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HEALY HITS BACK AT THE WITCH-HUNTERS

ONE of the principal targets of the witch-hunt waged by the News Chronicle and other capitalist papers against Marxists in the Labour Party is Gerry Healy, a member of Streatham Labour Party and a life-long socialist.

This week The Newsletter hits back at the witch-hunters by proudly announcing that Gerry Healy has joined our Editorial Board to strengthen the work of our paper and help develop it as a fighting socialist weekly.

In this issue, on behalf of the Editorial Board, he presents our answer to the lies and smears of the millionaire Press—and our views on what Labour's General Election policy should be.

This article, the most trenchant and hard-hitting political document that has appeared in any Left-wing paper in Britain for years, does the following:

IT THROWS BACK in the teeth of Mr Roy Nash and his fellow-witch-hunters the allegation that The Newsletter and the Conference it called last month are a 'conspiracy';

IT SHOWS who the real conspirators are—and brings

forward cast-iron evidence to prove it;

IT REVEALS that Mr Nash's colleague on the News Chronicle City desk, Sir Oscar R. Hobson, has been putting forward proposals in a bank journal that would destroy trade unionism as we know it;

IT CALLS on Labour to resist the offensive against shop stewards;

IT APPEALS to members of the Communist Party not to let their leaders weaken the common fight against the witch-hunt; and

IT OUTLINES, as an alternative to last week's milk-and-glossy pamphlet, a real fighting socialist policy for driving out the Tories and building a socialist Britain.

Gerry Healy brings to our paper a rich experience of working-class struggle. He is known throughout the country for his firm adherence to socialist principles, his forthright opposition both to Stalinism and to Right-wing reformism, and his insistence on the need to speak the truth to workers, however harsh it may be, if they are to learn the lessons of their struggles and go forward.

THIS IS OUR ANSWER — AND OUR POLICY FOR LABOUR

By GERRY HEALY

DURING the past few weeks the capitalist Press have engaged in a furious witch-hunt against trade unionists and Labour Party members whom they call 'Trotskyists'. They have paid particular attention to the national industrial rank-and-file Conference called by The Newsletter on November 16.

They wrote about this Conference under headlines such as 'Red Club Exposed. Men behind it: Secret Documents Revealed' (News Chronicle, November 13); 'The Men You Must Watch' (Sunday Mercury, November 16); 'Their Aim is More Strikes' (Reynolds News, November 16); '600 Plot 24hr Strike' (Daily Sketch, November 17); 'Red Club Men Hold a Secret Conference' (News Chronicle, November 17).

Not for many years has the capitalist Press engaged in red-baiting on such a scale and with such venom; but it is no accident that it has chosen this time to do so.

Every trade unionist knows who owns the mass-circulation newspapers of Fleet Street, who pays the Fleet Street piper, and who therefore calls the tune he plays. Behind these powerful organs for moulding public opinion and influencing people's minds stand millionaire representatives of the employing class.

These organs and their millionaire owners are now extremely sensitive to developments inside the trade unions and the Labour Party.

They realize that the growth of unemployment and the attempts by the employers to weaken trade unionism in industry are bound to provoke reactions among the rank and file.

They know that a general election is not far off, and they

(Continued overleaf)

AUBTW RANK AND FILE BACK BEHAN

CRAWLEY (Sussex) branch of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers has unanimously passed a resolution condemning the AUBTW executive for their expulsion of Brian Behan and demanding his readmittance to the union.

This was passed after Behan had addressed the branch and replied to questions about the South Bank dispute and the Newsletter Conference.

Brian Behan intends to issue an appeal to all branches of the union asking them to follow the lead given by Crawley.

Mick Gammon, of London, and Jim Rand, of Liverpool, have been threatened with suspension from the AUBTW unless they cease their association with the 'Newsletter group'.

To this Gammon, a member of the Lambeth and Borough branch, has replied that he refuses to discuss the matter, since the political views of its members are not the business of the AUBTW executive.

GERRY HEALY (Continued from front page)

want at all costs to weaken the Labour Party and ensure a substantial Tory victory.

The technique of Fleet Street is as old as the hills. Select some individual victim, build him up as a villain and conspirator, and retail his alleged misdeeds on the front page day after day.

But never, never print one line or word or syllable of the policy for which he stands, the arguments which he adduces in support of that policy, or the stand he takes on vital questions affecting the happiness and welfare of the workers.

'Strikes are caused by Red Club men,' scream the Press in chorus.

Contented workers, wild agitators

There is nothing new in this allegation.

In the eyes of the capitalist class every strike is a conspiracy. Workers are quite contented, whatever happens to them, until some wild agitator comes along and disturbs their tranquillity.

By describing strikers as conspirators or the dupes of conspirators Fleet Street hopes to turn public opinion against strikers and so help defeat them.

For decades trade unionists in pretty well every industry have been patiently pointing out that strikes do not take place because of the intervention of 'agitators', but because the workers have a burning grievance which cannot be expressed in any other way.

No body of workers will down tools, with all the sacrifice that often entails, without some powerful reason for doing so.

