

THE NEWSLETTER

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TORIES COVER UP FOR SPY FLIGHTS U.S. Brass Admits Provocation Against Soviets

By G. HEALY

MACMILLAN'S letter to Khrushchev is a propaganda stunt designed to cover up the latest preparations for war on the part of United States imperialism.

The letter was announced in the House of Commons on the same day that reports were reprinted from the U.S. News and World Report of an interview with General Thomas D. White, chief of staff of the United States Air Force. General White bluntly admitted that it is the policy of the U.S. air force to fly near enough to the Soviet Union 'to be provocative'.

This was necessary, he said, in order to keep Britain and the other allies 'in good heart'.

Macmillan's pious words about peace were uttered with full knowledge of what General White and the U.S. military brasshats are up to. That is why it was the action of a Tory hypocrite falsely posing as a peace-maker.

As Macmillan disclosed the contents of his letter to Khrushchev he was also aware that there is no provision for consultation with him or his government on the final decision as to how the war is to be launched. General White was asked a question: 'We can't wait for Congress to pass a resolution?' In a reply he said: 'No, we certainly can't.' The question was then asked: 'Who had to give the order?' And he replied: 'The President'. The Tory government was ignored.

It is necessary to say in the strongest possible way that it is not the Soviet Union who is today the aggressor in world affairs. It is Wall Street imperialism and its allies, which include the present Tory government and the Right wing of the Labour Party. There can be no sitting on the fence so far as this position is concerned. The Labour movement must be opposed to any war-like measures against the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China.

Such a decision does not in any way signify agreement with the power-politics diplomacy of Khrushchev. If the imperialists and Macmillan are able to create confusion about the real aims of the Soviet Union it is because Khrushchev is on the one hand shouting about using rockets and on the other talking about existing peacefully with the imperialists.

Rockets cannot save the Soviet Union. The real solution to this problem lies in the extension of the socialist revolution, especially to the imperialists' countries. In Britain this means active participation in the class struggle combined with the fight for a socialist policy within the Labour Party and the trade unions.

The more Khrushchev raves about rockets, the more he plays into the hands of the imperialists and discredits the struggle for socialism.

Of course, only naive pacifists would argue that the Soviet Union should not have arms to defend itself. But arms by themselves are not sufficient. What is necessary today is a return to the internationalism of Lenin which will place the defence of the Soviet Union within the framework of the world struggle for socialism.

Khrushchev and the Soviet bureaucracy cannot do this. They give verbal support to the struggle in the Congo while at the same time failing to recognize the FLN as the legitimate government-in-exile of the Algerian people.

This playing around with the freedom of peoples and the constant threat of the use of military weapons arises because the Soviet bureaucracy is itself frightened of the social revolution.

MAKE SURE OF ANTI-BOMB VICTORY AT SCARBOROUGH A VITAL DEMONSTRATION

One hundred delegates met at the Leeds Trades Hall on July 16 to plan one of the largest demonstrations against nuclear weapons and installations to be seen in northern England.

Representatives from the Leeds Trades Council, CND, trade union branches and peace organizations were agreed that this demonstration be held at Scarborough on the eve of the Labour Party conference. Many of the contributions to discussion made the point that there is a possibility that the conference will decide in favour of unilateral disarmament, despite the manoeuvres of the Right wing. A demonstration of the size envisaged by the Leeds meeting would help to make certain that this happens.

A suggestion that proscribed organizations should not carry their own banner was strongly opposed, but it was left to the members of CND to defeat this idea in their own organizations.

The conference resolved to use every means to make the demonstration a northern Aldermaston. A committee of representatives from the Yorkshire Federation of Trades Councils, the Cheshire Federation and possibly the Tyneside trades councils, as well as CND organizations will meet to organize the demonstration.

Every Labour Party, Young Socialist branch, trade union organization and CND group should join in this demonstration. A massive expression by the rank and file of the Labour movement in favour of unilateralism could be of powerful assistance to the Left at Scarborough.

THE NEWSLETTER

SATURDAY, JULY 23, 1960

186 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4
Telephone Macaulay 7029**UNITY IN ACTION BRINGS SUCCESS**

THE preparations for this year's conference of the Labour Party are now well under way. Resolutions have already been submitted by constituency parties and trade unions. Public discussion has taken place on Clause Four and on the unilateral abandonment of the H-bomb. The decision of the majority of the big trade unions has been to reject the policies of Gaitskell and the Right wing. Both in the trade unions and in the constituency parties the initiative is now with the Left.

