

THE NEWSLETTER

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CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN FRANCE AGAIN

From a Special Correspondent

THE de Gaulle régime is losing no time in preparing for its onslaught against the Algerians and the French working class. It is setting up concentration camps on the fascist pattern.

Here is one example. An old Nazi camp near Pont d'Ain, about 40 miles north-west of Lyons, is being renovated, enlarged and brought up to date in the latest techniques of torture, much to the horror of the local population.

This fertile part of France was a strong centre of the Resistance. There is hardly a single family which did not lose one of its members in resisting Nazi occupation.

The people openly express their hatred of what is to be perpetrated in their midst—especially those who voted 'yes' in the recent referendum 'because,' they will tell you, 'the socialists and the communists refused to do anything, and we thought de Gaulle was a lesser evil than Salan and the Algerian settler fascists'.

'Something must happen soon,' they say, 'or we shall be

the ones to fill this concentration camp.' Yet their hopes for new leadership are far from dead.

At a wayside café, where conscripts in fatigue drill were letting off steam among themselves about the revolting duties they are forced to perform at the camp as part of their training, I overheard this exchange:

'It's got everything the Nazis had and more, bar the gas ovens.'

'If they brought in the whole Algerian population they couldn't fill half of the camps, so who do you think they'll put in?'

'Not difficult to answer that one, chum . . .'

COACH-LOAD COMING FROM NUFFIELD'S TO RANK-AND-FILE CONFERENCE

By Our Industrial Correspondent

FOLLOWING the factory gate meeting held outside Nuffield Metal Products to tell workers about the national industrial rank-and-file conference, I had a word with Bro. Jack Lynch, the convener, and Bro. J. Farrington, chairman of shop stewards.

They told me that sections are already choosing their delegates to the conference, and they expect to fill at least one coach from Nuffield's.

There is tremendous support in the factory for the conference.

Bro. Lynch and Bro. Farrington asked me to convey to the locked-out men on the South Bank and at Belvedere, through The Newsletter, the following message:

'We at Nuffield's are all behind you in your splendid fight. We have begun taking collections on your behalf and will be sending you the money very soon.'

WELCOMES CONFERENCE IN PERSONAL CAPACITY

We have been asked by Bert Aylward, national docks secretary of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers, to make clear that his statement welcoming the national industrial rank-and-file Conference on November 16 was made purely in his personal capacity, and in no way commits the union of which he is an official.

WE'LL ANSWER GOODWIN'S SECOND ATTACK NEXT WEEK

A reply to a second article by Dennis Goodwin attacking The Newsletter, which appeared in the Communist Party weekly World News last Saturday, will be published in The Newsletter next week.

HUNGARY

MORE HUNGARIAN COMMUNISTS ARRESTED BY KADAR GOVERNMENT

BUDAPEST radio announces that two Hungarian communists, Sandor Fekete and Ferenc Merey, members of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, have been arrested on 'strong suspicion of subversive activity against the State'.

Fekete, who was cultural editor of Szabad Nép, the pre-October 1956 party daily, is alleged to have taken 'an active part in the ideological campaign which resulted in the 1956 Hungarian Revolution.'

Merey, a university professor retired since 1956, is said to have propagated false and wrong ideas for which he has already been punished.

In an election speech preparatory to the General Election due on November 16, party secretary Janos Kádár ignored the arrests.

'We forgave those who went astray, and the majority have since returned to the right path,' he said.

He went on to defend the Rákosi regime: 'We know where the mistakes were in the work of construction, but the achievements and results of the ten years are sacred.'

It will be recalled that under Rákosi more communists were executed in Hungary than under the pre-war White terror of Admiral Horthy.

ANOTHER WORKER MURDERED IN KERALA

British United Press reports that a striker was killed and four others injured when police fired on plantation workers in two places in Kerala last Monday.

The workers were demanding increased bonuses.

On July 26 the 'communist' government's police fired on factory workers, killing three and wounding six.

