

THE NEWSLETTER

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BUILDING WORKERS START RANK-&-FILE MOVEMENT

By Our Industrial Correspondent

FIRST step in the creation of a powerful building workers' rank-and-file movement was taken at the Holborn Hall on Sunday when delegates from jobs and trade union branches all over London agreed to launch a rank-and-file committee of stewards, which will press the union leaders to resist the employers' offensive.

Among the 130 workers present—113 of them delegates, 64 from branches of six unions and 49 from jobs—the feeling was one of determination to answer the master builders with 100 per cent. organization and an unwavering fight for the eightpence an hour claim and the 40-hour week.

A delegation of eight Merseyside stewards, warmly welcomed by their London brothers, reported on the feeling in their area and pledged that a similar conference there would soon follow London's fine example.

Opening the conference, chairman **Paddy Healy** said it had been called by the Alderton Construction Co. workers, who felt that the growing unemployment and the employers' attacks should be met with united resistance and stronger job organization.

Well-known militant **Brian Behan** said their industry was already suffering as a result of the Tory squeeze. The eight-

Brian Behan, who made the opening statement at the conference on behalf of the Alderton Construction Co. stewards, is a bricklayer's labourer.

A member of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers, he was a delegate to last year's Trades Union Congress.

Formerly on the Communist Party executive committee, he resigned from the party last year and joined the Labour Party. He is a member of the editorial board of The Newsletter.

pence an hour and 40-hour week fight was part of the fight against unemployment.

The bosses' spokesman, Mr Leonard A. Walden, president of the National Federation of Building Trade Employers had called the claim 'unrealistic', but had given no facts and figures to substantiate his argument. Last week's Contract Journal said production in the industry had increased last year by 18½ per cent., or £1,055 million, an increase higher than the national average.

W. G. French's profits had increased by 103 per cent., and the shareholders received a 15 per cent. dividend plus a 10 per cent. bonus. The directors of Turner Newalls received £600 a week. The master builders could afford to meet the claim tomorrow.

'We take the attitude that as far as we are concerned the conditions of our class come before the expenditure on H-bombs or the provision of super-profits', Bro. Behan declared.

The employers were united. Yet no attempt was being made by the trade union leaders to unite and mobilize their members in defence of conditions. They were hoping for the best. There were no leaflets, no mass meetings, no campaign.

This was because the leaders were tied to the employers both in words and in deeds. Without a new movement down below these leaders would do nothing.

There could be no serious struggle without a strong stewards' (Continued overleaf)

DISCRIMINATION, SO 1,500 DOCKERS STRIKE

From Our Liverpool Correspondent

FIFTEEN hundred men—almost the entire labour force in No 5 Control on Liverpool dock—stopped work for half a day last Monday because of discrimination against members of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers, the 'blue union'.

The dispute began in the morning when men were being hired to discharge a cargo of bulk sugar. The local Transport and General Workers' Union official declared that only men showing TGWU cards would be hired, and began telling the foreman which men he should hire.

Two members of the 'blue union' were hired, however, and the TGWU official told the foreman to give them their books back. Members of both unions walked out of the hiring pen in protest.

At a meeting of all dockers in No 5 Control later the same day it was decided that the men in No 5 should stop work and go to the Control Office to protest against discrimination between members of different unions.

Dockers told me that when the Port Labour Officer met representatives of the men he said he was acting on instructions from the TGWU official in hiring only TGWU members.

At a mass meeting of the sector, attended by men working on twelve ships, this resolution was carried unanimously:

'Having registered this protest we will resume work, but should there be a repetition of the discrimination there will be an immediate withdrawal of labour from the area and further support sought.'

STRIKERS SACKED, SO JOB IS 'BLACKED'

THIRTY workers in the fettling shop of the Nuneaton factory of Sterling Metals Ltd, on strike over a pay dispute, have been dismissed.

At a mass meeting, 1,500 Nuneaton employees of the firm decided to 'black' work in the fettling shop, and to refuse to work with any men recruited to do the sacked workers' job.

All castings made at the factory have to pass through the fettling shop for trimming, and unless work in the shop is resumed the firm's output of castings will come to a halt.

Workers at the firm's Coventry factory are expected to resist any attempt to take castings from Nuneaton to the Coventry fettling shop.

The fettling shop stopped work because the firm had refused to negotiate on a claim for an additional payment for handling particularly hard castings. The management warned that they should return to work or be dismissed.

COMMENTARY

WHEN ROBBERS MEET

MARXISTS are distinguished from pacifists by their opposition, not to wars in general, but to wars prepared and waged by the ruling classes of imperialist countries to further their class interests. Marxists do not fight against war in the abstract, for wars of liberation waged by colonial peoples and oppressed classes are just wars. The wars they oppose are wars for re-division of the loot, for conquest and enslavement. They fight for the prevention or transformation of imperialist wars and the victorious prosecution of wars of liberation. The fight against war cannot be separated from the fight against the capitalist system which breeds war. The fight for peace is not a matter of convincing bourgeois diplomatists that war is immoral or evil, but of mobilizing the masses of the people in a struggle against warmongers—a struggle whose ultimate aim can only be the overthrow of capitalism.

