

THE NEWSLETTER

Weekly Journal of the Socialist Labour League

Vol. 3, No. 112

Threepence

July 25, 1959

MR BRIGINSHAW AND THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE: AN OPEN LETTER

Gerry Healy Nails 'Employer-Paymasters' Smear

By GERRY HEALY, general secretary of the Socialist Labour League

DEAR MR BRIGINSHAW,

On July 15 you addressed a letter to all members of your union, the National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants, declaring that the Socialist Labour League was being 'paid by the employers in this country' to 'ruin' the struggle of the ten printing trade unions. (The full text of the letter appears below.)

By implication you linked the Socialist Labour League with the strike-breaking outfit of Edward Martell. You did not produce one single shred of evidence for your monstrous allegations.

When you wrote that letter you must have been aware that the League had no legal redress, since by statute no action can be taken against a trade union for any libel alleged to have been committed on its behalf. Nor can any injunction be applied for restraining you from republishing your letter.

Since the law guarantees you an immunity not enjoyed by the ordinary citizen, since you cannot be challenged in the courts—which would reveal your letter to be a pack of lies—the method you have chosen to attack the Socialist Labour League can only be characterized as cowardly.

We are making this an open letter, which we hope all members of your union and of the other printing unions will read, because it is clear that the lies to which you resort can only weaken the printworkers' struggle.

COMMUNIST PARTY LEADERS

Working for a split

In the midst of a decisive dispute you have uttered slanders which can only bring discredit on yourself.

We are well aware that these are not your own opinions alone. They are the opinions of a faction of Communist Party members who, directed from that party's headquarters, are active in your union and the other printing trade unions.

Behind the scenes these gentlemen are working, not in the interests of trade unionism, but in the interests of the Kremlin-guided bureaucrats who control their party.

Under cover of pious talk about 'unity' they are seeking to strengthen Natsopa at the expense of the other unions in the printing trade, thereby creating what they consider would be a fruitful field for their penetration.

The leaders of the Communist Party are in fact working for a split in the printing trade unions. And they consider that their main political opponents are the Socialist Labour League, since the League has no other interests than to help the printworkers secure the 40-hour week and the 10 per cent. wage increase.

The Socialist Labour League has no reason to adopt any underhand methods in this struggle. It has appeared openly under its own banner, and has collaborated—without any strings—with printworkers all over London in a number of public demonstrations.

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THE NEWSLETTER: CHANGE OF ADDRESS

The next issue of The Newsletter will appear on August 15. From then onwards, the address of The Newsletter's editorial and business offices will be 186 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4, to which all copy, subscriptions, inquiries and other correspondence should be sent.

Contributors are asked once again to note that the deadline for receipt of copy is Tuesday midday of each week.

BIRMINGHAM WORKERS PLEDGE SOLIDARITY WITH MORRIS STRIKERS

The works committee of Fisher and Ludlow's, Birmingham, resolved on Tuesday 'that this works committee deplores the act of the British Motor Corporation in victimizing Bro. Horsman, TGWU.'

The resolution expressed 'full moral and solidarity support in any action the TGWU members take in pursuit of this matter.'

Shop steward Frank Horsman was sacked last week by the management of Morris Motors, Cowley, which has issued a statement accusing him of 'a continuous and deliberate policy of obstruction, insubordination and insolence over a period of many years.'

Bro. Horsman retorted: 'In their suggestion of insubordination the management may be getting confused with plain speaking, for which I make no apologies, while at the same time always attempting to maintain a recognized courtesy.'

Three thousand Morris workers have downed tools in protest at his victimization.

HAIL KASSIM!

'The question of the triumph of our Republic requires what the Leader pointed to in his replies: Unity of Ranks.'

'Our Republic has been frustrating the imperialists' efforts for one reason explained by the Leader: its sovereignty . . .'

'The workers are entitled to have their working conditions improved and their wages reasonably raised. Workers and employers must form a solid front . . .'

These passages are taken from the June 4 issue of Iraqi Review, the weekly English supplement to Ittihad-al-Shaab, organ of the Communist Party of Iraq.

THE NEWSLETTER

180 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4

Telephone Macaulay 7029

SATURDAY, JULY 25, 1959

PLAN FOR THE POLICE?

PEOPLE are becoming very concerned about the conduct of the police. Butler assured the House of Commons this week that Podola had not been beaten in the police station. The Manchester Guardian suggested that these last four words might have been deliberate. Even before Press photographs of Podola's face appeared Paget said in the Commons that he had been 'beaten unconscious'. It is said that he ran into a door just as it was burst open, but this is too reminiscent of the old 'shot while trying to escape' excuse to carry much weight.

Last week two Birmingham detectives were found guilty of assaulting a Jamaican. He said he was hit across the face several times, kned in the stomach and kicked, and that when a uniformed officer entered the room he was made to bow to him. A 'lapse', said the magistrate. It may well be so. There was a 'lapse' at Thurso some time ago. In one year 800 policemen were punished for 'lapses' of one kind or another.

