

THE NEWSLETTER

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RANK-AND-FILE CONFERENCE IN NOVEMBER

A RANK-AND-FILE conference to discuss working-class resistance to the Tory offensive is to be held in the Holborn Hall, London, on Sunday, November 16, under the slogan 'Unity in Action'. It has been called by the Editorial Board of The Newsletter, whose draft discussion statement, printed below, is now in the hands of leading militants in the mines, docks, engineering, transport and other industries.

All trade union branches, shop stewards' committees, trades councils and district committees will be invited to send representatives, as well as liaison committees and other unofficial bodies, and ad hoc meetings of workers on the job, in factories, garages, pits, on building sites and on the docks.

WAGES and JOBS will be the main themes of the conference: the fight to maintain and improve wages, conditions and workshop organization; the fight to prevent the growth of unemployment and, by linking the unemployed workers with the forces of organized Labour in common struggle, to prevent their use as blacklegs.

Special attention will also be paid to the problems of two sections of the community: old age pensioners and young people.

In the thirteen weeks between now and the conference The Newsletter and its supporters will be campaigning for the widest possible discussion by industrial workers of the draft statement, and for the election of delegates representing the rank and file in a wide variety of industries.

Series of industrial broadsheets

The campaign will take two forms:

(1) The publication of a series of twopenny broadsheets devoted to the problems of particular industries and designed for mass sale on the job.

These broadsheets will be largely written by workers them-

selves; they will appear as supplements to The Newsletter as the Strike Bulletin did during the London bus dispute. A docks broadsheet is now being prepared.

(2) A tour of the principal industrial centres by members of the Editorial Board of The Newsletter to address factory gate meetings and discuss the conference with workers.

It is intended to cover Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Leeds, Coventry, Birmingham and London with a Newsletter loudspeaker van. Dates of visits will be announced later. Local campaign committees are being set up to plan details.

How readers can help

For all this work, help of two kinds from our readers is urgently needed.

First, to prepare and run a conference such as this is going to mean extra expenses in postage, stationery, fares, telephone calls and so on.

Readers who can spare donations or take collections will be helping to bring together representatives of the rank and file in various industries for joint discussion of their problems, and so helping to achieve working-class victories in the impending industrial conflicts.

Secondly, we want the opinions of readers and of their workmates on the draft statement. Our columns are open to any reader who would like to contribute a point of view to the discussion—but please try to keep your letters within 200 words.

UNITY IN ACTION: OUR DISCUSSION STATEMENT

THE Tory Government and the employers have declared war on the working people. As a result of their actions it is becoming harder for working-class families to manage.

Every day something goes up in cost: rent, food or clothing. The basic wages in many industries are a farce. Some of us have got by in the past by working overtime, or doing bonus or piece-work. Now overtime is being knocked out by the employers, without any additional payment being made to cover it.

New piece-work and bonus targets are being introduced which are difficult to earn on. They are simply a device to get us to work harder for less money.

There are tens of thousands of men and women who have no way of earning above the basic rate and who are really feeling the pinch.

More and more able-bodied men and women are being forced on to the dole queue. There are now over 400,000 signing on.

Unless we do something about it, very quickly, we are going back to the hungry thirties—to the years of long dole

queues, hungry children and men and women driven mad trying to rear a family decently.



To us it seems the height of madness to speak of the great technical advances that have been made and at the same time to see people go without.

If we can build huge atomic power stations, send rockets to the moon and introduce automation that can produce goods at the push of a button, then surely the question arises:

Are we going to use all these great advances to lighten man's burden or is it all going to enrich still further a handful of rich people who have never done a day's work in their lives?

The only real long-term solution to our problems, we think, is to return a Labour government that has a genuine socialist policy.

But that will not come about by itself. The great achieve-

(Continued overleaf)

COMMENTARY

PREPARE FOR STRUGGLE

THE slump is upon us, and nobody is now trying to hide this fact. On returning from their annual holiday Vauxhall workers were told that 600 of them will be sacked on August 28. William Jessop and Sons, Sheffield, employing 3,000 steelworkers, are to introduce a four-day week from August 24. A Lancashire calico printing works is to close and 350 are likely to be laid off. Another Lancashire works, making lamps, is to close for six months and 320 will be sacked. A Derby net and lace mill, employing 40, is to close. The Financial Times forecasts that a 'downturn' in the British motor industry is 'inevitable'.

What does a slump mean for the working class? It means that a new and more bitter stage of the struggle to decide who is to bear the burden of the slump—the struggle that began with the recent strikes of busmen, market men and dockers—is about to open. Labour's leaders and Labour's policies are going to be put to the test. Are proper preparations being made? Anyone who claims they are is simply deceiving the workers. The cold fact is that no warning is being given, no comprehensive strategy is being worked out, for class battles which the workers *must* win if they are not to be thrown back to the days of the dole queue and of wage cuts. Far too little has been done to bring home to the workers the grave lessons of the recent round of strikes. The whole working class will pay dearly if the cardinal weakness—the failure to extend the bus strike and turn it against the Tory Government—is repeated in the future struggles. Yet there is no sign that the leaders of the Trades Union Congress or of the Labour Party have learned anything. They are incapable of leading a real struggle. They are still living in the years of full employment, regular wage concessions, fairly widespread prosperity and buoyant illusions about 'contemporary capitalism'. Those years have passed away.