These were once everyday ideas among Marxists, but they have tended to become blurred in recent years, partly through the spreading of illusions about the fight for peace, partly through the development of so terrible a weapon as the hydrogen-bomb. Those who are unwilling to deceive themselves and others into thinking that a meeting at the summit (whether it is spelt with a capital S or not) is a panacea are supposed to underestimate the dangers of the H-bomb. But unlike the leaders of the Conservative, Labour and Communist Parties, who all support British manufacture of the H-bomb, British Marxists stand unconditionally for the immediate cessation of its manufacture by Britain. They believe that it is the responsibility of the British working class to use its industrial and political strength to bring this about.



Marxists expect nothing from meetings among capitalist powers. What if the Soviet Union participates? Then it depends entirely on the policy the Soviet spokesmen present at a summit meeting. If the Soviet Union were to present a socialist policy, to insist that representatives of India, Yugoslavia and all the small nations should be present, to demand that such a conference renounce the manufacture of the H-bomb and declare for freedom for the colonial peoples and the withdrawal of all troops from foreign soil—then Marxists would not hesitate to support such a policy. But the Soviet Union is doing nothing of the sort, and as long as it

does not, a summit conference will not end the danger of war. The only thing that will end this danger is the mobilization of the international working class around a socialist programme for the ending of the capitalist system, the cause of war.

The workers should pin their faith, not on agreements, but on their own strength in the struggle against war. The interests of the people will not be served by secret diplomacy—and we should not forget that each of the leaders who climbs up to the summit is a robber and a murderer. The peoples of Cyprus, Kenya, Algeria and the Philippines, the socialist workers of Hungary, have nothing to expect from a robbers' 'peace' which leaves the capitalists in possession of the loot, the Kremlin in military occupation of eastern Europe. By all means let Russia and the western powers live together without throwing bombs about. But let no one expect the colonial and oppressed peoples of the world to halt their struggles for independence. There can be no peaceful coexistence between exploiters and exploited, between oppressors and oppressed, between colonialist butchers and their victims.

So if and when the robbers meet on their summit they must be made to feel the pressure of the working people, the sixth great power of the world, who will be satisfied neither with an exchange of platitudes, nor with a division of the world into spheres of influence for imperialist plunder and military domination.



SPEAK UP OR SHUT UP!

IN the *Daily Worker*, John Williamson writes that 'the slander that the [New York] *Daily Worker* was suspended to get rid of Gates' is being spread by 'the capitalist Press in Britain and some of the renegades from our party who are its hangers-on'. At the building workers' rank-and-file conference in London, Jack Pascoe, member of the Communist Party executive, says there are 'false voices' calling for opposition to trade union leaders. This kind of vague slander against other sections of the socialist movement went out with the Khrushchev speech. The age of the lie is over. So is the age when workers would listen to unsupported allegations against unnamed socialists. Out with it, Johnny—who are these ex-communists who are now 'hangers-on of the capitalist Press'? Out with it, Jack—whose are these 'false voices' seeking to lead the workers astray? Either you have facts to put before the workers—names, quotations, evidence—and the courage to do so, or you haven't. If you have, then speak out like men. If you haven't, then shut up.

BUILDING WORKERS (Continued from front page)

organization, which must be defended by the official trade union machinery.

The Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers' record in defence of stewards was probably one of the worst. The unions must have the power to defend the stewards, and must exercise it.

Because of the failure of the official machine to act, there was a need for a rank-and-file movement, whose basis should be the stewards' organizations that already existed on a number of jobs.

'We see it', Bro. Behan explained, 'not as an alternative to the established trade union machine, but as something

which would have as its aim the transformation of the official machine.

'We need it to build our own solidarity assistance to jobs which come into dispute. We need it to be able to exchange experiences.

'We are not anti-official. But we do want to get the machine acting.'

T. McGowan, a Unit Construction Co. Federation steward said there were now approximately 64,000 fewer jobs within the building industry: about 34,000 were unemployed and about 32,000 had left the industry. This was a very bad position indeed.

(Continued on back page)

Government Is Playing Down Strontium Danger

THE immediate job for socialists is to get the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress to ACT on resolutions they have already carried. Number one issue is the unilateral suspension of nuclear tests, agreed on unanimously at the Labour Party's Brighton conference.

The visit of the TUC deputation to 10 Downing Street was a step in the right direction. Why not a nation-wide campaign to force the Government to stop the tests, along the lines of the highly successful 'Law not War' campaign at the time of the war on Egypt?

I am convinced this would have a dramatic psychological effect and help to lessen tension between the nations. Since Bulganin has himself made such an offer, it would almost certainly be followed by Russia.

I doubt whether America could continue with the tests, particularly since there is pressure on the point inside America. (See the full-page advertisements in the New York Times paid for by the National Council for a Sane Nuclear Policy.)

I admit that stopping the tests does not mean stopping war. But the first step away from war is always the most difficult. It could lead on to the stopping of manufacture.

MANKIND IN DANGER. The stopping of the tests is vital in itself. For mankind is in real danger of poisoning itself even without a world war taking place.

There is the growing risk of damage to generations yet to be born. The more immediate threat is that of bone cancer and leukaemia (cancer of the blood) from strontium 90.

