

THE NEWSLETTER

Weekly Journal of the Socialist Labour League

Vol. 4, No 159

Threepence

July 9, 1960

HANDS OFF THE NATIONALIZED INDUSTRIES

Miners and Railmen Warn the Tories

By OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE leaders of the National Union of Mineworkers at their conference in Llandudno have made it perfectly clear to the Tory government that any interference in the organization of the mining industry would meet with resistance such as in 1926. No one can doubt the seriousness of this declaration. The miners' leaders were obviously speaking with full knowledge of the government's proposals for the industry. They are well informed of the reasons why Gaitskell's lieutenant Robens has been appointed by Macmillan to carry out Tory policy.

Coming as it does from the most bureaucratic element in the miners' union, this warning is in fact way behind the feelings of the men. Miners are ready for action. They have been ready for such action ever since the Tories began to close down the pits. It has only been the hesitancy of their leaders, who have until now retreated on all the main questions concerning pit closures, which has prevented a great nationwide movement in the coalfields.

The determination of the railwaymen to resist Tory encroachment in their nationalized industry is reflected in the overwhelming opposition to Gaitskell's addendum to Clause Four.

Railmen and miners are rightly suspicious about the government's policy in relation to the nationalized industries. Despite all the shortcomings, they still consider that nationalization is an improvement over the old chaotic state which existed under private ownership.

These two decisive sections of the British working class must not be allowed to fight alone. Already we have the basis for the organization of a new Triple Alliance. Workers in the nationalized industries have much to gain from urging their union leaders to form such an alliance. It could be a beginning of a nation-wide offensive to bring down the present Tory government.

What is most important is to realize that the struggle against the Tories cannot be won by industrial action alone. Trade unionists have to seek a solution to their problems on the political field. It is here that the present Labour Party leadership has proven it is absolutely incapable of fighting the Tories. The removal of the Right-wing leaders of the Labour Party is today part of the class struggle against the Tories. In other words, as the miners and railmen prepare for the defence of the nationalized industries, they must press forward the campaign inside the Labour Party to get rid of the Gaitskell leadership. This campaign will be immeasurably strengthened by the adoption of a programme which will call clearly for the extension of nationalization to all the basic industries. **If there is one thing that is clear it is this: the present limited nationalized sector cannot stand alone any longer.** Either we extend it to all the basic industries, which in turn means working out a system of workers' control, or we go back to the anarchy of private ownership operating under the whiplash of big capital.

Owing to space considerations, the third instalment of an examination of the Corfield Report and Part Two of the article on the Chinese-Soviet debate have had to be held over until next week.

Some Lessons of the Dock Strike

By W. Hunter

There was no demoralization among Merseyside dockers who returned to work after a nine-day strike last week. About 50 hands went up against the ending of the stoppage. These men evidently felt it was still possible to fight on.

The question for militants in Liverpool and elsewhere is what happens between now and July 12, when the unions meet the employers?..A general opinion is expressed here that if there is no offer from the employers or the offer is inadequate, then national action must be taken. But how will that action come about? Clearly, the need between now and July 12 is for that preparation and planning which has been sadly lacking.

The great strength of the Liverpool strike was the spirit of the men. The stoppage was complete in a way no other has been since the end of the war—its big weakness was its unplanned start.

Propositions to prepare for national action were rejected by the leaders of the portworkers' committee, some months ago. This would have meant a thorough campaign with no illusions that an adequate rise would come by petitions or minor actions.

As it was, dockers were plunged into strike action—and a magnificent action it certainly was—trying hastily to make connections with other ports. Because of the way it began the issues of wages and the 40-hour week were confused with the issue of overtime.

It is not too late to learn some lessons from all this. Unless some work is done between now and July 12, an unsatisfactory answer from the employers will leave the dockers in the same situation as they were on the day the strike ended. Liverpool will be left to take the lead in action and then try to pull out the other ports.

A campaign is needed to overcome any splits and misunderstandings. It is needed to build a national leadership. And above all, it is needed to explain to the London dockers how vitally they are concerned with the

(Continued on page 211)

THE NEWSLETTER

SATURDAY, JULY 9, 1960

186 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4
Telephone Macaulay 7029**MR. WILLIAMS SHEDS A TEAR**

MR. A. L. WILLIAMS, the national organizer of the Labour Party, is not distinguished by his ability to win elections. Although he is, we are told, constantly boasting about his personal abilities in the field of organization, it is rumoured that his department is one of the most inefficient in the Labour Party—and that's saying something.

We must, however, give credit where credit is due. Mr. Williams has acquired a skill in the organization of witch-hunts which makes him a permanent asset to the election-losing Gaitskell clique, who now dominate the leadership of the Labour Party.

His hatred of Trotskyism derives from the fact that at one time, when he was a lecturer in the NCLC, Williams claimed to have certain sympathies with Trotskyism. We don't know what these were and we are not really interested. Mr. Williams has simply traversed the well-worn path described by some as the transformation of a red to a rat.

