

# THE NEWSLETTER

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## STEWARDS, H-BOMB MARCHERS, TO MEET National Assembly of Labour Campaign Under Way

**T**HE campaign for the National Assembly of Labour, which meets at St Pancras Town Hall, London, on Sunday, November 15, is under way. Thousands of invitations are now being printed, and will be going out within the next few weeks to trade union branches, trades councils, district committees, shop stewards' committees, trades councils, local Labour Parties and Labour youth sections and anti-H-bomb organizations.

The five questions which the Assembly will discuss, and on which it will hammer out a common programme, are: (1) the fight against the H-bomb; (2) the fight for shorter hours, higher wages, the defence of jobs and the defence of shop stewards; (3) the fight for the extension of nationalization; (4) the fight against oppression in the colonies and against racialism in Britain; and (5) the fight for democracy inside the Labour Party.

In an article below, Gerry Healy, general secretary of the Socialist Labour League and a member of the Editorial Board of The Newsletter, which is calling the National Assembly, discusses its aim and purpose.

Readers of The Newsletter who want invitations sending to organizations to which they belong should let us have the secretary's name and address as soon as possible.

Regular appeals will be made in the paper for money to help cover the cost of postage and other expenses connected with the running of the Assembly.

### *Towards the National Assembly of Labour—II*

#### **CLASS STRUGGLE ALONE WILL SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS**

By Gerry Healy

WE are on the eve of a general election. The Tory Party and the Labour Party are busy revving up their vote-catching machines. Fleet Street is agog with public opinion polls.

To all those workers recently engaged in strikes, to all those who are still signing on at the Labour Exchanges—and there are nearly half a million of them, even according to the notoriously unreliable official figures—to all those who have been fighting hard against the hydrogen-bomb, this pre-election excitement seems very superficial.

And in fact no real issues are going to be decided at the forthcoming general election, because, as even the most partisan commentator will admit, there is very little essential difference on major issues between the two main parties.

#### **REALITY, NOT SPECULATION**

##### **Looking to the future**

The great issues in Britain and throughout the world will not be resolved in general elections or in conferences of diplomatists, but in the class struggle.

This is the lesson that Marxists constantly seek to hammer home in all their speeches and writings.

When we look to the future we do not do so in terms of speculation about general election results, but in terms of the real struggle between the employing class and the working class.

Can any British trade unionist be satisfied with the conduct  
(Continued overleaf)

#### **AFRICAN SEAMEN WIN HIGHER PAY, BETTER FOOD—AND REPLACEMENT OF TWO OFFICERS**

By Our Industrial Correspondent

The Nigerian seamen who went on strike in Liverpool in June have won their fight, according to reports from Lagos.

The strike began when seventy-eight members of the crew of the Elder Dempster liner M.V. Apapa walked off the ship, demanding an end to discrimination against Africans and the transfer of two ship's officers (see The Newsletter, June 27, p. 185, and July 4, p. 195).

The day after the Apapa berthed there was a big demonstration in Lagos. The procession of workers, with whom marched the seamen's wives and families, was over a mile long.

The Nigerian government was forced to take notice of the dispute and of the Africans' demands. It appointed a board of inquiry into 'labour-management relations in the shipping industry in so far as they affect Nigerians recruited for service in outgoing vessels'.

Meanwhile seamen have been informed by representatives of the Elder Dempster line that their pay is to be increased. The complaints about food have been met.

And the two officers whose transfer the men were demanding have been replaced.

#### **RALLY ROUND THE BELFAST WORKERS FIGHTING FOR THEIR JOBS**

By John Byrne (former branch chairman, Workers' Union of Ireland)

BELFAST is today a battle-field against redundancy.

The 6,000 aircraft workers of Short Bros. and Harland, who are fighting against the threatened redundancy of 1,200 of them, deserve the support of all workers throughout Ireland and England.

Their shop stewards have pointed out that if the redundancies go through 95 per cent. of the men have no hope whatever of getting other employment. They see it as a life and death struggle.

The Socialist Labour League, which stands four-square behind the Belfast strikers, is calling on all workers to give them support; it is holding mass meetings at building sites and factories to rally support for them.

The first meeting will be at the Shell site on London's South Bank next Friday.

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SATURDAY, AUGUST 22, 1959

**NINETEEN YEARS AFTER**

**UJPEST** is an industrial suburb of Budapest, a solidly working-class district and a centre of communist-led resistance to the Nazi occupiers during the second world war. In the 1956 revolution the workers of Ujpest elected Pal Kosa—a member of the Communist Party and of its Ujpest committee—president of the local revolutionary council, on which the workers' committees of all the different factories in the area were represented. Kosa was one of those who kept the general strike going after the Soviet bureaucracy decided on November 4 to drown the workers' revolution in blood. On November 12, 1956, he was arrested. Now it is learnt that following a secret trial Kosa and seven other young Hungarian workers have been shot. The Kadar government has behaved with its customary furtiveness, keeping details of the trial and sentences from the Hungarian workers and, as far as it could, from the world Press. The executions were hurriedly fixed to take place before August 20, Constitution Day, when there is usually an amnesty for political prisoners.