It is not always realized that, even if not a single further H-bomb explosion takes place, the amount of radio strontium deposited on the earth will continue to grow for years to come, since it takes a number of years before strontium 90 released into the stratosphere finally descends.

I believe that the Government is playing down the dangers.

Following requests for recent information about the increase of strontium 90 the Prime Minister arranged to place in the House of Commons library a report prepared by the Atomic Energy Authority.

STARTLING FIGURES REVEALED. This report, by four Harwell scientists, revealed startling figures:

The bones of two children who died early in 1957 contained 2.3 and 2.4 strontium units, or nearly twice that discovered in any child in the previous year.

As the Medical Research Council had stated that a level of ten strontium units would force it to call for 'an immediate review of the atom hazards from tests', this meant that one quarter of that level had already been reached.

Yet when on November 13 I questioned the Prime Minister about this he replied:

'The Medical Research Council has recommended that the level of strontium 90 in the bones of the general population, with its proportion of young children, should not exceed 100 strontium units. The recent figures of 2.3 and 2.4 units which the hon. member quotes are only a small fraction of this.'

MACMILLAN'S 'SAFETY LEVEL'. So far as I am aware no one has drawn attention to the fact that Mr Macmillan is taking as his safety level one that is no less than 10 times as high as the one considered by the Medical Research Council to justify calling for an immediate review of the dangers involved!

More recently twelve leading American scientists, including Dr Willard Libby, adviser to the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, have stated that they believe that in some parts of the world this level (of ten units) may have already been reached.

This, they say, may have already happened in Britain, Russia and America. (This may be poetic justice, but hardly for our children.)

Moreover if H-tests continue at their present rate for the next few years the dose, they believe, is likely to mount to 25 units.

Is the Prime Minister (and also Lord Hailsham, who is using the same figure) going to stick to his 100 units level and wait till that level is reached before taking action to stop the tests?

That would be too late.

FRANK ALLAUN, MP

SCOTLAND AND LEEDS PROTEST ON BASES

THE Labour movement in Edinburgh and Leeds has been active in protests against the building of rocket bases in Britain.

A protest meeting called by Edinburgh City Labour Party was the best-attended since Suez, and the feeling of the meeting was for positive action.

A resolution was passed condemning the setting-up of rocket bases anywhere in Britain and the carrying of hydrogen bombs by U.S. aircraft.

In response to a request from the floor the platform (which included two prospective Labour Parliamentary candidates, a councillor and the secretary of the City Labour Party) urged local organizations to send deputations to City Chambers to protest, and to write to all local MPs.

It was reported that the Tory majority on the Council had refused the Labour group the right to debate the question, and they were urged to press the matter. A member of the audience suggested they stage a walk-out.

The following resolution has been passed by Leeds Trades Council:

'In view of the presence of American planes carrying H-bombs, the establishment of rocket sites, and the im-

possible position of British people in the event of nuclear war, this Trades Council calls upon the TUC to wage a national campaign to stop the flights and rocket bases, and to halt the testing of H-bombs and prevent their manufacture.

'It also invites the co-operation of the City of Leeds Labour Party in a local campaign to achieve these ends.'

5 UNIONS IN SALFORD'S H-BOMB CAMPAIGN

FIRST stage of Salford City Labour Party's campaign against the H-bomb ended with a unanimous resolution at a crowded meeting, declaring opposition to the manufacture and testing of the bomb and calling on the Labour Party to organize mass protests.

Four months ago the City Party set up a committee to run the campaign, and trade union and religious organizations were invited to send representatives.

The Amalgamated Engineering Union, Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, Union of Post Office Workers, National Union of Vehicle Builders, Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, Society of Friends and local peace movement all took part in the committee's work.

A car rally and march was probably the most effective event

of its kind organized in the area. It threaded its way through the busiest parts of Salford a week before Christmas, and had a tremendous impact.

The modest but significant success the campaign has so far had refutes those who talk about the people's apathy on this and other vital questions. Experience in Salford shows that where there is leadership there is a response.

AGAIN THEY ATTACK THE MEN IN THE PITS

By Price Jones

THE annual report of the National Coal Board is usually made the basis, in one way or another, for an attack on the miners. This year follows the same pattern.

Ex-miner Sir James Bowman, now NCB chairman, joined the Tory Press in blaming the fall in output last year on 'absentee' miners.

He said he was 'not attacking the miners, but we have to face facts'. Absenteeism was higher than in previous years. But the NCB did not contemplate a 'get tough policy'.

He relied on joint endeavour between the NCB and the union as the road to success. He wanted miners' leaders to 'create a climate of opinion which would change these figures'.

I wonder what Sir James really means by this Mumbo Jumbo. How can the miners' leaders create a different climate of opinion? By collaborating in absentee committees sponsored by the NCB, as has been agreed to in Lancashire recently?

When I say agreed to, I mean by a majority of delegates at a recent area conference, not by a majority of rank-and-file miners in the Lancashire coalfield.

'Include us out', say men

The miners themselves argue that if the NCB wish to create disciplinary committees let them do so, but without the collaboration of the men's organization.

They are not reassured by Edwin Hall, area secretary, when he says that the new committees will be merely extensions of present machinery existing at each pit.