To read the capitalist Press, one would imagine that the McAlpine dispute came about through the intervention of a handful of Newsletter 'agitators'; the Financial Times last Monday again gave currency to the lie that The Newsletter 'helped to organize' this stoppage.

Ignores the stubborn fact

This is to ignore the stubborn fact that McAlpine, and not The Newsletter, gave 1,250 men their cards for the purpose of 'weeding out the worst militants', as the Financial Times itself revealed at the time.

Britain is today witnessing a large number of strikes, for the simple reason that the employers have decided to fight the trade unions and, in particular, to weaken the shop stewards' movement as much as they possibly can.

Mr C. S. Garland, retiring president of the National Union of Manufacturers, said on November 27 that shop stewards were 'an excrescence on the trade union movement'; the shop steward system was 'thoroughly bad' and 'one of the greatest menaces that we employers have had to face'; and a 'solution' must be found 'in legislation'.

It is the employers' attacks which cause the strikes, and their newspapers are using the old red boggy to cover up the downright conspiracy of their own class, a conspiracy in which these newspapers are participating, against the workers' jobs, living standards and workshop organization.

Here are two examples to prove this.

The News Chronicle prides itself on its cleverness in rooting out and exposing a 'Red Club'. This Liberal paper is in the very forefront of the witch-hunt.

Sir Oscar's own Charter

At first sight, this might seem surprising. But it is less surprising when we learn that the joint editor of its City column, Sir Oscar Hobson, is busy advocating a Charter of Employers' Demands including the following points:

- (1) Strikes to be illegal until an inquiry has been held;
- (2) Secret ballot before 'the withdrawal of labour';
- (3) Political strikes to be illegal;
- (4) Unofficial strikes not to have the protection of the Trade Disputes Act;
- (5) A Court to deal with 'restrictive practices'; and

- (6) To deal with abuses 'in the relationship between members of a union and the union itself'.

These were the demands put forward by Sir Oscar, the eminent stable companion of Mr Roy Nash, in the November issue of the National Provincial Bank Review.

This is a programme for making the trade unions part of the official machinery of the State and for putting the full power of the State machinery behind their permanent officials.

As team-mates in the News Chronicle Club, Sir Oscar and Mr Nash are jointly responsible for moulding the public opinion of their readers along the lines desired by their employers, the famous cocoa kings.

Game is very clear

The game is very clear. While Mr Nash is busy on his witch-hunt against union militants, Sir Oscar is busily preparing a charter for destroying trade unionism as we understand it.

The industrial correspondent clears the way for the City man to get on with the real job. Of course, Sir Oscar has not yet dared to come out into the open—the readers of the National Provincial Bank Review are far fewer than those of the News Chronicle. But there is a clear and significant division of labour here.

Here is the second example.

The Sunday Times boasts a correspondent, who claims to be well-informed about the 'Trotskyists', and who signs his articles 'A Trade Unionist'.

In fact this stool-pigeon who is afraid to sign his name to what he writes is known to be very close to the very highest circles of the Trades Union Congress.

By a strange coincidence

'A Trade Unionist' recently devoted a good deal of space to attacking the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers in the northern ports.

A couple of weeks later the TUC, by a strange coincidence, decided to suspend the NASD (and did so at a very convenient time for the officials of the Transport and General Workers' Union, when unemployment is growing on the docks and there is being prepared a move on the part of the employers to cut the dock register).

By placing the 'blue union' outside the pale the TUC leaders are entering into a conspiracy with the leaders of the TGWU—aided and abetted by Lord Kemsley's Sunday Times—to deprive militant portworkers of their livelihood because they do not hold a union card of the right colour.

Has 'A Trade Unionist' a crystal ball in his office? Or did he know what was coming, and was he given the task of preparing public opinion by means of the old red boggy, so that this shameful attempt to split the trade union movement on the docks would pass without protest?

It is here, and not in the activities of Marxists and other working-class militants who have spent their lives in the service of their class, that one should look for 'conspiracies' and 'plots' against the trade union movement.



SINCE the NEWSLETTER Conference Mr Nash has turned his attention to the Labour Party. He notes with glee that as a result of his efforts it is possible that the Right-wing leaders of the party will start a witch-hunt against Left-wing members, and may even expel them.

The same people who want to destroy the shop stewards' movement want to split the Labour Party, so that some of its most active and devoted workers will be driven out of the party at the time it most needs them to help ensure a Labour victory in the General Election.

To the News Chronicle anyone who speaks out strongly for socialist policies is a 'Red'. To these practitioners of journalistic ethics any Labour Party meeting where the class

struggle is discussed and support is given to workers fighting in defence of their jobs can be described as a meeting of a 'Red Club', if it suits the book of the Cadbury family and those whose pens they have hired.

Guilt by association is no longer the prerogative of the late McCarthy; it has been imported into Britain by Mr Roy Nash and some of his Fleet Street colleagues and competitors.

Must be on guard

Trade unionists and Labour Party members everywhere must be on guard against the methods of the millionaire Press.

Behind these attacks on militants and on socialists there is a conspiracy to compass the defeat of the Labour Party in the next General Election, split the trade union movement, and pave the way for the harshest of reactionary anti-trade-union legislation if the Tories are returned to power.