It is now just over a year since the murder of Imre Nagy and three other Hungarian communists. Nagy's name was famous; the name of Kosa is almost unknown outside his own district. The Stalinists in Hungary and in Britain will no doubt count on this to ensure that the latest crime goes unnoticed. Yet the murder of eight industrial workers is an even more striking indication than was the murder of Nagy of how great is the Stalinists' fear of the working class and of the emergence of any Marxist opposition to Stalinism. There have been many who suggested that the bureaucracy was 'liberalizing' itself. A strange liberalization, whose progress is punctuated by the crack of the firing-parties' rifles! In fact the bureaucracy is in crisis; the periodical executions are only the outward signs of the seething discontent among the workers whose power it has usurped.

There are other signs, no less pregnant with meaning. The Observer's correspondent in Moscow, reporting last Sunday about the Russian public's reaction to the American Exhibition there, wrote:

Young people with notebooks openly copy facts about Stalin previously unknown to the Russian citizen. I saw a young man intently taking notes about a man whose name

few Soviet citizens still dare to speak in public—Leon Trotsky.

It was not the highly-boasted gadgets and other paraphernalia of the 'American way of life' that this young Soviet citizen was interested in. He was 'intently taking notes' about a man whose ideas the Stalinists thought they had murdered 19 years ago this week. Nineteen years later the ideas for which Trotsky gave his life when Stalin's assassin struck him down are capturing the imagination of young workers seeking a communist alternative. For the social problems he analysed with such clarity, such learning and such passion still remain: and the working class that he served is still the only social force capable of solving these problems. Little by little the evidence accumulates of how the masses of the people turn instinctively to the ideas of Trotskyism. And this is the fundamental reason why the bureaucracy continues to murder workers who dissent.

Three years before he was killed Trotsky wrote that the work he was then doing to lay the foundations of a new Marxist international would ultimately be seen as more important than even the work he had done in the Russian Revolution and civil war. This is something that the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois commentators on Trotsky, blinded by their own Philistine values, could not understand in a million years. Yet he was right; and the inevitable coming together of mass movements in the capitalist, colonial and Stalinist-ruled countries with the reborn Marxist parties of a re-organized and powerful Fourth International will prove it. It will do more. It will avenge his murder and that of eight simple Budapest workers. And it will pronounce sentence of death on capitalism and on all appendages of capitalism in the world Labour movement.

**GOOD NEWS FROM DOWN UNDER**

**AUSTRALIAN** Labour history is stirring and stormy, from the days when Britain's rebels were shipped there as convicts, through the unforgettable Eureka stockade, to the post-war struggles of miners and 'wharfies'. What has been lacking, especially since the Stalinization of the Australian Communist Party, is Marxist leadership of the workers' movement. The appearance of 'The Socialist: a Monthly Paper Advocating a Socialist Australia' is a welcome step towards the building of such a leadership. The aim of the new journal is 'to provide a forum for militant workers and for those intellectuals who wish to place themselves at the service of the working-class movement'. We wish our Australian comrades and co-thinkers success.

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (Continued from front page)**

of his leaders over the past year? This year's wage increases have been the lowest for many years; for, says the Financial Times, 'the trade union leadership recognizes that the case for wage increases is considerably less strong than it has been in most years since the war'.

**EMPLOYERS ARE ARROGANT****Union leaders in retreat**

Mr Robert Willis, this year's chairman of the Trades Union Congress, not long ago wrote an article for the journal of the Institute of Directors advocating wage 'stabilization' for periods of years, and an end to annual wage struggles.

The struggle for the 40-hour week has been killed stone dead by the print sell-out.

The miners are facing mass sackings. So are the railwaymen and the rail shopmen.

On their side, the employers have been displaying more and more arrogance than at any time since the end of the war.

These are the class realities behind the election.

And it is the outcome of the class struggle that is going to determine the issue of the H-bomb. Resolutions, no matter how sincere and serious their movers may be, will remain pieces of paper unless the organized strength of the working class is brought to bear against the bomb.

History proves that the working class will engage in political struggle to the degree that it sees the connexion

between the struggle to maintain and improve its standard of living and the more long-term political issues.

Therefore the retreat of the Right-wing trade union and Labour leaders on bread-and-butter questions is also in practice a retreat in the struggle against the H-bomb.

No trade union, no matter how big its vote at the Labour Party conference may be, will achieve the slightest success in the fight against the bomb until its members are mobilized, as part of the working-class movement, to wage an all-out struggle against the bomb.

By its conference decision the Transport and General Workers' Union emerged as an important factor in the anti-H-bomb campaign: but unless Frank Cousins is prepared to take the offensive against the employers all along the front, and to encourage the whole Labour movement to do the same, then the Isle of Man resolution will be ineffectual.

But the trade union leaders, Frank Cousins included, are not prepared to fight in this way.

Only the rank and file can resolve this problem. Only the rank and file can overcome the immense, entrenched power of the bureaucratic apparatus.

## BUREAUCRATS ARE FRIGHTENED

### Need for new leadership

The recent spate of witch-hunts, bans, proscriptions, expulsions, lies and slanders shows that Transport House is well aware of this.

