

THE NEWSLETTER

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WHY FRENCH WORKERS LOST THIS ROUND

By DANIEL RENARD, for many years an engineer at the Renault works, Paris

DE GAULLE'S coming to power is a grave set-back for the French working class. It is all the more serious a set-back since the French working class has not fully shown its mettle.

The workers were capable of a very great deal. They could have stopped de Gaulle's rise to power. They could have imposed their point of view about what was to happen inside France itself—and about the Algerian war, too.

Why were they unable to achieve this? Because the established trade union and political organizations, the CGT (General Confederation of Labour), CGT-FO (socialist-led trade unions), Communist Party and Socialist Party betrayed the working class with a mastery and cunning that come from thirty years' practice in the art of treachery.

Although the Pflimlin Government was opposed by part of the Right wing in the Assembly, it was voted in by the Right-Centre, Centre and socialist deputies.

The communist deputies abstained. But their abstention had a special significance. It did not mean that the French Communist Party did not want to express an opinion about the Pflimlin Government.

Directed against working class

On the contrary, it meant that the French Communist Party was for the Pflimlin Government. This point was made clear forty-eight hours later in a Humanité article which clearly showed that only the abstention of the communist deputies had made possible Pflimlin's election.

The French Communist Party was to continue this policy of support for the Pflimlin Government to the bitter end.

OLD FRIEND SENDS FIRST DONATION

First donation to The Newsletter when this paper started a year ago came from a comrade in Bushey (Herts.).

First donation to The Newsletter's development fund comes from the same comrade, in a letter announcing his intention of joining the Labour Party—and expressing the hope that as The Newsletter develops into a paper for militants it will not become 'a paper for sectarians'.

In thanking our Bushey reader for his £1 donation, and congratulating him on the political step he is taking, we assure him that the new, enlarged Newsletter we are planning will continue to carry criticisms, controversy and other highly unsectarian features!

Many other readers have congratulated us on our intention of adopting the Strike Bulletin format as soon as possible—but remember the sum we need to accomplish this: £50 per month.

It voted for the emergency law brought before the Assembly by Pflimlin, a law which meant the suppression of all democratic liberties (the banning of meetings, the censorship of the Press, the prohibition of demonstrations).

This emergency law, which was supposed to be directed

(Continued overleaf)

TARDOS RELEASED, BUT THREE OTHER WRITERS TO STAY IN JAIL

The Hungarian communist writer Tibor Tardos, jailed for eighteen months last November for 'inciting against the democratic order of the State' has been released from prison.

The Hungarian News and Information Service reports that László Gyáros, official spokesman of the Hungarian Government, confirmed this at a Budapest Press conference.

Asked whether the communist writers Tibor Déry, Gyula Hay and Zoltán Zelk, sentenced at the same time to periods of three to nine years, would also be released before completing their sentences, the spokesman said: 'I do not know of any such plans.'

REFUSE TO BUILD OR USE ROCKET SITES

East Leeds Constituency Labour Party has passed the following resolution for inclusion in the preliminary agenda of the Labour Party conference:

'That on its return to power the Labour Party will refuse to build or use rocket sites.'

CLERKS DEMAND STRIKE ON MELLORS CASE

Delegates to the North-Eastern area council of the Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union unanimously passed a resolution calling for a strike in all Amalgamated Engineering Union offices in support of Joan Mellors.

Joan Mellors, after working for the AEU for 19½ years, was sacked for writing a letter to the Sheffield Press defending local AEU official Harold Ulliyatt against witch-hunt attacks.

But her claim for victimization pay has been turned down. Delegates demanded that this decision be reversed.

NEW PLAY BY ALISON MACLEOD

'Dear Augustine', a play by Alison Macleod, will be produced at the Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square, London, for a week, beginning July 28.

The play is about Jewish refugees in London just after the war, wondering whether to go back to Germany.

NO FREE SPEECH IN CROMWELL'S COUNTRY

In King's Lynn there are two grammar schools, one for boys and one for girls. The sixth forms organize a joint society and invite speakers to come and talk about interesting and controversial subjects.