But the idea that a blue uniform seems to give some ruffians, that it empowers them to use physical violence against 'suspects', is only half the story. The filming of an anti-H-bomb march by Salford police a year ago, and the filming of this year's Aldermaston march by the Slough police—a record for social purposes—have not been satisfactorily explained. No meeting of certain socialist organizations is now complete without its plain-clothes man sitting conspicuously in the audience, taking shorthand notes for dear life. Telephone-tapping and tampering with private letters are everyday occurrences. Police interference with the right of peaceful picketing has reached the point where any senior officer can 'interpret' the law to mean that only two pickets will be allowed—and the magistrates will uphold his decision.



Can we draw some general conclusions from these facts, taken in conjunction with the increased powers given to the police under the Street Offences Bill and Butler's interventions with local councils (e.g., Gateshead) to ensure that newly-appointed chief constables shall not be local men? It seems that there is a definite plan in somebody's head to strengthen the powers of the police in relation to the ordinary citizen, and to ensure the independence of the police in relation to local authorities. Without prejudice to the question of the Nottingham planetarium, it is clear that Butler is seeking to crack down on watch committees—and what are watch committees for if not to exercise some sort of control over local police forces? If present trends continue, such control will become a farce, and we shall have a police force like that in France, responsible only to the Home Office and run by men whose major experience is in colonial operations of one sort or another. The structure of the French police force facilitated de Gaulle's accession to power. A centralized,

streamlined police force, accustomed to acting tough towards Left-wingers and militant workers, is a ready-made instrument for a Bonapartist *coup d'Etat*. Can it be that somebody is thinking ahead?

FROM DISCUSSION TO ACTION

A NEW stage has been reached in the struggle against the hydrogen-bomb. A year ago it was a movement of middle-class progressives and the more enlightened socialists. This year the H-bomb takes a prominent place on the agenda of many trade union conferences. As usual, the Right-wing trade union leaders are showing that their views on this question are essentially Tory views. Sir Tom Williamson is prepared to go to any lengths to assure the Foreign Office that he stands four-square under the Union Jack, even though the destruction of his own country and the possible destruction of the human race are entailed. But the tide of feeling is flowing strongly against Sir Tom, whatever victories he may win by gerrymandering.

It would, however, be a mistake to imagine that the adoption of resolutions by trade union conferences is more than a tiny step towards ending the dangers of radiation and H-bomb holocaust. The movement against the H-bomb must pass from *discussion* to *action*. Trade unionists are now talking against the bomb. But trade unionists are still making it, are still building the rocket bases. One hour's action to stop this work would have more effect than all the resolutions put together.



Frank Cousins should speak up and tell the workers precisely what contribution his union is going to make towards the practical fight against the bomb. His union's struggles against the employers, which every serious socialist supports to the hilt, are inseparable from the struggle against the H-bomb, which is the employers' ultimate weapon. When Cousins weakens—as he unfortunately did in the Covent Garden and London bus disputes—he harms the struggle against the bomb as well as the struggle for economic gains. Conversely, no real fight against the H-bomb is possible that is not waged as a class fight. Whoever is a real opponent of the bomb must participate in the class struggle and seek to carry it forward to the point where the working class takes State power, introduces a socialist society and does away with nuclear weapons altogether.

The position of the Communist Party leaders would be laughable if the issues at stake were not so momentous. At recent union conferences Communist Party members have upheld the position of the Labour Party Right-wing, which coincides with the position of their own party. If they had taken the clear-cut line of fighting against British manufacture of the bomb the whole face of the trade union movement would now have been very different. If Gaitskell wins at the Blackpool conference his victory will in no small measure be due to the line taken by the Communist Party.

Serious socialists should note that Stalinism and Right-wing reformism, as usual, stand united against progress. In spite of them, against them, the fight will go on.

OPEN LETTER (Continued from front page)

The League has scrupulously avoided attacking any individual trade union leader even though it has certain criticisms of the conduct of the dispute. We have gone to great pains to make clear our position from the standpoint of principle.

Above all we have no desire for a victory of one union and the defeat of others. We want to see the victory of all ten unions over the employers, and we have striven and shall continue to strive for the maximum possible unity in action of these unions.

Your letter makes no attempt to grapple with our arguments or our policies. It calls us names. It says we are 'paid by the employers'.

The signature at the bottom of the letter is yours, Mr Briginshaw. But the ideas expressed, the whole method of the letter, are the ideas and the method of Stalinism.

Long ago Stalin set the pattern for this kind of lying in the Labour movement. By denouncing his opponents as agents of the employers, agents of imperialism, agents of fascism, he diverted attention from his barbarous crimes against the international working-class movement.

All this is history. But the technique is still being used. The technique is simple: denounce your opponent with the biggest possible lie—and hope that some at least of the mud will stick.

Whether you like it or not, Mr Briginshaw, you are doing the dirty work of the Communist Party leaders.

WE CHALLENGE YOU: Can you produce one single scrap of proof? Can you name one single member of the Socialist Labour League who has received money from the employers? Have I as general secretary of the League received any?