Part of Mr. Williams' contribution towards losing the last general election was the organization of a witch-hunt against members of the Socialist Labour League, whose only crime was that they felt that an open organization of Marxists would greatly assist the Labour Party in the formulation of a socialist policy. The past bureaucratic decisions of Mr. Williams and his friends prevented Marxists from having such an organization, despite the fact that Right wingers have the Fabian Society and openly organize against the Left around such journals as Socialist Commentary. Because of this type of petty dictatorship Marxists have had to work illegally inside the Labour Party. This suited Mr. Williams and his clique because the moment a group of loyal Labour Party members talked like Marxists they were denounced as a conspiracy. Naturally, in doing this, Mr. Williams enjoyed the full support of all the reactionary Tory newspapers in Fleet Street.

One of the reasons why we asked the opinions of Transport House during the formation of the Socialist Labour League was that we wanted to put an end once and for all to the false idea that Marxists are a conspiracy inside the Labour Party. We were, and are, only too pleased to place our policies, about which there is absolutely no secret, before the membership of the Labour Party and the trade unions.

Despite the proscription imposed upon it by Transport House, the Socialist Labour League considers itself to be an integral part of the Labour Party and the trade unions. Its constitution requires that all its members, wherever possible, must be members of the Labour Party and their appropriate trade union.

In the July issue of the monthly Labour Organizer, edited by A. L. Williams, there is a leading article

claiming that the purpose of the Socialist Labour League is to 'subvert' the Labour Party. By what yardstick should we judge the use of this word? The purpose of the Labour Party is to defeat the Tories and establish a socialist society. Trade union after trade union has gone on record against the policy of Mr. Williams and the National Executive Committee to amend Clause Four. We are convinced that the overwhelming majority of Labour Party members and trade unionists stand with us in the struggle to make the Labour Party a more socialist party.

We would consider that a correct use of the word 'subvert' would be to describe those elements in the Labour Party who consistently weaken the party in its struggle against the Tories. Can there be any possible doubt that it is Mr. Gaitskell, Mr. A. L. Williams, together with those who have been in control of party policy since the end of the war, who must accept the full responsibility for the policies which have led to the strengthening of Toryism since 1945?

Another mistake made by Mr. Williams is that he seems to imagine that the rank and file of the Labour movement are somehow or other the private property of the leaders at Transport House. He equates the Labour Party as a workers' organization with the policy of his small pro-Gaitskell clique. This is nonsense. The Socialist Labour League has just as much right as the Fabian Society to be a part of the Labour Party. That is why the struggle to remove the proscription on the Socialist Labour League is today the spearhead of the fight to make the Labour Party a more democratic organization.

Ah, says Mr. Williams, look at what happened to poor Mr. Behan. 'One cannot help feeling sympathy with Mr. Behan', he writes in the Labour Organizer.

We are quite sure that Brian Behan will not be too pleased about this support from the strangest of places. But it is worthwhile giving it a little consideration.

Mr. Williams believes that Mr. Behan was, in fact, an honest man when he called for the formation of an independent, working-class revolutionary party. Williams denounces the leadership of the Socialist Labour League who have decided to continue the fight for socialist policies inside the Labour Party. He prefers the policy of Brian Behan because such a policy would isolate the Marxists from the Labour Party. This would allow Mr. Williams to enjoy his night's sleep without being unduly worried over resolutions and struggles against the Right wing in local Labour Parties.

We think that Mr. Williams' concern for Brian Behan is instructive. Sectarianism always leads to a reinforcement of Right-wing policies. The Socialist Labour League is opposed to all brands of sectarianism which seek to separate Marxists from the mass Labour movement. The fact that we are having some success in the struggle against the Right wing inside the Labour Party is the real reason why Mr. Williams has devoted the front page of the Labour Organizer to an attack against us. We will continue with the good work of winning the Labour Party to a socialist policy.

ADVANCE ANNOUNCEMENT**20th Anniversary of the Assassination of Leon Trotsky by the Stalinist GPU**

FRIDAY, AUGUST 19th Caxton Hall, Victoria Street London, S.W.1 7 p.m.

Chair: G. HEALY Speakers: BRIAN PEARCE, BENITA PARRY, TED KNIGHT, and others.

Tape recordings of Trotsky and others.

Tickets — 6d. each

ALGERIA**Settlement or Sell-out?**

By TOM KEMP

ALL the efforts of the French Army over almost six years of war have failed to bring about a military solution to the Algerian question. De Gaulle has been no more successful than his predecessors in his search for a so-called political solution. If the Algerian liberation army cannot be beaten in battle the material stake of French capital must be safeguarded by other means, similar to those which have been applied to the newly 'independent' territories of colonial Africa. For this, however, it is necessary to find collaborators with standing among the Algerian population and, in effect, means turning to the Algerian Provisional Government in Tunis.

It is to be noted that while the struggle continues in Algeria it threatens to become a source of infection to the other areas of Africa where the new political arrangements have left unresolved the social and economic problems. That is because the struggle in Algeria, whatever the leaders of the FLN may want, is part of a social revolutionary struggle for land and life on the part of an oppressed and pauperized population. In the measure that it succeeds it will sharpen the social conflict in other territories.

