

THE NEWSLETTER

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THE SPECIAL BRANCH & THE NEWSLETTER

By PETER FRYER

AS readers will have learned from the brief announcement in last week's issue, our paper has recently received some attention from Britain's political police, the Special Branch. We are grateful to all readers and supporters who have written or telephoned to assure us of their moral and material support if—as seems unlikely—proceedings are taken against us. We value especially the assurances of solidarity from comrades who on many questions do not share our views: notably from a member of the New Reasoner's editorial board.



THE offence of 'seditious libel' is an extremely elastic one. Just as any report of parliamentary proceedings is technically a breach of privilege, so almost any piece of socialist propaganda could, if the letter of the law were strictly observed, bring its writer and publisher into court. One kind of 'seditious libel' consists of words written or spoken with the intention of promoting ill will and hostility between different classes of the Queen's subjects. (This is just as nebulous as the 1936 Public Order Act, nicknamed by policemen the 'breathing Act', since it enabled them if they felt like it—or so they boasted—to arrest a person for breathing.) A definition of 'seditious libel' so vague as this enables the authorities to widen or narrow the meshes of their net at will. Thus, to the best of our knowledge, no police action has been taken, nor warning delivered, against the writers and distributors of 'Keep Britain White' propaganda, of varied provenance, which may well have played a part in unleashing the Notting Hill riots. The Mosleyites, of course, have a finger in the pie; there are also the 'National Labour Party' and the sixpenny broadsheet called 'Black and White News', put out by the 'Britons Publishing Society', which has headlines such as 'Blacks milk the Assistance Board' and 'Blacks seek white women'. By what criterion are these not words written with the intention of promoting ill will and hostility between different classes of the Queen's subjects?



IN this connexion, whatever one's feelings about the brutality of the nine young men who went 'nigger hunting', it is difficult not to be seized with the contrast between the severity of the sentences imposed on them and the failure to take action against those who incited them. Seventeen-year-old hooligans, their minds moulded by a sick society, are punished rigorously; at least one fifty-year-old ringleader goes scot-free.

Several white people told me: 'You see older men who sit in cars and give directions.' Nobody can identify them. I looked for them at the flashpoint, but in vain.

I did see one man in obvious authority in the Kensington Park Hotel, rallying centre of the gangs. About fifty, with a brutalized red face, he wore a leather jacket and a peaked cap modelled on the old German Army pattern.

The gangs certainly have a plan of campaign. People had heard shouts of 'Oxford Gardens next!' and 'All up to Blenheim Crescent!' I saw obvious messengers on fast motor-cycles. Gangs arrive in cars from other parts of London.

There are signals, too. As a parked car drove by, one young thug said to another: 'It ain't them. Hasn't got its indicator out.'

'I reckon it's the Mosleyites,' declared a young policeman. Their paper, Action, is sold vigorously in the riot area. And on Monday they held a meeting just where the clashes had been worst, in a place where meetings have never been held before. Nobody can understand why it was allowed.

Thus wrote Mervyn Jones in Tribune of September 5. Yet the police officers who visited our office admitted that they had not even read that article. We suggested that before coming to see us again they might do their homework. Even the Daily Telegraph, whose reporting of the riots was scarcely distinguished by impartiality, now says in its comment on the sentences imposed on the nine young men: 'It is natural to suspect incitement by somebody else. Should not this possibility also be explored by the authorities?'



WHAT in fact was said in THE NEWSLETTER that might have annoyed the police? Bearing in mind that the record of the police in the pre-war fascist disorders gave little ground for confidence in their impartiality, we suggested that the sort of 'order' they might bring about might be one where coloured people had in practice fewer rights than white people. Forty-eight hours after our article appeared Mr Norman Manley, Chief Minister of Jamaica, was complaining about an instance of police discrimination in which he himself was involved: coloured people, including the Chief Minister, were told to move on while white people were given the freedom of the streets. We suggested that a responsibility lay on the Labour Party, on trades councils and on trade union branches to protect coloured workers against hooligans and fascists, not as an act of charity, but as an elementary measure of working-class self-defence. We said, in fact, no more than did the Labour Party in Salford which has called for the setting up of 'joint committees to organize practical united action by coloured and white people against fascist-inspired hooliganism'. The only force which can defeat fascism and racialism is the organized working class; to suggest otherwise, to foster illusions in the willingness or ability of the capitalist State machine to do the job, is to deceive the workers.

INDUSTRY**STEEL-FIXERS STRIKE ON SOUTH BANK**

Steel-fixers and benders on both night and day shifts at the Shell-Mex site, South Bank, London, stopped work at the beginning of the week.

The 150 strikers are demanding the removal of a foreman who worked overtime while they were restricting overtime to secure better bonus earnings.