WE CHALLENGE YOU: Come out from behind your legal cover and repeat your allegations in a form in which they can be fought out in the courts. Quit skulking in the back room and come into the light of day.

You try to link the Socialist Labour League with Edward Martell. Yet anyone who can read can see on page two of the July 11 issue of the scab-herders' weekly paper, the People's Guardian, a paragraph denouncing the Socialist Labour League in the following terms:

'Blatant incitement to involve other major industries in the printing dispute is made in the current issue of The Newsletter, the weekly journal of the Socialist Labour League, which has been the spearhead of much industrial trouble during the last year or so.'

**DEVOID OF FACTS
From beginning to end**

You write about the Socialist Labour League's 'employer-paymasters'. Yet anyone who can read can see an attack on us by the Economic League—the employers' own intelligence organization—in a recent leaflet (1959 series: no. 19) which declares:

'The Trotskyist record in recent months is a wholly destructive one. They sought to prolong the official London bus strike. They captured the leadership of the last unofficial dock strike in the Port of London. They took a leading part in the pointless unofficial strike on the South Bank site . . .

'Trotskyism spells Trouble, wherever and whenever it appears. . .

How similar is the tone of these attacks to the tone of your own attack on the Socialist Labour League. All three attacks are devoid of facts. All three distort our policy from beginning to end.

The more we reflect on your letter and the motives that must have led you to write it, the more we feel that you are trying to create a diversion of some kind in the middle of

the printing dispute for some as yet unstated reason.

The printworkers are in the vanguard of the entire trade union movement in the struggle for the 40-hour week.

The Socialist Labour League does not argue that a compromise agreement with the employers is not possible as a result of negotiations on this issue and on the wage demand.

What we do say is that the employers are determined at all costs to prevent the 40-hour week being achieved by workers in all industries, that they are prepared to fight to the bitter end against this.

**GENERAL COUNCIL'S POLICY
Fails in elementary duty**

We feel that since this struggle concerns other trade unionists the extension of the dispute would help the whole Labour movement to achieve the reduction of hours that is so vital if unemployment is to be combated.

That is what we have argued right from the beginning.

Will you reply to this argument before your members and the other workers in your industry? Without lies? Without slanders?

Can the 40-hour week be won by ordinary negotiations? Your union and nine others have had to take strike action. Is it not better to win this strike, and strengthen the unity of the whole Labour movement, by showing the employers that printworkers are prepared to join hands with other workers to achieve victory?—or should the printworkers' struggle be sealed off from the rest of the movement?

This is what is so pernicious about the policy of the Trades Union Congress General Council. On paper it declares for a 40-hour week. But when the battle begins it runs to the Tory government for some kind of inquiry.

It does not carry out its elementary duty: to declare its solidarity with the printworkers' struggle for the 40-hour week, to raise financial help, to encourage solidarity action.

If you want to criticize those who are hampering the printers' fight, Mr Briginshaw, why not direct your criticisms to the right quarters—to the Right wing of the trade union movement, which is doing absolutely nothing for the printers, as it did absolutely nothing for the London busmen last year.

**TO 'BLACK' SHOP
Ordinary workers marching together**

When members of Natsopa and members of the Socialist Labour League—ordinary workers like themselves—marched together through the streets of London to Martell's 'black' shop they carried such slogans as 'No phony arbitration' and 'Nothing less than the 40-hour week'.

You want your members to believe that we were 'paid by the employers' to do this!

Again, there are members of the Socialist Labour League in various parts of the country who are Natsopa fathers of the chapel. Are they 'paid by the employers'?

At the South London Press members of your union had the right of peaceful picketing interfered with by the police. A few months earlier a member of The Newsletter's Editorial Board was imprisoned for upholding the same right during the South Bank dispute. Was he 'paid by the employers'?

Several years ago your union was engaged in a struggle with the Scottish firm of D. C. Thomson and Co. Ltd. Many socialists who are today members of the Socialist Labour League gave full support to Natsopa in that struggle, as did the paper Socialist Outlook, of whose editorial board I was a member.

Organizers of your union congratulated us on the stand we took, just as many members of your union today have congratulated The Newsletter, the successor to Socialist Outlook, on the stand it is taking in the present dispute.

Were we all 'paid by the employers' in those days?

Can it be, Mr Briginshaw, that you are . . . weakening in the fight for the 40-hour week? Can it be that you want to erect a straw man so that attention can be diverted from a

retreat on this vital principle?

Will you give a straight answer to this question in front of your members?

Recall how Moulden, president of the National Union of Hosiery Workers, having just accepted two wage cuts for his members against their expressed will, launched a violent attack against the Socialist Labour League, which he alleged had 'goaded' his members into rebellion.

In the opinion of the Socialist Labour League any retreat from the demand for a 40-hour week would help the employers at a time when the British working class can win this demand.

The policy of the Socialist Labour League on how this demand can be won is quite clear. In The Newsletter of July 11 we called for the setting up of rank-and-file committees in the printing trade.

These committees, we wrote, would not be 'an alternative to the existing union machinery', but would be 'an indispensable backbone for the unions, making sure there is no retreat whatever on the 40-hour week and the 10 per cent.'

