

THE NEWSLETTER

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March 5, 1960

NUCLEAR EXTERMINATION THREAT GROWS Labour Must Lead Anti-War Fight

By G. HEALY

The preparations for the summit talks can only find a parallel in the behaviour of lunatics who have lost all contact with reality. Just pause for a moment and think about the awful situation in which mankind finds itself. Barely a decade and a half after the end of the second world war the German capitalists have openly embarked upon a fresh campaign of war preparations.

While the stench of death still hangs over the horror camps of Belsen, Dachau, Ravensbruck and Auschwitz, the Krupp millionaires, the merchants of death of Western Europe, send their technicians into Spain to commence the manufacture of missiles in that outpost of fascist brutality. Just as the reinstatement of Krupp was made legal by the American imperialists, so this latest move is also quite legal. The destruction of Hitler's war machine was brought about in order to organize a better and more efficient one.

Ask yourself, who was right about the second world war? The Trotskyists were the only international socialist tendency to state that that war could not put an end to fascism or imperialism and that it was a capitalist war which would resolve nothing so far as the working class were concerned. The right-wing Labour leaders, including Mr. Shinwell, and their Stalinist allies supported the war and its orgy of mass destruction on the grounds that this would end fascism for ever. Who was right, the Marxists or these traitors?

The summit talks are a farce

The summit talks have been boosted by the same rotten crew as a way of strengthening peace today. But what is the reality? On the eve of these talks high-flying military aircraft stream provocatively across the skies between the East and West zones of Germany. Military expenditure has got out of hand. Nobody knows exactly what it has cost and what it is going to cost. In 1948 the Labour government estimated that it would cost £1 million to build a guided missile. The latest estimate for the same missile is £40 million, and it is confidently expected that when this missile is operational it will already have become obsolete. The original estimate of £8 million for these missiles has now jumped to £110 million.

American bombers constantly patrol the skies, ready to leave at a moment's notice to destroy Soviet cities and industrial installations. American rockets are ready for launching from British bases. Mr. Khrushchev is not behind the times, he says that Russia has the most terrible weapon of all.

Mark you, all this is taking place on the eve of the summit. The decision to hold the talks sparked off a new round of sabre-rattling and wild military expenditure. Just as the declared war aims of the victors of the second world war were a farce, so the summit talks are a farce. They cannot bring peace because they are based upon the diplomatic meanderings of the capitalist lunatics who dominate society in the Western world.

In fact the summit talks may well bring war nearer. Should the Americans think that they have gained some short-term advantages they may be tempted to take the plunge, and the

Soviet bureaucrats and Mr. Khrushchev will be caught just as Stalin was on June 21, 1941, when the Soviet people became involved in a war with Hitler which their leaders were calling right up to the night it began, impossible.

Gaitskell lines up for nuclear war

The right-wing Labour leaders such as Gaitskell cannot oppose the Tories and their war preparations. It was the 1945 Labour government which drew up the plans for the H-bomb home of Aldermaston and the poison factory at Porton. It was they who voted the first guided missile expenditure.

In the defence debate last Tuesday, Mr. Gaitskell proudly demanded that Britain should have its own nuclear policy. Everyone should feel happier now that Transport House is prepared to lead the British people into the valley of death. Indeed this is the only type of leadership that Gaitskell and his kind have provided for the working class since 1941.

There is not a single shred of serious opposition to these war preparations in the Parliamentary Labour Party. The so-called Victory for Socialism lefts do not oppose the war preparations on principle, they simply call for alliances between the people who are preparing the war. In other words they are a left cover for the right wing and not a serious anti-war opposition.

All socialists and trade unionists who want to prevent the nuclear holocaust now being prepared must understand that only the mobilization of the working class around a socialist policy which will constantly oppose the Tories and their agents in the Labour movement can solve the problem of peace. The Socialist Labour League is the only organization in Britain that fights for such a policy. We oppose war on principle and we believe that only the victory of the working class in the struggle for socialism can prevent it.

The policy to be debated at our local Assemblies of Labour, commencing this week-end, is the only effective answer to the madmen of Washington and the rest of the capitalist world. We urge all our readers to support these Assemblies, to join the Socialist Labour League and take part in the real anti-war struggle.

This Week-end: London & Liverpool Assemblies of Labour

Sunday

March, 6

LONDON:

Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W.1.
10.30 a.m.—5 p.m.