This society recently invited Peter Cadogan to speak to it on 'Communism and Democracy'.

As a matter of form—or so he thought—the secretary informed his headmaster of the speaker and subject. The meeting was immediately vetoed.

LEEDS METER READERS STAND BY SACKED SHOP STEWARD

HARRY NEWTON, shop steward of the Leeds electricity meter readers' branch of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, was dismissed at a moment's notice on May 10.

His dismissal followed an organized resistance by all the meter readers to the Yorkshire Electricity Board's increase in the number of visits to be made by the meter readers each day.

The pretext for dismissing Bro. Newton was alleged insolence to a foreman. As the decision to limit the number of visits made was the official policy of the meter readers' branch the entire branch refused to start work the next day when they learned of their shop steward's dismissal.

After a total stoppage of about four hours the men were finally persuaded by the district organizer of the union, Alderman Sykes (last year's Mayor of Morley) to return to work

so that he could start negotiations on Bro. Newton's behalf. The Board also agreed to pay the men for the time they had been stopped.

After the negotiations the Yorkshire Electricity Board confirmed the sacking of Bro. Newton.

Many of the meter readers are far from satisfied with the part played by the full-time officials. After a delay of nearly a month the matter has been placed in the hands of a sub-committee of the joint council of the unions and the Board for further investigation.

'Let him sign on'

After more than five weeks the union has still not met the repeated claims by the entire branch of meter readers that victimization pay should be given to Bro. Newton. The advice of the full-time officials is that he should sign on at the Labour Exchange.

The meter readers are making a voluntary collection each week so that he can continue his fight to regain his job.

FRANCE (Continued from front page)

against the fascists, was in fact mainly directed against the working class, and Pflimlin cynically admitted this when he declared: 'There will be no unilateral application of the emergency law.'

The French Communist Party voted for the special powers in Algeria, which Guy Mollet had first proposed in 1956, and which aimed at putting all administrative, judicial and political power into the hands of the same brass hats who refused to submit to the authority of Pflimlin himself.

But the French Communist Party did not stop here. On the agenda submitted by Pflimlin to the National Assembly a motion of congratulations was sent by ALL the deputies to the generals who had valiantly defended the honour of the French Army.

While pretending to struggle against the Algerian war, the Stalinist deputies congratulated the generals on their excellent conduct in that war!

Both of one mind

This policy of support for the Pflimlin Government flowed from the French Communist Party's refusal to call on the working class to settle the country's political problems. On this point the Stalinists and the social democrats were of one mind.

While the Communist Party indulged in these anti-working-class and openly reactionary parliamentary manoeuvres, Stalinist spokesmen in the factories convened meetings.

But the action proposed in the course of endless speeches amounted to nothing more effective than petition-signing and the dispatch of telegrams to the Assembly.

The vote for the state of emergency, the vote for special powers and the congratulations to the generals could only strengthen the extremists in Algiers in their determination to impose their policy.

Behind his show of strength the full weakness of Pflimlin's Government stood revealed and it was at this stage that the extremists attempted their Ajaccio coup.

(To be continued)

LAST-DITCH BID TO SETTLE THE SETTLERS

From Our Paris Correspondent, Seymour Papert

'BUT it's the same ones back again,' exclaimed an Algerian settler bitterly disappointed to see his Saviour come to power surrounded by the usual parliamentary medley of socialists, radicals and what-have-you.

Spoken bitterly or with relief the same words must have been on the lips of millions of Frenchmen. Hence, in part, the flatness of Paris's reaction to the installation of the new Government. No jubilant parades of Gaullists. No mass expression of feeling against the régime.

The Communist Party demonstration on June 1 was

obviously a turn-out of the hard core of party militants (perhaps 20,000 in all) designed to create the impression of having done something—and to let off the pressure built up by three days of living on the alert against the putsch repeatedly predicted by the party leaders.

Stoppages of work for short periods were reported in a number of factories on the next two days, but no positive slogan was put forward.

An analysis of the slogans which caught on during the crisis is revealing. At the mass demonstration on May 28 the organizers did their best to have none at all.