Recent events contain a solemn warning, in the light of such past experiences as the Campbell case and the Zinoviev Letter.

At all critical times, when the Tories and the employers are bankrupt of policies, they resort to red scares of all kinds to divide and confuse the working class.

Once more they are in difficulties. Unemployment is increasing. In adjacent columns you can read red scare stories and accounts of sackings, short-time working and mounting unemployment.

One aircraft company is threatening to sack 1,000 workers; at least 4,000 miners are to be sacked. These are almost daily occurrences.

Endorse their class's policy

The News Chronicle and the Sunday Times are not campaigning for full employment. They endorse the policy for which their class stands, the utilization of unemployment as a means of 'disciplining' the workers.

When The Newsletter proposed to give the rank and file the opportunity to discuss the growth of unemployment and how to resist it, it was attacked by the Press because it was drawing attention to the plight of hundreds of thousands of human beings, condemned once again by an obsolete social system to poverty and all its degrading effects.

Though the Tory Party publicly declares its anxiety about the growth of unemployment, both Heathcoat Amory and the Economist have blurted out that even the present figure is 'excessively' low.

The fight against unemployment is a political question. It is the touchstone of a real socialist policy. The Right-wing trade-union leaders have demonstrated their utter incapacity to stand fast against the employers on this question.

The only real resistance has come from the shop stewards. That is why the stewards, and all who seek to bring the

rank and file together in united action in defence of jobs, have become the main target of the employers' hostility.

We say quite frankly that every trade union leader who helps the employers to victimize a shop steward is nothing more nor less than a tool of the employers inside the trade union movement.

Have served him well

Those trade union leaders who agreed with the sacking of the Shell-Mex workers and their shop stewards have served Sir Robert McAlpine and his class well, and have betrayed the interests of their own members.

Tory policy for the working class is hunger and war. The capitalist system is bankrupt.

And all the Right-wing Labour and trade-union leaders who want to patch up this system are holding back the advance to socialism in Britain.

But neither witch-hunters nor glossy pamphlets can hold back this advance for long.



I WANT to address some remarks on the witch-hunt to members of the Communist Party.

First by their silence, then by their slanders against the Newsletter Conference, the leaders of your party have in practice endorsed the witch-hunt against The Newsletter and the Conference.

They have thereby split the anti-capitalist struggle and left your own ranks open to similar witch-hunting attacks.

It is not possible to resist the attacks on the London North district committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union and on the Electrical Trades Union while at the same time delivering side-swipes at The Newsletter.

When the capitalist class embarks on a witch-hunt, it does not care whether its victim is a member of the Communist Party or the Labour Party. Communist Party members and 'Trotskyists' are all 'Reds' to them.

Against whole working class

The witch-hunt is aimed against the working class as a whole, even though the immediate victims are individuals. Not to come out against the witch-hunt when it starts, as a matter of principle—whatever one's political disagreements may be with the initial victims—is to make a rod for one's own back.

Look at the experience of the American workers. During the second world war the U.S. Communist Party supported the use of the Smith Act against the Trotskyist leaders of the Socialist Workers' Party.

During the cold war this same Act was used against the leaders of the U.S. Communist Party (and the SWP, incidentally, protested and campaigned against this persecution).

Financial Times Is Getting Worried

WARNING TO LABOUR LEADERS

'For the most part, the policy-makers seem to have decided, their proposals should be restricted to matters about which there can be no real difference of opinion and the poverty of their programme concealed by the glossiness of its cover.

'This may pass for a short time longer.

'But if Britain suffers in the long run from her lack of an effective radical opposition—and nations have suffered from such a lack in the past—it is the present leaders of the Labour Party who must shoulder the blame.'

(Financial Times, November 25, 1958)

QUICK, MEN, FILL THAT VACUUM!

'It would be hard to say whether the Group is more unpopular with employers, union leaders or the official communist bureaucracy at King Street. To each it poses a challenge . . .

'Already the Group seems to have acquired some degree of influence . . . The initial success of the "Newsletter Group" has only been possible because of the growing weakness and lack of appeal of the official Communist Party.

'This has created an ideological vacuum among the militants in the unions. What is to be hoped is that the moderate union leaders will do more to fill it than they have hitherto.'

(Financial Times, December 1, 1958)

Isn't there a lesson here for Gollan and Pollitt? And for the rank and file of their party?

The trouble with the British Communist Party is that its leaders have never been able to get to grips with Stalinism.

Yes, they paid lip service to Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin's crimes—but they never drew the lessons from it. Instead, they sought to lull their members to sleep.

Stalin represented a privileged bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. And Khrushchev continues to represent that bureaucracy today.

If he was forced to denounce Stalin, it was because that bureaucracy is being threatened by the power and might of a revitalized working class in Russia.

The leaders of the British Communist Party, by continuing to support Khrushchev in the same uncritical way they supported Stalin, are carrying on in the old Stalinist manner.

That is why, instead of having an honest discussion about Left-wing unity in Britain, they go on using the word 'Trotskyist' as a swear-word, thus evading political problems rather than give serious answers to them.