COMMENTARY**TRADE UNIONS AND LABOUR PARTIES**

EVERYONE knows that it is the trade unions that control the Labour Party nationally, and that for a long time now their influence has been used in support of Right-wing policies. The last occasion when the trade union influence in the party pushed the 'politicians' further *to the Left* than they wanted to go was in 1932, when the decision to nationalize the joint-stock banks was taken. The political outlook of the trade unions leaders soon swung back to the Right, where it has remained pretty fixedly ever since—with the joint-stock banks still not nationalized of course.

In many Constituency Labour Parties now one commonly finds that it is the trade union delegates who are the staunchest pillars of the Right, while the banner of the Left is carried by 'middle-class' representatives from the wards. It is Jim Matthews versus Barbara Castle at the local level. So far as the middle-class Lefts are concerned, intensified industrial struggle in the coming months is all too likely to cause many to waver in their views; at any rate, unless and until the working class shows itself to be the winning side.

What about the trade union delegates? Here it would be foolish to expect any automatic 'radicalizing' to take place. For these delegates to play the tremendous role that is open to them in transforming local Labour Parties into organs of workers' class struggle, a hard fight will be needed in the trade union branches.

During the 1926 General Strike the political side of the movement nationally—and in many cases locally—took little part, which was one of the causes of defeat. This must not, and need not, happen this time.

WE SALUTE THEM

RIGHT-WING and 'Left-wing' slanderers of the uprising that broke out in Budapest two years ago last Thursday have not succeeded in obscuring its true character. They have fastened on the excesses that were committed, as evidence that the Hungarian events were an anti-socialist counter-revolution. There never was a revolution in history which did not have terror, hooliganism, adventurism as part of the pattern. When intolerable conditions force a human torrent on to the arena of history, muck is always mingled with the flood waters. The security policemen who were lynched were the instruments of a despotism that had warped Hungary's development to socialism. Rákosi's men reaped only that which they had sown.

But the excesses were few. Workers' councils controlled the factories and patrolled the streets. The workers were showing the revolutionary discipline, heightened consciousness and creative initiative they always show in struggle. Then came November 4. Russian tanks swept across the barricades. The grip of bureaucracy was reimposed on the Hungarian people.

Every effort the Kádár regime has made in these two years to sweeten its rule in the eyes of the world Labour movement has been nullified by such acts as the murder of Nagy and the arrest of Fekete and Meray. The honest communists of Hungary continue their defiance. On this second anniversary we salute our Hungarian comrades: the metal-workers and poets, the miners and journalists who, inside or outside Kádár's jails, remain steadfast to their socialist principles.

LABOUR**THE KING TOLD MORRISON: 'YOU ARE NATIONALIZING TOO FAST'**

By George Cunvin

THOSE Labour Party people who try to soothe their erstwhile republican consciences by constantly repeating that 'the monarchy is not an issue', could do worse than read 'King George VI. His Life and Reign' by John Wheeler-Bennett (Macmillan 60s.).

The late King had the habit of keeping a diary and passages reproduced from it show the part the monarchy plays in keeping Britain safe for capitalism.

When the Conservatives are in power, there is very little meddling from the throne in affairs of government. There is no need for it.

The reigning monarch, by upbringing, background and the very position he holds, thinks along the same lines as the members of the Tory government.

Thus we find that Neville Chamberlain frequently never bothered to inform the King of important decisions.

George VI had to learn from the Beaverbrook and Harmsworth Press about Eden's resignation in 1938.

Similarly, Chamberlain never sought the King's permission, as he was constitutionally obliged to do, when he left for the notorious Munich conference with Hitler, Mussolini and Daladier.

But when Labour came into power in 1945, it was a different matter. The King received the election results with trepidation.

Like a true product of the public school system, he thought the electorate had behaved meanly in rejecting Winston Churchill—just as in 1940, when the House of Commons turned against Chamberlain, he felt:

'It is most unfair on Chamberlain to be treated like this after all his good work. The Conservative rebels like Duff Cooper ought to be ashamed of themselves for deserting him at this moment.'

Within the marble halls?