Communist militants introduced their own: 'Down with de Gaulle' and 'Fascism shall not pass.'

More radical slogans spread

But the demonstrators (more than half of them workers) were well ahead of this, and more radical slogans spread rapidly, despite energetic attempts of Communist Party official organizers to squash them.

Among these were 'Peace in Algeria', 'The paras to the factories' (i.e., dissolve the airborne forces and put the paratroopers to work) and, though less widely, calls for a popular front government.

From one point of view these slogans go to the heart of the matter. Dissolve the military and paramilitary machine; end the war: these demands answer the most real and immediate needs of the working class.

But from another point of view they are terribly limited since they fail to raise the question of power even in the most rudimentary form.

Who could end the war in Algeria? Who could dissolve the paratroops?

They could not govern

The essence of the crisis was that Pflimlin could not end the war. Nor could Gaillard. Nor could Mollet. Nor any of the other possible parliamentary coalitions.

Not only could they not end the war: they could not govern the country. Long before the settlers' rebellion it was obvious that the whole French State machine was rapidly degenerating.

The greater part of the police, the army, the civil service was utterly demoralized if not frankly hostile and contemptuous of Parliament. The Algiers coup was the death-blow to an already half-paralysed organism.

General de Gaulle is not Massu and he is not the settlers of Algiers. It is already quite clear that though they brought him to power he has higher dreams than to serve France's most backward elements.

In fact he has offered himself to big capital as the only man who can pull off a last-ditch attempt to break free of the blackmail of these elements which have, for a long time, been a drag on the 'rational' development of French capitalism.

In this he has the support of Mollet, whose outlook is closely linked with that of capitalism.

Against the virtual certainty of an open class struggle if a frankly military dictatorship is imposed he offers at least the hope of getting out of the Algerian war and rationalizing the economy without a naked class fight.

In order to do this he will have to drive a wedge between the brass hats and the settlers, perhaps by offering the former the prospect of an integration into a bureaucratized French régime. He will have to risk stabbing in the back his most vociferous supporters.

Thus the state of affairs of three years ago is turned on its head: then a 'socialist' Mollet was needed to do the dirty on the workers to carry on the war; now a 'fascist' is necessary to do the dirty on his rabble to end the war.

WHAT STRONTIUM DOES TO OUR CHILDREN

By Our Medical Correspondent

IV. Radiostrontium

THIS radio-active material is inhaled in air, and absorbed through drinking water and from the surface of cereals and vegetables.

The major portion of strontium 90 fall-out enters the soil, however (in rain). Then it enters grass, the cow that eats the grass, the milk the cow produces, and the child or adult consuming the milk or dairy products.

Radio-active strontium is concentrated in bone. It only emits beta rays and is therefore not a genetic danger, like radiocaesium.

However, the fact that it is concentrated in the skeleton makes it even more dangerous, in a sense, than radiocaesium.

The actively developing bones of young children contain about four times as much radiostrontium as do the bones of adults. And a given amount of radiostrontium in a child's bones is about three times as harmful as the same amount in the bones of an adult.

The fall-out of strontium 90 is therefore at least ten times as harmful to a child as it is to an adult.

Sarcoma

The radio-activity in the bone may affect the bone itself, causing a tumour known as bone sarcoma. This usually affects the thigh bone but may occur at other sites. It causes severe pain as it erodes the membrane lining the bone. Spontaneous fracture of the bone may occur.

The tumour may invade the muscle surrounding the bone and eventually ulcerate through to the skin. Bits of tumour

may break off into the veins and be carried to the lungs.

No treatment short of amputation of the limb has any chance of being helpful.

Leukaemia

Radio-active material in bones may also result in leukaemia. This is a form of cancer of the white blood cells.

Although only a minority of leukaemia cases is due to man-made radiation there is little doubt that some cases are so caused and are not due to 'natural causes'. There is no known way at present of differentiating these from 'natural' leukaemia.

Normally, white cells are formed in the bone marrow and lymph glands. In leukaemia the marrow cavity becomes packed with abnormal white cells which may later flood the bloodstream.