Marxists are distinguished from reformists by their insistence, among other things, on the need to prepare the working class for struggle, just as the capitalist class is preparing. There are plans to use Haringay Arena in a dock strike as a distribution centre for goods brought in by scab lorries. Landings for the Christmas trade are already well advanced in the Port of London. Guardsmen at Wellington Barracks are being taught how to handle cranes. Clearly the Government intends to intervene briskly in a dock strike. The bosses are getting ready for struggle. So must we. That is why THE NEWSLETTER is calling an industrial conference in November. This gathering will tackle the problems that none of the 'official' working-class organizations puts on its conference agenda. The keynote of the conference is unity in action, and we look forward to a vigorous discussion. Why has the conference been called by THE NEWSLETTER? Simply because there is no other force in the Labour movement prepared to bring together representatives of the rank and file in different industries. As the only Marxist weekly paper in Britain, we are bound to shoulder our responsibility to help prepare our class for struggle.

CONFERENCE (Continued from front page)

ments of our movement have had to be fought for against all manner of doubters and waverers.



CAN any of us be satisfied with the present policies of the trade union and Labour leaders? Do they go far enough? Do they go to the root of our problems—the existence of the capitalist system, dedicated to the welfare of the few? Do they present a fighting socialist alternative?

What is there to inspire us in the attitude of the Trades Union Congress, who when faced with a struggle in support of the busmen failed lamentably to unite the whole working class to defeat a common enemy?

Can we feel really confident when every hack Tory politician is congratulating the TUC on its 'wise and statesman-like attitude'?

Is it not a fact that Labour's future election policy gives no guarantee that real socialist policies are going to be introduced?

If our full power and strength were used today around a united industrial and political programme, then our interests, which are the interests of the majority, would have to prevail.

No matter what clever arguments are used, we are determined that we must be prepared to do everything in our power, including taking industrial action, to halt the scourge of unemployment.

Never again do we want to see able-bodied men and women beg for what should be theirs by right.



BECAUSE of all these problems, and of the need to get something done about them, THE NEWSLETTER is calling a conference on November 16 at the Holborn Hall, London.

We hope that to this conference will come the ordinary men and women of our movement, the old age pensioners, the working men and women and the unemployed.

We want to hear what you think about the following:

HOW CAN WE stop rising prices?

HOW CAN WE increase wages and shorten hours?

HOW CAN WE maintain full employment?

HOW CAN WE increase old age pensions?

It does not matter if you are not a great speaker or a big name in the movement. To us the ordinary rank-and-file trade union and Labour Party worker is the backbone of the working-class movement.

We hope that as a result of our conference and discussion a strong movement will grow—a movement that will build up solidarity among all trade unionists fighting for wage increases and shorter hours, that will forge links between the organized working class and the unemployed, so that they can wage a common struggle for work or maintenance at trade union rates.

Into this movement we want to bring young people, whose problems will have a big place on our agenda. A powerful movement fighting with them for their future is the best way forward for all of us.

Not least, this movement will give hope to the old age pensioners that a real struggle will be waged on their behalf.

Above all, through industrial and political action, it must force the defeat of this Tory Government and the return of a Labour government pledged to socialist policies.

WHITE WOMAN'S BURDEN?

'Now and again a few stones are thrown, but that happens to everyone.'

—Article in the Daily Telegraph, August 12, on the life of a British policewoman in Cyprus.

HERE'S THE REAL SAFEGUARD AGAINST FIDDLING

By BRIAN BEHAN

I READ with interest the letter from Mark Young in last week's New Statesman. I don't think that Mark Young has thought seriously enough about the problems that face the whole trade union movement, of which the Electrical Trades Union is a part.

Because he looks at the ETU in isolation his letter tends to be one-sided, misleading and open to quite wrong conclusions.

An untrue impression is now being created that fiddling of votes is done only in the ETU and only by members of the Communist Party.

As any active trade unionist knows, this is a problem in most unions, and in fact I have known many Communist Party members to fight quite vigorously against fiddling even when they had the power at branch level to do it themselves.

Right wing organize too

I have known members of the Communist Party who have been kept out of trade union positions as a result of gross fiddling by their opponents.

On the question of advisory committees, it is surely understood by all in the movement that groupings, committees and fractions—from Left to Right—exist in every union.

The Right wing organize quite effectively in many unions. They don't need to go outside the rules to do it. Their control of the machine is sufficient.