The bureaucrats are frightened of the class struggle, which menaces their privileges and their enhanced standard of living.

The class struggle puts on the order of the day, more and more insistently, the need for a new leadership. Without a new leadership the working class will go down in defeat, as in 1926.

The fight against the H-bomb; the fight against unemployment; the fight for the 40-hour week; the fight for more nationalization; the fight for a socialist foreign policy: these fights can be won only if the class struggle is brought into the heart of each campaign, only if the question of an alternative leadership is brought to the forefront.

United action is needed now more than ever. By united action we mean unity on the basis of a struggle against the employers and their government.

We mean unity to get rid of trade union and Labour leaders who refuse to lead, who accept wage cuts, who sell out the struggle.

We mean unity to smash the warmakers, to end the production of hydrogen-bombs and the construction of rocket bases.

Once a lead has been given on these lines great numbers of middle-class people, students, peace-lovers, will rally round the working class, inspired with confidence in its militancy and its determination to put an end to Tory rule and to capitalism.

## UNITED MASS MOVEMENT

### Against employers and government

The National Assembly of Labour on November 15 can be a foundation-stone of such a united mass movement.

**WE AIM** to bring together, at the National Assembly of Labour, Aldermaston marchers and shop stewards from the factories. We believe they have many aims and purposes in common.

**WE AIM** to bring together housewives worried by high prices and the rank-and-file trade unionists whose fight for a 40-hour week is a fight for leisure and culture.

**WE AIM** to bring together the student worried by low grants and graduate unemployment and the young worker having his first experience of industrial struggle.

The National Assembly of Labour will be a demonstration of unity among all sections who are now convinced, or are coming to see, that a struggle must be waged against the employers and their Tory government.

The unity in action we envisage is fundamentally different from the 'unity' behind an employers' government and summit

talks that the Communist Party and Labour Party leaders are committed to.

The idea behind the National Assembly of Labour is that only the power of the working class in struggle against its enemies can resolve the problems before mankind.

The 'communist' and Right-wing Labour class collaborationists say workers should unite behind the capitalist government of the day if only that government will agree to summit talks.

But after the summit talks the real problems will remain. The National Assembly of Labour will give an opportunity for those problems to be stated frankly, and for a realistic solution to be worked out in terms of class struggle.

Class struggle, not class collaboration: that will be one of the keynotes of the National Assembly of Labour.

The Assembly will have a message of hope and encouragement, not only for workers, and all other anti-Tory forces, in Britain, but also for the colonial peoples who are fighting the same ruthless enemy that we are fighting. It will demonstrate the real internationalism of the working class.

The Assembly will be the Marxists' answer to Toryism.

The Editorial Board of The Newsletter is calling on all sections of the Labour movement to spare no effort between now and November 15 to secure the election of the maximum number of delegates.

Let us resolve to make the National Assembly of Labour a landmark on the road to socialism!

## INDUSTRY

### 1,500 STRIKE IN DEFENCE OF VICTIMIZED WORKMATES

By Tom Radcliff

ABOUT 1,500 construction workers are now on strike at the Petrochemicals site at Carrington, Cheshire.

Men working for other contractors stopped work the day after 400 workers employed by Kellogs International downed tools, demanding the reinstatement of two riggers and the riggers' steward (see last week's issue of The Newsletter).

The response of the stewards' committee on one contract was typical of the immediate and spontaneous solidarity action throughout the site.

'Never mind the details. If the steward's sacked, we're out', they said.

For some time the management have been showing a tough attitude on issues raised by the men, including complaints about the buses.

We feel they are trying to challenge trade union organization on the job.

The three men were sacked following a dispute over the need for an adequate scaffold on an 18ft gantry carrying pipes.

The sacked steward told a meeting about the very high accident and fatality rate among Constructional Engineering Union members.

To carry out this gantry work without proper scaffolding, which the firm could easily provide, entails unnecessary risks, both for constructional engineers and for welders, fitters and painters who would follow them.

The scaffolders themselves have come out in support of the sacked men.

The prompt sympathy action on the site has shaken the management. On Monday they offered to lift the sackings and 'suspend' the three men with full pay pending negotiations. At a mass meeting on Tuesday this proposal was overwhelmingly rejected.

As one speaker said to the meeting, 'We do not want any false "victories" such as they got at BMC. There can be no compromise when men are victimized.'

This is the second strike in the area over an attack on constructional workers' organization. At Widnes, eighty men working on the new bridge across the Mersey are on strike over the sacking of a steward.

## CHAIRMAN WOULD NOT LET THEM VOTE ON SETTLEMENT TERMS

By Harry Ratner

MANCHESTER printworkers are in revolt against the leaders' settlement of the print strike.

A crowded general meeting of Manchester branch of the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paper Workers ended in uproar last Friday when the chairman refused to accept a resolution rejecting the terms and advising members to vote against acceptance.

Although members were on their feet the chairman abruptly closed the meeting.

As printworkers thronged the pavement outside the Houldsworth Hall angry comments were heard.

### 'We were quite prepared'

'If they had taken a vote the majority of the meeting would have rejected the terms', one member told me.