The logical outcome of this is that they find themselves echoing—or anticipating—Fleet Street in attacks on Marxists in the Labour Party.

Blind support for Khrushchev in the Soviet Union leads to collaboration with the Right wing in the British trade union movement—and that is why many Communist Party full-time union officials are indistinguishable from their Right-wing counterparts.

Communist Party members should press their leaders to wage a united campaign against the witch-hunt, as a matter of principle.

And they should judge their leaders by their readiness to wage such a campaign, which is the acid test of their sincerity as socialists.



THE next Labour government cannot survive unless it bases itself on the defence of the shop stewards' movement and gives trade unions complete freedom to act on their members' behalf.

The middle class will be won to the Labour Party only when the party decides to take action against the big monopolists, who are the mortal enemies of the middle class. This action cannot be taken unless the industrial working class is mobilized behind the Labour Party.

All those in the Labour Party who treat the trade union rank and file as some kind of skeleton in the cupboard, while placating the middle class with soft words and promises, reveal that they are not socialists at all, but liberal apologists for capitalism.

Unless the Labour Party takes real socialist measures to solve the problems that capitalism places before the British people, then the middle class will be won over to fascism.

As soon as it returns to power the Labour government must introduce legislation protecting shop stewards against victimization. It must review all the present legislation that hampers such trade union activities as the right of picketing in the face of police provocation.

Employers who persist in provoking strikes and industrial unrest by attacking wages and working conditions must be smacked down—hard.

Only by such a militant socialist policy, carried out on behalf of the class that built the Labour movement, can Labour hope to defeat Toryism once and for all and go forward to a socialist Britain.



LABOUR'S demands as outlined in 'The Future Labour Offers YOU' are completely inadequate to deal with the present crisis.

This pamphlet contains no peace policy. On foreign affairs its proposals, apart from the suspension of H-bomb tests,

would mean virtually the continuation of the present Tory policy.

The pamphlet proposes to continue squandering huge sums of money on armaments, while the world remains poised on the brink of disaster.

It proposes to keep Britain in NATO and SEATO, the war alliances of Wall Street imperialism, which were designed for the purpose of making war on Russia, the eastern European countries and China.

So long as a Labour government pursues an imperialist 'defence' policy, then all hope must be given up of finding the money to reorganize British industry in the interests of the community as a whole, to build schools, homes and hospitals, to care for the old people and give proper recreation facilities to the young.

Withdraw from war alliances

The first step towards a socialist Britain would be for a Labour government to withdraw from NATO and SEATO, to end arms expenditure, abolish the manufacture of the H-bomb, close down the rocket bases—and devote the money and labour thus saved to the well-being of the people.

Some may say this would encourage Khrushchev and Company to go to war. So-called socialists who argue in this way are imperialists in disguise. The most powerful weapon against war is the international might of the working class, responding to the socialist appeal of a socialist government, taking decisive action against war.

The diplomatic position of a Labour government will be strengthened a thousandfold if it is able to go to the peoples of the USA, the USSR, China and the rest of the world with its policy for outlawing war altogether.

An immediate and direct appeal, over the heads of the statesmen, to the workers of the world, would galvanize the international Labour movement and win millions of allies.

A Labour government must say that under no circumstances will it use the H-bomb against the Soviet Union, the eastern European countries and China—at the behest of American imperialism.

It must give the American military staffs in Britain their marching orders, at the same time explaining to the American workers in uniform here that it has no quarrel with them, but only with their ruling class.

Under no circumstances must British Labour have anything to do with the war plans of imperialism.

And if war does break out, Labour must urge the workers to oppose the warmakers by fighting for socialism.



A MOST serious weakness in Labour's present policy is its failure to declare for the withdrawal of troops from Cyprus, Northern Ireland and other British colonies and semi-colonies.

British troops are in Cyprus as part of the commitments of British imperialism to NATO, and they have earned the hostility of the entire Cypriot people.

Labour must end this useless slaughter and bring back these boys to their homes, where they can engage in useful occupations, instead of being turned into brutes and thugs in the interests of imperialism.

Friendship with the colonial peoples can come about only when imperialist armies are withdrawn from other countries. Then these peoples will be the friends of a socialist Britain. We shall right the wrongs our rulers have done them, and our example will encourage them to take the path of socialism, too.



THE only way to end the menace of unemployment is to bring about the nationalization of the basic industries. But nationalization is not given a chance

to work if huge sums are handed out in compensation to the ex-owners.

The present nationalized industries are dominated through and through by capitalists and their hangers-on. The rich have been milking these industries for years.

The National Coal Board is a case in point. Once again miners are faced with unemployment. Before the war Labour won the support of large sections of the working class by its demand for nationalization; but nationalization will become more and more discredited if nationalized industries are run without the workers' participation and against their interests.

On return to power a Labour government should legislate for the nationalization of all the basic industries without compensation. A national plan should be drawn up for the running of industry under the democratic control of the working class.

Labour must legislate to stop the export of capital, to extend workers' control to the banks and finance houses, and to establish a monopoly of foreign trade.