LIVERPOOL:

Walker Art Gallery, William Brown Street.
10.30 a.m.—4.30 p.m.

THE NEWSLETTER

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

Telephone Macaulay 7029

SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 1960

RACIALISTS IN ACTION

LAST Sunday's demonstration calling for a boycott on South African goods touched off a conflict between the demonstrators and organized fascist bands. No matter how mild this type of protest (and it was intended by the organizers to be nothing more than a shadow fight so far as the real issue of apartheid is concerned), nevertheless the sponsors have embarked upon a course which raises the whole problem of racialism.

It is now high time that the Labour movement had a closer look in this direction. During the '30s anti-semitism was popularised by British fascists who copied the methods of Mussolini and Hitler. Their source of income depended upon their allegiance to such allies, and if anti-semitism was the order of the day then the British fascists were anti-semitic.

The scene has changed, but the aims remain the same. The decline of British imperialism reveals the naked and cold-blooded brutality of the white colonial settlers. At their head stands the Union of South Africa. Behind the Union of South Africa stands the City of London. It is nothing short of a diversion to lay the blame for the policy of apartheid at the door of the present leaders of South Africa. It is British capital which calls the tune in the Union today as it has done in the past; therefore, behind the white settler brotherhood stand most influential business interests.

The contradictions of imperialism are, of course, enormous. Macmillan is forced to issue some mild rebuke over apartheid in a desperate attempt to stabilize imperialism in a world in which it is crumbling. This aggravates the problem and it tends to build up a conflict in ruling circles. Both sides in this conflict are determined that the class power of capital must remain. Both sides must be defeated by the combined strength of the British and colonial working people.

White settlers and their allies in Britain are now lending more and more support to the development of fascist groupings in England. Just as the French fascists have drawn much support from the white settlers of Algeria, so the racialists of Notting Hill look to South Africa, Kenya and Nyasaland. The basis of racialism in Britain today is the break-up of the Empire and the impetus for a new fascist movement is now emerging from a fusion of right-wing die-hards in Britain with their counterparts in the colonies.

If the slogans have shifted from anti-semitic to anti-negro, it is because those who call the tune are no longer the Hitlers and Mussolinis, but the white brutes who dominate the 'settler' colonies. This is the reason why we have had one outburst of racialism after another in the last three years. The incidents in Trafalgar Square, therefore, are simply a continuation of the process now taking place in rebuilding the fascist movement in Britain—this time with the support of the white settlers.

The only difference between the brawling in Whitehall and the ambush strategy of Notting Hill was that the fascists have substantially reaffirmed that their main aim is to attack the Labour movement. It was sections of the Labour movement who were present

at Trafalgar Square and not the West Indians of Notting Hill. Here is a warning that cannot be ignored.

Last summer The Newsletter urged the Labour movement in West London to consider the setting up of defence guards composed of trade unionists and coloured workers in order to defend ordinary working people from fascist attack. The purpose of this type of organization was purely defensive. We were told by Gaitskell and his allies at that time that we should leave matters in the hands of the police, yet 8 months have gone by and still no one has found out who murdered Kelso Cochrane. Instead of Labour Colonel Marcus Lipton congratulating Macmillan, wouldn't it be far better for an inquiry to be demanded in the House of Commons as to why the police have been unable to trace the murderers of Cochrane?

No one doubts that the police can catch murderers; they are particularly swift when one of their own people is involved. They are familiar with the gang life of London, they know also that it was a gang who killed Cochrane, yet no results have been achieved.

A conference to initiate an inquiry into racial disturbances of all the Labour organizations in London should now be demanded by every trade unionist and active Labour worker. This conference should take steps which would lead to the organization of defence squads to prevent the fascists from beating up either coloured workers or young students as they did last Sunday. Fascism stands for violence. Despite Trevor Huddleston, Donald Soper and Canon Collins, it is not going to be defeated by the heavenly hosts, but by the organization of the working class who, whenever they are attacked by these thugs, will know how to provide an effective reply.

WOOL AND WATER

WALTER KENDALL, writing on 'Marxism in Britain: The Way Ahead', in the Socialist Leader of February 27, argues that the British workers will not need to build a revolutionary party in order to take power, because 'Britain has no Okhrana'. The Okhrana—the word means 'protection'—was, of course, the political police of Tsarist Russia. Far be it from us to equate civil liberty in Britain today with civil liberty in Russia, say, 40 years ago. But hasn't Kendall forgotten M.I.5—and the Emergency Powers Act? Can it be that he is now going, along with R. P. ('Peaceful and Constitutional') Dutt, to close his eyes to such things?