No sooner was Labour in power than the King thought it necessary to tell Attlee that 'he must give the people here some confidence that the government was not going to stifle all private enterprise'. Later, he records a conversation with Herbert Morrison:

'We discussed the whole of the Labour programme. I thought he was going too fast with the new nationalizing legislation.'

Was it within the marble halls of Buckingham Palace that Morrison first discovered the need to slow down on nationalization and to 'consolidate'?

It is well known that successive monarchs have invested their wealth heavily in industry. The occupant of the throne, therefore, has a definite vested interest in the continuation of 'private enterprise'.

We learn from this biography, too, that it was thanks to George VI that we had Ernest Bevin as Labour's Foreign Minister after 1945, instead of Hugh Dalton.

From a socialist point of view, Dalton would probably have been little improvement on Bevin. But it would scarcely have been possible for him to be worse.

The point for the Labour Party is that the monarchy can make its influence felt on behalf of the existing order of things and does not hesitate to do so.

THEY PERFUMED THE FACTORY AIR FOR THE ROYAL VISIT

By G. Gale

REMARKABLE preparations were made for the Queen's visit to Leeds last week.

In one large tailoring factory she visited Hoffman presses

were specially washed down—but only those on Her Majesty's route. Those she did not see got only their usual dusting.

In the large canteen masses of flowers were provided—but only in one half. The half she did not see was as bare as usual.

To make sure that royalty really knows what the inside of a factory is like, the air was perfumed.

The canteen was instructed not to cook fish and chips on the day of the visit, and workers were told not to bring fish and chips into the factory during their dinner-hour.

Some women who were chosen to meet the Queen were told to wear white gloves, in case they were privileged to shake hands.

And in several places visited by the Queen, special lavatories were constructed.

FOOTNOTE: Latest figures show 5.1 per cent. unemployment in the textile industries.

ECONOMICS

IS THE AMERICAN DEPRESSION OVER?

NO PROOF THAT GOVERNMENT SPENDING CAN GIVE A SHOT IN THE ARM

By Tom Kemp

CLIMBING production, a reduction in unemployment of one million, higher investment, a Wall Street boom—these are the apparent signs that the American depression is ending. Some are already predicting wonders for 1959.

'The sharpest, but also the shortest, depression since the war,' defenders of American capitalism are saying with relief. To account for its short duration, they point to the inherent health of the system, the confidence of business, 'built-in stabilizers' and the increase in Federal spending.

The depression showed itself most emphatically in reduced industrial investment, idle plant and unemployment. Corporation profits fell by over one quarter from their boom level.

In the sphere of consumption the depression was less marked. Total consumption was almost maintained, although consumption per head fell; so did new instalment business.

The increase in Federal spending channelled into the economy through dole, aid to home building programmes, bigger arms orders and other payments obviously played an important part here.

But consumption, of itself, cannot ensure a continuous upward movement. This must take its departure from the side of investment. There are three possibilities:

(1) A RENEWED, CLASSICAL CAPITALIST PROSPERITY.

For this a new, heavy burst of investment is required, stimulating steel, machinery and heavy industry generally.

This would help to counteract deepening depression in other parts of the capitalist world by increasing U.S. demand carrying the whole economy upwards into a new boom.

for imports, but it would raise the bogey of inflation and might be nipped in the bud if interest rates were raised to counteract that.

Such a boom depends on finding big new investment opportunities; and in the course of time the downward phase of the cycle would reappear. And the next depression might be more serious.

(2) A TEMPORARY RESPITE BEFORE A FURTHER DECLINE.

Partial recovery, accompanied by a stock market boom, preceding a further slump, has been seen before.

Now it has been prompted by the need to replenish stocks, which imparts a stimulus to investment, revives business confidence and feeds speculation.

However, if optimistic expectations do not justify them-

selves, or if the Wall Street boom collapses, the process could run in reverse.

The petering out of the effects of increased Federal spending and home building, or the raising of interest rates, might contribute to this effect.

(3) A PROLONGED RELATIVE STAGNATION.