Doesn't Catholic Action organize in the trade unions and put forward candidates? Doesn't the Daily Telegraph from time to time tell us coyly who the 'genuine' opposition candidate is?

To say these things is not to endorse fiddling by anyone, but simply to recognize things as they are in order that we can look at what the real problem is and advance a solution.

'Capitalism is good for you'

Fiddling, corruption and so forth are symptoms of a struggle that has gone on since the birth of trade unions. This struggle is a reflection of the struggle that goes on in society between employers and workers, a struggle that with each swing of the economic pendulum varies between desire for reforms and for revolution.

(Continued overleaf)

Radio-Active Dangers in the Factory

Supplementing this week's report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the effects of atomic radiation, our scientific correspondent J. H. BRADLEY here discusses the chief radio-active dangers that workers on the factory floor are likely to meet every day.

THIS account is not meant for people who make or use radio-active instruments or X-rays, but for the man who may run across them in automatic controls, safety devices, inspections or repairs, just as he runs across many other dangers.

No industrial radio-active device need be in any way unsafe, even amid fires and explosions, though some of them cannot be expected to stand up to corrosive chemicals and fires at the same time.

They should all be put as far from workers as possible, and well screened.

ABOVE OR BELOW. Remember, if there is radio-active material in the shop above or below, or the next room, some radiation may reach you. A fire might let it loose all over the place.

Under no circumstances need a worker wear a radio-active badge or ring as a safety guard on a machine, because his skin will receive radiation.

Any failure in the radiation detector will mean that the machine is unsafe—violating the first principle that all safety devices must 'fail-safe'.

There are far better methods for nearly all machine guards, without the dangers of the old photo-electric devices.

The main legitimate uses of radio-active devices in routine production can be classed as:

Thickness measurement (without contact, as on hot materials, layers of one material on another, where only one side can be got at etc.);

Level and position indicators (inside steel tanks and such places where other devices are difficult or dangerous);

Batch and revolution counting;

Detecting empty packages;

Automatic conveyor routing;

Smoke and fire alarms;

Anti-static ionizers (with dusty and fibrous materials, as in operating theatres);

Leak and blockage tracing;

Measurement of wear;

Search for cracks and flaws;

Examination of inaccessible parts (girders encased in concrete, jammed valves etc.).

PERFECTLY REASONABLE. It is perfectly reasonable for workers to demand that all inspection by X-rays or isotopes shall be done at night or week-ends and all sources of radiation taken away (or X-ray tubes turned off) during working hours.

If a management alleges that some radiograph needs a very long exposure, the answer is that it can be done by several short exposures, with the source replaced in exactly the same position each night.

All devices should have to be approved and inspected by the Atomic Energy Authority for fire resistance, impossibility of accidental exposure to the radio-active source, resistance to tampering, safety of the high-voltage units needed in all radiation detectors, safety of the machine in case of a fault, and—not least—that radiation gives the safest way of doing the job.

CAN INCREASE SAFETY. If this is done, radiation instruments and controls can be far safer than many machines already in use.

Indeed, they can greatly increase industrial safety by abolishing most of the failures in safety devices due to dirt, grease, metal shavings, stray light, electrical faults, accidental damage or foolish tinkering.

When all is said, the greatest cause of industrial accidents is things falling on people, and, as I sought to show last week, there are many dangers of injury and poisoning quite as bad as radio-activity, about which we hear not a word.

BRIAN BEHAN (Continued from previous page)

There are sections of the trade union movement that sincerely believe that capitalism is good for you

They believe that the main job of a trade union is to cooperate to secure some reforms, while refraining from any actions likely to end the system.

The holders of these principles do not incur any great hardship because of them. On the contrary, particularly in boom periods, they are assured of comfortable trade union posts at quite decent salaries.

Their future prospects are even better. The boards of nationalized industries carry a number of trade union veterans at salaries of several thousand pounds a year. Now even the House of Lords is to get its quota from the boards.

How to detect them

It follows quite logically that if the main trend of trade union leaders' activity is top negotiations and compromise, then what is needed is not a powerful, active rank-and-file movement but that all real power should be concentrated at the top.

The problem arises: how does one detect the Right wing, particularly if it hoists the red flag?

I think one simple test is sufficient.

How much real power do the members of a union exercise?

Do the leaders consult them before they accept wage claims or alterations to labour conditions?

Have the members the right of communication between branches and access to the union journal?

Can the members vote on salaries, delegation fees etc. with a real knowledge of the amounts involved per person, plus discussion both in the union journal and in the branches before the vote is taken?

Conscious rank and file

Without measures like these it is impossible to create the only real safeguard against fiddling and corruption—a conscious rank and file.

Even more important: without these being fought for now the trade unions will be unable to defend their members' interests from the coming attacks of the employers.

Look at Mr Jack Cooper's position now with his gasmen. Despite his cant about working together with the employers and so on, the Government will not concede him as much as more rebellious types are given!