Another added: 'Before the dispute started the union rejected an offer of 42½ hours and 2½ per cent. Now after seven weeks they have settled for 42 hours and 4½ per cent.

'Seven weeks on strike for a mere half-hour and a couple of bob! Either the unions should have accepted the first offer or, having brought us out, stuck out for the full claim.'

'They should have brought out the papers as well', said his mate. 'We were quite prepared to stay out.'

When I asked another member what he thought of the whole thing he pointed to The Newsletter's headline—'The Print Strike Could Have Been Won'—saying: 'That about sums up what I think.'

Sixty-four copies of The Newsletter were sold at the meeting.

## FULL-TIME OFFICIAL HELPED TO SPREAD CONFUSION

From Our Scottish Correspondent

DESPITE a campaign by the sacked sheet-ironworkers at Fairfield's shipyard, Govan, their workmates have avoided taking direct action to have them reinstated.

During the campaign pickets outside the gates called for support in their fight against redundancy and victimization.

Meetings were held, and leaflets distributed, to show that the sacking of thirty-two workers, including the shop steward and two committee men, was part of the general employers' attack on workshop organization.

The full-time boilermakers' delegate, Bro. J. Chalmers, contributed to the confusion that led to the final vote.

Two weeks before, when the men had agreed on the need for action to seek their fellow-workers' reinstatement, they were headed off on the basis of militant phrases and strong-arm promises to allow the delegates two weeks to negotiate.

In those two weeks the men's feelings cooled down, and of course nothing came of the talks.

At last Tuesday's recall meeting of the section, despite the

known unemployment in the trade, Bro. Chalmers was at pains to express optimism about the possibilities of jobs for the dismissed men. As if from a hat, he produced four jobs in Falmouth, Devon—which is by no means a bus ride from Glasgow.

The recall meeting, after much discussion and a good deal of confusion, decided to ask the management to reinstate the shop steward and the committee men, yet not to take any action to force the decision.

The men also decided to pay the wages of the three victimized workers until the management relented.

The remainder of the sacked men were not considered, and no action to help them is to be taken.

Decisions like this will be greeted with satisfied smiles by a management which is obviously intent on strengthening its hold in a trade already much threatened by the growth of unemployment.

Action can still be taken to secure the reinstatement of the victimized men, and there is talk among the workers of a campaign to this end.

## SACKED BECAUSE THEY WERE MILITANTS

By Our Industrial Correspondent

FIFTY plumbers on McAlpine's South Bank site, London, returned to work on Monday after ten days' strike over the sacking of five militants.

A steward who was a member of the strike committee told me the men were opposed to the case of their five workmates going to a disputes panel.

'As far as we are concerned these men were sacked because they were militants, and for no other reason. We feel very bitter about the findings of the panel. Panels never go in favour of the men—that's why the employers favour them.'

'The union officials had a very hard time in getting the men back to work. The men wanted it settled there and then.'

## 'MAC IS UP TO HIS OLD TRICKS AGAIN'

McAlpine's sacked sixty labourers last Friday on the South Bank site.

'Mac is up to his old tricks again', said one of the men on the site. 'He took on ten on Monday and sacked them the same day.'

'If he starts to carry on that old game again he will get a big shock. We just won't put up with that sort of treatment.'

## 'INVESTIGATE' CALL TO AUBTW COMMITTEE

Brixton branch of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers has called on its south-east London district committee to investigate the dispute at the Token Construction site, Southwark Street, where men are fighting sackings aimed at breaking trade union organization.

The branch has asked the committee to receive a deputation from the branch committee, including men in dispute at Token's who are members of the branch.

# Solidarity Action Can Stop Dismissals

By HARRY FINCH

THE sacking of Frank Horsman can well become the pattern in the motor industry unless any future attempts are met with united resistance by all British Motor Corporation workers.

This is the main lesson of the strike at Morris Motors, Oxford.

A meeting of the BMC stewards, called in Birmingham after the strike by the BMC joint stewards' committee, pledged 100 per cent. support 'for direct action in all BMC plants whenever a shop steward is victimized and sacked'.

Speakers talked of 'withdrawing our labour, officially or unofficially'.

The BMC committee has made pronouncements before, but has failed to act in time when situations needing action have arisen.

Unless such correct sentiments are brought now before mass meetings of motor workers, and made the policy of these workers, the danger is that more victimization can take place, and that the workers can be divided and confused.

The BMC bosses are out to 'discipline' stewards in order to keep down piece-work and day rate wages in their quest for higher profits.

The BMC directors act as a co-ordinated machine. The workers must do likewise.

If this unity is cemented at the bottom, then the top union

## ..... Open Letter on the Closed Shop .....

DEAR MANSFIELD,\*

I have just read your article in the August 14 issue of Motor Transport, entitled 'The Problem of Union Cards' and addressed to your fellow road haulage employers, on what you describe as a 'disturbing trend in haulage affairs'.

By this you mean the closed shop and 100 per cent. trade unionism.

It would of course be quite impossible for me to agree with your arguments or for you to have any sympathy with mine, because first and last you are an employer, and I am a worker, and our interests are antagonistic.

