regional economic councils set up under the plan for decentralizing industrial management were already showing shortcomings and a 'definite tendency towards bureaucracy'.

SOUTHERN RHODESIA: Over two hundred bus drivers and conductors in Salisbury went on strike, demanding a minimum wage of £5 a week for drivers and £3 for conductors. The management said they must return to work or lose their jobs.

AUSTRALIA: Queensland's Labour Government was beaten at the polls after twenty-five years, following a split in the Queensland Labour Party. Ex-premier Gair had refused to legislate for a minimum of three weeks' annual leave for all workers, in line with Australian Labour Party policy.

POLAND: The Polish Government launched 'a merciless battle against absenteeism, slackers and loafers'. The situation in the textile industry was described as alarming. No miner who has been dismissed on disciplinary grounds will be allowed to obtain work at any other colliery. Stronger measures are to be taken against officials accepting bribes.

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC: Three leaders of a strike at the Silbitz steelworks were freed by fellow-workers at a factory meeting to which police had taken them to recant. The strike was a protest against a pay cut. Neues Deutschland admitted unrest at Leipzig University, where professors had failed to check—and might even have encouraged—'slandorous utterances against our Republic'.

USA: By 51 votes to 42 the Senate passed an amendment to the Civil Rights Bill depriving federal judges of the power to sit without juries in cases of criminal contempt, and thus removing the Bill's protection of Negro voting rights.

Eleven demonstrators against atomic tests were arrested as they tried to enter the Atomic Energy Commission's test site at Nevada on the anniversary of Hiroshima.

NEHRU ASSUMES REPRESSIVE POWERS

PRIME MINISTER NEHRU, in an attempt to avert a major industrial crisis, promised that the proposed inquiry commission would give early consideration to the wage demands of Indian Civil Servants.

At the same time the Indian Government has been pushing through Parliament the Essential Services Maintenance Bill under which it assumed powers to prohibit strikes in many industries. The industries named are those considered by the Government to be essential services.

The passing of the Bill through the House was the occasion for a demonstration of 2,000 Civil Servants who assembled outside and greeted departing Ministers with shouts of abuse. Members of the Congress Party were booed and members of the Communist Party were cheered.

Under the pretext of 'maintaining essential services' the Indian Government can now send strikers to jail for six months with a £15 fine. Those giving financial aid to strikes can be jailed for twelve months with a fine of £75.

The low-paid Indian workers are getting tired of promises. The Home Minister, Pandit Pant, though conceding that prices had continued to rise, defended the freezing of workers' wages in the interest of implementing the five-year plan.

He revealed that out of 1,700,000 Government employees, 970,000 earned salaries of £3 15s. per month or less, and another 420,000 earned less than £7 10s. per month.

The rates paid by the different state governments are much lower, and those paid by local bodies lower still. Nehru's threats of force, fines and jail sentences can scarcely avert the strike of Civil Servants due to start at midnight on Thursday.

HUNGARY (Continued from front page)

last year, and even then only with Government permission.

The trade union paper *Nepakarat* last week reported ferment among the workers of the Mavag electrical plant against wage cuts imposed without consultation.

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LIVING STANDARDS IN HUNGARY TODAY

THE Hungarian Central Office of Statistics has issued some figures comparing current living standards in Hungary with those of twelve months ago.

From a sample of 1,500 factory and white-collar workers is deduced an average monthly income of 1,229 forints per month compared with 1,129 forints a year ago.

This figure does not include, however, the lower-paid category of workers (cleaners, messengers, doorkeepers, etc.) who receive only about 600 forints a month.

Expenditure per head of family (including children) is given as 607 forints per month as against 538 forints a year ago. Thus, whereas wages have increased by only one per cent, prices of consumer goods have risen thirteen per cent.

* * *

It is difficult to understand how even this selected section of workers can maintain a decent standard of living, especially if there are children in the family.

The number of wage earners for each hundred families is given as 149, so that the average total income would amount to no more than 1,850 forints per month, enough to keep only three. Nothing is said of how the lower-paid worker manages to keep himself and his family alive.

That inflation rages in Hungary is clear from the increases in the expenditure required for such items as clothing and furniture.

The allowance for rent, fuel and light, which is given as 53 forints per month, can only apply to those occupying State-owned flats, a privileged minority.

* * *

For others, the cost of rent alone is often very high, 300 forints for a single furnished room being common, without any hope of getting a State-owned flat.