We need democracy in the trade unions, not to see one man replace another, but to secure a policy that corresponds to the interests of the members, and a leadership that will carry out this policy.

Voting fiddles are the sign of a crisis in the leadership. If leaders have no policy for the coming struggles fiddling can well become more widespread.

Fight for alternative policies

Militant trade unionists, including the rank and file of the Communist Party, must neither be discouraged, nor deflected from the main struggle.

The task is not to elect an alternative personality with no policy except 'Elect me and I will do the job', but to fight for alternative POLICIES and leaders who will carry them out.

The choice before the unions is not between Stalinist leaders and Right-wing leaders.

The choice is between countenancing leaders who betray their members' interests, and a struggle for a rank-and-file policy and programme that will throw up leaders whose first concern is their members' interests.

Sell the Humber Hawks

Such leaders would immediately reduce the outrageous salaries and delegation fees that exist in most unions, including the ETU, to the average wage earned in the industry.

Such leaders would sell the Humber Hawks and buy cheap vans with loudspeakers and use them for propaganda.

Such leaders would always consult their members on strike action, not only to defend and improve conditions, but also against rocket sites and H-bombs.

Such leaders would declare their intention of stopping unemployment by every means, including strike action.

Rather than chasing after courts of inquiry into trade unions, even under Trades Union Congress auspices, the rank-and-file trade unionist would do better to fight for a rank-and-file programme and reject or select leaders in relation to it.

EDUCATION**SCHOOL-LEAVING AGE CAN AND MUST BE RAISED TO 16—IN THREE YEARS' TIME**

By Peter Cadogan

THE Labour Party's education policy document 'Learning to Live' says: 'It is Labour's aim to raise the school leaving age to 16 as soon as possible, but . . . the shortage of teachers may make this impossible in the first five years of the next Labour Government.'

Are we to declare the battle lost before we even start it?

It would be perfectly possible for a Labour government to announce that the school leaving age is to be raised to 16 in three years' time.

It is true that something like panic would then assail all education committees and every secondary modern head and staff! But the cobwebs would be off in no time.

It can be done. What it requires is tremendous socialist incentive. It will call for a fundamentally new approach to education in secondary modern schools.

You might not think from 'Learning to Live' that there is only one big problem before English education: revolutionizing the schools that provide so-called secondary education for 75 per cent. of the children of this country.

Having done all my teaching in these schools I know, as all other secondary modern teachers know, that we do NOT provide secondary education. (Exceptional work with GCE classes etc. does not alter matters.)

Most of us are prepared to go to all sorts of lengths to see to it that our own children do not go to the schools in which we teach. Can you think of a more shattering criticism?

Under the present arrangement boys and girls spend three full years in a secondary modern school and then in their fourth year leave at the end of the term in which the fifteenth birthday occurs. 'Learning to Live' proposes a full fourth year for all. So far so good.

SECONDARY SCHOOL OBJECTIVES

No attempt is made however to suggest the educational purpose and content of the fourth year.

This problem was placed in the laps of teachers when the school leaving age was raised to fifteen. But it was never faced. With a disintegrating fourth year on their hands teachers just 'cope'. What else can they be expected to do?

A Labour Ministry of Education insisting upon a full fourth year in secondary modern schools must answer the question of its content in a way that carries conviction in the staff rooms.

If the first weakness of the secondary moderns is the impossibility of providing secondary education in the time allowed, the second weakness is the lack of an objective that can be grasped not only by education committees, teachers and parents, but also by the pupils themselves.

The simple, necessary and intelligible objective is a school leaving examination.

It is significant that although the GCE was not intended as a school leaving certificate that is exactly what it has turned out to be. Regardless of its creators' intention, secondary

education has demanded the thing that way.

But GCE standards are too high and too limiting for its use as a school leaving examination. What is required now is a new certificate, one that is a fair test of average proficiency in the average boy or girl. The GCE can then revert to its original university entrance purpose.

So what we want is a full five year course in all secondary modern schools culminating in the minimum requirement of a school leaving certificate.

In that context it becomes possible to see the current proposal for a full four years course as one step towards the real objective. Then it really makes sense.

We might devise a temporary school leaving certificate for use at the end of the four years pending the introduction of the five years course. Reading Education Committee has already done this.

BEYOND THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

'Learning to Live' falters again when having written off the task of raising the school leaving age to 16 in the next five years it omits to mention that in the USA and the Soviet Union the school leaving age has either reached 17 already or is about to do so.

If we can raise the school leaving age to 16 in three years' time we can proceed to raise it to 17 in less than ten years.

EDUCATION AND THE CHURCH

It is in the chapter on primary schools that the question of Church schools should have been raised. This is the subject you will not read about in 'Learning to Live'. It is regarded as too hot to touch.

The question of the Church has bedevilled education for 150 years. It is high time we settled the matter.