The real significance of the rejection of Gaitskell's proposal to remove Clause Four is that it emphasizes the instinctive firm adherence to socialist principles which, despite the Right wing, still exert considerable influence inside the British Labour movement. The fight against Gaitskell and Clause Four was not purely a defence of an academic clause in a constitution which only a few members of the party have actually studied. It was a reaffirmation that socialism is the only solution to the problems of society.

A fight on Clause Four was therefore a fight for the extension of nationalization to all the basic industries.

The tens of thousands of people who are organized in the trade unions are themselves representative of larger groups of people whose only contact with politics is, perhaps, during elections. The vote against Gaitskell is therefore a repudiation of his whole policy, which is based upon the mistaken theory that there is a swing against socialist ideas. The defence of Clause Four is a massive reaffirmation of socialist theory.

How can the Left turn from a defensive strategy to the offensive? That is the key question. How can we go from defending Clause Four to implementing Clause Four? To answer this it is necessary to realize the forces which have come to the assistance of the active socialists in the defence of Clause Four. The great swing in the trade unions was the responsibility of rank-and-file members of the Labour Party as well as trade unionists in the Communist Party and members of the Socialist Labour League. There is today a great possibility that this unity in action can not only be maintained but greatly strengthened by a united movement which will see to it that the nationalization of the basic industries is part of the next election programme of the Labour Party.

Already one party, the Harrow Borough Labour Party, has set forth the list of industries to be nationalized as follows:

- (1) The engineering industry, based upon the Confederation plan.
- (2) Banks and insurance companies.
- (3) Building and building materials industries.
- (4) Road haulage industry.
- (5) Iron and steel industries.
- (6) The land.

This is entirely correct and consistent with the defence of Clause Four. Either we go forward to the offensive on policy or Gaitskell can still win a victory.

The Socialist Labour League is prepared to unite

with all those in the Labour Party, in the trade unions and in the Communist Party who want to fight now for the implementation of Clause Four. We include in this appeal, members of the Communist Party, even though we are opposed to the policy of their leadership, just as we are opposed to the policy of the leaders of the Labour Party, on many questions. Nevertheless, unity in action has already brought our forces together. Communist Party members, active in trade unions, have an important role in helping to bring the unions into action around Clause Four policy.

On the other hand, the struggle to lift the bans and proscriptions must apply equally to the Communist Party and to the Socialist Labour League. It is perfectly clear that the Labour movement has arrived at a stage where a great new advance in its thinking can only be made when all the bureaucratic stop-gaps are removed.

The success of the Clause Four campaign underlines once again the success of unity in action.

Midlands Clause Four Campaign Committee Launched

By H. FINCH

Forty-five delegates and visitors decided unanimously to form a Midlands Clause Four committee at the Birmingham July 17 conference, called by Aston Constituency Labour Party. Delegates from 19 organizations and visitors from 11 others were present; 7 AEU, 1 ETU, 4 constituency Labour Parties, 5 Ward Labour Parties and 2 Victory for Socialism branches were represented by delegates. Representatives from Nottingham and Derby also attended.

Fred White, Aston CLP secretary, told the conference that his party unanimously decided to affiliate to the London Clause Four committee and felt that they must themselves campaign actively in the Midlands, hence this conference which he hoped would form a committee.

Dealing with the Labour Party crisis, he condemned the Gaitskell leadership as being responsible for this crisis on policy. 'The leadership of the Labour Party has now been defeated on its addendum to Clause Four', he added. 'But this does not mean that they will go forward to a campaign for socialism.' Commenting on the sackings at Mulliners in Birmingham, he warned that this could be the pattern unless a real fight was conducted leading to the nationalization of the motor industry. He concluded by stating: 'Now the fight is to implement Clause Four—that means the nationalization of all the basic industries which we have listed in the resolutions before you.'

Councillor Ron Spurway, secretary of the London Clause Four Committee, told the meeting that since the formation of this committee, 76 different organizations had affiliated to it. They have had affiliations from as far afield as Liverpool and Scotland.

The discussion that followed was lively and showed an awareness by the delegates that the fight to implement Clause Four had just begun—Gaitskell's climb-down on his addendum being 'only the first round'—in the words of one delegate.