Moreover, the failure of the Summit talks have both strengthened de Gaulle's illusions of grandeur and evoked pathological fear of the Chinese, with whom the Algerian leaders have recently been carrying on negotiations with a view to obtaining arms and assistance. A settlement in Algeria has become increasingly desirable, perhaps imperative. At the same time, the failure of the settler movement of last January has weakened its possibility of standing out against the will of the French Government as long as the Army remains loyal to de Gaulle. For the moment the possibility of rebellion by the settlers and the Army is not immediate. The former are too weak: some of their leaders are in prison, allies among the extreme Right in France are prevented from going to Algeria. The Army waits, perhaps sceptical of the possibility of de Gaulle meeting the Algerian Provisional Government half way and not wishing to show its hand, or convinced that de Gaulle's 'liberalism' is not genuine.

The Provisional Government

As we said at the time of de Gaulle's original 'self-determination' offer last December, there are elements in the Provisional Government which are attracted by the prospect of a compromise peace which would enable them to take office in Algeria itself. Ferhat Abbas, its Prime Minister, is the centre of this tendency, with support from Morocco and Tunisia. But even he cannot make peace on the terms proposed by the French so far and still retain the support of his followers. The real stumbling blocks encountered in the recent negotiations seem to concern the position of the Liberation Army, the conduct of elections and the status to be accorded to the Provisional Government, i.e., they are political and milit-

ary. However, if it were possible to win concessions on these points it seems likely that the FLN would be prepared to reach an arrangement with de Gaulle.

If de Gaulle really wants such an arrangement—which is not certain—and can get his supporters in the administration and in Algeria especially to go through with it—which is also questionable, then it is clear that the FLN government would have to sell out the social revolution in Algeria. It would become, despite the paraphernalia of political independence, the stooge of French capital, powerless to carry out agrarian reform or to take the steps necessary to promote economic independence in the interests of the people. And this is the inevitable concomitant of any negotiated peace with de Gaulle.

The French working class

Notably absent in this latest turn in the Algerian crisis has been any intervention by the French working class. Undoubtedly, like the majority of the French population, it is anxious to see the war brought to an end, but it has been numbed into passivity by its experiences since 1945. No sudden change can be looked for. A crisis in leadership so profound as that which exists in the French working-class movement cannot be overcome in a day. The bitter truth is that every turn in the Algerian crisis reveals it more starkly and bitterly.

Into the vacuum rush the self-styled men of the 'Left', pushing the cry of a negotiated peace (but de Gaulle would also be prepared for a negotiated peace) and forgetting the revolutionary character of the Algerian movement and the great historic responsibility of the French left for the present situation. These conscience-savers are, in fact, urging de Gaulle to be good-hearted and not to listen to the wicked men who surround him. French interests, they say, lie in recognising Algerian 'independence' on the same terms as Mali and Madagascar. It is not surprising that the 'Left' has not been able to rouse much enthusiasm for its campaigns along these lines—so much like the other half-hearted efforts of the last decade. The line of pressurising de Gaulle is not one likely to appeal to workers in present circumstances or one which can lead them out of their apathy and bewilderment.

DOCK STRIKE—(Continued from front page)

fate of the northern men.

Because of their piece-work earnings, the London dockers feel that an increase won't mean so much for them. But the main point to bring home is that lower wages and conditions in the north represent a sharp threat to the standards of dockers in London. When the Merseyside docker fights for higher wages he is fighting to prevent his port becoming a scab alley, undermining conditions in London.

In their attempts to turn London men against the north, Transport and General Workers' Union officials told London shop stewards that there were two thousand non-unionists in Liverpool and Birkenhead.

It should only take a moment's thought for the stewards to realize that these men were out solid in the strike and that they support the purpose for which unions were formed—to carry forward working-class struggle.

Most of these non-unionists are outside because they are disgusted with the TGWU. They see no future in

the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers, the 'blue' union, which has suffered nothing but kicks and blows during the past few years.

When TGWU officials talk about non-unionists in the north, they also mean 'blue' union members whom they have done their best to drive off the dock.

A joint official campaign by 'blue' and 'white', something suggested by the local NASD but vehemently opposed by TGWU officials, or a campaign by rank-and-file committees would very quickly find these men taking out union cards again.

But the first task is to organize the wages fight. The

Open Letter to Members of the Communist Party

FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

Dear Comrade,

There are open political differences between the leaders of the Soviet Communist Party and the Chinese Communist Party. We all know that the Soviet and Eastern correspondents of the capitalist press can invent and have invented such differences even when they don't exist. But recent articles in the Moscow Pravda and Peking's Red Flag, official organs of the Parties, leave no room for doubt. If the 'Daily Worker' has nothing to say about the differences between Moscow and Peking, that can only recall its attempt to conceal from its readers the ferment in Eastern Europe during the period following the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in February, 1956.