A vast number of Church schools remain. They are nearly all very old. Some were built over a hundred years ago.

You could go into scores of towns and villages and collect a fantastic story of primitive and inadequate conditions.

Teachers engaged by the Church employer but paid by the State are waging a heroic struggle against unnecessary odds.

It is not only a question of dilapidated buildings, depressing environment and often incredible sanitary conditions. There is frequently active interference of clergy in the internal affairs of the school. Some clergy understand professional relations. Some do not.

It is quite impossible for teachers in these schools to be in opposition to their employers publicly. Open division would have a very bad effect upon parents and children, so a sort of conspiracy of silence prevails.

It is the responsibility of the Labour Party to lay down as a general principle that all these schools should be taken over by the State even if this means hurting some clerical feelings.

This process is of course already taking place. Every year a considerable number of Church schools are replaced.

But this has to be vastly accelerated.

Especially is it important to get rapid action in rural areas, where in tiny and inadequate all-age Church schools children frequently get only a fraction of the opportunities open to town children.

(To be Concluded)

INDIA

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN KERALA

MARXIST-LED WORKERS DEFY STICKS AND BULLETS OF STALINIST-CONTROLLED POLICE

From Our Special Correspondent, M. Rashid

GREAT hopes were aroused in the hearts of the common people of Kerala, the smallest state in the Indian Union, when the Communist Party came into power there sixteen months ago.

E. M. S. Nambudiripad, member of the Indian Communist

Party's political committee and a leading theoretician, in a speech just after he became Chief Minister, promised a 25 per cent. rise in basic pay, the ending of landlordism and the distribution of the land among the tillers of the soil, non-interference by the police in trade union struggles and full civil liberties.

In its election manifesto, too, the Communist Party had promised all these things.

Soon after the formation of the communist administration workers of the PWD workshop—an establishment directly run by the Government—went on strike, as a last measure, to get their grievances redressed.

The PWD workshop trade union was under the leadership of the Revolutionary Socialist Party, a party which accepts Marxism-Leninism as its guide to action.

Communist-led workers attacked

The police indiscriminately charged the PWD workers with lathis (heavy iron-bound sticks). Then the Government issued a Press statement denying the lathi charge.

A few days later agricultural labourers at Kollengode, near Pelghat, struck work under the leadership of the local Communist Party.

Again the police lathi-charged, and many labourers, including a leading worker in the local Communist Party, received serious injuries. Again the Government denied the lathi charge.

When workers at the cashew-nut factory in Kilikollur, near Quilon, went on strike—again under the leadership of the local Communist Party—the police made a brutal lathi charge.

In this instance the Government was compelled to hold an inquiry, but the report has not yet been published.

Stalinists organize splinter unions

The leaders of the Communist Party are trying by every means to destroy the influence of the Revolutionary Socialist Party in the trade union field.

Wherever the majority of the workers are members of the RSP-led trade union, the Stalinists organize splinter unions, which the Government is encouraging.

T. K. Dwakaran, president of the Kerala branch of the RSP-led United Trade Union Congress (UTUC) had to resort to hunger strike to achieve some elementary demands of the workers in State-owned industries.

But to compel the Government to carry out its promises, the PWD workshop workers had again to go on strike—and underwent repressions and arrests.

In a major textile mill recently there was a very long struggle, led by the non-Stalinist trade union, against the Government's policy of discrimination against socialist workers.

Three workers were killed

During this struggle, which lasted for two months, 1,376 persons were arrested.

To crown all these repressions, on July 26 the communist Government's police fired twenty-seven rounds on cashew-nut factory workers who were peacefully picketing at Kundara, near Quilon.

Three workers died and six others were seriously injured.

The officials of the trade union which is leading the strike, active RSP workers, were arrested and beaten. Their injuries include broken bones.

Before the police fired on the cashew-nut workers there was no warning or lathi charge or firing of tear-gas shells.

Protest strikes and processions

The Kerala Government and Communist Party leaders justify the police firing. But S. A. Dange, secretary of the All-India Trade Union Congress and leader of the communist group in the Indian Parliament, at first criticized the police, though it seems he is now changing his mind and justifying

their action.

On July 29 there were general strikes throughout Kerala protesting against the murder of workers and the suppression of civil liberties. That evening there were huge mass processions and protest meetings in towns and villages throughout the state.

IRELAND

IRISH LABOUR STUDENTS CHALLENGE IRELAND'S ESTABLISHMENT

'WE SHALL NOT IGNORE THIS MISERY'

We reprint below, with acknowledgments to the Irish socialist paper *The Plough*, extracts from a declaration issued by the newly-formed Pádraig O Conaire branch of the Labour Party at University College, Cork.

THIS recently founded branch of the Labour Party consists of university students, both night and day. It reflects a growing interest of students in serious politics. We have realized that political decisions decisively affect and determine our lives whether we like it or not . . .