Councillor Bill Horrocks, railwayman and Aston CLP delegate said: 'In effect we are discussing the whole future of the Labour Party. I'm pleased that this Clause Four committee is a committee of action. The NEC has only

partly withdrawn its objectives. Their proposed report to Conference on the addendum must be defeated.'

'It is obvious that in 1945 we had people at the top of the party who didn't really believe in nationalization. We must now campaign throughout the Ward and Constituency Labour Parties and the trade unions. We know we will be called Communist, Trotskyist or what you like, but we must do it.'

Jack Harris, Birmingham 4th AEU secretary and delegate followed: 'It is time for us to go on the attack—not just the defence of Clause Four.' He warned: 'We must watch that there is no last minute switch of union votes at the Labour Party conference. It's happened before. This Clause Four committee must be extended throughout the breadth and length of the country. We must help other areas to set up committees and make this a national, broad rank-and-file movement.'

Criticism of the lack of co-operation given to the Clause Four campaign by the Executive Committee of Victory for

Socialism was expressed by a few delegates and Dick Johnson, convenor of Massey-Ferguson, Coventry, and also a Coventry VFS delegate, drew support from all when he said: 'VFS leaders' lack of co-operation has disturbed me. I think we in Coventry and the comrades in the Birmingham VFS should, at their next meetings, table resolutions to go to the VFS executive, asking them to say where they stand on this Clause Four campaign.'

A resolution calling on this Clause Four conference to go on record against all bans and proscriptions within the Labour Party was carried alongside the main resolution which called for a fight to get the Labour Party to adopt a programme of nationalization of all basic industries.

A committee representing Birmingham and Coventry, with seats left for Nottingham and Derby, was elected. It was decided to launch an East and West Midlands campaign leading to an all-Midlands nationalization conference in mid-September.

The Corfield Report & the Present Situation in Kenya

(4) A Policy for the People of Kenya

By JAMES BAKER AND MASINDE MOTO

THE forebodings we expressed in the preceding article have quickly become facts. During last week, acting under the Public Security Ordinance, the Government of Kenya arrested 52 people, including three women. They are not to be charged but are to be held without trial for an indefinite period. They are to be exiled to a remote and barren island off the North Kenya coast, many hundreds of miles away from their homes in the Central Highlands. They will not be allowed to leave this spot, there is no work for them to do there, and there is no means of their earning any money. Each detainee is to receive the magnificent sum of 30s. a week; with this they must feed, house and clothe themselves and also the families they have left behind.

The Government alleges that these are all former Mau Mau converts, that they had been administering oaths, or that they had been collecting funds for 'unlawful' purposes. But in spite of the wide legal powers they possess under the Ordinance it is clear that there is no real evidence available, otherwise the Government would put them on trial. Other alleged law breakers have received sentences of up to three years imprisonment for similar offences. Night curfews have been imposed on a number of villages because, in the words of the District Commissioner, their inhabitants have 'a truculent and non-co-operative attitude'. What he means, of course, is that there are no stool pigeons among them and they refused to give false evidence.

Even before these arrests there were 530 people in jail, some of whom had been in detention for up to eight years. This represents a move on the part of the settlers, and of their 'tools' in the Kenya Government, to intimidate leaders of the National Movement. It is difficult to understand how the Europeans in Kenya can be so blind to what is happening around them. The Minister for Internal Security, a certain Mr. Anthony Swann, evidently regards his responsibilities as great 'sport'; for him arresting Africans is rather like potting pheasants. They had 'rather a mixed bag in Nairobi', he told reporters, in other areas they had netted unemployed as well as farm-workers

and peasants. Mr. Swann had better enjoy his 'sport' while he can, there may not be much more of it; one day he may find himself among the hunted.

The Kenya Chief Secretary maintained that these arrests were necessary because of the recent spread of 'subversive' activity; this was not due, however, to any real 'grievances', but was a kind of infection to which the Kikuyu were particularly prone. The Kenya Government was even able to put up three stooge African Ministers to express support for the detentions. But James Oichuru, Tom Mboya, President and Secretary of the Kenya African National Union, the most important organization representing workers and peasants in Kenya, condemned the Government's action. This was an attempt, they said, to delay the holding of elections, which would give Africans their first majority in the Legislative Council. KANU expects to win most of the seats, although there is a very limited franchise.