You voice the interests of the employing class and the Tories. You are opposed beyond any compromise to trade unionism among lorry drivers and transport workers, except perhaps the 'right' kind of 'sensible' and 'responsible' trade unionism, which talks but does not act.

You talk of the need for 'tolerance' and 'understanding' between employers and trade unionists. I am afraid I am not impressed.

**CASH AND CONDITIONS.** For when it comes down to cash and conditions the high-sounding phrases go out of the window.

By 'tolerance' you mean that we should tolerate non-trade unionists, men who threaten the defence of our wages and conditions. And these same men whom we 'tolerate' will be used by the employers to break our resistance. No, thank you!

As for 'understanding', I cannot see any kind of understanding between workers and bosses that does not involve our 'understanding'—and accepting—the bosses' position: they would be only too glad to pay wage increases, but . . .

How the 16,779 member firms of the 'free enterprise' Road Haulage Association must have smiled at the bit you wrote about how you select your drivers.

You list technical ability, accident record, previous experience, honesty and sincerity, 'but not surely politics or personal convictions. Those aspects of a man's character must remain his own personal affair.'

**INFLAME THE READERS.** Are we to believe that the £100,000 that the Road Haulage Association is spending in its anti-nationalization campaign is just to convince the floating voter, and that these bosses really do not care what political opinions their drivers have or whether they are members of a union?

There has never been a boss who is indifferent to his workers' political opinions, particularly when they demand the nationalization of the industry from which the boss derives all his profits.

\* A. Stephen Mansfield is a director of John Harris (Cartage) Ltd.

officials' 'let-outs', blaming lack of action by other union executives for the winding-up of various disputes, can be prevented.

The workers' strength is in their unity at shop floor level, with factory linked to factory.

At Morris Motors, members complained bitterly at the action of one local Amalgamated Engineering Union official, who said at the beginning of the dispute that the management was 'justified in sacking Horsman'.

AEU stewards at Morris's made the bad mistake of allowing a secret ballot of their members after a show of hands had

The incidents you mention where workers refused to handle goods delivered by drivers who could not produce a union card are meant to inflame your readers with indignation at what you call these 'unnecessary and annoying delays and distractions'.

But to trade unionists they are heartening. The rank-and-file worker is prepared to fight your class, is capable of inflicting defeats on you, and, when the issue is raised, will combine with his workmates to use the full strength of his union against arrogant employers, strike-breakers and scabs.

But what is more important is why this issue is raised at the present moment in the transport industry. Has it by any chance anything to do with the uncertainty within transport circles about future prospects for 'free enterprise' road haulage, faced with competition from both British Road Services and British Railways?

**OVERLOADING OF VEHICLES.** Every week now cases are coming up in the courts about overloading of vehicles by employers, illegal driving hours and breaches of traffic licences.

**Official statistics show that a third of all goods vehicle accidents in 1958 were caused by overloading.**

An authoritative transport organ wrote in March of hauliers' capabilities for price war with the railways being at 'rock bottom'.

You and your friends must know this, Mansfield. It leaves you little room for manoeuvre.

Transport workers can expect a drive against their wages (around £9 basic) and a speed-up of schedules. The hauliers who are harder pressed by 'free competition' will encourage their drivers to work extra hours, with the bribe of extra pay and the threat of the sack.

**WE SHALL RECRUIT.** You know as well as I do that what stands in the way of these trends is the organized Labour movement, and above all the closed shop.

So you fire the first shot in the struggle with an attack on the closed shop.

Militant workers will note this. We shall strive to convince many more transport workers to organize, not only in defence of what they have but as a first step towards getting more.

In the mean time we shall not be split by the bogey of 'threatening other workers' jobs', because we know you do not really care what happens to the 'nons' you use against the closed shop.

We can in fact recruit many of them to trade unionism, because although the principal target today is the trade unionist, tomorrow it will be every transport worker.

We are not dismayed about those employers who are, you write, 'going to be cross' about 100 per cent. trade unionism.

To trade unionists and socialists the interests of workers are paramount, no matter how 'cross' it makes the employers.

A TRANSPORT WORKER

overwhelmingly declared in favour of joining the strike.

Even so, 800 members voted to come out, and some of them did walk out. The AEU stewards should have called them out. This would have encouraged many of the others to follow. The AEU stewards were in fact considering this when the strike was wound up. They were too late.

In Birmingham Transport and General Workers' Union stewards had recommended solidarity action. They said to me:

'Our own executive should have been prepared to make this a BMC issue instead of leaving it to us to take unofficial action in support of our brothers at Morris's.'

As soon as signs were seen that solidarity action was going to take place in Birmingham, the 'negotiations' were speeded up. Frantic calls came from the TGWU in London for TGWU stewards not to take action.

**The employers' federation was also ringing up all union officials in Birmingham to get them to stop the scheduled 24-hour walk-out. This shows how frightened they were of the dispute spreading.**

There is no doubt that in spite of the AEU executive's standing aside, and in spite of the confusion among AEU members at Morris's itself, a spread of the strike to Birmingham BMC factories would have changed the whole complexion of the dispute.