PRODUCE YOUR EVIDENCE

Or have decency to apologize

We added:

'These rank-and-file committees could become the means of rallying hundreds of thousands of workers directly or indirectly connected with the printing industry . . .

'Federated house chapels should seek to forge links on an area basis, with the aim of setting up liaison committees with other trade unionists from whom solidarity action is to be sought.

'Rank-and-file initiative is the key to a printworkers' victory.'

WE SHALL CONTINUE to advocate this policy, which we believe is in the interests of every single worker involved in this dispute.

WE SHALL CONTINUE to fight for the unity in action of all printing trade unions behind the demands for a 40-hour week and a 10 per cent. wage increase.

WE SHALL CONTINUE resolutely to oppose any retreat from these demands.

WE SHALL GO ON challenging you to produce evidence of your shameful assertions—or to have the decency to apologize publicly for the grave injustice you have done to self-sacrificing and hard-working socialists, among whom are members of your own union.

Lastly, we have this specific proposal to make: let a working-class court of inquiry be set up, consisting of three rank-and-file members of Natsopa, three rank-and-file members of other printing trade unions, and three rank-and-file members of the Socialist Labour League.

We should be ready to submit evidence to such a court of honour, to answer any questions and produce whatever documents it might consider necessary to help it investigate your allegations.

We have complete confidence in the verdict of such a court of inquiry after it had investigated the facts.

We have nothing to hide.

Can you, Mr Briginshaw, say the same?

MR BRIGINSHAW'S CIRCULAR: THE FULL TEXT

The following is the full text of the circular sent by the general secretary of Natsopa to his members. It is dated July 15, 1959.

DURING our present struggle to better the living standards of our members, our Society and its leaders are being attacked by disruptionists on both sides.

Firstly the professional strike breakers through their known organization. Secondly the more insidious Trotskyists under the guise of the Socialist Labour League.

Both are saying much about the same thing for quite the

same reason—to defeat the Society and undermine the efforts of the ten unions to do the best for their members.

Under the cover of widening the dispute, the Socialist Labour League is reaching for its real objective, on instruction from its employer-paymasters, to break the struggle of the ten unions.

Both are paid by the employers in this country to ruin our movement.

Everyone must be on guard precisely because sincere workers are used as dupes in these purposes.

It will be obvious to our members that the intervention and propaganda is timed for the decisive point of the struggle. Do not allow your representatives to be stabbed in the back.

In both cases, send these disruptive elements packing with the appropriate 'flea in their ear'

Yours faithfully,

R. W. BRIGINSHAW, general secretary

PRINTWORKERS ARE KEEN TO READ THE NEWSLETTER

By Bob Pennington

DESPITE the attack on The Newsletter and the Socialist Labour League by Mr Briginshaw, printworkers—including Natsopa members—were still keen to buy The Newsletter last week.

Over 200 copies were sold on Friday around print-shops in London. One Natsopa father of the chapel himself took 100 for sale to his members. In Watford, a centre of the print trade, sales topped the 250 mark.

Eighty copies were sold in Fleet Street late on Saturday evening.

On Saturday afternoon the Socialist Labour League organized a march to the offices of the South London Press.

A number of Natsopa members took part, besides members of the London Typographical Society and the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paper Workers. During the march 234 copies of the paper were sold.

'IT'S BITING THE HAND THAT HELPS US' — BIRMINGHAM NATSOPA MEMBER

By Harry Finch

Members of Natsopa in Birmingham are bewildered—and in some cases downright angry—about Mr Briginshaw's circular attacking the Socialist Labour League.

The branch committee has had to stop putting The Newsletter on the table in the strikers' paying-out room. But sales outside were brisk.

One striker said: 'This attack is in effect biting the hand that helps us. We like The Newsletter and we shall continue buying it.' Committee members were among those who bought the paper.

FURNITURE WORKERS STRIKE FOR 100 PER CENT. TRADE UNIONISM

By Our Industrial Correspondent

THIRTY-THREE members of the National Union of Furniture Trade Operatives at the Benchairs Factory, Southgate Road, London, are on strike for 100 per cent. trade unionism.

The strike follows a successful struggle last May to secure the full rate for the job. After three days' stoppage the management agreed to the wage demand but refused to accept the principle of the closed shop.

During the dispute the six non-union members remained at work. Despite approaches by the union the six refused to join.

Bro. Seaborne, the shop steward, told me that the strike is official and that he is convinced if they establish a closed

..... Gaitskell, the Labour Party and the State

By MARTIN GRAINGER

GAITSKELL, in his speech at Workington on July 11, brought into the open some issues of fundamental importance to genuine socialists.

He stated that it was 'not right' that a future Labour government should be fully committed by conference decisions. 'Annual conference,' he told us, 'does not mandate a government.'

This means that the rank-and-file members of the Labour Party need not expect the party to implement all conference decisions once it is returned to power. It must presumably be left to the leaders to decide which decisions not to implement.

These statements may cause surprise to many Labour Party members.