The nature of the differences

The basic positions taken up are these: Mao Tse-tung and his comrades consider that Khrushchev has fallen over backwards to achieve a settlement with American imperialism. Peng Chen, sent as Chinese fraternal delegate to the recent Rumanian Party Congress in Bucharest, said that the Americans were putting up a 'peace front' which was only camouflage for aggression and war preparation. As against Khrushchev's speech in the Kremlin on May 28—'I must say that I still believe that the President himself still wants peace now' (i.e., after failure of the Summit)—the Chinese People's Daily of June 25 said: 'the facts have torn down the work of the modern revisionists, who have been whitewashing and hauling American imperialism and its chieftain, Eisenhower.'

The only 'revisionist' ever named by the Chinese is Tito, but the 'People's Daily' comment could apply equally to the behaviour of the Communist Parties of Greece and Eastern and Mediterranean countries, who demonstrated to welcome Eisenhower on his recent pre-Summit tour. The Greek Party, despite its post-war record of lone anti-imperialist struggle, turned out with slogans 'in the spirit of Camp David'. Here in Britain we were treated to a glossy publication from Moscow featuring on its cover the smiling faces of Eisenhower and Khrushchev—'Towards Lasting Peace and Friendship'. The Chinese are absolutely right to say that this is a mockery of Communist politics.

In effect the Russians have acknowledged that the Chinese attacks on 'revisionists' are directed at Moscow. Pravda (June 13) and Sovetskaya Rossiya (June 10) published long articles on the 40th anniversary of the publication of Lenin's booklet on strategy and tactics, 'Left-Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder' (1920). All

Liverpool committee should immediately arrange a series of meetings in other ports. The aim should be to have a national leadership and a national rank and file completely aware of the issues before July 12.

The committee should be strengthened and widened in Liverpool. There are dozens, even hundreds, of militants in Liverpool and Birkenhead who could be contributing to the committee and making it a much closer reflection of the feelings of the dockers.

These militants should come forward and take their place on the committee, otherwise there is no point in them complaining about the weakness of the present leadership.

Communists know this work, and should be interested in the controversy that has sprung up around it. Soviet-skaya Rossiya condemns 'modern Left-wing extremists', who consider peaceful co-existence a deviation from Marxism, and 'regard the slightest exacerbation of the international situation as proof that their sectarian convictions are valid'. The article goes on to refer to the recent emergence of such Left-wing deviations in the Communist Parties of Iraq and other countries (unnamed) which 'only recently achieved national independence'. This doubtless refers to India, Indonesia . . . and China.

These 'Left-wing extremists', according to Pravda, quote Lenin without realising that times have changed. If Lenin were alive today, said Khrushchev in Bucharest, he would box the ears of such comrades. It is all very well, he said, to quote Lenin on the inevitability of war so long as imperialism exists, but the strength of the Socialist camp today makes that out-of-date.

By arguing in that way Khrushchev appeals to many people as more reasonable and flexible, but he is really using phrases to cover up the essential truth in the Chinese case. Khrushchev is afraid of one thing above all: that the Chinese emphasis on the need for struggle against imperialism will break his hold on the Communist Parties of the world, a hold which enables him to use their influence with the working classes not for winning victory over the class enemy but as bargaining counters for his diplomatic manoeuvre with the USA.

There is thus a complete difference of emphasis in the statements of the two party leaderships. Kuusinen, for the Soviet Party, says that besides the 'hardened enemies of peace' in imperialist countries, there are 'sober-thinking statesmen', and Mikoyan praises Macmillan for his attachment to the English 'spirit of compromise' in diplomacy. The Chinese rightly call all capitalist peace and disarmament talk a tactical adjustment, behind which war preparations go on. It is wrong to act on assumptions about the good intentions of capitalist statesmen; imperialist war results from reasons 'of a deep class nature'. Against this objective characterization of imperialism, Khrushchev maintains that disarmament can assure world peace.

Pravda and Khrushchev try to attribute to the Chinese the view that peaceful co-existence is impossible, and war inevitable. They proceed to condemn such a view as showing lack of confidence in the working class. Do the Chinese hold such a view? Peng Chen said in Bucharest, for instance, that there certainly was 'a real possibility of avoiding war'. BUT this depended on three things: (a)

the military strength of the Socialist countries, (b) the strength of the colonial revolution, and (c) the revolutionary struggle of the working class in the capitalist countries. So far as 'confidence in the working class' is concerned, then, the boot is on the other foot.

Now the Russian leaders might agree with that in words, but the Chinese are clearly against the whole emphasis on mere pressure politics for peace talks in which the class struggle, with the aim of revolution, is pushed to one side. They showed recently that they mean the Chinese when they attack 'Left-wing adventurism'. On June 23, the Party journal 'Kommunist' talked about 'the tendency of some political leaders to see the policy of peaceful co-existence and the struggle for disarmament as a retreat from Marxist-Leninist principles' as 'mistaken, dogmatic, and Left-sectarian'. The reference to political leaders is clear enough.