The 'Emergency' again

The re-introduction of 'Emergency' measures is a clear victory for the settlers. Sir Ferdinand Cavendish-Bentinck, former Speaker of the Kenya Legislative Council, has been in London for the past fortnight with a large delegation of settlers. So far they have not even bothered to talk directly to Macleod, but have been going behind his back, seeking support from business circles in the City. Recent developments in the Congo have lent additional support to their arguments. Firm measures are necessary, they say, to prevent 'violence and intimidation'. What they mean is that they want a free hand to put back the clock in Kenya by a campaign of violence and intimidation against the workers and peasants.

It is even possible that they may have some temporary success. But the tide is running too strongly for any temporary barriers to withstand it. The National Democratic Revolution which is engulfing Africa will finally be transformed into the Socialist Revolution. The peoples of Africa will 'leap' over bourgeois democracy to a higher form, that of proletarian democracy, or communism. Or

if this does not occur the present struggles for national liberation will be diverted and will not produce the results which the oppressed peoples expect. They will find themselves the victims of new forms of exploitation.

A policy for the national revolution in Kenya

There are clear implications for the people of Kenya in the military revolt and the mass flight of the Belgians from the Congo. Does this mean that the choice lies between either so-called 'tribalism', a return to a purely subsistence economy, or close co-operation with European capitalism? We do not think so.

The peoples of the Congo and of Kenya, as of other parts of Africa, face problems of malnutrition, disease, illiteracy and technical backwardness. How are these to be overcome? Not through piecemeal reform, but through the struggle for political power. Who is to govern whom? This is the central problem for the peoples of Africa as it is for peoples in other parts of the world.

In Kenya, as in other colonial countries, the people are engaged in a desperate struggle on three fronts simultaneously: for national liberation, for the attainment of full democratic rights and for control of the productive forces of society. They do so in order to be able to live as free and equal individuals, enjoying the fruits of their labour and developing their own cultures.

Nevertheless, they form a part of the world-wide system we know as capitalist society; this society has deeply-based class antagonisms. There are only two possible answers to the question of who is to govern whom. Either the **dictatorship of the bourgeoisie** must continue in its open form we call colonialism (this becoming more difficult), or it will survive in a disguised form through the installation of nationalist leaders in local positions of open authority, while the big international financial oligarchies continue to rule from behind the scenes. This is the solution adopted in Ghana, Nigeria, and the former French territories.

The second answer is that the **dictatorship of the proletariat** must be established. This may take very many different forms in different areas. The political parties and groupings through which this operates will not be the same in Kenya, Tanganyika or in Nyasaland. But this is the only means by which the national democratic revolution can in fact be carried through in such countries.

The development of the national revolution in Kenya

In the preceding articles we have tried to set out some of the particular characteristics of Kenya's economic and political development. In order to define the tasks and activities which must be undertaken in order to influence and lead the mass of the people much more detailed knowledge than either of us possesses of the present situation would be required. Here we must restrict ourselves to pointing out some of the ways in which the bourgeoisie is attempting to divert the national movement from its main objectives.

The apparent acceptance by the main parties and groupings representing the workers and peasants of the Lancaster House Constitution has led to a concentration on purely 'constitutional' activities. The militancy of the organized workers in the trade unions has received no adequate leadership, and the campaigns for the release of Kenyatta do not appear to have been pressed home. The campaign among the peasants for the solution of the agrarian problem has not been developed. The Government has been enabled to seize the initiative and to frag-

ment the national movement.

The acceptance of ministerial office by African political leaders before the granting of full voting rights was a mistake. The failure of the Kenya African National Union to expand so as to embrace the full range of the national groupings which make up the peoples of Kenya, has enabled a rival grouping to be established called the Kenya African Democratic Union. The Government has been successful, too, in winning the support of the more backward groupings, for a campaign of 'inter-tribal' rivalry. Lacking militant leadership with a broad political perspective some of the workers have tended to become disillusioned, and to have engaged in some conspiratorial activity, stimulated, no doubt, by **agent provocateurs**.

Because they lacked an adequate agrarian programme the Government has been able to push through a scheme for land consolidation in the Kikuyu areas which has led to the appearance of a few rich farmers with cars, and increased the number of unemployed workers in Nairobi.

Some of the inexperienced African politicians have begun to think of themselves as statesmen who can solve problems by negotiation. They have been attracted, therefore, by the scheme for a Federation of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika put forward by the bourgeois nationalist leader, Julius Nyerere, in Tanganyika.

For all of these reasons the National Movement has surrendered its initiative to the Government.