What need would there be for any such new creation unless there was some ulterior motive?

Unlike Sir James, the miners are convinced that these absentee committees will be part and parcel of a 'get tough policy' by the NCB, and will not only be used to 'discipline' the very small minority of persistent absentees, but also to discipline militants who kick against the increasing NCB pressure.

A very large majority of miners is working at least five days per week and in many cases six and seven days per week. Compare this with before the war when the majority was compelled to work only two and three days per week.

There are those who hope that, by attacking miners' standards, still cheaper coal may be provided for private industry.

Provides those sacred profits

The mining industry, though nationalized, is still part of the capitalist economy of this country, and must play its part in providing that sacred article—profit.

Owing to deteriorating external conditions the only way to maintain the owners' profit is at the expense of the workers' standards. It is obvious that if the miners' standards can be successfully lowered then all other workers' standards will quickly follow the same downward trend.

That in the opinion of many miners is the reason for the appearance of the absentee committees but these will very soon meet with opposition from the workers when they start to operate.

These attacks against the miners have been going on incessantly since Vesting Day. Now, at long last, part of the union leadership have raised their voices against this latest attack.

Arthur Horner says there is 'an obvious campaign to denigrate nationalization and the miners as much as possible'. Both he and Ernest Jones defend the miners against charges of absenteeism, and the inference from what they say is that

there is no need for the creation of absentee committees.

Yet the National Union of Mineworkers in Lancashire has agreed to them. We in the pits would be interested to hear the official policy of the NUM on this matter.

James Bowman says the 'NCB are 2,800 men short of requirements' but this does not apply to areas like Lancashire.

This is one of the older coalfields and a policy of concentration is being carried out. As one colliery or seam is closed the men are absorbed at another pit.

Obviously this can only go on for so long and then saturation point must be reached—large-scale redundancy will occur. We want to know what is the union's policy on this problem.

Consumption of coal has risen by 3 million tons in the last ten years. In 1957, however, it fell by 5 million tons, says Bowman.

Drop in demand is important

He gives the reasons as warmer weather, strikes in shipbuilding and engineering, a check in industrial activity during the early months of the year and the influenza epidemic.

Whatever the reasons, the drop in demand is very important. Many younger miners are realizing for the first time that their ivory tower is not impregnable—that mining is an industry that can be affected, just like any other industry, by outside factors.

They are joining with older miners in looking with concern at the reported amount of 28 million tons of coal in stock (for the first time since before the war). Every older miner connects stocked coal with short-time working and does not relish the reappearance of the huge mounds of unsaleable coal.

Young and old alike will be pressing with increasing vigour for the NUM campaign for a shorter working week, lower retirement age, and higher pensions from the NCB as being part of the answer to the problem of lessening demand for coal.

DE HAVILLAND WORKERS FIGHT SACKINGS

SOME 200 workers at the De Havilland propeller factory, Edmonton (Middlesex) are threatened with redundancy next August or September, when the firm proposes to close the factory on the completion of the present projects.

Twenty-one workers are to be made redundant during the next month.

At the end of last year the firm told its workers: 'The prospects for propeller business are limitless.' The management assured the shop stewards that new projects would be started when the existing ones were finished.

When it was learned that there would in fact be redundancy, the stewards proposed an overtime ban; this was agreed to by both shifts.

The ban on overtime has placed the management in a difficult position and makes it extremely doubtful that the present programme will be completed by the date estimated.

One striking example of the solidarity of the workers was given by the labourers, who are on a relatively low wage and who increased their earnings by undertaking security duties during the times that the factory was unoccupied.

These labourers now refused to do further security duties, and although the stewards stated that they were prepared to allow them to do so in view of their low earnings they maintained their decision at subsequent meetings.

The management has been forced to bring security men in from Hatfield to take over between shifts and for weekends.

OLD AND TRUE

'Comrade Trotsky, who is ill in Tiflis, has sent a wonderful message.'

—Harry Pollitt (in Moscow for the funeral of Lenin, who died 34 years ago last Tuesday), *Workers' Weekly*, February 22, 1924.

Cunvin's Column | Britain's 600 Millionaires

'BUT SOME ARE MORE EQUAL . . .'

For some years now we have been assured that every day we are getting nearer to a equalitarian society. There is therefore no need, you see, for horrid things such as the class struggle to disturb the even tenor of British political life.

This rosy picture of the gradual equalizing of incomes is shattered every year when the Inland Revenue Commissioners publish their annual report.

The 1956-57 report shows that Britain now has 600 millionaires as against only 200 in the previous financial year. In other words, some 400 very wealthy big businessmen have succeeded in increasing their profits sufficiently to bring them into the £6,000-a-year class after income tax had been deducted.

The number of surtax payers also went up by 25,000 to 340,000. So much for equality of income.

WHAT ABOUT THE WORKERS?

The Sunday Express is quite enthusiastic about these huge incomes for a handful of very rich people. It objects only to the tax collector taking some of it away from them. 'Big efforts', says the Beaverbrook journal, 'merit big rewards'.

But increased wealth comes, not from the boardrooms which these super-tax payers adorn, but from the work bench and the coal face.

Yet when the miners, the railwaymen or other workers whose labours have made these men wealthy, ask for higher pay, the Express talks of 'holding the country to ransom'.