More recent Chinese statements make the matter even clearer, and cannot be labelled so easily by the Russian leaders. General Li Chih-min, on June 25, denounced those 'who exaggerate the consequences of nuclear war and have begged imperialism for peace at any cost, thus in fact helping the imperialists to undermine the fighting spirit of the people'. And Mrs. Soong Ching-ling (Sun Yat-sen's widow), a vice-chairman of the Chinese government, said on the same day (tenth anniversary of the Korean war): 'We have not won the benefits of the revolution just to give them away under the false illusion of maintaining peace with insatiable imperialism.' She concluded with a call for international struggle to defeat imperialism, not just to force a peace agreement.

Marxist principles and the Chinese CP

For one reason and another, the leaders of the Chinese party are forced on this question to return to certain of the basic principles of Marxism, to emphasize that only the revolutionary struggle of the masses can put an end to war. The reaction of the Russian leaders to this must disturb every Communist. There is need for immediate discussion on every level inside the Communist Party, instead of the stupid attempt to behave as though the difference does not exist. How many Communists have not felt that the collection of signatures and writing of postcards, and the calls on 'Mac' to make the Summit a success, were a travesty of revolutionary politics, a peddling of illusions that no Communist should support? How many have not felt in their hearts that 'the parliamentary road to Socialism' was a lie? Well, the Chinese have questioned Khrushchev's revision of Lenin on this point, too, and said quite clearly that ruling classes don't give up power without armed struggle. Who is right? At least this question should be given a full airing in the Party.

And, surely, discussions should take place with Marxists who left the Party after 1956 over such questions as these. The Socialist Labour League, always referred to sneeringly by J. R. Campbell as 'the Trotskyite circus', has consistently criticized the 'parliamentary road to socialism'. It is part of the whole international strategy of the Kremlin leadership to keep the Communist Parties not as revolutionary working-class leaders, but as errand-boys for their deals at the summit.

It is no good party members deluding themselves that Khrushchev is only 'bluffing' and that he only says he thinks peace can be negotiated, but really he understands imperialism. In the first place, the strong line taken by the Chinese makes it clear that, in their opinion, Khrush-

chev is really working for a deal with the U.S. Secondly, and more important, even if it were only a bluff, what excuse can there be for leading Communists bluffing the whole of the working class about the nature of its deadly enemy?

We are not by any means suggesting, as no doubt leading party spokesmen will suggest, when forced to open their mouths on the subject, that the views of the Chinese leaders are equivalent to Trotskyism, i.e., a return to a complete Marxist strategy of world revolution.* There are very definite temporary reasons pushing the Chinese leaders into their present position. Above all, they see the possibility of exploiting the major tactical setback to imperialism in Japan and South Korea. Their own immediate security demands full attention to these problems and to Chiang Kai-Shek on Formosa, rather than to an overall standstill agreement between Khrushchev and Eisenhower. For these immediate requirements, they need to ally with the forces of the people themselves in South-East Asia, Korea and Japan.

In point of fact, the events which push them to the Left have implications which go beyond the whole framework handed down from Stalin, of which they are still a part. Just as the Chinese Communists had to reject Stalin's advice of an alliance with Chiang Kai-Shek after 1945, because of the power of the people's own movement, so the struggle against war and imperialism goes beyond the limits seen by the Russian or the Chinese leaders.

In Japan we have seen the most important political event since World War II. The workers and youth of an advanced capitalist country have entered on the international scene against American imperialism. Ever since the war, the American monopolists have expanded as the empires of the older powers disintegrated. The colonial revolution against these older powers has made all the great gains since the war. The Japanese events are a qualitative leap from that stage. They are important not only for the capitalist world but for the future of the socialist world; for they mark the beginning of the end of that first period of the world revolution, in which Communism has been distorted by the backwardness of Asia and the relative smallness of the industrial working class in Russia and China.

Just as the leaders of the Japanese students had to go to the Left of the Communist Party in Japan—they were expelled last year for 'adventurism'!—so the British Communists must break out of the grip of their leaders' opportunist politics. For two years Gollan and Matthews put over the idea that the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was 'a split' from the peace movement. Only a few weeks ago, without explanation, did the Party come out for unilateral nuclear disarmament. Is this 'the vanguard party'?

In The Newsletter and the Labour Review, we shall continue to take a firm and principled line on questions like the H-bomb and the Summit, and we shall welcome contributions on these questions from Communist Party

* Footnote. Characteristic of the irresponsible, bureaucratic character of the Chinese leadership are the cracks made by Yu Chao-li and other spokesmen to the effect that a third world war (fought with nuclear weapons) would result in several hundred million more people 'turning to socialism'; and that whoever may be exterminated in such a war, a lot of Chinese would survive! Domestic difficulties arising from the adventurist 'communes' policy may well be a factor in this loud-mouthed let-'em-all-come style, which has nothing in common with a truly Communist foreign policy.

members. In addition, we invite all Communist Party members to discuss with members of the Socialist Labour League the questions raised in this letter.