When these steps have been taken it will be easy to explain the facts of the economic situation to the working class, obtain their full and enthusiastic co-operation in the con-

struction of socialism, and on such problems as wages and working conditions.

Once the working class themselves own and control the means of production, the wages that can be afforded will be a matter for social discussion and decision.

Lead to world's workers

Until this has been attained, then the law must guarantee that wages are geared to the cost of living, as determined by an index drawn up on a realistic basis by the trade unions themselves.

Labour must declare that it will never again permit the working class of Britain to live in poverty.

But, above all, the next Labour government will stand or fall by its attitude towards the international working class.

Unless its policies give a lead to the workers of the world and encourage them to go forward to socialism, then we must say with all frankness that whatever the good intentions of Gaitskell and Bevan may be, mankind is doomed.

But if the workers refuse to be deluded and split by slanders and witch-hunts, if they rally their ranks and go forward in a determined counter-offensive against reaction, then mankind can win a socialist future of undreamed-of happiness, prosperity and plenty.

MINERS DEMAND FIRM OPPOSITION TO PIT CLOSURES AND DISMISSALS

By Tony Harris (delegate to the Lancashire area conference of the National Union of Mineworkers)

MINERS are angry about the National Coal Board's reported decision to close forty pits and sack 12,000 miners.

We must resist all pit closures and dismissals unconditionally. The nationalized mines have been run in the interests of a capitalist economy and now we are being asked to suffer for it.

'Private enterprise' has been getting cheap coal. It has extracted a toll of interest from the money the NCB has to borrow.

It has found a profitable market for the machinery and other products which the NCB has used in modernizing the pits. There has been a steady rake-off in compensation payments.

The right of the miner to his livelihood is higher than the right of these people to draw interest and profit.

Arthur Horner said over the week-end that he had not heard of the Board's plans. And he is the general secretary of our union. The myth of joint consultation has been blown sky-high.

Workers have the power

The only people who seem to be shocked by this are our leaders. Which only goes to show how far they are out of touch with the rank and file.

Most of the men in the pits are experiencing the Coal Board's 'get tough' policy every day.

The fight against pit closures must be part of the fight against the capitalist domination of industry. The miners and other workers together have the power to end that domination.

If we are to stop having false booms and depressions, then we must fight for socialist measures that will abolish capitalism for ever.

We must demand such measures from the Labour Party leaders. The crisis in the coal-mines shows the utter fallacy of believing you can have socialism in one industry.

If the present leaders will not unite the workers to fight the capitalist offensive then we, the rank and file, will have to do it ourselves.

We must see to it that no section is left to fight pit closures on its own, but that the whole power of the organized mine-workers is used to prevent a return to misery and poverty.

LABOUR REVIEW SAYS OUR CONFERENCE WAS A 'MILESTONE'

LAST month's national industrial rank-and-file Conference was 'a milestone in the post-war history of the working class', says an editorial entitled 'Rank and File on the Move' in the December issue of Labour Review, now on sale.

Answering attacks made on the Conference and The Newsletter by Fleet Street, various union leaders, Communist Party leaders and a writer in Socialist Review, the editorial declares:

'On November 16 a good part of the groundwork was laid on which can be built a leadership which will organize, educate, mobilize and lead in industrial and political struggle workers who seek socialist solutions to the problems of their class.'

This issue of Labour Review contains a notice by Isaac Deutscher of the latest volume in E. H. Carr's 'History of Soviet Russia'.

There are articles on the race riots (Cliff Slaughter); the Pasternak affair (Alan MacDonald); Marxists in the second world war (William Hunter); and 'The Origins of Sectarianism' (Peter Cadogan).

There is a communication from Douglas Goldring, originally submitted to the New Statesman, but rejected by that journal; a poem by a young Azores girl, 'Music from Afar', translated by P. McGowan; and five pages of book reviews by Brian Pearce, Jock Stevens, G. Gale, the Rev. Donald O. Soper, Martin Grainger, Nigel Harris and Dora Scarlett.

Labour Review can be obtained from New Park Publications Ltd., 266, Lavender Hill, S.W.11, price 2s. 5d. post free.

JOHN LAWRENCE: A POLITICAL OBITUARY

From a Correspondent

WHEN John Lawrence publicly joined the Communist Party on November 23 the Daily Worker omitted to give certain details of his biography.

Lawrence joined the Trotskyist movement towards the end of 1939, and became South Wales organizer of the Revolutionary Communist Party after its formation in 1944.

A leading spokesman against Stalinism, he was forcibly ejected from a Communist Party meeting in January 1951 when he and others exposed the lies in James Klugmann's 'From Trotsky to Tito'.

Lawrence had a long record of fighting for an independent Marxist party in Britain. His desertion to Stalinism now will

not remove the good he did during those years, which will remain as a foundation stone of the Marxist movement.

In joining the Communist Party Lawrence shows that, like some of those who lately left that party, he is looking for a ready-made way out for the working class.

At the core of his abandonment of Marxism is his conception of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, eastern Europe and China. He believes that this bureaucracy can liberalize itself, and that this will encourage the communist parties to do the same.