The low standard of life of the Hungarian workers is clearly shown by the figures of consumption of food. Bread and lard are the staple diet, with little meat (6.35 lb. of all kinds per month), butter (2.8 oz. per month), milk (11½ pints a month) or eggs (10.4 per month).

These are the figures for those workers who are more comfortably placed, the skilled and clerical grades. What must things be like for the labourers, cleaners and porters?

USSR**NO ROOM FOR EGG-HEADS**

INCREASING numbers of Soviet children are staying on at school after the compulsory seven-year period ending at the age of fourteen, in order to receive 'complete secondary education'—which ends at seventeen.

The difficulties which such youngsters sometimes encounter in obtaining work are described in an article in *Pravda* of July 17, by two special correspondents in Stalingrad.

It appears that the directors and departmental managers of certain factories prefer not to engage workers who have had a ten-year education. They are afraid of being shown up by these youngsters, or at least of proving unable to impose on them the degree of respect for themselves to which they have become accustomed.

If they do manage to get taken on, the youngsters may find themselves persecuted by means of 'foremen's tricks' designed to reduce their earnings, prevent their progress and generally humiliate them.

ONE REASON WHY SHEPILOV WENT

EVIDENCE that what the Soviet ruling group disliked in Shepilov was not his party-line approach to intellectual and artistic matters but his relative softness (compared, say, with Zhdanov) in applying it, is provided by an article in *Sovetskaya Kultura* of July 16.

'The tactic of jollyng-along and a sort of ideological "clas-

'FOUL WORK', SAYS SWEET WILLIAM

We hear that King Street propaganda chief William Wainwright is telling chaps to have nothing to do with *The Newsletter* (or *Labour Review*, or *Forum*) 'as this only helps the "Trots" to carry on their foul work'.

This old-world sentiment comes easily to Blimp Wainwright. On his conscience he has the pamphlet (now something of a collector's item) 'The Forced Labour Swindle', in which he proved Stalin's slave camps to be a myth.

Also from his pen came 'Clear Out Hitler's Agents!' in which we read: 'Today Doriot, French Trotskyist, has organized a detachment of troops to fight Russia'. (Doriot, French nazi, was, of course, no more a Trotskyist than Quisling was a Stalinist.)

It was in this pamphlet that Lenin's Central Committee, the leaders of the October Revolution and the builders of the Red Army, were disposed of as follows:

'Right from the first days of the Russian Revolution the Trotskyists have tried to bring about its downfall. . . . Trotsky was a Russian who gathered around him an unscrupulous gang of traitors to organize spying, sabotage, wrecking and assassination in the Soviet Union.

'They came together after the workers took power in Russia and had cleared out the capitalists. They wormed their way [!] into important army positions, working-class organizations, even government posts.'

ticity" was repeatedly manifested, for instance, in what D. Shepilov had to say about painting and music.

This enabled certain people demagogically to utilize some of his streamlined "formulas" in order to bolster up avowedly aesthetic positions; it contributed to a certain orientation in our creative and theoretical work and encouraged aspirations alien to our art. . . .

'When there was need to hurl thunderbolts at modernism and decadence this was done only "in general terms". . . .

SOUTH AFRICA**THE MOST VICIOUS APARTHEID OF ALL**

A South African Correspondent writes:

I AM rather surprised that there has been so little agitation overseas about our Group Areas Act.

Of all the Apartheid measures introduced by this Government this is certainly the most vicious.

When applied—and I don't think for a moment that they have no intention of applying it—it will mean people being uprooted from homes they and their forebears have occupied for many years.

People's livelihood will be taken away from them and they will be forced to start all over again, trying to make a living in a new area and dealing with types of population altogether different from what they have been accustomed to.

Just imagine! All the Indian shopkeepers will have to move into their own area and will have to try and make a living from each other.

In one Transvaal town, with one Chinaman, an area has even been set aside for him.

This Act hits the poorer white man as well. He, too, will

be uprooted, forced to sell his property if he has any.

On the whole, however, it is the non-white, as usual, who will be the greatest sufferer.

Somehow, I feel that overseas there has been a lot of hullabaloo about such things as the so-called Church clause and academic Apartheid.

The real truth, of course, is that no one aspect of Apartheid can be fought without fighting the whole of it.

I should imagine that if its full implications are realised there would be a howl of indignation about this group areas business.

POLAND

COMPOSITION OF POLISH WORKERS' PARTY

Workers are now in a minority in the Polish United Workers' Party.