One reason why this is especially important is the defence of the Chinese Revolution. The reactionary press in Britain and the U.S. will now turn a campaign of hate against the 'hard' line of the Chinese. Many of those 'Left wingers' in Britain who have supported peace campaigns will also feel that China is rocking the boat, and they are already beginning to fall for the stories about China's 'aggressive expansionism'. Unfortunately, the Party's past propaganda of 'peace is above politics' has encouraged this kind of backwardness, and we shall find people saying: 'Thank God for Khrushchev' in one breath and attacking China in the next. And after China it would be Russia's turn. There is no substitute for revolutionary politics in the fight for peace.

EC, Socialist Labour League.

ANTI-H-BOMB CAMPAIGN

FYLINGDALES DEMONSTRATION SPELLS TROUBLE FOR LABOUR'S RIGHT WING

By G. Gale

At 10 o'clock last Sunday morning, a carload of sniggering policemen led a column of 38 marchers past the Fylingdales early-warning station in East Yorkshire. Four hours later the sneers were wiped away as the demonstrators—now over a thousand strong—marched through Scarborough with banners flying.

Contingents from Hull, Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford and Doncaster, representing not only CND branches but trade unions and Labour Parties, demonstrated their opposition to the government's nuclear policies. At the same time they showed how the opposition to Gaitskellism is growing in the Labour movement, for this demonstration took place on the eve of the Miners' and Railwaymen's Conferences, where Right wingers will try to manoeuvre the block vote behind the Gaitskell-Brown 'Defence Policy'. It was also a foretaste of the tremendous anti-bomb demonstration that will greet Gaitskell when he arrives at Scarborough for the Labour Party Conference in October.

Youth on the march

Once again, the majority of marchers were young people, many of them members of Labour Party Young Socialist branches and University Labour Societies. This will bring no joy to the barren heart of Labour officialdom.

Take, for instance, the Leeds Labour Party, the leaders of which are noted for their almost sub-human ability to avoid any kind of activity whatsoever. Surprised by a decision of the Leeds City Labour Party to support the march, harassed officials had to explain to party members who called to pick up the banner, that they did not possess such a thing, as the public were 'apathetic' to marches. When informed of the huge anti-bomb marches that have been taking place for years, one exasperated official is said to have burst out: 'Yes, but they don't march behind our policy'.

Despite the unpreparedness of these political fossils, however, there was an encouraging increase in political banners on this march. Moreover, the 'Summit Talks Now' slogans, so prominent at Aldermaston, were not in

evidence this time. Perhaps they had been left behind in Paris. Instead, a growing awareness of the need for a real break with capitalist militarism, rather than a reliance on the goodwill of capitalist statesmen, was reflected in such banners as 'Get Out of NATO, Pronto!'

Members of the Socialist Labour League found a good response to their literature. Two hundred copies of 'CND and Politics' were sold, as well as 60 Newsletters and a number of Labour Reviews.

INDUSTRY

LOTS ROAD POWER STRIKE BRINGS VICTORY

By Our Industrial Correspondent

The strike of maintenance engineers at London Transport Executive's three power stations ended in victory this week. The three-week strike gained increases from 28s. to 35s. a week for all the day-work staff at Lots Road, Greenwich and Neasden power stations.

In a statement to The Newsletter Bro. Beasleigh, secretary of the stewards' committee at Lots Road, where the strike began, and Bro. Wallace, chairman and convenor, said: 'The solidarity of the strike has achieved a victory that we couldn't get with eighteen months' negotiations. On the basis of our victory, the shift workers at the three LTE stations are holding meetings to press a demand for similar increases.'

One hundred and twenty thousand manual workers in the electricity supply industry whose claim was presented to the wages tribunal on Wednesday will take heart from this victory in the LTE's power stations.

DOCKERS REFUSED NATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR WIVES AND FAMILIES

By Peter Kerrigan

Following their nine-day strike, thousands of Liverpool dockers with earnings of less than a pound were turned away empty-handed from the offices of the National Assistance Board on Thursday of last week.

They were told by the management that a loan had been made available ('generously' the Tory press later implied) by the National Dock Labour Board.

The dockers saw this 'generous' loan as another classical piece of skulduggery to intimidate workers, based on the hope that their incurring debt would act as a deterrent to militant action by them in the future.

Dock-gate meetings were held at the north end of Liverpool docks, where the feeling was high.

A telegram was sent to Bootle Labour MP Simon Mahon, asking him to intervene.

On Friday, Simon Mahon addressed a meeting in Nelson Street. His intervention proved to be of little assistance, but he did admit it was 'morally wrong for any worker to mortgage his future wage packet.'

At the Canada dock, however, the arrival of that outstanding parliamentarian, Mrs. Bessie Braddock, created quite a sensation.

From her there was no expression of sympathy for the men whatsoever. She upbraided them over her microphone. She called them fools, asked them to be 'British' and declared they were being led by a gang of 'Communists'.

To end her tirade, she said one of the members of the strike committee had drawn £37 that week.

Hundreds of angry dockers approached her limousine uttering adjectives not to be heard by a lady.

'I'm going. I'm going', she cried, and with a total disregard to the men in front of her car she pressed the accelerator and shot quickly away.

One old militant docker (perhaps thinking of the Japanese students and workers) declared that a few thousand men outside the offices of the Assistance Board would have got more successful results.