Fabian brand of Stalinism

Fabians believe that capitalist society will gradually become socialist; Lawrence adopts a Fabian brand of Stalinism: he pins his hopes on a gradual evolution.

Marxists, however, believe that it is necessary to construct new Marxist parties, and to prepare consciously for the overthrow of the bureaucracies and the establishment of real socialism.

Lawrence throws up the sponge at the very time when a large number of Communist Party members, many of long standing, are finding the way to Marxism for the very first time. His retreat from Marxist principles will serve as one more landmark in the education of these new forces.

ECONOMICS

QUESTION IS: 'HOW BAD WILL IT GET?'

GOVERNMENT MEASURES CANNOT AFFECT WORST-HIT INDUSTRIES FOR SIX MONTHS

By Tom Kemp

It is now taken for granted that the recession is going to continue well into 1959. The question is: How bad will it get?

It is plain that the government response was slow, and that the measures so far put in hand cannot have any appreciable effect on the worst-hit industries until the middle of next year.

Nor does private business look like steadying up its own investment plans before then.

The contradiction in foreign trade has hardly begun to have its effect. It is likely to continue as under-developed countries run into increasing payments difficulties and as recession spreads in Europe.

The reliefs given to the consumer goods industries will only have a once-and-for-all sustaining effect. They do not, in any case, provide help for those industries most in need of it.

Real slump quite possible

The expansion of bank credit which has been taking place, as well as the high level of share prices, may in time become sources of weakness.

Certainly a deep downward slant into a real slump is quite possible. Continued slowing down of private investment, coupled with a sharp fall in exports, could stoke up a cumulative movement which it would be difficult to arrest by orthodox Keynesian methods.

Excess labour would be dismissed, stocks would decline, consumer purchases would slacken and a new run on the pound would take place.

To say this is a possibility is not to say that it is the most likely alternative. If it does not occur in 1959 it will be because the forces of classic capitalist crisis have been checked, not because they have not been operating.

The continued high level of activity in important sectors of the economy is, for the moment, sustaining the level of activity as a whole. Cars and consumer durables play a key part here.

The rising trend of exports to the USA, somewhat unexpected, is also important.

Private investment generally is coasting along under the favourable influence of these features and benefits from the backlog of demand from the peak of the boom. Building has benefited from government orders and lower interest rates.

Could tilt the balance

The extent of the recession will depend upon the relative strength of these two opposing sets of forces. It is doubtful whether any new measures of government policy can influence the outcome until later next year. A break of business confidence, or renewed recession in the USA, could tilt the balance towards a deeper trough.

A note of some anxiety is perceptible among the defenders of capitalism. At the height of the American recession last May their former confidence in indefinite growth already showed extensive gaps.

'Do something to save us from a new dollar shortage' was then the cry addressed to the U.S. administration.

This autumn the cry is for the State to do something to save the system from its own excesses.

Many, of course, assert their confidence in the system to keep their spirits up. They need to, for its inability to match the accomplishments of Russia's planned economy is a further source of deep concern.

For all its expansion in the boisterous fifties world capitalism is relatively and absolutely a weaker system than at any time in this century. Be this recession short or long, deep or shallow, the writing on the wall will only be engraved more deeply.

FRANCE

COMMUNIST AND SOCIALIST MILITANTS MUST SHOULDER A HEAVY BURDEN

From Our Paris Correspondent

THE elections to the National Assembly plainly confirm the grave political defeat of the French working-class movement. The emergence of a powerful bloc around Soustelle underlines the danger of a steady drift from the cautious Bonapartism of de Gaulle to a totalitarian State able to underpin French capitalism for a further period.

The purely formal powers of the Assembly in the new régime gave the elections no more than a symbolic importance. But for a régime which draws its strength from symbols the display of electoral support was invaluable.

The whole working-class movement and Left wing is now confronted with a sorry spectacle of confusion and retreat.

No longer can the Communist Party claim that the correctness of its line is proved by growing electoral support.

Its defeat is more than a question of votes now: it is the defeat of an entire policy and leadership.

The long overdue stock-taking among the communist rank and file can no longer be postponed. A new note of criticism is apparent, especially among intellectuals.

Public communist opposition journal

The recently published resolution of the Paris university teachers' branch of the party calls for an end to the leaders' blind optimism and self-praise, the recognition of the serious errors which have been committed, and of the need for a new and thorough Marxist analysis of the present state of French capitalism.

The communist opposition journal *La Voie Communiste* (now appearing as a printed, public, monthly) calls for an end to the disastrous tactics of recent years, which have destroyed much mass confidence in the party.

The various opposition currents still remain unclear and are either unwilling to link up the failures of the party with the entire Stalinist past, or do not recognize the need for this.

Many honest militants still see any criticism of the leaders as the first step towards compromise with the bourgeoisie.

The example of Doriot, who had a big mass following in the thirties and then ratted, is still potent.

The oppositionists have a hard road ahead. Their first task is to sort out their own ideas and then to break down the mistrust of the honest, but often bewildered, party member. The sad thing is that many simply vote with their feet, moving into isolation and apathy.

Bound to be ambiguous

The brave new Left grouped for the election in the Union of Democratic Forces polled no more than 5 per cent. of the total vote in the constituencies where it appeared.