If new investment projects are not enough to produce a strong boom, the economy might tick over at an in-between level.

Unemployment, instead of falling back to its pre-depression level, would remain at 3 to 4 million. Excess capacity and lack of new markets would hold back investment in a vicious circle.

Lack of confidence could deter consumers from taking on bigger hire-purchase agreements, thus hitting manufacturers of consumer durables and cars.

Although government spending can stave off acute crisis, at least under certain conditions, there is no proof that it can give an ailing system that shot in the arm which will enable it to reproduce the vigorous activity of the 1950s.

On the other hand, it would be unwise to assume, as some Marxists did in the thirties, that a renewed expansion is ruled out altogether. It is difficult, however, to see where such an impulse can come from; and it is doubtful whether it can come at all from the capitalist mechanism itself.

For the immediate future swings and uncertainty, possibly 'stagnation', seem the most likely prospects.

SOUTH AFRICA

LEGAL VICTORY BUT POLITICAL DEFEAT IN PRETORIA TREASON TRIAL

By Our Special Correspondent, Saul Scheepers

ONE of the most significant chapters in South Africa's recent political history has ended with the Crown's withdrawal of the remaining charge of conspiracy in the mass treason trial.

But it is reported that certain of the ninety-one accused are to be indicted again.

It all started on the morning of December 5, 1956, when more than 150 people throughout the Union were arrested and brought to the 'Fort' in Johannesburg to await trial for alleged conspiracy against the government.

All of the accused belonged to, or had at one time been members of, the Congress Alliance, a body made up of the African National Congress, the South African Indian Congress, the South African Coloured People's Organization and the Congress of Democrats.

The arrests were made in the midst of a wave of bannings, deportations and dismissals of people from extra-parliamentary political organizations and movements.

They were the logical outcome of repeated threats by Minister of Justice C. R. Swart, who had declared that he would deal in the near future with more than 200 'dangerous political criminals'.

Included tribalists and reactionaries

An examination of the list of those arrested shows why the Congress Alliance was unable to make political capital out of the government's measure.

Among the accused were tribalists and reactionaries like ex-chief Albert Luthuli, Professor Z. K. Matthews and the Reverend Calata, whose collaboration and sell-outs had long ago discredited them.

There were also trade union officials such as George Peake, Reginald September and others who had formed the still-born South African Coloured People's Organization.

This body was made up of the most politically backward elements in the country and was intended to counter the growing influence of the progressive Anti-Coloured Affairs

Department Movement and the Non-European Unity Movement.

There were 'women's leaders' and ministers of religion from the 'Friends of the Soviet Union' group. There was a Liberal MP, Lee-Warden, one of the three Native representatives 'elected' by a communal vote to represent 10 million Africans in Parliament.

Some of those arrested were known only to their nearest relatives.

Progressives throughout the Union came to the defence of civil liberties and a treason trial fund was started to ensure a fair trial.

Ludicrous evidence by police

The preliminary trial dragged on for months in spite of the fact that the accused were unemployed and that most of them had dependants who could look to nobody for support.

Thousands of documents were handed in as evidence, ranging from notices of meetings to cyclostyled lectures and spurious letters.

Oral evidence of the most ludicrous kind was given by illiterate police witnesses.

A. H. Murray, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Cape Town, gave definitions of communism which included such absurdities as the argument that anyone who uses terms like 'fascist' or 'equality' is or tends to be a communist.

The defence counsel, led by Advocate Berrange, destroyed piece by piece every argument brought up by the Crown—and even proved to Murray on his own definitions that he was a

communist.

Nevertheless the government decided to commit ninety-one of the accused for trial on the charges either of conspiracy or of contravention of the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950.

Prosecution put on trial

The prosecution was led by the notorious Oswald Pirow, who openly collaborated with fascism during the war. A special court composed of three judges chosen by the Minister of Justice was instituted by Act of Parliament.

The trial was a fiasco for the government from a legal point of view. The defence team, under the able leadership of Advocate Maissels, won one victory after another and succeeded in placing the prosecution on trial.