### Rank-and-file committees

As it is, the Oxford men are now mulling over the 'settlement', knowing that the chances of ever getting Frank Horsman back as a result of the 'inquiry' are slender.

Bro. Tony Bradley, Morris Motors TGWU secretary, told me:

'The men were naturally disappointed that Bro. Horsman was not reinstated at Morris's. Reluctantly we have had to concede an inquiry. We have not filled his place as senior shop steward. We will await the outcome of the inquiry.'

Other Morris workers sought consolation by saying: 'Well, at least Bro. Horsman's livelihood has been safeguarded by the settlement. In the past stewards were sacked and had great difficulty in finding work.'

Frank Horsman himself believes he has a good case to put before the inquiry, to demolish all the management's charges of 'obstruction, insolence and insubordination'.

'The danger of this situation', he says, 'is that my dismissal can become a precedent throughout the industry.'

It can, and will—unless solidarity action is prepared now.

This means not only the calling of mass meetings by the stewards, but also the formation of rank-and-file committees composed of stewards and shop floor members, so that the maximum unity throughout the BMC can be built up.

## FRANCE

### BIG BUSINESS PURRS WITH SATISFACTION— AND PREPARES FOR BATTLE

From Tom Kemp

PARIS

THE tumult of the Algiers forum in the days of May 1958 seems far away in the France of de Gaulle in the summer of 1959.

No doubt many supporters of the de Gaulle régime would like to forget how it came into being. But all the trimmings of legality and republicanism cannot wipe out the facts.

The régime issued from a threat of violence exercised by the armed forces and manipulated by a network of civilian and military plotters.

And today it exists as a coalition of interests in which big capital is a decisive factor—with de Gaulle straddling these interests as the national saviour.

But these interests are torn with jealousies. The conflicts among them find political expression in a number of parties and organizations, some old, some new.

Rumblings in the army; activity by openly fascist groups; calls for the purging of the administration; the possibility of further blackmail from Algiers: symptoms of this kind indicate that the régime might be torn apart in the event of major strains or crisis.

Yet de Gaulle has his successes.

No other régime since 1945 has been so successful in mastering working-class dissatisfaction and imposing measures detrimental to the workers' living standards.

It has improved the stability of State finances, reduced the foreign deficit and—at the expense of real wages and social

services, and without serious challenge—it has provided an improved basis for French industry in world competition.

Outside the few sections affected by the short-lived recession, industrial profits continue to rise.

**A buoyant stock market and a business Press purring with satisfaction show conclusively who has gained from de Gaulle.**

'Enrich yourselves'—other reactionary governments have said this to the capitalist class in the past—is the régime's unacknowledged slogan.

### Mechanization and speed-up

National glory, the interests of France, a French atom bomb, the Algerian war, Sahara petrol: all reduce themselves to a common denominator—profits and dividends.

Favourable world factors—notably the U.S. recovery and lower raw material prices—have contributed to Gaullism's sparkling financial results.

The Governor of the Bank of France, a power behind the scenes, is measuring with cautious optimism the balance sheet of financial policy. The target is monetary stability and economic expansion.

In workshop terms these apparently desirable objectives will mean more mechanization and speed-up, stiffer resistance to wage increases and cut-backs in all the gains in living standards and working conditions made during the boom.

Sharpening international competition dictates such a policy, not only in France, but in all the advanced capitalist countries.

There are battles ahead on the industrial front in France at the end of the summer, when the workers return from their paid holidays.

### What French workers lack

In their summer resorts and watering places the bosses are putting the finishing touches to their strategy. Are the workers doing the same?

Unfortunately not. The French working class will no doubt fight, and fight hard. But it will do so largely in separate units, for partial gains, and under divided and unsatisfactory leadership.

Two things are missing as yet. The first is a powerful, coordinated rank-and-file movement. The second is a clear understanding of the link between the workers' economic interests and the political struggle against the de Gaulle régime.

## AUSTRALIA

### RIGHT-WING UNION BOSSES AND STALINISTS ARE CRITICIZED IN NEW SOCIALIST JOURNAL

From a Correspondent

ANOTHER new socialist journal has appeared in the English-speaking world—'The Socialist', a monthly published in Sydney by Lionel Anet.

The first issue is dated July 1959 and includes a survey of recent developments in the Australian Labour movement.

Among topics discussed is 'the rise of American-style business unionism', of which the leading exponent is the Australian Labour Party member and outstanding redbaiter, Laurie Short.

'For such people the job of running a union is just one more business enterprise under the capitalist system. Under no circumstances does it mean militant action in defence of workers' rights.'

After reviewing recent experiences in the industrial field, contributor Bob Richardson comments that: 'It is no coincidence that the worst attacks by the capitalist class have come precisely at the time when on-the-job organization has practically collapsed in most industries.'

'What we want today is a network of job, shop and site committees ready to battle for the rights of the workers and to ensure that our union officials in fact represent the interests of the rank and file.'

The role of the Communist Party is dealt with in a brief article which brings out the dependence of the party's policy on the moods of the Soviet bureaucracy.