Since it was a loose formation extending from Mendès-France to workers disillusioned with the Communist Party, its political position was bound to be ambiguous.

Some of its prominent spokesmen showed distinct wavering in their attitude to de Gaulle when negotiations with the FLN seemed in prospect at the end of October.

The main weakness of the non-communist Left is that it is a movement of opinion. It attracted a clientele of sophisticated voters, ready to think out complicated issues and take account of fine distinctions.

It could offer the ordinary people nothing; it had no roots in the factories and, with few exceptions, no record of work in local affairs.

The betrayals and failures of the old leaders raise the question: What are the fundamental requirements for a new upsurge of the French working-class movement?

There are those who emphasize the need for a re-examination of the past. If that means going into a huddle in a mood of despondency to find the perfect formula, it will only exaggerate the ingrown, sectarian features already characteristic of some groups.

New methods of work

This re-examination must go hand in hand with a search for new methods of work and struggle, adapted to the conditions of the régime.

Special emphasis is needed on the YOUTH. Great revolutionary potentialities were everywhere apparent among young people in the forties. The wanton neglect and suppression of this enthusiasm is one of the blackest crimes which can be

laid at the door of the reformist and Stalinist leaders.

French socialists must go to the young people as they are now, with their special interests and problems: to learn from them, not merely to win them for a policy.

New methods, and no doubt unorthodox organizational forms, are more urgently called for here than anywhere else.

An important aspect of the problem of the youth is that of the SOLDIERS, the conscript youth. Seizing possibilities which the compromising slogan of 'one State, one army' raised by the Communist Party in 1944-45 left open, the reactionary officer corps pinioned the conscripts in an iron propaganda grip.

The terrible ravages of the psychological branch of the army could be heard last May in the radio declarations of the conscripts in Algeria.

Yet only a year or two earlier, these same young men had been prepared to struggle against the war. The winning of the soldiers' confidence is terribly difficult but terribly necessary.

RANK-AND-FILE TRADE UNION WORK at workshop level is indispensable, to remedy the trade union officials' routinism and neglect.

THE ALGERIAN WORKERS must be supported in their national struggle, and also in their efforts in France to secure a decent wage and an end to the intolerable housing conditions in which the majority of them live.

Solidarity against French imperialism

Practical efforts, and not mere words, are needed here to build real solidarity against French imperialism.

Fulfilment of such aims will impose a tremendous burden on the comparatively few militants in the communist opposition and in other groups who recognize the need for a thorough overhaul of the old methods.

There will be no room here for those who expect to see spectacular changes and rapid successes. There is no quick way by collecting together a few 'personalities', issuing a manifesto, founding a new 'movement' or hoping for a change of heart on the part of a Duclos or a Defferre. These are men of the past, and these methods are discredited.

Only a deeper, and, in a sense, more primitive type of work can restore the integrity of the French working-class movement.

There is no doubt that there will be opportunities as the régime reveals its true face, as economic problems at home and in North Africa become more acute.

But it would be well, all the same, not to underestimate the power and subtlety of the French workers' enemies.

Constant Reader

Socialism and the Wolfenden Report

PROSPECT of increased powers being given to the police to deal with prostitutes, and of heavier penalties being inflicted on the latter, should make all socialists examine their attitude to this question.

The old socialist classic dealing with it was August Bebel's 'Woman in the Past, Present and Future' (English edition, 1885), spoken of as such by Lenin in his well-known discussion with Klara Zetkin on women's problems. (Bebel wrote that 'for modern society, the prostitution question is a sphinx whose riddle it cannot read; it sees no way out of the difficulty but that of State sanction and control, if greater evils are to be avoided'.)

On the same occasion Lenin recalled that Rosa Luxemburg, 'a true communist, acted and felt like a human being when she wrote a certain article in defence of a prostitute who had landed in jail for violating a police regulation connected with her sorry profession'.

'Yellow passport' system

In tsarist Russia the police enjoyed extensive powers to control prostitutes—the notorious 'yellow passport' system—

and these gave rise to a variety of abuses and tyrannies which were ventilated in two scandalous court cases involving the police chiefs of Kronstadt and Nikolayev.

In 1910 an all-Russia conference against the traffic in women and children was held in St Petersburg. A spokesman of the social-democratic workers addressed the conference, declaring:

'We have no hope of getting rid, under the present economic system, of the terrible evil that is called prostitution, and that weighs upon the national organism with its deadly effects . . .

'For that reason we regard it as our chief duty to reveal the deeper causes of prostitution.'

After the revolution

After the revolution and civil war in Russia the People's Commissariat of Public Health, in a circular issued in 1922, stated that 'the former methods of supervision adopted in pre-revolutionary Russia, which in practice meant not the protection, but the oppression of women, must be quite definitely repudiated . . .

'Under no circumstances must the war against prostitution degenerate into a war against prostitutes.'

Klara Zetkin vigorously opposed a project for a 'militia of morals', pointing out that such a force could 'have no power to reduce demand and supply in prostitution; the most that they can attain is a mere outward transformation of the market'.