Is it not the greatest turning away from reality of all to be passively indifferent to the misery, corruption and injustice that are so blatantly rife around us and to live for a few sheltered years in a college such as this, cut off from all the disturbing conscience-striking facts of present-day Ireland? . . .

One in twelve unemployed

Here are some of those facts, true and unexaggerated:

- (1) One out of every six families in Ireland is on the borderline of starvation, i.e., below the necessary minimum diet as stipulated by Sir Jack Drummond, the late eminent British dietician.
- (2) Over 1,000 a week are emigrating.
- (3) One out of every twelve who want work can't get it.
- (4) Do you know that an unemployed man, his wife and two children get £2 1s. per week dole? And you must prove you want work to get the dole, i.e., have six stamps at least per annum . . .

Last year 60,000 (one in every 50) emigrated. Over 70,000 average unemployed. This is not new. In the last 100 years seven millions have emigrated.

We are the only country in the world to have a declining population. We have the lowest marriage rate in the world. Our agricultural productivity per acre is second lowest in Europe . . .

Britain still dominates Ireland

The simple fact is that Britain still actually does dominate Ireland. Politically this domination reflects itself in the two Statelets set up by force under the 1920 Ireland Act . . .

Over 50 per cent. of all Irish banking capital is British owned . . . ICI and Unilever own or control every firm in Ireland connected with chemicals, fertilizers, paints, soaps and fats. J. A. Rank owns 80 per cent. of our mills and is expanding his (already) 40 per cent. hold on the bakeries.

The British cattle monopolists will not tolerate an Irish dead meat trade with its subsidiary home industries . . .

While agreeing with the main aim of Sinn Féin (i.e., to get rid of British political and economic influence) and recognizing the noble idealism of many of its members, we consider its main defect is to ignore the real class position.

Why is Labour stagnant?

Its social programme is sufficiently vague as to be meaningless, and its tactics to end partition have only served to accentuate sectarian divisions and bolster the Stormont régime. as recent elections have shown.

Unfortunately the Labour Party has not, unlike in other countries, succeeded in gaining the support of all the working people . . . The present stagnant state of the Labour Party is due primarily to the lack of both ideas and selfless leaders . . .

The trouble with us students is not only apathy but fear, fear of holding unpopular views, fear of the nameless 'they' . . .

Discussion with members of the branch will at any rate help you to work out your ideas with those who aren't afraid to hold 'dangerous' views if they are truthful ones.

ALGERIA

WOMEN STUDENTS APPEAL FOR HELP

THE Committee of Women Students of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco has appealed to women throughout the world to help women patriots imprisoned by French imperialism in Algeria.

Protests addressed to the appropriate French authorities should demand:

THAT the Algerian women patriots sentenced to death shall not be executed.

THAT the treatment of Algerian women prisoners shall conform to the Geneva International Conventions.

THAT their living conditions shall be improved and be subject to the control of the International Red Cross.

In addition to Djamila Bouhired, Djamila Bouazza and Jacqueline Guerroudj, whose death sentences were commuted to life imprisonment after widespread international protest, the appeal names many more.

Children are detained too

Hundreds of women political prisoners are detained by the French in the prisons of Algiers, Maison-Carrée, Constantine, Tlemcen, Oran, Blida, Bougie and Orleansville. Children as well as women are detained in the concentration camps of Beni-Messous and Zeralda.

None of them escapes torture, the appeal declares. A 40-year-old woman was tortured by water and electricity for two days. She was then hung by her arms for three days and barbed wire was placed round her head so that she could not move.

The appeal also asks for material help to be sent to the International Red Cross for the fund for Djamila Bouhired and her companions.

NEW GUINEA

VILLAGERS REFUSED TO PAY HEAD TAX: SHOT DOWN BY ARMED POLICE

From a Special Correspondent

THERE have been widespread protests from the Labour movement in Australia against the shooting on August 4 of New Guinea villagers who were demonstrating against the payment of head tax.

An armed patrol of ninety-five men was sent to collect head tax of £2 per year by force from villagers in Navuneram on the northern tip of Bougainville Island.

This island forms part of the United Nations Trust Territory of New Guinea, administered by the Australian Government.

The villagers had refused to pay tax or to join the Local Native Government Council. Their attitude is regarded by the authorities as a test case for other villages in the area.

The patrol was attacked by a demonstration of several hundred people who threw stones and used slings against the police, who then opened fire.

Two villagers were killed and three arrested, two of whom were jailed for six months for refusal to pay tax.

Why You Should Be a Socialist

This is the first of a series of articles explaining why YOU should be a socialist. They are written by Councillor HARRY FINCH, Birmingham shop steward and member of the Editorial Board of The Newsletter.

BRITAIN is building atomic power stations, and scientists claim that the possibility of unlimited thermo-nuclear power lies within our grasp. YET not many weeks ago unemployed Welsh workers were marching through the valleys to demand work.