But Gaitskell is telling the unvarnished truth. And in so doing he is revealing a lot more than he thinks.

He is showing the real relationship of forces in society, when a reformist party has taken parliamentary power but has failed to destroy (and reconstruct on a socialist basis) the main institutions of the capitalist State.

REAL POWER. Real power under these circumstances would remain in the hands of the capitalist class, however large the parliamentary majority of the Labour Party.

For this real power does not reside in Parliament but in the ownership of the means of production and in the control of coercive State institutions (the armed forces, the police, the prisons, the judiciary).

And it is this extra-parliamentary power that will determine which aspects of party policy a Labour government will be unwilling (and unable) to implement.

Gaitskell is saying in effect: 'Pass what resolutions you like at conference about the H-bomb, military alliances and foreign policy.

'Your opinions will not matter very much. These issues will be decided in consultation with the Imperial General Staff, the Foreign Office and other 'technical experts'.

Such 'specialists' and professional administrators are not politically neutral 'servants of the State' (as the reformists would have us believe).

INTERWOVEN PATTERN. By training, habits and interests, they are very much part of the ruling class. Their power is all the greater for not being openly acknowledged.

The Manchester Guardian let the cat right out of the bag. Commenting on Gaitskell's statements it proclaimed that 'the need for freedom of action applies to many aspects of policy but probably to none more than to the interwoven pattern of foreign, defence and scientific policies'.

'Who', the Guardian asked its readers, 'knows precisely the

state today of British weapons development?' And it answered: 'A small inner group of Ministers, Chiefs of Staff and scientific advisers.' The implication is clear: they alone should decide these things.

Instead of subordinating the experts to the policy of the working-class party (as the Bolsheviks did after taking State power in 1917) the Labour Party intends to subordinate the movement to the wishes and 'advice' of the capitalist experts.

This will ensure that the long-term interests of the capitalist class are not fundamentally endangered, though certain short-term concessions may have to be made to maintain the façade of democratic government.

STRESS CONDITIONS. The separation of legislative and executive functions in bourgeois society further strengthens the position of the ruling class.

It enables this class, under conditions of stress, to allow the representatives of the working class to obtain a temporary parliamentary majority, while retaining the means of obstructing their legislative programme and then of securing their parliamentary defeat.

Real organs of working-class power will clearly have to combine both legislative and executive functions, as did the soviets in the early years of the Russian revolution.

Gaitskell's 'statesmanship' has earned him the unanimous applause of the capitalist class, which sees these things much more clearly than do the reformists.

'Gaitskell has added to his laurels' and 'Leadership of a high order', proclaimed the Daily Express on July 13.

'Both Mr. Gaitskell and Mr. Bevan deserve full credit for having stated and argued important principles of British foreign and defence policy against powerful and demagogic Left-wing critics', echoed the Daily Telegraph.

PATRONIZING CONTEMPT. By 'British foreign and defence policy' both these papers mean the policy most likely to be in keeping with the interests of the ruling class.

The Evening Standard outdid them all. It revealed the patronizing contempt with which the ruling class views 'its' tame Labour leaders.

'When there is no chance of conference resolutions being implemented, [the] power and authority [of conference] is stressed.

'If there is even a faint possibility of a socialist government being bound by conference votes, this doctrine is smartly reversed. . . . The socialist rank and file decides policy only when the leadership is too weak to impose its will or the issues too trivial to matter.'

The working class must take real power—not merely parliamentary power—if it is to lay the basis of a socialist society.

shop at the factory they will also be able to organize the showroom.

CARPENTERS' BAN ON OVERTIME

By Our Industrial Correspondent

Carpenters on the Shell-Mex job, South Bank, London, operated a ban on overtime from Friday to Tuesday over a bonus grievance.

At a mass meeting on Tuesday it was decided to resume normal working and refer the case to a disputes panel.

After the meeting one of the stewards told me he did not

favour this and would have preferred a more direct form of action. McAlpine thought the men were cowed since the last dispute, but that was not the case, he added.

BACKED SOUTH BANK MEN — SUSPENDED FROM OFFICE FOR TWO YEARS

By Peter Cadogan

LAST autumn Arthur Utting of Stevenage joined the picket line on the Shell-Mex site on London's South Bank and actively campaigned inside the Amalga-

mated Society of Woodworkers for support for the 1,250 locked-out men.

On November 11, 1958, he was warned off by the ASW's mid-eastern counties committee. He went on fighting the case and discussed it with Stevenage, Hitchin and Hatfield branches of his union at their invitation.

Now the committee has used its own interpretation of the rule book against him, and he has been suspended from holding office in the Society for a period of two years.

Not only have bureaucratic methods been used to cover up the class issues involved in the South Bank dispute, but this 'disciplinary' action is damaging the union.

Arthur Utting was both ASW and Federation steward and chairman of the stewards' committee on the Harry Neal's contract at the Stevenage New Town Centre. His suspension has harmed union organization in Stevenage.

Until last year he was south-east midlands district secretary of the Communist Party.