Kendall also writes about the work of the Industrial Syndicate Education League, the Plebs' League and the Guilds' League, in the period 1910-1922, and observes: 'The examples provided conclusive proof that the "party conception" is not the only one for Marxist propaganda and agitation.' Agreed: but surely, the aim of serious Marxists is not just to propagandize and agitate till the cows come home, but to lead the workers to take power and build socialism—and no merely educational association can do that.

We are reminded of a cartoon which appeared in James Connolly's paper Workers' Republic during the first world war. John Bull has been knocked groggy by the Germans and Young Ireland is leaping forward to finish him off. Restraining Young Ireland is a figure representing Mr. Bulmer Hobson, covered with Irish national symbols but whining: 'Now, don't you go depriving me of my life's hobby, The Revolution.'

INDUSTRY

THE LESSON OF THE BETTESHANGER STRIKE

By Bob Pennington

The strike at Betteshanger (Kent) ended last Sunday. The men voted to return to work after being addressed by National Union of Mineworkers' general secretary, Will Paynter.

Paynter told the mass meeting that the 'union executive would investigate the question of redundancy and would lead a deputation to open talks with the Coal Board'.

This promised action by the NUM leaders is rather belated. The strike lasted three weeks and throughout the leaders refused to make it official. One cannot but suspect that such a formula was designed to get the men back to work and extricate the leaders from an embarrassing position.

Agreed sackings

This assumption is reinforced when one notes that the NUM executive has never gone on record for a struggle against pit closures and redundancy. The prior collaboration practised by the leaders with the NCB concerning sackings was seized on by J. H. Plumtre, general manager of the south-eastern division of the NCB. Writing in *The Times* on February 16, Plumtre goaded Burke, the Betteshanger chairman, with the fact 'the union insisted that those declared redundant should be those recently engaged'. Burke had complained that those sacked were all young men.

Utilizing to the full, these agreements entered into by the union officials, Plumtre went on to say: 'This problem of redundancy at Betteshanger has been fully discussed with the union at pit, divisional and national level. The union have not, at any time, opposed the reduction in output and manpower in Kent.'

This acceptance of the arbitrary right of the NCB to carry out sackings ensured that no preparations were made at either national or area level to defeat the NCB. The union had three months' notice of the sackings. At national level nothing was done. A fact which casts a shadow over the sincerity and seriousness of the executive's latest proposals.

No campaign beforehand

In the Kent area itself no campaign was waged to gain active support in the other pits. Nor was any campaign directed towards the other coalfields.

When the Kent area executive asked the other three Kent pits to take supporting strike action they were turned down. This was the pay-off for the lack of preparation. The refusal of the other Kent pits to strike, then became an almost insurmountable barrier to gaining supporting action in other coalfields.

On February 16, the other three pits did agree, however, to place an embargo on Kent's 1,500 tons of coal stocks being moved. This, however, remained simply a pious resolution. No pickets were placed at the other pits and no call was made to the other coal fields to support this decision. Some of the Betteshanger men claim 2,500 tons was moved from Snowdown in the last week of the dispute.

The strike consequently remained isolated. The Betteshanger men, despite tremendous militancy and a willingness to fight, could not win on their own. Driven into isolation by the union's acceptance of sackings; hampered because of the failure of the Kent area executive to develop an alternative policy; the men were compelled to return to work.

There is an attempt to find consolation in the fact that some 60 men have left the industry over the last few weeks and it is therefore assumed 60 of the sacked 140 will be re-absorbed. This solves nothing. The NCB intend to intensify their drive to reduce the labour force in the mines. More

sackings are on the way and unless preparations are made now to meet them then the experiences of Betteshanger will be repeated.

Rank-and-file unity must be established in the coalfields. Each pit and every area must be linked together to ensure a unified fight against sackings and closures. The demand for the suspension of all interest payments in order to provide money to maintain miners made redundant and awaiting transfers or seeking alternative employment must be fought for both in the NUM and inside the Labour Party.

C.I.E. REORGANIZATION. NEARLY 200 MEN LOSE JOBS

By our Dublin Correspondent

Coras Iompar Eireann (Irish Transport services) has been informed by the Lemass Government that all government subsidies will cease in 1964. This has resulted in a large-scale programme of reorganization and rationalization on the part of CIE. In all, 171 men are to be dismissed during the next few weeks. Some of these have already gone. Over 100 of them are young men between 20 and 32, with from 5 to 15 years' service. The remainder are mostly disability cases or men between 62 and 65.