The packed-out bone-marrow can no longer efficiently manufacture red cells, which are essential for carrying oxygen to various parts of the body. The child develops anaemia and becomes progressively paler, weaker and more breathless.

Other cells normally formed in the marrow are also interfered with. These are the platelets, which are essential for the normal process of blood clotting.

Haemorrhages therefore take place into the skin and there may be bleeding from the nose or mouth. Healthy white cells, necessary for mastering infections, may not be produced in sufficient numbers and severe ulceration of the mouth, throat and gums results.

The liver and spleen are often packed with the abnormal cells and enlarge considerably.

The disease is usually much more acute in children. It causes fever and rapid wasting but is not usually painful. A few cases may be temporarily arrested but the vast majority prove fatal.

V. 'Unanimity of Ignorance'

These are unpleasant facts, but it is no use running away from them. And the full reality may be more frightening than we know.

The Medical Research Council's 1956 publication 'Hazards to Man of Nuclear and Allied Radiation' contains the ominous statement: 'There are many large and serious gaps in our knowledge of the medical and biological effects of ionizing radiation'.

In the words of Ritchie Calder, in a letter published in The Times on May 30, 1957: 'This unanimity of ignorance is not reassuring; the risks to humanity are not in what the scientists know but in what the scientists do not know.'

The known risks are surely sufficient to warrant stopping the tests immediately and unconditionally.

Constant Reader | Two Books that Light up the Present

Two classics of Marxism which are especially helpful to understanding current events in France are 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte' (Marx, 1852) and 'The Only Road for Germany' (Trotsky, 1932).

Tribune has brilliantly employed quotations from 'The Eighteenth Brumaire' in its presentation of the French crisis—though what a pity that the worst of available translations was used, in which some passages become nonsense and the meaning of others is reversed!

Perhaps the main reason why 'The Eighteenth Brumaire' deserves study today is not such superficial similarities as exist between the coup d'état of December 1851 and that of May-June 1958 (Algerian generals etc.) but Marx's basic political analysis.

He comes out against the discussion of what happened in terms of a struggle between 'reaction' and 'the people'—'a night in which all cats are grey' and which 'veils the class struggle'.

And he shows the fatal consequences for the workers of

merging politically with the petty-bourgeois democrats, accepting their slogans and their leadership.

United front rejected

Trotsky's analysis of the passage of the German State through Bonapartism to fascism shows how the two working-class parties both rejected the united front that alone could have saved Germany and the world from Hitler's victory.

The social democrats followed the line of the 'lesser evil', supporting Hindenburg 'against' Hitler (much as the French communists supported Pflimlin 'against' de Gaulle), while the communists, operating Stalin's orders, were in practice helping the Nazis.

It was for circulating this and Trotsky's other writings on the 1930-33 crisis in Germany that the first British 'Trotskyists' were expelled from the Communist Party; they were, so to speak, 'premature united-frontists'.

The middle class

More nonsense is talked in the working-class movement about the middle class than about any other subject.

The Right wing justify their policies of 'restraint', 'moderation' and 'all-round half-heartedness with the argument that 'you mustn't antagonize the middle class'.

Yet the Right wing has in historical fact done just this again and again: see, for instance, what happened with the Labour Governments of 1924, 1929-31 and 1945-51.

Basis for fascism

In fact it is Right-wing policy that drives the middle class into the arms of reaction.

The Right wing does just enough, industrially and politically, to irritate the middle class, while not impressing them with the power and determination of the workers.

In Italy in the early 1920s and again in Germany ten years later the hesitant, disunited, indecisive actions of the Labour movement made it seem to the middle sections a factor capable of causing disorder and inconvenience without being able to take control and refashion society in its own way.

This provided the basis for fascism.

General-Strike Lesson

It is when the working class is acting with the maximum militant unity that the middle class begins to swing over to its side.

This was seen very clearly during the last days of the General Strike of 1926, just before the sell-out.

It is important for the workers' organizations to take up the special demands of the middle class, and to carry on direct work among them (and the Right wing usually neglect both these things, since what dictates their attitude is not really the interests of the middle class but those of the monopoly capitalists!).