RADIO-ACTIVE DANGER

The head of a radio-active needle which was accidentally left in the nose of a little Dutch girl has caused serious alarm in the village where she has her home.

The house and garden have been fenced off and a notice warns passers-by: 'Peril to life. No entrance!'

This is an example of the dangerous stuff humanity is playing about with these days. Doctors are gravely concerned about the radio-active qualities of luminous watch dials, the machines which X-ray children's feet in shoe shops and so on.

But these things are pinpricks compared to the far greater menace of the H-bombs which fly over our heads or the trans-continental missile sites now being built.

Let's speed up the campaign against the manufacture and testing of H-bombs. This is a peril we must banish from the face of the earth!

DAILY WORKER CHAUVINISM

Every socialist worthy of the name is opposed to the imperialist policies of American capitalism, which, if taken to their logical conclusion, would result in a war threatening the very structure of human existence.

Every socialist worthy of the name demands the withdrawal of U.S. armed forces from Britain and the continent of Europe because their presence there is part of the war preparations of American imperialism.

But socialists have always made a close distinction between the rulers and the ruled. Not so, however, the Daily Worker. That paper indulges in anti-American propaganda which can only be described as chauvinism.

This reached its nadir last Saturday. The front page article 'The Menace in our Midst', after a passing reference to bombers, bombs and rockets, attacked the morals and character of the individual American servicemen themselves—most of them the sons of American working-class families conscripted into the army and as anxious to get back home as we are to send them there.

Socialists should, to quote Lenin, 'patiently explain' to these

servicemen the real purpose of their Government's policy and not indulge in crude character assassination. The Worker article does no service to the cause of socialism or of peace.

CHAFING IN HIS CHAINS

The Beaverbrook Press is the most enthusiastic defender of the greatest land robbery in history—the British Empire. The Empire is sacrosanct and anyone who seeks to weaken it is a scoundrel.

Reporting Premier Macmillan's visit to Ceylon, the Daily Express refers to the very modest nationalization measures of the Ceylon Government (which the Express calls 'the socialist-Trotskyist Government') as a 'nationalization grab'.

Of course, the Ceylon Government would be fully in its rights to nationalize all the tea plantations in the islands—and the sooner it does so the better for the people of Ceylon.

But all it has done is to try to frustrate the efforts of speculators who want to buy up tea and rubber estates in Ceylon and Malaya at depressed market prices, distribute the accumulated cash and sell the estates in small parcels to land-hungry small holders.

The Ceylon Government has taken powers which will enable it to prevent the estates being broken up by buying them itself. But even this modest step in the right direction is more than the Empire Crusader, chafing in his chains, can swallow.

STEEL AND SUGAR

Mr Ian D. Lyle, chairman of the Tate and Lyle sugar combine, announced in his annual report to the company's shareholders his support of the steel magnates' campaign against nationalization.

He does not even approve of Mr Gaitskell's 'new backdoor method of compulsory share purchase'.

So the Board of Directors of Tate and Lyle has decided to show the people 'that sugar refining under free enterprise gives them the cheapest and best sugar . . .' We can look forward to Mr Cube making this point on every packet of sugar we buy in the near future.

To talk of 'free enterprise' in the sugar industry is simply a farce. Just try to buy a packet of sugar anywhere in the South of England which does not come from the mills of Tate and Lyle!

Labour must not be blackmailed by big business but must campaign vigorously for a full programme of nationalization.

HOW STALINISM AFFECTS THE KENT CP

THE Kent district congress of the Communist Party, which is being held this weekend, is the first for three years. The reasons for this long gap are clear from the district committee's report on its work.

The number of indoor public meetings fell from 120 in 1955 to 60 in 1957, of factory gate and open-air meetings from

LEST WE FORGET

'Let us be glad that this trial has taken place, that these men will be sentenced.'—William Wainwright in Challenge, March 10, 1938, on the Moscow trial of Bukharin, Rakovsky, Krestinsky and others.

(Mr Wainwright's appointment as assistant general secretary of the British Communist Party was announced on January 17.)

98 to 55. Weekend circulation of the Daily Worker, approximately 950 copies, 'is a decline over the past period'.

In 1955, 14 Daily Worker bazaars were held and raised

£570. In 1957, 9 were held and raised an estimated £380.

Literature sales by branches fell from £1,730 in 1955 to £989 in 1957. Circulation of World News fell from 414 to 255, of Challenge from 318 to 187, Soviet Weekly from 304 to 182, of Labour Monthly from 226 to 128, of Woman Today from 483 to 284.

'The decline in branch sales is a serious political question', says the report.

Party membership in the district fell from 1,000 in the spring of 1956 to 785 at the end of 1956. Latest registration figure will be given at the congress.

ANNIVERSARY

RUTLAND BOUGHTON ON BUREAUCRATS

Rutland Boughton, veteran British musician, composer of 'The Immortal Hour', celebrated on Thursday his eightieth birthday.

He joined the Communist Party in 1926 and left it in 1956. Some readers will have noticed the patronizing 'profile' of him which appeared in last Saturday's Daily Worker.