In 1949, when Stalin was proclaiming the now-famous doctrine of the main blow against social democracy, the Communist Party union leaders led the general strike of coal-miners to the most disastrous defeat in mining history.

In 1959, when Khrushchev is proclaiming peaceful co-existence as a principle, the same union leadership meekly accepts the brutal displacement of thousands of miners from the industry without making any effort to organize industrial action against the sackings.

Characteristic of the Communist Party's activity in industry is that its chief aim 'is to win trade union positions in order to enforce decisions rather than develop a mass movement from below.'

### DID POLICE 'BASH A CONFESSION' OUT OF HIM ?

Three independent witnesses have made statements quoting the police as saying they had 'bashed a confession' out of the part Aborigine Rupert Max Stuart, who is under sentence of death for murder.

The royal commission of three judges which is inquiring into the case was told this in Adelaide on Monday by the QC who is representing Stuart.

### MRS BEHAN, OVER FROM DUBLIN, GREETES THE NEWSLETTER

Mrs Kathleen Behan, the 67-year-old mother of six sons and a daughter—and grandmother of twelve—who took London's Press and television by storm when she came over from Dublin for a holiday, paid a visit to The Newsletter's new offices.

'I wish your paper luck', said doughty Mrs Behan, whose brother, a great friend of James Connolly, was the author of Ireland's national anthem.

'I support The Newsletter because you support workers on strike', she said. 'Every strike I hear of makes my heart rejoice. Because it's the only weapon the workers have, isn't it?'

'If they didn't strike they would be walked on. They suffer plenty of hardships when they're striking, but it's better for them afterwards, and for their wives and children.'

Then Mrs Behan went off to spend a few days with each of her children who are in England.

'We reared them in terrible poverty', she said of Brendan, Brian and Dominic. 'And every one of them was a tradesman before he started to write.'

## Constant Reader Including Us Out?

A CONTRIBUTOR to the correspondence in the New Statesman about problems of the Socialist Societies in provincial universities has declared that some of these Societies are dominated by 'exclusionist Trotskyism'.

What, one wonders, may that be? An exclusionist, according to the dictionary, is 'one who would exclude another from some privilege', and in particular 'a supporter of the Exclusion Bill (1679)'.

From what privilege are the redbrick Trotskyists seeking to exclude other socialists? Surely the boot is on the other foot, and it is Transport House that is out to exclude all Trotskyists from the privilege of belonging to the Labour Party.

As for the Exclusion Bill of 1679, what relevance can that have? Socialist Labour League members are doubtless all foes to 'Popery, slavery, brass money and wooden shoes', like those who sought to exclude the ultra-reactionary James, Duke of York, from the succession to the throne of England.

But they would claim no monopoly of such sentiments; and might urge that other issues are more urgent nowadays. It is all rather mystifying.

When a movement becomes the object of meaningless abuse, as in this letter, as well as of mendacity, as illustrated by Briginshaw's circular, that can usually be taken as a sign that its opponents are finding it hard to deal with in an honest political way.

### Marx caught two-timing ?

A friend who has been badly bitten by Strachey's 'Contemporary Capitalism' has lent me a book called 'Marx and America', by Earl Browder, who is now in the same business of trying to show how obsolete and fallacious were Marx's ideas on political economy.

One of Browder's big points is that Marx contradicted himself in his theory of wages.

Whereas in 'Wage-Labour and Capital' (1849) Marx shows wages as being basically determined by minimum subsistence

levels, in 'Wages, Price and Profit' (given as a lecture in 1865) and in the first volume of 'Capital' (1867) he recognizes the existence of a social ('historical and moral') element in wages—something unique in the way that the value of labour-power is determined, as contrasted with any other commodity.

Engels, says Browder, by reissuing 'Wage-Labour and Capital' in 1891 without drawing attention to the alleged contradiction, helped to confuse and mislead students of Marxism from that moment on, until Browder arose to clear the matter up.

In my humble opinion, however, what Browder has discovered is a mare's nest. The idea of the 'historical and moral element' in wage levels is clearly conveyed in 'Wage-Labour and Capital', in the passage which tilts at attempts to define standards of living in absolute terms, and ends:

'Our needs and enjoyments spring from society. We measure them, therefore, by society, and not by the objects of their satisfaction. Because they are of a social nature, they are of a relative nature'.

Browder appears to have missed this.

### Not his Aunt Sally

Unfortunately, though, it cannot be said that Browder is shooting at an Aunt Sally of his own making when he ridicules 'subsistence-theory' Marxists.

Owing to the Soviet bureaucracy's need for a world-picture which would make the condition of the Russian workers seem better than it was, the Stalinists at a certain stage did commit themselves to some singularly foolish statements about working-class standards in the west, and comically 'theorized' about them on 'subsistence-theory' lines.

See, for instance, the pamphlet 'Are the Workers Better Off?' by J. Kuczynski, with a foreword by R. Page Arnot, published by Marx House in 1944.

Browder quite correctly points to the shortcomings of the view expressed by Marx (and echoed by Lenin) that a more advanced country shows to less advanced ones 'the image of

their future', but fails to acknowledge his debt in this connexion to Trotsky's conception of 'uneven and combined development'.