Dr Bronner, head of the famous venerological institute in Moscow, declared that 'if the government cannot assure to all women the work they need to make a living, it cannot punish them for earning a living as best they can—in this instance by taking their own bodies to market'.

He showed that not only unemployment but also inadequate wages and the housing shortage, to mention only directly material factors, inevitably produced a constant supply of prostitutes.

While stern measures should be taken against brothel-keepers, pimps and white-slavers of all kinds, it would be grossly unjust to persecute the women themselves.

Mixture as before

ANYBODY who hoped that Andrew Rothstein's review, in the Communist Party monthly Marxism Today, of the recent history of the party by Henry Pelling, would be an improvement on James Klugmann's squib in the Daily Worker, will have been disappointed.

The same old method—disingenuous misrepresenting of what the writer actually says—remains Rothstein's stand-by as it remains Klugmann's.

Pelling refers to the conflict in Barcelona in May 1937, during the Spanish civil war, as a 'communist coup'. This is very wrong of him, writes Rothstein, for it is well known to have been 'a Trotskyist affair'.

The point is, of course, that Pelling, in accordance with the mass of information which has been published by eye-witnesses of and participants in that conflict, presents it as an attack by the Stalinists who ruled the roost in Barcelona at that time, upon a working-class party which they saw as a rival and as a centre of activity to keep the Spanish struggle on the revolutionary path which it had originally taken.

By means of provocation and aggression they crushed a group which Stalin feared as a potential threat to his intrigues.

Extremely instructive

The whole incident is extremely instructive as to the aims and methods of Stalinism, and it is to be hoped that the recent mentions of it, not only by Rothstein, but also by Dennis Goodwin in World News, will lead thoughtful Communist Party members to give it some study.

The best book from a Marxist standpoint is Felix Morrow's 'Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain' (1938).

Also worth reading are Fenner Brockway's 'Workers' Front' (1938), George Orwell's 'Homage to Catalonia' (1938), Gerald Brenan's 'Spanish Labyrinth' (1943), and two books by ex-GPU officers who were involved in the coup—Walter Krivitsky's 'I Was Stalin's Agent' (1939) and Alexander Orlov's 'Secret History of Stalin's Crimes' (1954).

How do they get that way?

There must be something in the nature of the life of a bureaucracy, whether it be of a government, trade union, political party or a religious institution, that deadens the receptive faculties and smothers the imagination.

'Whether it is the comfortable life of the office, the necessary routine of their work, with its rules and regulations, or a cynicism induced by their escape from industrial life, I, for the moment, leave to the sociologist and the psychologist.'

—J. T. Murphy, Sheffield engineering shop stewards' leader in the first world war, in 'New Horizons' (1941), p. 50.

Putting it mildly

'It is doubtful whether many trade union leaders regard their task as being the fulfilment of the normal aims which preface the written constitutions, and which are mainly couched in the terminology of the early socialists.'

—V. L. Allen, 'Trade Union Leadership: Based on a Study of Arthur Deakin' (1957), p. 13.

BRIAN PEARCE

LETTERS

71-YEAR-OLD 'DISCIPLE OF KEIR HARDIE' GREETES THE NEWSLETTER

YOUR last issue is most interesting, refreshing and sensible. I had been reader of the Worker for many years until a few months ago, when I could not appreciate their policy and views.

I am, alas! a discarded remnant of capitalism, with 50s. a week to exist on at the age of 71.

Hence I am not in a position to subscribe for a full year, but I will do so each three months. I regret I cannot be active owing to my very bad state of health.

However, here's wishing you and your colleagues every success in your fight for some REAL socialism. As a disciple of Keir Hardie, you will realize I have had quite an experience of our so-called 'Labour' and trade union bosses.

Bournemouth

Frank Bridges

[With the above letter came a postal order for 2s. 6d. We are loth to accept money from an old age pensioner living on 50s. a week, difficult though our own financial position is. Would any reader be prepared to give this old comrade a year's subscription to The Newsletter as a Christmas present?—Editor]

FRANCE, 1958, AND GERMANY, 1932-33: WHAT IS THE REAL COMPARISON?

In your commentary on the French election results you write:

'These leaders [of the French Communist Party] are displaying all the fatal infirmity of will and paralysis of action that the German Stalinists displayed before Hitler in 1932-33 . . .

'Instead of rousing the French workers to bar the path to fascism, they supported the "democratic" elements which smoothed de Gaulle's path to power . . .

Should not 'Stalinists' read 'social democrats' here? In Germany in 1932-33 it was the social-democratic party that was the majority party of the working class, as the Communist Party is in France today.

And it was the social democrats who followed the line of supporting as 'the lesser evil' figures such as Hindenburg who later opened the door to Hitler.

It is with the behaviour of the German social democrats in that period that the line of the French Communist Party offers a striking parallel.

In those years the German Communist Party made its own contribution, true, to the victory of fascism—but this it did through its sectarianism, its treatment of social democracy as the main enemy, its tactical co-operation with the Nazis, and the imbecile idea which was allowed to flourish in its ranks: 'After Hitler, our turn.'

London, N.W.

W. Stueckrath