BUSMEN COULD LEARN FROM PRINTERS IN FIGHT FOR 40-HOUR WEEK

By Geoff Kennedy (Colindale depot)

THE rank and file delegates to the joint delegate conference of London busmen could very well learn some lessons from the printworkers that would strengthen their own fight for the 40-hour week.

The printworkers are in a similar position to that of 50,000 London busmen a year ago.

They are a section of the trade union movement under fire from the employers and the Tory government; the mass of the rank and file are determined to struggle to victory; the union officials, while displaying a respectable 'militancy', are already looking for a 'formula' for a return to work—on a promise.

The legacy of fighting the employers in isolation from the whole strength of the working class has left its mark in demoralization and defeat among the busmen.

Allowed to ride roughshod

The London Transport Executive has been allowed to ride roughshod over wages and conditions, and to have the initiative in all negotiations.

On each one of the major issues that has come up since the London bus strike—bus cuts, one-man operation, eleven-day amendments and the 40-hour week—the question of struggle was raised. But each time any move for action is made the Right wing raises the cry: 'It's unconstitutional', 'It's out of order', 'It's contrary to the agreement' or 'Only wild-cat militants want a strike at this stage.'

Now the Right-wing arguments have this much truth in them: that having been called out on strike, then having seen the union leaders fail to extend it to the tubes and tanker fleets, then having been sent back after seven weeks on a promise, the busmen are very cautious about repeating the experience.

This month the questions of the 40-hour week and the amendments to the eleven-day fortnight are up for discussion.

Already the central delegate conference, which represents the men on Diesels, has a motion tabled for a ban on overtime and rest-day working—which the London district secretary has promptly declared 'out of order'.

Farce of 'non-co-operation'

With over 2,500 vacancies, and the fleet operating on overtime and rest-day working (which nevertheless leaves hundreds of cuts a day) this might be a powerful weapon.

But two questions must be asked:

Has the joint delegate conference enough moral authority over the 50,000 busmen to enforce such action, which means sacrifices?

Will it just repeat the farce of 'non-co-operation' over bus cuts that fizzled out owing to its ineffectiveness and the

failure to follow it with something definite?

What is the alternative? The LTE offensive and the mockery of 'negotiation' would go on, and more and more crews would express their disillusion by 'jacking it in'.

The joint delegate conference should campaign among the branches for enforcement of its action. It should tell the full-time officials that they work for us and that the rank and file will decide what is in order or out of order.

Militants in the garages and depots should get together to work out a common programme of action, just as the Right wing does before and after the meetings.

We should immediately take action to help the printers, by resolutions, collections and joint picketing, since their fight and the busmen's fight are two sectors of the same battle against a common enemy.

JOURNAL

PRaise FROM THE CAPITALIST PRESS

ALL socialists will oppose the efforts of the landlords and big business men to destroy the Communist Party government in Kerala.

It is quite clear, however, that this government is digging its own grave.

The Daily Worker recently carried a review of a book about Kerala written by Gopalan, who quoted with approval the comments of a leading Calcutta newspaper on how the Kerala government conducted itself during elections:

'No communist Minister spoke or joined in the campaign, lest the people might think that advantage was being taken by the government of the power they hold in their hands . . . This is a new example of political honesty and praiseworthy too.'

The Daily Worker saw nothing sinister in this praise from a capitalist newspaper.

I always thought a real Marxist party would use the power in its hands to smash the organized opposition of landlords and business racketeers. Prominent Indian communists say the job of the Kerala government is not to take the side of the workers against the employers but rather to mediate.

Such 'leadership' can only prove disastrous for the cause of socialism in Kerala—and in the whole of India.

VISIBLE INK

Mr Willis, of the London Typographical Society, has condemned what he calls the hypocritical attitude of papers like the Daily Mirror towards the print dispute.

Papers like the Mirror, he points out, have large investments in printing establishments outside Fleet Street that are locking out printing trade workers.

This makes it all the more difficult to understand why the national Press is now going full blast.

Some time ago the spectre of a shut-down haunted Fleet Street, and the Express and the Mirror were startled into a public slanging match. Unfortunately the old saying 'When thieves fall out honest men come into their own' was not fulfilled.

By some strange magic the ink vats of Fleet Street are now filled to overflowing. Instead of asking 'Daily Mirror, what about it?' on official demonstrations, why not demand the closing down of the national Press?

This would put a stop to employers making profits from one section of the printworkers in order all the better to choke their mates.

EMPLOYERS' ENEMY

It's good to know that the first issue of the Builders' Voice is completely sold out.

The employers have reacted quickly by warning all who

receive the bulletin of the Economic League against this 'new extremist journal for building workers'.

In fact very nearly the whole of this bulletin is devoted to the doings of The Newsletter and the Socialist Labour League. In the employers' eyes we are enemy number one.

Which makes Mr Briginshaw's circular to Natsopa members look all the more fantastic . . .

SIX-YEAR PLAN?

Speaking in a debate in the House of Lords on the future of the mines Lord Mills denied allegations that the National Coal Board has locked up in a safe at headquarters secret lists of pits to be closed as soon as the Tories are safely back in office.