Several older men who have 45 years' service behind them have been clamouring to get out of CIE on early retirement. Their compensation under the provisions of the Transport Act, 1958, would be about £6 10s. per week. But the transport company says no. Their plea is that it would be too expensive to train the younger men.

Mr. Lawrence, national organizer of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, states that this is 'morally wrong' but that 'there is nothing we can do'. Mr.

A LEAD TO FOLLOW

After hearing a speaker from the Socialist Labour League, a special mass meeting of workers at the Unit construction Company site at Abbey Wood passed the following resolution:

'This mass meeting fully endorses the policy of the National Federation of Building Trade Operatives which calls for the extension of nationalization to the building industry. We reject any attempt to revise the constitution of the Labour Party in such a way as to prevent the nationalization of the industry. We call upon all building and trade union representatives on the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party to adhere to the Federation's official policy and to reject any attempt to tamper with it.'

Lawrence also maintains that, in relation to arbitration on the men's compensation on emoluments: 'We must rely on the goodwill of the CIE.'

The men involved have made their position quite clear to Mr. Lawrence. They have no faith in the 'goodwill' of CIE, nor of any other employer. What they want is action, and they are now quite sure that Mr. Lawrence will not provide the necessary leadership. In fact, one of the men who was dismissed last week was ordered by the organizer to leave the union office and not to return without first making an appointment.

The only real guardians of trade union solidarity are the men who pay the weekly subscriptions—the rank and file. It is now the duty of every employee of CIE to show his or her solidarity with the dismissed men by demanding official trade union action in defence of jobs, by electing rank-and-file committees at all stations and garages, and by helping to ensure 100 per cent. fully-paid-up trade union membership.

One of the dismissed men with whom I spoke estimates that the number of sackings may well reach 1,000 by the end of this year alone. Meanwhile the army of well-paid officials continues to grow.

HULL DOCK STRIKE ENDS

By our Industrial Correspondent

The sixteen-day strike of Hull dockers ended last Tuesday with the men being forced to use shovel and basket to unload a cargo of cotton seed from the SS 'Yelkenci'. They were pushed back in their fight to banish this primitive type of unloading from the port of Hull as it has been banished from other major ports.

Attempts have been made to create the impression that the employers have proved their case about mechanization, but a demonstration in which unloading by basket and shovel and by mechanical means were in competition showed that grabs could be used.

In this demonstration, which ended the strike, basket and shovel unloading was quicker, but the conditions were set by the employers who demanded that the cargo be weighed on deck. This would certainly slow down unloading by grab. However, one hour's demonstration was totally inadequate for conclusions to be drawn.

In any case the real issue of the strike was not the relative speed of method, but that basket and shovel unloading was dangerous to the dockers' health. In fact what the employers have shown is that the Hull men were justified in demanding mechanical unloading which the employers declared was impracticable. But for the stevedoring firms speed of discharge and profit come before men's health.

Hull dockers lost this round, but this is certainly not the end of their struggle. More cottonseed will come into the port during the next few months and the men will most certainly object once again to this antiquated method and filthy conditions.

HARDY-SPICER'S STRIKE ENDS

By Harry Finch

Strong dissatisfaction at the Hardy-Spicer 'settlement' was expressed by quite a number of strikers at Monday's mass meeting.

When the stewards presented the recommendation for a return to work about a third of the 2,000 strikers present voted against.

A group of strikers put it to me: 'We all came out and said we would stop out until Troth was reinstated—we believe we should have stuck to that.'

Mr. Briggs, the general secretary of the Brass and Metal Mechanics' Union, told the meeting that his union was called to talks by the Confederation under an agreement whereby any

union that has members affected by a strike can call for this meeting. At this meeting his executive was told by the other executives that there would be no support until 'procedure over Troth's dismissal had been carried out'. He informed the meeting that Troth would be paid his average wages meanwhile, and 'if the final decision is not satisfactory to your members, the society will then be free to take action.' Shouts of 'How long will all these talks take?' greeted his remarks.

The union officials were uneasy at this meeting. Mr. Beard, for the Transport and General Workers' Union, tried to reassure the strikers: 'I know you are all disappointed at the recommendation. Let me make it quite clear that no union has dropped the idea of the reinstatement of Troth. But other unions would not give official support to your strike until negotiations had gone through all the stages of procedure.'