STANDARD'S WORKERS HEAR ABOUT THE RANK-AND-FILE CONFERENCE**THE NEWSLETTER VAN IN COVENTRY**

'COME back again and we'll organize a bigger meeting for you,' said Dick Johnson, Amalgamated Engineering Union convener, and two other stewards at Standard's Banner Lane factory, Coventry.

Building worker Reg Perry had just addressed several hundred Standard engineers—they produce Massey-Harris-Ferguson tractors—about the rank-and-file Conference called by The Newsletter on November 16.

Bro. Perry spoke about the Tory attacks on the working class, and the way in which the employers were trying to get

LONDON DOCKERS' TRIBUTE

Over 500 London dockers joined the family and friends of Jimmy Fullerton on Wednesday to pay their last respects to one of the East End's most popular figures.

Crowds began to assemble in Shadwell Square an hour and a half before the funeral procession began, and hundreds of wreaths were on view, including one from the portworkers' liaison committee, one from every sector of the Port of London and one from The Newsletter.

Jimmy Fullerton was loved and respected as a docker and as an outstanding fighter for trade unionism.

As is traditional in Dockland, his colleagues and workmates are seeing to it that his wife and family do not suffer any hardship as a result of this 26-year-old militant's untimely death.

G.H.

an 800,000-strong 'army of scab labour'—unemployed men—which they could use to break strikes.

'The place to fight unemployment is in the factories now,' Bro. Perry declared.

The rank-and-file Conference would enable workers from all industries to get together to pool their experiences and ideas, and would be the start of a movement which would give the employers 'two blows for every one'.

FOOTNOTE. On August 11, 1958 there were 1,282 men and 822 women signing on at Coventry Labour Exchange and 77 men and 19 women on short time.

Asked if the employment situation was getting better or worse in Coventry, Miss Phillips, deputy manager of the Exchange, replied: 'That's a hard question to answer.'

SALFORD ENGINEERS URGE WAGES ACTION

A meeting of workers at Jackmans Ltd, Salford, has asked the local district committee of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions to convene a general meeting of shop stewards throughout the district to launch a campaign on the wage claim.

Broughton (Salford) branch of the Amalgamated Engineering Union has asked its district committee to call a stewards' meeting on the claim.

'PRACTICAL ACTION AGAINST HOOLIGANISM' URGED BY SALFORD LABOUR

'JOINT committees to organize practical united action by coloured and white people against fascist-inspired hooliganism' are urged in a resolution passed by Kersal (East Salford) Ward Labour Party.

Condemning the race riots and attacks on coloured people in Nottingham and London, the resolution, which has been sent to the general management committee of East Salford Labour Party, declares:

'Discrimination and attacks on coloured immigrants will not solve the unemployment and housing problems, which are the result of Toryism.

'We repudiate those Labour MPs who advocate control on immigration.

'The first step towards providing jobs and houses for all is the return to power of a Labour government with a socialist policy.

'We urge the Labour Party to initiate a campaign in the areas with a mixed population to counter fascist hate propaganda.'

H-BOMB CAMPAIGNERS REBUKE LEADERS FOR STEERING CLEAR OF FACTORIES

LEEDS campaigners against the hydrogen-bomb are 'disappointed' at the failure of the leaders of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament to carry the campaign into the factories.

Leeds and District Council for Nuclear Disarmament has decided to write to Mrs Peggy Duff, the CND organizing secretary, to tell her so.

The letter will express 'disappointment at the failure of the established leadership to pursue the fight against the H-bomb into industrial channels'.

Other decisions of the Leeds Council are:

TO PREPARE a list of speakers for trade union branches on the Council's aims;

TO CIRCULATE all union branches, shop stewards' committees and other industrial bodies in the area; and

TO CALL a delegate conference of trade union branches in the Leeds district to discuss the H-bomb.

From Capitalism to Socialism – and Beyond

By HARRY FINCH

IN a previous article we discussed the taking of power by the working class. We showed that the most likely course would be the working class setting up workers' councils all over the country and electing from these a national workers' council, which would take over the government of the whole country.

Such a government would immediately declare the banks, basic industries and land national property.

At the same time it would offer shopkeepers and farmers

credit facilities to carry on their businesses until they became convinced of the need to join their life with that of the new planned society.

Why does the working class need its own State machine in order to progress to socialism?

Because without such a State machine the overthrown capitalist class would soon rally its forces to take back the factories, using violence to remove the workers from control.

If the working class does not set up its own State machine, which includes its own armed detachments of workers, it

cannot transfer all the basic means of production to the people—nor can it even begin to plan the economy.

History is rich in instances where workers rose in revolt with great heroism—even occupying the factories—but where because there was no leadership to advise them to set up their own State the capitalist class ruthlessly crushed them.