We have pleasure in reprinting a passage from the article 'How Come These Traitors?'—a remarkable analysis of the causes of degeneration in working-class leaders—which he contributed to the Labour Monthly for November 1926.

To pay the secretary of a trade union or the editor of a Labour paper a higher salary than the average wages of the men he is intended to serve is contrary to every principle of socialism and common sense.

The theory appears to be that if the Labour movement is to have really first-class officials they must be kept for Labour by the sort of wage they could get from the boss class. But the boss class can always afford to pay the highest salaries and so secure the most efficient of these men who are for sale.

Therefore of such men Labour can in any case only get the second best, the men left over when the boss class has had its pick—unless, of course, a certain number of very efficient men are actually allowed to put on the livery of Labour the better to do the bosses' own work; and in that case it is fully to be expected that they will get a good deal more than Labour pays them.

I don't mean that such men would receive actual bribes of cash. That would be too obvious and would not properly achieve the masters' object.

But popular Labour leaders whose ideas are flabby and offer no real threat to the capitalist system may be invited, for instance, to write for the capitalist Press, with great advantage to themselves and to the increase of a reputation for broadmindedness among the masters.

Or they may be called upon from time to time to act as Labour adviser to capitalist organizations. But under the most favourable circumstances, even when the highly-paid leader is a man of principle, he is unable properly to serve or represent the workers if he lives at a higher rate than they live.

The cut of a joint

It is not his fault so much as the fault of the workers who overpay him. A man who gets the cut of a joint every day in the week forgets (if he ever knew) the needs of a man who lives chiefly on bread and potatoes.

A man who can take his family once a week to the theatre cannot understand the intellectual starvation of one who finds it hard to afford a daily paper.

Further, if an official is paid well enough to mix without too much discomfort in circles frequented by the master class, he will be open to another demoralizing influence—to that flattery which is the third cause of official Labour treachery.

When MacDonald got into such a muddle over the forged

letter I heard a great dramatist remark, 'He has fallen a victim to the charming manners of the English governing classes'.

And while the workers will have to take steps to guard against that sort of failure they must not despise too much the men who have failed.

Not one of the workers themselves but would become weakened in moral fibre if day in and day out, year in and year out, he were assailed by the subtle sweetness of pretended and genuine admiration from fair women of fine culture, and by the even more powerful flattery of their men when they ask for advice and incidentally learn many solid and useful facts which lie behind the Labour official's opinions, the knowledge of these facts being so necessary for the continuance in power of the capitalist class.

This is not a wilful treachery of the official: he cannot help himself in the false position of superiority which a high salary gives him.

ALGERIA

RISE OF ALGERIA'S NATIONAL MOVEMENT

By Michael Banda

FRENCH oppression in Algeria has been as relentless as the Sirocco and as harsh as the Sahara sun. Small wonder that Algerian nationalism has proved more heroic and more enduring than any other national movement.

Modern Algerian nationalism was born in 1925 under the name of The Star of North Africa, whose founder and leader was Messali Hadj, and whose stated objectives were complete independence, withdrawal of the occupation forces and the formation of a national army.

The movement first took shape in France among the emigrant Algerian workers and then spread to Algeria. In 1929 it was dissolved by the French but appeared immediately afterwards under a new name, The Glorious Star.

In 1936, after seven years of intense agitation, the French struck again. The 'Glorious Star' was banned and Messali was imprisoned.

But the movement was irrepressible. It re-formed itself as the National Union of North African Moslems.

The election of the People's Front in France quickly

Because of pressure on space the second of Michael Banda's articles on the Algerian people's struggle for national independence will be printed in two parts. The second part will appear next week.

disillusioned the Algerians, for the People's Front not only continued but intensified the persecution of Algerian nationalism.

In January 1937 the People's Front decreed the dissolution of the National Union. For the fourth time the party changed its name, this time to the Peoples' Party of Algeria.

During this period Messali and his followers had to wage an implacable struggle against the French as well as against the reformist ideas of Ferhat Abbas, a rich lawyer who defended the assimilationist policy of the French and opposed the idea of an independent Algerian State.

1937 was an historic year for the Algerian people, Berber and Arab alike. For the first time the Algerian national flag was unfurled and carried triumphantly through the streets of Algiers. For the first time too, the streets echoed to the shouts of 'Land to the Fellah!'

Immediately after this Messali and his associates were tried and imprisoned for two years. So great was his popularity that in the cantonal election held while he was in prison he was elected by an overwhelming majority in Algiers!

Utilizing the war crisis the French, for the fifth time, banned the movement and imprisoned its leaders, Messali included. But the PPA did not concede an inch to the French. The party was reorganized.

Messali, heroically refusing to submit to the Vichy regime, was given 16 years' hard labour, 20 years' banishment and all his property was confiscated.

When the Allies landed in North Africa in 1942 they released all political prisoners with the significant exception of Messali and his followers.

In February 1943 the PPA—through its legal representatives—presented the Allies with a charter (the Manifesto of the Algerian People) demanding independence.

The response of the embarrassed Allies was swift and cynical. The petitioners were deported to the south and Messali to the Sahara.

Yet by the end of 1944 the movement had grown to 600,000 members.