The chairman of stewards, Bro. S. Emery, informed the meeting that the case of Troth will reach York on the second Friday in April—and added: 'Meanwhile, it is up to all of you to keep the case of Troth alive.'

NIGERIAN SEAMEN WIN CONCESSIONS

By our Industrial Correspondent

'Nigerian seamen work almost round the clock'—that was the headline of an article in The Newsletter of June 20, 1959.

The headline is quoted in the report of a Board of Enquiry set up by the Federal Government of Nigeria.

The Board of Enquiry—whose report has just come into my hands—arose out of the Nigerian seamen's strike in Liverpool during June of last year (see Newsletter, June 27 and July 4).

After the crew of M.V. 'Apapa' walked off their ship, alleging racial discrimination, the strike spread to another five ships in Liverpool and eight in Lagos harbour.

The Board dismissed the men's allegation of racial discrimination, but it admitted that African crews are given worse conditions than European.

'As regards rights and conditions of service between the Nigerian and European crews', it declared, 'certain inequalities exist, particularly in regard to such matters as wages, hours of work, extra leave for Sundays at sea and salvage awards, etc.'

The Board was forced to make recommendations to meet the main grievance behind the seamen's strike.

It called on the Elder Dempster Line to end the present system whereby: 'The crew's hours of work are not regulated or loosely regulated.'

It recommended that there should be payment for overtime.

London Assembly Arrangements

By R. PENNINGTON

The fight to retain Clause 4 of the Labour Party Constitution will be in the forefront of the discussions at the London Assembly of Labour which meets this week-end at Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W.1.

As new delegations continue to be elected the strength, power and need of the Assembly emerges. Amongst the fresh branches of the Amalgamated Engineering Union to elect delegates are West Norwood, Wembley No. 1, Edgware No. 2, and Walthamstow No. 2. A mass meeting at Abbey Wood—London's largest building site—has elected six delegates. Workers at Laing's site, Great Queen Street, are sending a delegate. This Thursday and Friday, workers at Brown's, Belvedere, and Jarvis', south-west London, are to hear speakers from the Socialist Labour League on the Assembly. Three new delegations have also been elected from contracting electricians on jobs in London. A delegation of three and six visitors are coming from the Gilbert and Ash job at Sidcup.

Four more delegations have been elected from the Labour Party Young Socialist Groups. One of East London's biggest Labour Parties has decided to send an observer.

East Ham Youth CND and Stanmore CND have each agreed to send two delegates, Croydon Youth CND and Willesden CND are both sending observers.

Miners from Kent will be present, as will tenants from St. Pancras—scene of London's biggest rents battle. Electricians are coming from London airport, clerks from Morden branch of the Clerks' Union and coloured workers from north Kensington.

A number of Communist Party members figure prominently on delegations. Others are coming as visitors, included amongst these is the secretary of a south London Young Communist League branch and some AEU and ETU members.

Make sure you attend on Sunday. Get your friends in the union branch and the local Labour Party to come also.

Constant Reader | Oxford Episode

DID those dons who ganged up against Macmillan's election as Chancellor of Oxford University have any particular danger in mind, I wonder, when they wrote that it was unsuitable for an active politician of marked allegiance to hold this office? Perhaps some of them remembered an incident from the last period when such a politician was Chancellor at a time of social and political upheaval.

When the arch-reactionary Tory Minister Lord Curzon of Kedleston was Chancellor, there darted across the Oxford firmament a comet called 'Free Oxford'. This was 'an independent socialist review of politics and literature' (later: 'a communist journal of youth'), which came out in six numbers in 1921 and 1922 and achieved an amazing success, with a circulation of at least double that of other university papers. Contributors included Louis Golding, A. E. Coppard, Edgell Rickword, Richard Hughes and other bright young writers, together with Edward Carpenter, of the older generation, and also E. Varga and K. Radek, who sent their articles from Moscow.

'Free Oxford' found purchasers in every university and aimed to become a regular inter-university paper reflecting and promoting the work of the University Socialist Federation. Already before it was closed down it was publishing a regular 'Cambridge Letter' from the youthful Maurice Dobb.

Towards the end of 1921 the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, one Lewis Farnell, sent for the editors, told them: 'I will not have Bolsheviks at Oxford', and expelled them. 'Free Oxford' went down with all guns firing. In particular, the following headlines caught public attention: 'Editors Sent Down. Curzon's Campaign Against "Free Oxford"'. Foolish Foreign Minister Forces Feeble Farnell to Fight Free Speech.'