The failure of the Italian working-class leaders to carry through the occupation of the factories in 1920 to the establishment of a workers' State led to twenty years of fascism. The lesson of Spain is a similar one.



CAPITALISM is a world system. Although each capitalist country is in competition with others, a revolution in one country threatens all capitalists.

That is why they will unite to try to crush any workers'

This is the fourth of a series of articles on socialism. The author is a Birmingham Labour councillor and a shop steward at GEC.

revolt. Fourteen capitalist States sent troops to Russia to try to crush the workers' State there. Mutinies, strikes and demonstrations by the workers of the intervening countries played a vital part in forcing the end of this intervention.

And so for any revolution to succeed the aid of workers in other countries is essential.

And for a workers' State to exist for any length of time without degenerating it is necessary for workers to take power in other countries.

For the existence of capitalism in the world constitutes not only a military danger to a workers' State but also a strong economic danger (blockades etc).

This makes the struggle for socialism international to its very core. There is no such thing as socialism in one country, though after Lenin's death certain renegades from Marxism in Russia claimed there could be.

Though the industries in Russia remain nationalized and have expanded tremendously, the pressure of world capitalism on Russia, its severe backwardness in the early years after the revolution of 1917 and the absence of other workers' States led, not to 'socialism in one country', but to a huge

bureaucracy taking political power out of the Russian workers' hands.

The best way we can help the Russian workers get rid of this bureaucracy is to bring about a workers' State in Britain as quickly as possible.



THE workers' State is only a transition to a *classless* society. Representing the huge majority of the population, it will be the most democratic State possible.

As the workers in one country after another take power the expansion of production, brought about by the nationalization of all the means of production, will be further accelerated, for not only will there be planning at home but also international planning of the linked economies.

The scientists will be released for peaceful research to wrest further secrets from nature.

The former 'backward' nations will have the most advanced techniques introduced so that their economies can be swiftly raised. For instance, atomic power stations will be built in the remotest corners of the globe.

Why sink deep shafts for the dangerous trade of mining when atomic power, freed from its hideous H-bomb use, is available for the whole of humanity?

The expansion of world production will rapidly raise standards of living. Automation will enable our hours of work to be reduced more and more. There will be an international, planned super-abundance of all goods.

And if there is a super-abundance of necessities and 'luxuries' in the world, money will lose all meaning and classes will disappear.

We certainly could not imagine anyone wanting to 'own' his own shop, or factory, when a few hours of work in an automated establishment establishes his right to take from society all he needs.

But what about human nature? This is the old Tory cry. Would not one man want more than another?

This would not matter. A super-abundance means just what it says. If someone took three cars instead of one he would be regarded as queer, just as anyone in our society who left the taps running all day because water is practically free would be looked on as odd.

Once society reaches a state of super-abundance for all there is no need for a State machine. It will die out. Jails, armies and police will become the museum relics of the past.

(To be concluded)

Constant Reader | What Butler is after

THE Tory Government appears to be considering how it can use the race riots to justify bringing in legislation to restrict further the working-class movement.

This would repeat the pattern of 1936, when a period of brawling between fascists and anti-fascists was followed by the passing of the Public Order Act.

Police partiality became notorious in that period. For instance, Mosley held a rally in London's Albert Hall and members of the audience who heckled were beaten up by blackshirt stewards under the eyes of the police.

The same night, however, a peaceful counter-demonstration held in Thurloe Square was attacked by the police without provocation or warning.

I well remember how, while we were listening to an address from the back of a truck by a pacifist clergyman with a beard, a body of mounted police suddenly charged into us, hitting out in all directions, and I had to clamber over some railings to escape a kicking and plunging police horse.

Gave power to police

The Public Order Act, passed allegedly to deal with the disorders caused by the fascists, gave power to the police

to ban any political processions in a given district and allowed the chairman of a public meeting to ask any constable to demand the name and address of anyone present.

This Act extended that convenient offence of 'using insulting words and behaviour' from the metropolis to the rest of England.

It was used in April 1937 to arrest the leaders of the miners' strike at Harworth (Notts.), who were put away for terms up to two years.

'Honest Stan'?

JENNIE LEE rightly draws attention, in Tribune, to the recent whitewashing treatment given to Stanley Baldwin by the BBC.

This links up with the Press boosting of Bassett's book about Ramsay MacDonald, and with a number of other phenomena.

A systematic effort is being made, it would seem, to change the picture of British political life in the twenties and thirties which is fixed in the public mind and which presents a certain obstacle to Tory plans for the near future.

People remember that the Tories used the alleged kindly

country gentleman Baldwin to put over a confidence trick that resulted in an epoch of frightful poverty for the workers.

They also recall that he was helped by the 'statesmanlike' Labour leader MacDonald who, after playing the Tory game inside the party for years, lined up with the Tories openly at the crucial moment.