In 1945 the Algerian people were dying in thousands from a famine which was the direct result of the French Government's policy. In May that year they rose in a spontaneous but unco-ordinated insurrection—88 Frenchmen were killed, 150 wounded.

This was the signal for a general massacre unknown since 1871—between 45,000 and 60,000 Algerians were killed and wounded and over forty villages were obliterated. To their eternal shame the Communist Party of France—then collaborating in a coalition government—were part authors of this sordid chapter of French history.

The 1945-1954 period was the heroic period of the PPA. So great was the hatred against the French, and so deep the loyalty of the people to the PPA, that more than 80 per cent. of the people followed the call of the party not to vote in the cantonal elections in 1945.

In 1946 Messali was held in 'enforced residence' in Algiers. Despite intensive repression the militants and leaders of the party went throughout the country sustaining the morale of the members and preparing them for coming events.

It was during this period that the first secret military organizations were formed for training the leading forces of the future Algerian Liberation Army.

USSR

NOVEL AND ITS WRITER 'REHABILITATED'

From a Correspondent

LOOKING through some issues of the Soviet newspaper *Literaturnaya Gazeta* for the last months of 1957 I noticed an item which may be of interest to readers who follow developments in eastern Europe. In the issue of October 22 the following appears:

'Readers' conferences have become a tradition with the students and staff of the Moscow Evening Institute of Metallurgy. Last evening's conference was devoted to the novel "Young Marx" by Galina Serebryakova.

'The authoress told her listeners many interesting things about how the book was written. To assemble her material, G. Serebryakova travelled, in the early nineteen thirties, in Germany, Britain, Holland and France, visiting different museums, libraries and record-offices in these countries.

'At present an edition of this novel is being prepared in the German Democratic Republic, to appear on the 140th anniversary of Marx's birthday.

'Contributors to the conference spoke with great interest about the novel. P. Morozov, a teacher of the history of the Soviet Communist Party, remarked upon its importance in connexion with the study of the history of the communist movement.

'In her concluding remarks, G. Serebryakova spoke about her plans for future work.'

The significance of this apparently routine item of news can

be grasped by comparing it with the editorial in the September 1936 number of the literary magazine *Oktyabr* [October].

Under the heading 'The vermin have been crushed!', this article hailed the sentences passed on the accused in the first of the great public 'purge' trials, and went on to deal with 'wreckers on the literary front'.

Among other things, the editors criticized themselves for having published the novel 'Young Marx' by 'the enemy Serebryakova'. Evidently both the novel and its authoress have now been 'rehabilitated'.

Serebryakova was the wife of Sokolnikov, Soviet ambassador to Britain and one of Stalin's victims. Her book 'Nine Women of the French Revolution' appeared in London in an English translation in 1932, with a preface by Beatrice Webb.

This change in her fortunes appears to have passed unnoticed in the British Stalinist Press—though many of those associated with it enjoyed Serebryakova's hospitality when she was at the Soviet Embassy here!

LETTERS

GARSTON PORTWORKERS SEND US A GIFT

WE are making great efforts to open our Garston Stevedores' Social Club by Eastertide for our members.

Our aim is to provide social amenities for the members, and we are hoping as the club progresses to give older members as they retire a pension.

If you will look through the history of Dockland you will see this has never been attempted before. I would like to see this movement spread to Liverpool, Birkenhead, Hull and Manchester, as the docker has been after pensions for a very long time.

I would like to highly commend the work done for us by three of your readers who are bricklayers. We can't thank them enough.

Garston

P. Broderick

[With this letter came a cheque for £5. Three of our readers had done some repair work for the Garston Stevedores' and Dockers' Social Club, refused payment for it, and asked Mr Broderick, the honorary secretary, to send a donation to The Newsletter instead.]

THEY PRAISE US WITH THEIR LABELS

What is the class role of The Newsletter? First it's labelled a King Street plot, then it's called 'dubious and questionable'.

Now I see in the Daily Worker an allusion to those comrades connected with The Newsletter who for their part in revealing the truth about the disappearance of the New York Daily Worker are referred to as 'renegades from our [King Street] party' and 'hangers-on' of the 'capitalist Press'.

What fine tributes to the efficacy of a truth-seeking socialist publication and of its contributors!

Upton (Dorset)

Alan R. Bennett

THEIRS IS A SILENCE THAT CAN BE HEARD

Why do the leaders of the British Communist Party, while expelling members for 'Trotskyism' (or even 'organized contact with Trotskyists'), not openly announce their present attitude regarding the charges of wrecking, spying etc. which now seem to be discredited?

After all, it was these charges which formed the basis for the special attitude of violent discrimination against Trotskyism and Trotskyists, as compared with all other groups and trends in the socialist movement.

They must be trembling with apprehension at what the Russians may come out with next on this subject. What will Pollitt, Gollan and Co. do if and when Bukharin, Trotsky etc. are formally and explicitly rehabilitated, as Rajk was in Hungary?

Meanwhile theirs is a silence that can be heard.

London, S.W.

G. Brown

BUILDING WORKERS (Continued from p. 22)

The Government intended to build 26,000 fewer houses this year. It was generally estimated that it took one man a year to build a house—this meant 26,000 fewer jobs still.

'The official leaders have failed us miserably,' he declared. 'We need hundreds of resolutions from the branches.'