But he did admit that plans are laid for at least six years ahead to deal with pit closures. He intends to discuss these

plans with the leaders of the National Union of Mineworkers.

Apparently the election of a 'communist' as general secretary of the NUM has not shaken Lord Mills. He seems quite confident that these new proposals, like the earlier ones, will go through with the union leaders' co-operation.

Meanwhile Bro. Paynter is declaring that the seven-hour shift is forty times more necessary than when it was gained forty years ago.

What is equally necessary—though Paynter makes no mention of it—is the mobilization of the miners in action for this demand.

I have a feeling that many of the fake 'Left' union leaders who have run away from the fight for the 40-hour week will heave a sigh of relief when the present bad example of the printworkers—who are not just talking about the shorter working week but are fighting for it—is over and done with.

BRIAN BEHAN

Constant Reader | Political 'Find the Lady'

AGAG, King of the Amalekites, walked delicately, the good book tells us. But he had nothing on the Communist Party leaders in their presentation of their H-bomb policy, discussed by colleague Cliff Slaughter last week.

It is so trickily done that one meets many an honest party member who believes his party is 'against the bomb', in the sense of being for unilateral renunciation of it, and is genuinely hurt when Michael Foot or The Newsletter point out that this is not so.

A previous occasion for smart footwork on a not dissimilar issue was the end of 1938 and beginning of 1939, when conscription was being introduced by the Chamberlain government.

The measure was unpopular, and the Chamberlain crowd were as dangerously reactionary a set to give such power to as could be found.

But the Communist Party could not oppose conscription on revolutionary class grounds, for that would be 'Trotskyism'—especially as there were some hopes that Chamberlain might sign a pact with Stalin.

So they sought a line that would please everyone, they supposed, and leave the door open for fully supporting the imperialist war machine if Moscow should require this.

It was discovered that 'well-informed military opinion' **repudiated mass armies of conscripts** in modern war. General Sir Ian Hamilton and Captain Liddell Hart were quoted as the great authorities determining communist military policy, and Gollan (then leading the Young Communist League) appeared on platforms with Liddell Hart.

Britain's contribution to the hoped-for 'grand alliance', it appeared, was to be rendered mainly by the navy and the air force, the mass of the PBI being supplied by Russia and France.

Very dull thud

Alas, this scheme fell with a very dull thud in Paris. The French communist paper pointedly supported conscription for Britain.

Sam Russell, then the Daily Worker's Paris correspondent, found himself cold-shouldered by his hosts. To make matters worse—indeed worst—the Soviet Press showed unmistakably that Stalin favoured the Paris line rather than the London one.

Clearly 'the situation had changed', as they say. And so in May 1939 the British Communist Party announced, in complete disregard of 'well-informed military opinion', that it would support conscription under a government which stood for collective security and a few other things including the granting of . . . democratic rights to the colonies.

Soon afterwards, in August to be precise, Stalin's pact with

Hitler made nonsense of all this pussyfooting.

The older generation of Stalinists must sometimes wonder whether something similar isn't waiting around the corner for them now, as they shuffle their double-meaning slogans on the H-bomb.

What happened to Agag? Why, he was hewn to pieces before the Lord, I regret to say.

About chaps

The new volume of the Dictionary of National Biography, covering the years 1941-50, contains brief lives of many prominent men and women who died in that period.

The biography of Lord Baldwin quotes a letter of his written after the General Strike, in which he expresses the fearful attitude of his class towards the workers.

'Democracy has arrived at a gallop in England, and I feel all the time it is a race for life. Can we educate them before the crash comes?'

A good deal of 'educating' of the workers along the lines desired by the Baldwins has, of course, been done by trade union and Labour Party leaders of the type of J. R. Clynes, who also appears in these pages.

As Home Secretary in the second Labour government he became notorious for his use of police against strikers. (He also refused Trotsky permission to settle in England.) Such services are rendered in return for solid rewards.

'In 1947', we read, 'Clynes wrote to The Times and other journals relating his straitened circumstances owing to the insufficiency of his union pension, and a fund was raised by his parliamentary colleagues and friends. Those closest to him felt that his complaints were . . . hardly justified, a view, which was somewhat confirmed when his will came to be published.'

No place for Noel

A very different man, who died in 1942, but for some reason is not accorded a place in this volume, was the Rev. Conrad Noel, vicar of Thaxted in Essex.

An outstanding propagandist for socialism, Noel influenced a number of men who were militant at one time and another in the British working-class movement, such as Harry Pollitt and Reg Groves, one of the founders of Trotskyism in Britain.

Utterly unlike some later 'progressive' clergymen, Noel came out in defence of Trotsky when he was being slandered during the notorious Moscow trials, an action typical of the integrity which won him universal respect.

He will be honoured when the Baldwins and Clyneses are mere boggy men of the bad old days.

BRIAN PEARCE

SCIENCE

DOWN TO THE SEA WITH ULTRASONIC FISH DETECTORS

By Our Science Correspondent

ELECTRONICS has at last come to the fishing industry. Ultrasonic fish detectors are now installed in a good many British trawlers.