Reaction in the university world and in the press to Farnell's action was generally unfavourable ('Farnellism and Crime', and 'Academic Pogrom by Modern Canute', were typical newspaper headlines) and Curzon, being a politician, sought to dissociate himself from his Vice-Chancellor. This he did, in a letter to The Times. Farnell was stung to reply to it, and a great deal of unpleasantness was created for the University. The more Farnell and his supporters tried to justify themselves, the bigger fools they made of themselves. 'The crux of the matter was whether it was wrong to advocate the use of force as a means of attaining political ends, and it was pointed out, with reason, that if this ruling held in the university the Officers' Training Corps should be abolished' (Maurice Ashley and Christopher Saunders, 'Red Oxford').

Arthur Reade

The last issue of 'Free Oxford', a special May Day number (1922), carried as its masthead a quotation from Trotsky: 'To make the individual sacred we must destroy the social order which crucifies him.' And the managing editor, Arthur Reade, of Worcester College, was destined to be the forerunner of Trotskyism in Britain.

After being sent down from Oxford, Reade worked as business manager on R. P. Dutt's 'Labour Monthly' (Dutt had been sent down from Oxford on similar political grounds a few years earlier). He was very active in the youth movement in South-West London, then the main Communist stronghold in the capital. In 1924, when the Communist Parties of the world were called upon by Moscow to pass resolutions condemning Trotsky for his work 'Lessons of October', Reade spoke out against this.

The British central committee had passed its resolution without having read the book—it was not then available in English—on the basis of an 'official summary' of its contents.

Reade had read a German edition of 'Lessons of October', and found it an important and constructive work, quite unrecognisable from this 'official summary'. As a member of the Communist Party's London District Committee he kicked up a fuss, and an all-London aggregate had to be held, in January 1925, to discuss a motion from Reade regretting the 'hasty' action of the central committee and supporting Trotsky's fight 'against bureaucracy'.

A concentration of party big-shots exerted themselves to prevent Reade from influencing the meeting. In supreme charge was Andrew Rothstein (then known as 'C. M. Roebuck'), political bureau member with special responsibility for youth work. He dismissed Lenin's testament, mentioned by Reade, as 'a gross forgery' and warned him and any co-thinkers he might have to realise the error of their ways 'before it is too late'. Reade's amendment got only a few votes, but what was alarming for King Street was that a motion to adjourn the discussion and reopen it later when comrades had a chance to read and think was defeated by the comparatively narrow margin of 81 to 65, in a house of about 200.

After this aggregate, a number of leading party members, reliable upholders of the official line, were transferred into South-West London so as to combat any sympathy there with Reade's point of view. At the party congress a few months later Tom Bell, reporting on 'Trotskyism', referred to the aggregate and said: 'The political bureau dealt with this matter very energetically and, removed from his post the particular comrade who was responsible for raising the matter.' The platform's resolution was carried unanimously, without discussion.

The methods used by the leadership in this affair, and their acceptance by the members of the party, turned Reade somewhat cynical. He went abroad (to Greece) soon afterwards, and when he returned two years later made it plain he was lost to left-wing politics altogether. But Harry Wicks, a worker who had known Reade in South-West London and had been affected by his arguments at the 1925 aggregate, was by then in Moscow, where the Communist Party had sent him for a course at the notorious 'Lenin School'. As a result of his experiences there, when Wicks returned to London in 1930 he sought out Trotskyist literature, and soon became a builder of the first Trotskyist group in this country.

The bomb shop

Reade's 'London office' in the days of 'Free Oxford' was Henderson's bookshop in Charing Cross Road, known in the socialist movement as 'the Bomb Shop'. This shop remained, down to 1934, a place where the publications of all socialist trends could be obtained, and it was there that Harry Wicks and other seekers after unadulterated Marxism found the American Trotskyist paper *The Militant*.

In 1934, Henderson's was taken over by Collet's, and it became a shop where Trotskyist publications were not, repeat not, displayed. As Stalinists and 'fellow-travellers' the directors of Collet's acted in a similar spirit to that shown by the Oxford booksellers Basil Blackwell when, in 1921, they refused to display 'Free Oxford' and wrote to Reade: 'We have received from you twelve copies of "Free Oxford" As rank bourgeois, however, we feel that we ought not to hasten the collapse of our class by assisting in the distribution of this paper. Accordingly, we return the copies.'