Thousands of millions of pounds are spent each year on weapons of mass slaughter. YET our old folk spend the evening of their lives in poverty and hunger on a miserable pension. H-bombers patrol our skies. Rocket bases are under construction. YET hundreds of thousands in Britain live in slums and sub-standard houses—and many are threatened with eviction in October.

Thousands of millions of dollars worth of food lies buried in underground deep-freeze vaults in the USA. Washington pays the farmers not to grow food. YET one-third of the world's population lives in permanent hunger, and diseases due to malnutrition are rife in Africa and Asia.

When workers in Algeria, Cyprus, Kenya, Malaya or other colonies cry out in their agony, demanding dignity and freedom, they are greeted with bullets, bombs and torture.

And the crowning paradox of all: in the USA over five million workers are walking the streets looking for jobs that are not there—while ever more ingenious automatic machines are installed in the factories that have laid them off, turning out the latest in cars and television sets.

This system is bankrupt

Once again the whole bankruptcy of this capitalist system is plain for all to see.

How often have we been told in these past few years that capitalism could now plan its system and prevent slumps? But even with the greatest armaments programme in history they cannot bolster up their system.

No amount of rockets to the moon or ZETA installations can hide the truth. Indeed, these scientific achievements that leave the poor poor and make the rich richer only prove that capitalism is doomed.

A system which cannot feed and clothe the people of the world, despite all the marvels that science offers to humanity, is totally unfit to remain. Our future and our children's future depend on getting rid of it.

The greedy millionaires who control our lives through the ownership of the means of production—the factories and machines—sense the challenge to their domination.

That is why they waste the wealth of the world in their search for ultimate weapons. Even H-bomb rockets are not enough for them.

If these men are left in power they will plunge the world into holocaust in the hope of saving capitalism. All the wars against the colonial peoples are means whereby the capitalists hope to crush the workers of the entire world.

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BUT the workers have the power in their own hands to banish the nightmare of capitalism for ever.

These are stirring times we live in, because the working class is making history. It is time to restate our socialist principles, to discuss WHY we want socialism, HOW we

can get it, and what are the main obstacles in its path.

It is time to win thousands and tens of thousands more workers to the socialist banner, in the way the pioneers of our movement used to do.

Let us look this week at the fundamental reason why socialism must come—the nature of what we call the economic contradictions of the capitalist system.

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SOCIALISTS believe that capitalism, because of the very nature of the system, cannot stave off slumps indefinitely.

All profits are extracted from the 'unpaid labour' of the working class—i.e., the time spent by the workers in producing a surplus over and above the value of their own wages.

Even the wealth passed between capitalist and capitalist in their buying and selling operations comes from the workers' unpaid labour.

Eventually more goods are produced than can be sold, for the workers of the world are never paid enough to buy back the total amount of goods they produce.

Social production, private appropriation

A slump may come in different ways. It may be the machine tool industry, as in Britain, suffering from reduced orders owing to lack of expansion in certain consumer industries.

But however it starts a slump boils down to the basic contradiction of capitalism—the goods that are produced socially, by millions of workers collaborating from the raw material stage to the finished product stage, are not owned by the working class which produces them, but by the shareholders of mighty monopolies and trusts, who sell them for private profit.

Take industry out of the hands of the capitalists, put it into the hands of the whole of society—and then you will have social ownership in harmony with social production, and production can be planned for the good of all instead of being carried on planlessly for the profit of a few.

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THERE is another major contradiction of capitalism which should be mentioned at this point. The system entails an international division of labour—yet each capitalist State is hemmed in by tariffs and restrictions.

The imperialist countries dominate underdeveloped regions and keep them backward.

The whole purpose of western rearmament is to open Russia, China and eastern Europe for capitalist exploitation in order to 'save' the system.

This contradiction will be eliminated as the workers take over production in each country, and come together to plan production on an international scale.

National boundaries will in time become mere geographical boundaries. Peace and plenty will lie ahead.

Constant Reader | Legend and Reality

THE Middle East situation, with Anglo-American troops intervening to support reactionary régimes, has been compared to the Spanish situation of twenty years ago, when the interventionist role was played by Germany and Italy.

The comparison has much to recommend it, especially in that it must make people ask themselves just what was settled by the Allied victory in the second world war.

It also should cause us all to take a long, hard look at the reality behind the legends about Soviet support for the Spanish Republic.

'Soviet aid to the Loyalists, after reaching a maximum in December of 1936 in order to save Madrid, gradually diminished through 1937', writes David T. Cattell, whose study of 'Soviet Diplomacy and the Spanish Civil War' appeared recently.

Russia 'only played a delaying game in Spain', perhaps 'to keep the war going for use as a bargaining point in negotiations with Hitler'.