The common opinion was that there should be no return to work in the future if this form of victimization was imposed.

MIDLANDS BACK CLAUSE FOUR CAMPAIGN

By Our Political Correspondent

A conference to discuss the launching of a Midlands campaign in defence of Clause Four is being held in Birmingham on July 17.

The call for this conference has been made by Aston Constituency Labour Party, which has invited all organizations opposing any amendments to Clause Four to

send delegates to the conference. Although circulars have only just appeared in the trade union and Labour Party local organizations, the response to this call has been immediate. This expresses the strong rank-and-file feeling against the Right wing's attempt to strangle socialism within the Labour Party. Four constituency Labour Parties, one ward party, AEU branches, and the Birmingham and Coventry Victory for Socialism groups have already elected delegates. Birmingham VFS decided to send a letter to Aston CLP giving it full backing. In addition members passed a resolution supporting the London VFS Executive in its demand for Gaitskell to go.

Clause Four is not something abstract in the Midlands. The continued struggles within the motor industry, omens of fiercer mass struggles in the future, because of the cut-throat competition between the big motor combines, pose more and more sharply the question: 'Who shall own and control this important industry?' Similarly, this problem is raised with regard to the aircraft firms in Coventry, and the machine tool industry.

The call by Aston Labour Party is a progressive step. It will draw together Left-wing socialists from the Labour Parties and trade union militants, and can have an important bearing on the future of the Left wing.

Constant Reader | Peace Parade

THE new project of the Soviet bureaucracy, acting through Ilya Ehrenburg, to convene a 'non-official' world conference for disarmament, at which the Stalinists and their fellow-travellers will sit down with pacifist notables like Bertrand Russell and Canon Collins, recalls the affair of the Amsterdam Anti-War Congress in the summer of 1932. It was first and foremost for protesting about this that the original British Left Oppositionists ('Trotskyists') were expelled from the Communist Party.

From 1927 onward the Soviet Government had participated in the official 'preparatory commission' for the world disarmament conference, and then in the conference itself, its commissar Litvinov becoming famous for his speeches in favour of peace. In spite of all this, however, at the end of 1931 Japanese imperialism began its conquest of Manchuria and North China, and increasingly threatened the eastern frontiers of the Soviet Union—and the other imperialist powers made it all too plain that they would be far from displeased if war were to break out between Japan and the USSR.

The Trotskyists in this period, functioning as an opposition within the Communist Parties, called for a campaign to achieve a united front of all the workers' parties, in each country separately to defeat the threat of fascism, and on the world scale to bar the road to imperialist war. This was rejected by the Stalinists with ultra-left arguments about 'not shaking hands with the murderers of Rosa Luxemburg', which in effect left the Social-Democratic workers in mental captivity to their traitor leaders. Then suddenly the Comintern, which refused to approach the other workers' parties and the trade unions connected with them, appeared as the promoter of a world congress in which the leading role was assigned to various pacifists, some worthy and some not so worthy, from the world of science and the arts, such as the writer Romain Rolland. This was a supreme evasion of the real need of the moment, and held the danger of fostering dangerous illusions about how to defend the Soviet Union and prevent imperialist war.

The Amsterdam Anti-War Congress made newspaper headlines for a little while, but the real social forces continued to unfold regardless of the speeches and manifestos at this masquerade. Japan went on absorbing China and massing armies on the Siberian border, and Hitler came to power in Germany. Within 18 months of the dispersal of the Amsterdam gathering it ceased to be mentioned in Stalinist propaganda, its utter bankruptcy having become too obvious and moves to replace the flirtation with French pacifists by an intrigue with the French general staff were already under way.

So it was, and so it will be. The social forces that matter decisively in the capitalist world are, on the one hand, the imperialist powers, and on the other, the working-class movement. In the last analysis Soviet diplomacy must choose between these two, whatever time-wasting and confusion-creating rambles it may undertake among the pacifists in its efforts to find a third path after being rebuffed by the imperialists. Insofar as the working-class movement in the capitalist world displays strength, the workers of the Soviet Union will be helped to see where the real allies of their country in its struggle against imperialist war are to be found—and so to recognize the Soviet bureaucracy as the worst enemy of the defence of the Soviet Union.

Weapons Against World Capital

Discussing recently with a pacifist friend whether the Soviet Union ought to scrap its nuclear weapons unilaterally, I turned up some notes on the development of poison gas research in the Soviet Union in the 1920s. In the inter-war period 'chemical warfare' played a similar part in propaganda against war to that which atom and H-bombs play today.

Writing in the Saturday Evening Post of May 26, 1934, on 'The Red Army', Trotsky mentioned that it was 'no secret that the Soviet Government—incidentally together with the governments of the whole world—did not bank for a moment upon the reiterated intentions to outlaw chemical warfare. Ever since 1921 the first Soviet labora-

ANEURIN BEVAN

By G. HEALY

The death of Aneurin Bevan marks the passing of a man whom history may well record as the last of the genuine Social Democrats. Bevan passionately believed in the parliamentary road to socialism. Here was his weakness as a working-class leader.