But it is gratifying to have, even so late in the day, this admission from the leader of the American Stalinists in the 1930s: 'Lenin never considered the possibility of socialism in Russia alone . . . for Lenin in 1917 the Russian Revolution was to be proclaimed "socialist", not because Russia taken alone was ripe for such a step, but because it would trigger the German socialist revolution.'

BRIAN PEARCE

## LETTER

### 41 YEARS IN ONE FIRM—SACKED AFTER PRINT DISPUTE

I WOULD like through The Newsletter to say how appalled I am at the action of the printing union leaders

### THESE 'COMMUNISTS' SET POLICE ON TO A FELLOW-WORKER

#### ATTEMPT TO STOP NEWSLETTER SALES IN FLEET STREET

By G. Gale

ALONG with three other members of the Socialist Labour League I went to Fleet Street late last Saturday night to sell The Newsletter to printworkers.

After a while a large crowd gathered around one of our sellers, a young busman, who was being abused by two or three men. Two policemen came up and warned the Newsletter seller to move on. They said nothing to the men barracking him.

A little later the same thing happened again. And then a third time.

**It became obvious that a few men, led by known members of the Communist Party, were following this young worker wherever he went and creating a disturbance.**

The aim was to gather a crowd so that the police would be able to intervene.

Each time the police warned the Newsletter seller. Finally they threatened to arrest him. Each time they exchanged jokes with his attackers.

At one point our comrade asked the Communist Party members if they preferred the police to a fellow-worker with a different point of view, as they were obviously setting the police on to him.

**The answer—from one of the Communist Party members—was: 'We prefer the police to you bastards any day.'**

This same Communist Party member went up to one of the policemen and told him that my car was parked without lights, and invited him to give me a ticket.

Two days later the Daily Worker was writing that the police force is an 'arm of the repressive capitalist State', adding:

**'An awareness of the function and nature of the police force can heighten the class struggle and lead to a clearer understanding of the role of the State and the need for socialism.'**

Setting the police on to fellow-workers is a crime in the Labour movement. It is on a par with scabbing in a strike.

Unable to answer the Socialist Labour League with better ideas, these creatures who call themselves 'communists' turn to the police force, in the same way they spread lies about 'American dollars' and about our being in the pay of the employing class.

No doubt members of the Communist Party will receive attention from the police in the coming struggles in Britain, just as members of the Socialist Labour League will.

on the question of reinstatement of strikers.

After refusing the masters' statement that some of the strikers could not be reinstated they thought fit to accept Lord Birkett's proposal that a fortnight's notice could be given.

This means that many workers return to work after a seven weeks dispute, to be immediately handed a fortnight's notice.

Here is a case that I know personally. A chap with 41 years' service in one firm was told his services were no longer required and was given a fortnight's notice.

This chap is now 55 years old. He is a cutter bookbinder, a trade slowly dying out.

What prospects has he got? To leave his trade and end up as a caretaker or watchman? This must be going on throughout the country.

Does not the settlement pave the way for large-scale sackings? The employers have long-term plans for a speed-up of production, automation and so on. They want to reduce the labour force and avoid having to pay for it.

**A Manchester member of the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paper Workers (name and address supplied)**

The Socialist Labour League will oppose such oppression and will defend Communist Party members in such cases, despite our differences.

### TOOK OFF SHIRT TO SHOW HIS BRUISES

Fined £2 at Nottingham last week for being drunk and disorderly, 19-year-old window-cleaner Kenneth Barnaby said police turned a hosepipe on him, tripped him and threw him down steps into a cell. He took off his shirt in the witness-box to show his bruises.

### POLICEMAN JAILED 60 DAYS FOR ASSAULT

Policeman Bernard McAllister, of Clydebank, was sent to jail for sixty days at Dunbarton sheriff court last week for assaulting a man by knocking him to the ground, kicking him and punching him.

### POLICE MUST PAY 10 GUINEAS COSTS

Baroness Wootton, chairman of Chelsea juvenile court, last week awarded 10 guineas costs against the police when she dismissed charges of 'violent behaviour' at West Central police station brought against two boys, aged 15 and 16.

### POLICEMAN IMPRISONED FOR THEFT

Police-constable Joseph Harrison Ward (33) was sent to prison for six months at Hull last Saturday for stealing a watch and cash totalling £20 from the lost property department, of which he was in charge.

### SUPERINTENDENT REDUCED TO THE RANKS

Scotland Yard stated last Friday that Detective-superintendent Leslie Davies, 51-year-old second-in-command of CID officers in north-west London, has been reduced to the rank of police constable.

This was the decision of a disciplinary board which investigated allegations that he had accepted the gift of a pair of cuff-links and given a reference to a woman who was an undischarged bankrupt.

### OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF PROPERTY OWNERS

A business man called Leslie Furneaux has a plan to insure all London policemen against death by criminal violence. A policeman's widow or nearest relative would receive £5,000.

Furneaux is willing to pay £50 a year towards the premium until the police get an official insurance scheme.

'This idea is not just a charitable gesture', he says. 'The police protect our property, and almost everyone is a property owner.'