The problem of leadership

All of these features of the national struggle in Kenya are in part a consequence of the small size and relative inexperience of the working class in Kenya. They are the result, too, of the lack of a working-class party equipped with Marxist theory to lead the movement. Bold revolutionary measures are needed. The struggle for the national liberation and democratic rights of the people of Kenya will be decided by the revolutionary struggle for power within the country. It will be decided, too, by the co-operation which the working class and peasants in Kenya receive from the working class in Europe, America and the Soviet Union.

This concludes our present articles on the problems of Kenya. We hope to take up similar questions with regard to another area in a short time.

RENTS

PAY OR GET OUT Says Grabbing London Landlord By Bill Boakes

Working-class families living in a 114-year-old block of slum flats in London are the latest to feel the effects of the Tory Rent Act.

The landlord of St. George's Buildings, Southwark, Mr. Benedikt, sole director of 22 companies, is raising the rents of 27 de-controlled flats by between 75 per cent. and 125 per cent.

St. George's Buildings, as one tenant remarked to me, 'looks like a gaol'. Bricks blackened by a century of London grime, paint peeling from doors and windows and sunlight blotted out by tall surrounding buildings, they are hardly fit for human beings.

Yet for a tiny two-roomed flat some tenants must now pay rents of £2 a week or more, exclusive of rates. In one case this means an increase of 25s. per week.

Some tenants have stubbornly refused to pay the extra rent, but others, haunted by fears of eviction and the London housing shortage, have paid up under protest. With the average wage of tenants under £10 a week none of them can afford it.

The methods Mr. Benedikt has employed to try to extort the extra rent are extremely enlightening. A member of the tenants' committee told me that in the case of people who have already paid the increase, the landlord has attempted to bribe them with a refund of the first week's increase if they can persuade their fellow tenants to give in. Another committee member revealed that where tenants are refusing to give in, he is threatening to increase their rents by a further 10s next week. Whatever happens, those who won't pay up have been told by the landlord's agent that unless he gets the extra money they must get out.

East End resists

These Southwark tenants are not the only impending victims of the unscrupulous Mr. Benedikt. Over 30 tenants living at his 80-years-old Mansford Street Buildings, Bethnal Green, have received similar notices of increase. Here he has met with stiff opposition. All the affected tenants have refused to hand over the increases and they are receiving backing from their fellow-tenants living in rent-controlled flats.

The newly-formed tenants' committee at St. George's Buildings is making a determined effort to organize resistance but it is clear that they will have to join forces with the tenants in Bethnal Green if concessions are to be won.

A useful form of joint action would be a protest march by St. George's and Mansford Street tenants to the home of Mr. Benedikt.

It is also vitally important that the tenants take their struggle into their local Labour Parties and trade union branches and demand that those bodies support them in their fight.

This is particularly necessary in Southwark, where their appeal to Labour MP Mr. Gunter for support has had little response.

The lesson for the London Labour movement is obvious. If Mr. Benedikt is allowed to get away with these rent increases other landlords with decontrolled property will see the way clear to boost their own bank balances still further at the expense of their tenants.

INDUSTRY

NOTTINGHAM MINERS STRIKE

By Our Industrial Correspondent

Grievances about pay, bad working conditions and lack of opportunity for upgrading sparked off a strike of 50 young miners at Calverton pit, Nottinghamshire, last week. This is the second time during the last six months that such a stoppage has occurred. The last time, the strikers were given promises that their complaints would be the subject of negotiations if they went back, but none of the complaints were met and some of the lads were victimized.

The strikers were addressed by Les Ellis, Notts Area NUM official; one-time militant and now a prominent member of the Communist Party. He had been foolhardy

himself, he said, but now his job was to negotiate with the management.

'Get back to work and let the officials do the job', was his advice. The advice was rejected, the experience of six months ago was too fresh for such a line to receive support. The young miners voted to stay out on strike until the following Monday, despite the fact that last week was 'Bull Week' in preparation for the last pay day before the holidays.

One young miner, Graham Newstead, told me that his wage averaged £6 per week. His job was on material shifting which was often heavy and wet and gave him no chance of upgrading to other better-paid work. Ivan Wilson said that he was a belt driver and was in fact driving a 'Transfer' belt which he had not been trained to operate.