But the only road to winning great masses of the middle class solidly to the workers' side is to demonstrate the immense strength of Labour and its ability to enforce its will upon capital.

BRIAN PEARCE

YUGOSLAVIA

KHRUSHCHEV'S LIES MUST BE ANSWERED

By Michael Banda

THE campaign against the Yugoslav Communist Party has assumed a sinister aspect with Khrushchev's furious outburst at the Sofia congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party.

Khrushchev—no mincer of words—demanded obsequious loyalty in place of critical independence and repeated his threats against ALL dissident elements in the Stalinist world.

In this sense the Sofia speech denotes a sharpening attack against the working class in eastern Europe and a more conciliatory foreign policy towards imperialism. This latter aspect of Soviet policy is confirmed by the silence on de Gaulle and the overtures made to the U.S. imperialists in Khrushchev's letter to Eisenhower.

Khrushchev's technique was not much cruder than the Chinese. He attacked the Yugoslav's as 'revisionists' and then proceeded to define revisionism as a 'modern Trojan horse' of the imperialist camp and revisionists as people who desire 'the preservation or the restoration of capitalism'.

One example of this 'revisionism' given by Khrushchev is enough to reveal the hollowness of the argument.

'The Yugoslav leaders did particularly great harm to the cause of socialism by their public pronouncements and their actions during the Hungarian events.

'During the counter-revolutionary putsch in Budapest, the Yugoslav Embassy, in effect, became a centre for those who had started the struggle against the people's democratic

system in Hungary, a refuge for the treacherous and capitulationist Nagy-Losonczy group.

'Remember the unprecedented speech made by Comrade Tito in Pula, in which he took the rebels in Hungary under his wing, while describing the fraternal assistance of the USSR to the Hungarian people as "Soviet intervention"—a speech which contained direct calls to certain forces in other socialist countries to follow the so-called "Yugoslav road".'

The so-called 'Yugoslav road', it may be remembered, was Kardelj's call for a government based on workers' councils.

'Much experience and merit'

That does not exhaust the question, however. If the Nagy-Losonczy group were preparing to restore capitalism in league with Tito then why have they not been put on trial for these crimes?

And how does this allegation square up with the explicit statement of Khrushchev elsewhere in his speech:

'The Yugoslav communists have much revolutionary experience and great merits in the struggle against our common class enemies. The working class and the entire working people of Yugoslavia made a notable contribution to the struggle against fascism in the second world war.'

No matter what differences separate British socialists from Tito—and there are many—they must not let this latest canard go unanswered. And if the Soviet bureaucrats want to apply economic sanctions let them do it to the class enemy, such as de Gaulle's France, and not to another workers' State.

AMERICAN WORKERS OUR REAL ALLIES

'The immediate task facing American socialists is the formation of a Labour Party, independent of the capitalist parties, and firmly based on the organized working class,' said Farrell Dobbs, secretary of the U.S. Socialist Workers' Party, at a meeting in Leeds last Sunday.

There were definite grounds for optimism on the American political scene, he said.

The American socialist movement had a long way to go and many obstacles to overcome. But the British Labour movement had a real ally in the American workers.

LETTER

LANCASHIRE MINERS FIGHT PIT CLOSURES

REDUNDANCY in the mining industry if mentioned last year would have raised a laugh. It couldn't happen!

But now in a changing situation shadows of pre-war conditions, of unemployment, of short time, are having to be faced.

The National Coal Board has declared its intentions to commence closure of some collieries on economy grounds. The figure of six to seven pits in the Wigan district has been mentioned and now the process may well be speeded up.

However the attempts by the Board to saddle the miner with the burden of solving the crisis of capitalism is being vigorously opposed.

The Lancashire area of the National Union of Mineworkers, is to be asked to give instructions 'that no agreement be made in the area for the closure of any pit on grounds of economy'.

It is clear that the rank-and-file miner is not prepared to help to create a pool of unemployment for use in driving down his own standard of living.

Salford 5.

E. Woolley