The ship sends out a very short pulse of sound waves into the water—a few thousandths of a second long—at a frequency well above the audible region.

These are reflected from any solid body and a very small part of them return to the ship.

DISTANCE

The length of time between their emission and return gives the distance of the reflector, since the speed of sound in water has been measured.

The depth of a shoal of fish may be measured, as well as its distance and size.

The observations are automatically shown on a screen or chart, as with a radar set or depth finder; indeed, the principle employed is exactly the same.

Asdic was developed in the 1930s for the detection of ships and submarines at sea, and echo depth finders a little later.

These were comparatively easy problems, for steel backed by air, or even solid icebergs, are much better reflectors of ultrasonics than are fish.

DEVELOPMENTS

Fish are nearly all water, and only the small air cavities in some of them are good reflectors.

So it has taken great developments of modern technique to pick up fish at ranges of several miles.

In the process the scientists have found an unsolved problem, that of invisible reflecting layers, which move up and down with the time of day.

LETTERS

'THOROUGHLY DISGUSTED' WITH LABOUR PARTY'S H-BOMB POLICY

AS a young member of the Labour Party I am thoroughly disgusted with the Labour Party policy on the H-bomb. I think it shows a complete lack of confidence in the working class.

The Labour Party's policy statement on the bomb pins all its confidence on summit conference, settlements and agreements between imperialist governments.

Not a word about working-class action. Not a word calling on the working class and trade unions of other countries to 'black' work on their H-bombs and rocket bases.

No, Gaitskell and Bevan prefer to ask de Gaulle, Adenauer and Eisenhower if they would give up the bomb, knowing full well that these men are interested only in the preservation of their system.

They do not give a damn if unborn generations are maimed through the testing of these hideous weapons, so long as they keep their positions in the world market and the money keeps rolling in.

Bevan is making a big mistake in not renouncing the H-bomb unilaterally here in Britain—an act which would not influence the reactionary governments of other countries, but would win the support of workers in other countries and give them confidence in their own struggle against the H-bomb and the system which produces it.

Edgware (Mx.)

Rita Watson

ABOUT £45,000 WAS SPENT ON OFFICIALS' MOTOR-CARS

I WAS very interested in the reference in The Newsletter of July 11—in William Hunter's report from Merseyside on the print dispute—to the non-existence of loudspeaker vans in the trade union movement.

The demand put forward at the National Industrial Rank-and-File Conference last November for loudspeaker vans in place of saloon cars for trade union officials had up to now been rather unreal for me.

But on reading the 1958 financial report of the union to which I belong, the Amalgamated Engineering Union, I was interested to note that £22,192 had been spent on officials' cars and a further £23,030 on 'freight, carriage, packing and motor expenses'—as well as further large sums on propaganda.

Taking all this into account, and also the high rate of depreciation for cars—well over £10,000 in the same period—the total cost of officials' cars must have been in the region of £45,000.

When this sum is compared with a grand total of £52,000 spent on dispute benefit in the same period it can be seen that the question of replacement of officials' cars is not in fact unreal at all.

London, N.7

K. J. Weller

ARE SOCIALISTS INELIGIBLE FOR JURY SERVICE?

HAVING been asked to attend for jury service at the Old Bailey last week I wrote the following letter:

'Although I am quite prepared to serve I wish to inform you that (1) I am an atheist and am not prepared to take an oath on the Bible; (2) I am a socialist who intends to help in changing the economy and therefore the law of the country, since I believe both to be interrelated.

'I am active in working towards that end, where both the economy and the law will operate for the benefit of the majority (i.e., those who sell their power to labour) instead of the way both operate at present—in general to favour the small minority who live off the labour of others.'

The prospective jurors, myself included, attended the Central Criminal Court. The clerk of the court said my letter had better be presented to the judge.

The judge looked at the letter, looked at me and looked at the clerk, who said I had no objection to serving.

'Under the circumstances I think he should not serve,' said the judge.

If I had written saying I was pledged to defend private ownership and that I believed in flogging criminals would I have been rejected? I wonder!

London, S.E.24

David Finch

SAYING OF THE WEEK

'A representative of the Bolshoi school interviewed her in February, and a few days ago she was invited to complete her education there as a guest of the Soviet Union. She says she hopes to stay in Moscow for at least five years.

'Her father, Mr. Alfred Stone, who is caretaker of a block of flats in Mortlake, said he was "proud but unhappy" that his daughter was going.

"I'm not a communist," he said, "and I don't want Ann to become one. But I've been assured that there'll be no politics in this. I've been told that ballet dancers in Russia live in a world of their own.'

—Manchester Guardian, July 20.

OR EVEN TWO WORDS: CLASS PRIVILEGE

'Preparatory schools have never been more prosperous . . . This summer a record total of 6,000 boys took the Common Entrance Examination for the public schools . . .

'The most glaring difference between the State schools and the preparatory schools can be summed up in three words: size of classes.' —From an article in The Times, July 21