BRIAN PEARCE.

WHAT IS MARXIST THEORY FOR?

By Alasdair MacIntyre

A NEWSLETTER PAMPHLET

Price 3d.

LONDON BUSMEN BAN OVERTIME

By a London Busman

London bus delegates, by 77 votes to 8, have called for a ban on overtime and rest-day working for March 9 in support of the £1 claim put in last November and rejected by London Transport.

Previous attempts to get overtime banned have been defeated by the Transport and General Workers' Union officials. At Hanwell Trolleys last year the union put up a notice telling the men to carry on normally. A proposal to ban overtime from Victoria garage was declared 'unconstitutional'.

But with the 24-hour Tube stoppage on February 1, the Central Bus Committee was able to pass a resolution which could be interpreted as a call for an overtime ban in sympathy with the tubes, over-ruling the protests of Higgs, the full-time official. Not wishing to have this repeated, Higgs made sure that no delegate conference was held in time for the proposed rail strike, in spite of many branches demanding a conference.

Delegates are angry

The delegates therefore assembled for the regular bi-monthly conference in an angry mood. They spent the morning castigating Higgs for not calling a conference before the date of the rail strike. Higgs tried to gag this discussion by offering to give an 'explanation' of the matter, which was not discussed further. This was rejected and a further investigation demanded to report back to a special recall conference in a few weeks.

In the afternoon, the overtime ban resolution was put to the conference by the standing orders committee. The mood of the delegates was obvious by the congratulations passed to Croydon, Kingston and Norbiton garages on their independent overtime ban already in force. A resolution to bring forward the ban from March 9 to March 2 was defeated.

After many hours discussion, Higgs again attempted to

block the ban by asking for the matter to be referred to the Trade Group committee (of which he is secretary). This was refused. The ban was put to the vote and carried.

That the ban, if successful, will be effective can be seen by the fact that, in four days, Croydon garage, with no overtime, lost 6,000 miles of journeys. Repeat this over the fleet (105 garages) and the result will be a severe restriction on services. Wage packets will drop to a flat £9 to £10 before deductions.

Overtime ban is not enough

The danger is that the delegates will imagine that an overtime ban alone is sufficient to win the £1 claim and payment for shift working. In 1955, the London Transport Executive brought in special schedules to defeat an unofficial ban. Seven weeks total strike in isolation led to a settlement a little more than the original offer in 1958.

The answer to special schedules must be first a go-slow and the preparations for a national stoppage for the three claims of the London, municipal and provincial busmen. The rail pay claim is far from settled and contact between railmen and busmen should be developed.

The fight of the busmen for £1 is necessarily bound up with the control and administration of British Transport. A political programme for the transport workers must be based on the nationalization of all inland transport, without compensation to the ex-owners (private and public), and under democratic workers' control at all levels.

To fight for this programme requires the widest possible democracy in the Labour and trade union movement; the lifting of bans and proscriptions on the left wing, the election and recall of all officials and the right of decision on any action in the hands of the rank and file.

This is the significance of and the reason why busmen should attend the London Assembly of Labour on March 6, to prepare a policy for the rank and file that can show the workers that to win the immediate demands for a wage increase and shorter hours it is necessary to fight for the political demands.

MINERS OPPOSE GAITSKELL

Delegates representing 127,000 Yorkshire miners passed the following resolution by 91,750 votes.

'Arising from our own experience in connection with nationalization of the mining industry and our demand for the extension of nationalization in respect of the distribution of coal, we reaffirm our belief in the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange as set out in Clause 4 of the constitution of the Labour Party.'

This is a severe rebuff for Mr. Gaitskell and right-wing miners' leader Sam Watson, who is a member of the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party. Formerly the Yorkshire coalfield was considered safe for right-wing policies, but this is no longer the case.

The need for united action between constituency Labour Parties and rank-and-file trade unionists is further emphasized by the Yorkshire decision.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF LABOUR CAMPAIGN: AREA ASSEMBLIES

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dates
now!**

GLASGOW: March 20	...	Central Halls, Bath Street. 10 a.m.
LEEDS: March 27	Leeds Museum. 3.0 p.m.
MANCHESTER: March 27	...	Registrar's Office, All Saints. 2.30 p.m.
BIRMINGHAM: April 24	...	Typographical Hall, Bath Street, Birmingham.