To Bevan the working class were a means of mass pressure for generating impulses of change favourable to this or that parliamentary political requirement. To the Marxists, the working class, consciously led by its revolutionary party, is itself the only real vehicle for social change.

It was this contradiction in Bevan's life which constantly shattered the illusions of Left wingers attracted to his political struggles. He was capable of arousing their hopes to the highest pitch on one day and dashing them to the ground the next.

Every time Bevan was required to call upon the working class to play its role in the transformation of society, he ran away. He was mortally frightened that the struggle of the class would get out of hand and upset his conceptions of the parliamentary road to power.

It would be meaningless for Marxists to deny the importance of parliamentary activity in a country with as long a history of capitalist democracy as Britain. Moreover, the flexibility of the ruling class in its manipulations of the state and Parliament allowed Bevan scope for his undoubted oratorical talents which might well have earned him long years in jail in some other European countries.

Aneurin Bevan's talents assumed a greatness that can find few parallels (apart from the historic days of the

Russian revolution) when they became a tribune for the real grievances of the working class. It was on occasions such as this that the ruling class feared Bevan.

He had the ability to hold tens of thousands of people spellbound, especially when he described the wicked injustices of the capitalist system and the little men who did its dirty work. His inside knowledge of the system and its inherent weaknesses made him a man to be feared in ruling-class circles. Until the day he died they were never quite sure of where they stood with Bevan. They were always frightened lest the forces he was capable of unleashing got out of hand.

His weakness lay in the fact that whilst he was capable of arousing great emotional feelings, he was always frightened by the real power of the working class to change society. Long years in Parliament had slowly but steadily undermined his relations with the class. He saw Parliament not as an instrument of the capitalist state, but as a means of changing society. It was here that he differed fundamentally from the Marxists.

The limitations of Parliament were acknowledged by The Times in its editorial on his death. 'There have been plenty of British administrations', wrote The Times, 'led by men without coherent political ideas.' True enough. Real power has never rested in Parliament but behind the scenes in the hands of the men of finance and property.

History is more and more verifying Marxism and rejecting the outworn social-democratic conceptions so sincerely held by Aneurin Bevan.

tories producing poison gases and other substances have functioned systematically upon the basis of an ever more extensive international information and with the assistance of qualified specialists. This work has never been halted for a single day.'

Trotsky knew a lot about this matter through having himself been Commissar for War between 1918 and 1925. When, at one of the notorious Moscow trials, an attempt was made to represent the secret collaboration between the Red Army and the German Army (which began in 1921 and continued until 1933) as a private conspiracy by Trotsky and his friends for factional purposes, Trotsky pointed out that it had been a decision approved by Lenin himself. In the New York Times of March 5, 1938, he wrote: 'Vitaly concerned to improve military technique, we could expect then co-operation only from Germany. At the same time the Reichswehr, deprived by the Versailles treaty of opportunities for development, especially in the fields of heavy artillery, aviation and chemical warfare, naturally aimed to make use of the Soviet military industry as a test field.' A number of German officers came to Russia—among them, by the way, there appears to have been a certain Speidel—and, 'in turn, several representatives of the Red Army visited Germany, where they became acquainted with the Reichswehr and with those German military "secrets" which were graciously shown them.'

An interesting glimpse of this phase of Soviet military history is given in the autobiography of the scientist V. N. Ipatiev, 'The Life of a Chemist' (1946).

More Anti-Humbug

The Daily Worker follows up its tears for Harry Pollitt with greetings to Eva Reckitt on her 70th birthday. In the interests of clean living, let us temper any senti-

mentality over these two by recalling the case of Rose Cohen.

Rose was a devoted worker for the Communist Party and its associated organizations through many years, during which Pollitt and Eva Reckitt (who founded Collet's Bookshops) were among her closest friends. She went to Russia to work, married and settled down there. In 1938 it was announced that she had been arrested for 'counter-revolutionary activity' and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. Among those who conspicuously refrained from helping in the campaign to save her were Harry Pollitt and Eva Reckitt.

Let me quote, from the account of his own efforts in this affair given by Eva's brother, Maurice Reckitt, in his book 'As It Happened' (1941), what he says about the reaction of some of Rose Cohen's erstwhile comrades when asked to do something to help her in her ghastly predicament: 'A few offered the lame pretext that it would be better for Rose if everyone kept silence; others added the barefaced assertion that Soviet justice could in any case be relied on (in fact Rose was kept in custody for more than a year before being permitted the privilege of sampling it). Others, again, still more scandalously asserted that no individual's fate was of consequence if they came into conflict with the interests of the Soviet Union.'

This was, writes Reckitt, 'literally the most shocking experience I have ever undergone, and made an impression on me which will never be wiped out.' Unfortunately, he attributed the behaviour of those who let Rose Cohen down to the effects upon them of 'Communist ideology'—an example of how Stalinism serves to discredit the ideas which it distorts, and provides ready-made arguments 'against Communism'.

BRIAN PEARCE