According to the theoretical magazine *Nowe Droge* workers made up 44.6 per cent of the party membership in 1956 compared with 60.5 per cent in 1948.

There had been a 'further deterioration of the composition of the party' in 1957.

LETTERS | The Wincott Story . . . The 'T' Collection

DON'T PEDDLE RUMOURS ABOUT WINCOTT

I AM surprised that *The Newsletter* should give publicity to Stalinist-inspired rumours that John Gollan is in any way responsible for Wincott's final release.

In point of fact the Communist Party leadership, Gollan included, deliberately kept their knowledge of the Wincott case from the membership for years.

When the facts began to leak out members were instructed to oppose protest resolutions which they did on many occasions.

Wincott's release has been obtained by the campaign carried on by the Left wing in the movement, a campaign in which some rank-and-file communists joined, but above all a fight which had to be waged AGAINST Stalinists of both British and Russian varieties.

The decisive stage was reached when resolutions from union branches, trades councils and Labour Parties, and, not least, a demonstration outside Claridges during the Bulganin and Khrushchev visit culminated with several national trade unions—among them the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers and the Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union—taking up the matter with the Soviet authorities.

Only when the truth could no longer be concealed was any approach even considered by the Communist Party leadership. Even as late as the spring of this year they smuggled a resolution on Wincott's imprisonment out of the discussion at the Young Communist League Congress.

Stalinist-inspired statements that Wincott regards his imprisonment as 'inevitable' cannot hide the fact that the case is still unsettled. Why, for example, must letters go c/o Charles Coutts, that discredited apostle of the Hungarian 'counter-revolution'?

Have the faked charges against Wincott been publicly withdrawn? Has Wincott been publicly rehabilitated? Has compensation been given him for false imprisonment?

Will the Russian authorities make a public statement that he is free to return to England, with his wife if he wishes, so as to visit his family in Leicester whom he has not seen for twenty years?

These are the minimum demands that decency requires to be met.

The Wincott case shows that it is possible for working-class pressure to rescue victims even from Stalinist jails.

But such victories are not won without much hard work. In Wincott's case, for example, hundreds of circulars giving the facts were circulated throughout the country.

To carry the Wincott case to a successful conclusion more pressure is needed. More resolutions to the Soviet authorities. More demands that the British Festival delegations itself intervene in the matter.

But efforts to save the all too numerous Wincotts and Rose Cohens need to be even better organized than they have been

in the past.

Perhaps we should set up a Defence Committee to deal with cases of this kind. I should welcome readers' views.

London, S.W.19.

H. Kendall

OUR REPLY

This is the first time *The Newsletter* has been criticized for giving credit to Communist Party leaders, instead of allegedly taking 'digs' at them and 'gloating' over resignations and other misfortunes!

We welcome Comrade Kendall's letter. The questions he asks are very important. If he has any evidence that John Gollan did not in fact intervene on Wincott's behalf we shall be glad to publish it.

We emphasized Gollan's part in the affair not in order to disparage the efforts of Comrade Kendall and others, but in order to make the point that what has been done (however belatedly) by Gollan on behalf of one prisoner could and should be done on behalf of others.—Editor

HUSH! PUT 'EM IN THE 'T' COLLECTION

THE open shelves of the Marx Memorial Library at Marx House, Clerkenwell Green (president: Prof. Bernall; chairman: Andrew Rothstein), carry a very wide selection of books on topics of importance and interest to the working-class movement. Some of the best books are not to be seen there, however.

It is an odd and thought-provoking fact that you can find on these shelves racist books like MacGregor's 'The Menace of Colour' and anti-Soviet horror stories like Java-Ronikier's 'The Red Executioner', while the works of Leon Trotsky are hidden in a sort of crypt and spoken of cryptically as the 'T collection'.

In view of the appeal which Marx House is making for new members and more money, present and potential supporters might well raise this matter with the management.

After all, at a time when people who lost their confidence in Marxism when Stalinism went bankrupt last year are recovering this confidence through reading the works of non-Stalinist Marxists, Marx House would hardly be doing its proper job if it continued to maintain its present attitude.

Witney (Oxon.)

D. Desmond

PROTEST AT JAILING OF PRESSMEN

Walton (Liverpool) Constituency Labour Party has written to the French Embassy protesting at the sentencing of six French Trotskyist journalists for writing articles opposing the French war against the people of Algeria.

A number of letters and articles have been held over till *The Newsletter* resumes its normal size next week.