First, the defence was able to secure the withdrawal of one of the three judges on grounds of prejudice.

Secondly, the alternative charge of contravention of the Suppression of Communism Act was quashed.

And now, after long and involved legal debate, the main conspiracy charge has been withdrawn—all this before the accused have even been asked to plead.

However, although the legal battle has been won against great material odds, the same cannot be said of the political battle.

It has become clear that the Congresses, which are essentially collaborationist and reformist organizations, were serving as guinea-pigs for an even more tragic experiment.

(To be concluded)

Constant Reader | Mr Justice Ron and the Pickets

SEEKING to join two friends who were picketing one of the entrances to the McAlpine site on London's South Bank, I was turned back by a constable who explained to me that there was a law limiting the number of pickets to two.

I told him that I took an interest in these matters and was surprised to hear that the law was so precisely worded. He then referred me to 'the Chief'.

This two-pipped officer (addressed by his equals in rank as 'Ron') made the position clearer. The Conspiracy Act of 1875, he reminded me, 'allows peaceful picketing'—'and we interpret that as meaning, for an entrance of this size, not more than two pickets'.

Having duly joined the throng parading up and down on the other side of the road with placards, I kept thinking I noticed the police patrols on the same pavement deliberately stepping out of their way in order either to force us into the gutter or to get between us and the site.

Oddly enough, as this happened on one occasion, I did hear one policeman remark to another: 'That's right, close it up there.'

Any WEA class in the London area that is studying British institutions could not do better, for its field work, than come down to the South Bank and watch our democratic police force on the job, protecting Capital from Labour in strict accordance with the law.

'A nation that oppresses others . . .'

Observations along the south bank of the Thames have recently shown that there are a great many Irish plain-clothes policemen. Employment of Irishmen is a tradition in the Special Branch that goes back to its foundation.

The pretext for introducing political police in this country was the need to protect Queen Victoria, at her Jubilee in 1887, from any hostile attention from Irish patriots.

Officers of the Royal Irish Constabulary, the militarized police force which then held Ireland down, were brought to London to organize the Special Branch.

Superintendent Quinn, who later became head of the Branch as Sir Patrick Quinn, was the first police superintendent to be knighted (1919).

The police forces of the Indian Empire were also drawn

upon for Special Branch service from the earliest years. No doubt we can expect police officers with experience in Cyprus to be brought into Special Branch work in the near future.

Private faces in public places

'It is said that King Charles I was a bad king, but in fact he was an excellent husband and father.' This hoary example of confused thinking came to my mind in Hyde Park on Sunday during the South Bank workers' demonstration.

A colleague of mine was being told by an acquaintance that The Newsletter had been too hard on McAlpine: he is really a kindly fellow, it seems, who gives a lot of money to a home for deaf people . . .

Unfortunately, just as this information was being imparted, the police were refusing permission for the workers' spokesmen to use a microphone and loud-speaker to put their case across to the crowd who had come to hear it.

Where it is a matter of hearing the truth about how he treats his workers, philanthropist McAlpine prefers people to be deaf.

Connolly on McAlpinism

James Connolly, perhaps the greatest workers' leader these islands have produced to date, was among many other things a brilliant popularizer of the basic ideas of socialism.

In his 'Labour, Nationality and Religion' (1910) there is a passage which has a grim relevance to the background of a certain current industrial dispute.

The writer is explaining why slavery, which once seemed even to churchmen a perfectly natural and proper thing, has come to be regarded as wicked.

'A Negro slave in the Southern States of America was told by his owner to go up and fasten the shingles on the top of the roof of his master's dwelling.

"Boss," said he to the slaveowner, "if I go up there and get killed you will lose that 500 dollars you paid for me; but if you send up that Irish labourer and he falls down and breaks his neck you won't even have to bury him, and can get another labourer tomorrow for two dollars a day."

'The Irish labourer was sent up.

'Moral: Slavery is immoral because slaves cost too much.'

BRIAN PEARCE