E. V. Harrison (Buckleberry House site) said the officials had an iron curtain round them. When you phoned them up you were asked your name; a couple of minutes silence and then the secretary said: 'Mr Jones isn't here. Will you leave a message?'

When a strike action took place and the organizer did not play his part he should be summoned to the local branch to account for himself.

Mick Gammon (Financial Times site) said overtime permits were still being issued and bonus earnings ranged up to £7. It was time to stop glossing over these problems if unemployment was developing.

It was still a challenge that in 1958 they had only got 50 per cent. of the workers in their industry organized, and probably about 35 per cent. nationally.

How the employers attack

Victimization, blacklisting, transfers, provoking workers, sackings, artificial hold-ups, witch-hunts and McCarthyism: these were the employers' methods. The right to strike was being whittled away, and many of those who criticized unofficial actions were the very people who owed their positions to leading unofficial actions.

The key to the problem was job organization, and this must be tackled in a serious way.

J. Matthews (ETU, Camden Town branch) agreed that the withdrawal of overtime permits would help the struggle against unemployment.

Another delegate who felt that the Federation should step in and stop organizers' granting overtime permits was **J. Mul-laley** (Lambeth and Borough AUBIW).

Bringing greetings from the building workers of Liverpool, **Jack Rogers** (Unit Federation steward) said the employers there were already stopping overtime. The unemployment rate there was 10 per cent. and it was likely to get worse.

'The lads in the Mersey area are rallying round,' he declared.

The delegate from the Westminster branch of the National Society of Painters, **Jack Curran**, criticized the draft resolutions for being 'weak and wishy-washy'. They should not 'call' on the executives, but demand their rights.

Make them take class attitude

'Let us see less competition on jobs between the respective unions,' he added. 'We have a common purpose as workers. Let us unite and express that unity on the job.'

W. Stevens (LCC direct labour job) said the main enemy was not the trade union official, but the employing class. The need was to make the unions take a class attitude, as at Abbey Wood, where the lads on the job had forced them to do so.

'This meeting is a beginning,' he said. 'Unless there is a fight made now, then this time next year we won't be in a position to fight, because we will all be a bit more demoralized.'

Jack Pascoe (Cubitts, Bank of England) said there was a tendency on some individuals' part to forget the overall picture in their private grievances against certain trade union officials. He was opposed to a movement that would alienate the officials.

A movement from below must push the officials, not split the ranks of the organized workers.

'There are a lot of voices telling us how to fight the employers. Some of them are false voices. Be very wary of any voices that will lead us against the official movement at this stage.'

Another Liverpool delegate, **Jim Rand** (Garston Gasworks)

said they must fight in both the industrial and the political wings of the movement in order to prepare for the fight to defend conditions.

The workers would measure the leaders by their response to such resolutions as those before the conference. No officials should be allowed to rest on their past laurels.

'Coppock tells us how he wore a big hole in his shoes. In the early days they sent leaders to Botany Bay. They knight them now. I wonder who has changed most, the leaders of the ruling class or the leaders of the working class,' Bro. Rand declared amid applause.

They should try to make every fight a joint fight and let

WHAT THE CONFERENCE DECIDED

The conference passed four resolutions.

The first called on the executive committee of the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives to launch a campaign around the claim for eightpence an hour and a reduction in the working week to 40 hours.

The campaign should include meetings of shop stewards, meetings on every site, specially summoned meetings in the branches and public meetings and demonstrations led by the executive members.

The resolution asked 'that before any settlement is reached we the members should be consulted'.

The second resolution pledged the delegates 'to bring in the "nons" and strengthen our site organization' and called on the executive committees to defend more resolutely the shop stewards from victimization by the employers.

The third called on the Federation to organize regularly meetings of Federation stewards, and at intervals mass meetings of all stewards.

The fourth related to the setting up of a rank-and-file committee of stewards.

branches and stewards' committees know what was taking place.

Joe Rootes (Willetts' site, Surrey Hospital) said they must win unity with the leaders of their unions, whatever they thought of them.

W. Humphrey (Watney's Brewery, Mortlake) said they were all prepared to use the machinery 'but don't forget that machinery needs new parts now and again: our machinery needs some new parts very badly.'

Replying to the discussion, Brian Behan said the main difference that had arisen was on the attitude to the officials.

The witches in 'Macbeth'?

Some felt that it was dangerous to develop such a movement, and spoke of 'false voices'—whether these were the witches in 'Macbeth' he did not know. They should not use this type of language. If there was a person who was speaking falsely they should say who he was and what he was saying.

'It might also be a false voice which says: "Work within the machine and do little else",' Bro. Behan remarked.

They were fighting to make use of the machine and to transform the machine, for it was not built on class struggle, but on the defeat of their class in 1926: for the pivot was the Working Rule Agreement, signed in 1927.

Yes, they wanted unity around the defence of the class. They wanted to be able to express their differences with the Right wing clearly and sharply.

Once the movement began to get under way problems of overtime and bonus would be solved. The campaign on unemployment must not be limited to overtime; it was also tied to the eightpence an hour and the 40-hour week.

It was a question now of sounding out the workers, putting to them plainly the need for energetic struggle.