Danger—scholars at work

The Labour movement being now an established topic for academic study, and the twenties being sufficiently long ago to rank as history, the Communist Party must face the prospect that scholars are going to subject its record to research and learned consideration.

The Oxford historian Henry Pelling is understood to be bringing out a full-scale history of the party next month.

The latest issue of the Transactions of the Royal Historical Society contains the text of the lecture he gave last year on the 1920-29 period of British communist history; it includes a number of shrewd observations and whets the appetite for the fuller treatment that his book will presumably provide.

Not so scholarly

Not in the same category, however, is the McCarthy-style pamphlet 'The British Road to Stalinism' just produced by IRIS, the anti-working-class intelligence service.

This type of attack upon the British Stalinists can only help them; even though they will not thank IRIS for including a warning against that 'significant minority' of ex-party members who have 'sought refuge in Trotskyism'.

A total lack of historical sense and even of elementary accuracy characterizes the pamphlet.

Thus, it is not true that William Paul edited the Sunday Worker 'from 1925 to 1930'; Communist Party membership was nowhere near 9,000 in 1932; Saklatvala did not die 'shortly after' 1931; the 'Socialist Forum movement' no longer exists; etc. etc.

Won't lie down

THE death of Dimitrov's widow has revived speculation about how her famous husband met his death. Was he the victim of a medical murder in Moscow—put out of the way because he disagreed with Stalin on the line to be taken with Tito?

It is said that when Mao Tse-tung was last in Moscow he, for some reason, demanded of Khrushchev that he come clean on this story—but got no answer.

Mystery also still surrounds the fate of Thaelmann. That he died in a Nazi concentration camp in 1944 is known: but why did the Soviet Government, which rescued other communist leaders such as Rakosi and Anna Pauker, by exchanging captured Nazi agents for them, never ask Hitler for Thaelmann?

This awkward question is said to have been raised again not long ago in the leading circles of the Socialist Unity Party by some of Ulbricht's critics.

Attlee on industrial action

'Thus a government might, in defiance of its election pledges, take action which amounted to aggression leading to a war. It might deliberately disregard public opinion in the matter.

'It might ignore its manifestations and continue on a course which was bound to involve the whole nation in great loss and suffering, if not ruin.

'It may be, then, right and necessary for a minority to take action . . .'

—Earl Attlee, 'The Labour Party in Perspective' (1949 edition), p. 94.

English understatement

' . . . I think the betrayal of the General Strike in 1926 seriously minimized the great hopes that had previously persisted.'

—Harry Pollitt, on the TUC General Council, in Marxism Today, August 1958, p. 255.

BRIAN PEARCE

LETTERS

COVENTRY BUILDING STEWARDS WELCOME CALL FOR DIRECT LABOUR CONFERENCE

I WOULD like to add my voice to that of Councillor Ellis Hillman in calling for a conference to discuss the extension of direct labour building.

Throughout the country there must be many direct labour building schemes operating under Labour-controlled councils.

In such cases direct labour should be a cudgel to batter the Tories and big builders with. It should be a wedge to be driven home in the fight for nationalization by the whole Labour movement.

Unfortunately it is at best an ineffective weapon and at the worst a boomerang. Because of its timid, half-way house, hamstrung character it is being used by private enterprise as an Aunt Sally.

Used efficiently it should be possible to undercut private builders and—because of the high interest rate on loans—make tremendous savings in expenditure.

There are instances of success to prove this; there are also instances of abject failure.

Workers on direct labour are also very disappointed. They expect better conditions of work, better amenities for comfort and better wages than under private enterprise.

They expect to participate in the management, and to have ~~their experience and initiative drawn on~~. All too often they find very little difference from private firms.

Though there are exceptions, they are still treated as though it was natural for them to work in dirt and filth. Their wages and conditions are often inferior to those enjoyed by employees of private builders, and the inhuman relationship between management and worker still exists and results in men having to strike against victimization.

The unions pay lip service to the extension of direct labour. The Labour Party tends to treat it very off-handedly.

Therefore I would like to suggest that the rank and file in the building unions, Labour Party members and the whole of the Labour movement, together with those Labour councils that are attempting to make a success of it, seriously take up the question of the extension of direct labour.

To this end we are prepared to organize a conference in October in Coventry to discuss the problems and the possibilities of direct labour building, what are its implications for the Labour Party and how we can utilize it in the fight for nationalization.

R. Perry (Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers, steward, Monks Park direct labour scheme, Coventry)

WHY DO YOU DEFEND THIS SORDID TRADE?

If the Editors of The Newsletter or P. McGowan lived in Stepney and had young families they might not write as they do about the anti-vice moves in the East End.

The spectacle of these women plying their sordid trade is a poisonous one for children's eyes.

What you write about the basic cause and basic cure is, of course, quite right—but does it mean no administrative measures must be taken now? When the communists were in the French Government the licensed brothels were suppressed: was that wrong—one of the crimes of Stalinism, perhaps?

London, E.5

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