From the Tory standpoint it is highly desirable that this 'legend', as they talk of it, should be obliterated—in order to make it easier for them to get away with the same sort of manoeuvres again.

Gallacher's tribute

Talking of Baldwin, there should not be forgotten the obituary of that enemy of the working class spoken by the communist MP, William Gallacher, in the House of Commons, on December 15, 1947.

Tributes had been paid by the leaders of the Labour, Tory and Liberal parties. Did Gallacher take the opportunity to call for the uprooting in post-war Britain of everything Baldwin had stood for in the inter-war years?

Did he even perceive an excellent occasion for keeping his mouth shut? No. He took neither course, but delivered himself of the following revealing passage:

'Let him sleep in peace'

'Stanley Baldwin was the leader of the Conservative Party: I am a leader of the Communist Party. There was not what might be called much of a political bond between us, but I remember meeting him one night by the tape machine.

'He appeared to be in a sentimental mood. He commented on some of my Scottish characteristics.

'Then he told me that he had a Scottish mother and a Welsh father. I told him that I had Scottish mother and an Irish father. That seemed to create, at least, a human bond between us.

'History will judge him and his life work. Some may praise, some may blame, but here today nothing should be said that could disturb his rest or the minds of those near and dear to him who are mourning his passing.

'In the quiet countryside beside his Scottish mother and his Welsh father, let him sleep in everlasting peace.'

BRIAN PEARCE

LETTERS

SUMRIES FACTORY COMMITTEE THANKS US FOR OUR STRIKE REPORTS

Your factual reporting in The Newsletter was deeply appreciated by the factory committee and workpeople of C. and M. Sumries, and was a great help in our gaining a satisfactory conclusion in the struggle to safeguard wages and working conditions.

The factory committee wish to place on record their thanks to The Newsletter.

Your efforts made it possible for many people to realize the true state of affairs which existed in our particular factory, and helped to dispel the myth of 'pay for nothing'.

Leeds, 12 C. Mason (chairman, factory committee)

WHITE AND COLOURED WORKERS MUST FIGHT THE GOVERNMENT TOGETHER

ACCORDING to Mr H. V. Legg, manager of the Edgware Road Labour Exchange, there are already 2,200 unemployed on the books of the Exchange, which covers Paddington, St Marylebone and part of Hampstead.

Over 25 per cent. of the unemployed in the area are coloured people.

*These facts are reported in the September 12 issue of the Paddington Mercury and provide part of the background to the recent anti-Negro violence in west London.

Do the authorities see any way out? Mr Legg states: 'I can see no answer to the problem. I live and sleep with it. It will be a considerable relief to leave it all behind when I retire at the end of the month'.

If this is the best the authorities can offer them it is obviously up to white and coloured workers in the area (who will not be retiring at the end of the month) to see what solutions they themselves can find.

The racialists would like to play them off against each other. Their real interests lie in acting together, against the employing class and its Tory Government.

I hope many will attend the rank-and-file Conference your paper is organizing on November 16 to discuss these questions.

London, W.9

N. Meadows

HOW TORIES SOLVE PROBLEM OF JOBLESS: SCABBING AND NUCLEAR BASES

THE Tories are looking to unemployment in east Kent to dampen organized opposition to the building of nuclear weapon sites.

Never absent from this region even during the 'prosperous' years since the war, unemployment is once again on the increase.

Throughout the summer, the peak period for employment in any holiday resort, unemployment in the Isle of Thanet has stood at around the 1,000 mark.

Many of Thanet's workers found work in the industries of the Medway area, around Chatham and Rochester, at the oil refinery under construction at the Isle of Grain, and at Ashford.

Now the present phase of construction at Grain has ended. The railway workshops at Ashford and the naval barracks and establishments at Chatham and Sheerness have been closed down. There are sackings and short-time working in Rochester engineering firms.

Unemployed used as blacklegs

Men who used to find work in these districts have been obliged to join the seasonal trade workers in their annual period of enforced idleness.

The employers took advantage of this during the London dock strike.

Ramsgate harbour, which normally sees only an occasional grain barge or timber vessel, was at one time during the strike handling seven ships diverted from London, carrying various cargoes, including perishable foodstuffs.

Many of the poorly-paid workers of the area supplemented their wages (among the lowest in the country) with part-time work unloading French, Dutch, Scandinavian and German ships, blacked on the London docks.

Mosleyites again forming branches

The closing down of the nuclear-equipped American air base at Manston (New Ramsgate) in July left 400 men idle.

Now it is rumoured that the U.S. army is to take over at Manston. Tory propaganda will attempt to persuade jobless men that this will provide jobs for many of them.

The Mosleyites, who were strong in the area in the 1930s, are well aware of the situation and are once again forming branches. Socialists must recognize the difficulties in such areas and be ready to meet them.

Ramsgate

John Pocock