I was also told about a young miner of 16 who had been given the job of driving a belt although according to the regulations no miner under 18 could be instructed to do such a job. He had been injured on this job and **it was only then that the matter of this contravention of the mining regulations was taken up**

The young miners have elected a three-man negotiating committee to take up their grievances within the union. Their object is to fight for support from other miners and from other pits.

COVENTRY MOTOR WORKERS DISCUSS ACTION ON WAGE RATES

By B. Green

'We must organize now to defend our rates and conditions in the Midlands.' This was the main theme of a meeting in Coventry last week by a group of trade unionists, mainly active shop stewards in engineering factories.

The meeting was discussing the expansion of motor firms to other areas. In particular Scotland and the Merseyside, where it is known that trade union officials have signed agreements with managements of the motor firms (in some cases before the factories have been built!), that will allow the firms to fix wages and conditions at the level already established in the district.

Bro. Higgs, an AEU shop steward, said there was a monopolization of power by the big union bureaucracies and that it was necessary to build up committees who would expose these leaders, and fight for the car industries in the new areas to be established at rates comparable to those existing in the Midlands. It was necessary to campaign for united action and take the struggle into the Labour Party and Trades Council, for this matter was a political question.

Another shop steward, Bro. Cusick, emphasized the urgency of the matter and thought that steps should be taken immediately. To go through the machinery would involve delay and it was necessary to act unofficially.

It was generally felt that both official and unofficial action was required as the history of previous forms of protest and demands for action to the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, had usually resulted in it being delayed and finally 'lost'.

It was agreed that the establishment of a committee, to organize the fight, was desirable and that a further meeting should be called to form it when a broader contact with a larger number of militant workers had been made.

The meeting resolved that those present should cam-

paign in their unions for demands to be sent to the Confederation to call a meeting of all shop stewards in the city to discuss these agreements made with the employers and the implications of decentralization in the motor industry.

A WARNING TO MOTOR WORKERS

By Alex McClarty

The aim of the motor car industrialists, in common with the capitalists in general, is to cheapen production costs in face of growing competition in the world market.

In the nerve centre of the industry, the Midlands, they have been unable to hold back the workers in their struggle to improve rates because of the confidence of the workers based upon a labour scarcity.

The tactics of this section of big business is therefore to shift some of the production elsewhere, not to alleviate the unemployment position, but to establish cheaper rates in the new areas, create some unemployment in the Midlands and then bring the standards of the Midlands workers down.

The action of the trade union officials in agreeing to cheaper rates is, therefore, a gross betrayal of the working class and can only encourage the employers.

What is not so well-known is the fact that one of the signatories to a vicious document signed with the Rootes group in Paisley, which will allow Rootes to engage workers at £4 or £5 a week less than the Midland workers, is a Communist Party AEU official.

All those in the Communist Party, and there are many, who have an ounce of socialism in them will immediately repudiate this reactionary document and should, moreover, demand a full-scale discussion in their party on this matter. For the action of this individual official is fully supported by all the leading committees of the Communist Party.

A militant trade union official who acknowledges as his prime belief responsibility and accountability to the workers' movement would have not only refused to sign this iniquitous document, but would have gone out of his way to warn the workers by alerting the shop stewards' movement in his area. Such a refusal (even assuming he was sacked by Carron) would have done more to expose the secret tricks of the employers and the Right wing and to arouse the wrath of the rank and file than all the militant resolutions in the world.

The Paisley workers must openly refuse to obey the signatories of this document and demand the same rate as the Midland workers.

THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

Commemoration meeting



on the 20th anniversary
of the assassination of
Leon Trotsky

at 7p.m. on Friday 19th August 1960

York Room, Caxton Hall, Victoria Street

London, S.W.1

Admission 6d.

Constant Reader | African Mutiny

ROGER CASEMENT first became widely-known through the report which he published in 1904, when British consul at Boma, on Belgian ill-treatment of the Congolese natives in connection with forced labour. The thoroughness of Casement's exposure of the Belgian atrocities led to his being assigned to carry out a similar investigation in Peru a few years later, for which he received a knighthood. (For turning his attention to oppression nearer home he received still later, as is well known, a death sentence.)

The harsh tradition of Belgian rule in the Congo supplies the background to the violence of recent events in that country, and it is worth recalling what Marx wrote for the New York Tribune when the London papers were full of fury over the atrocities of the Indian Mutiny of 1857:

'The outrages committed by the revolted sepoys in India are indeed appalling, hideous, ineffable—such as one is prepared to meet only in wars of insurrection, of nationalities, of races, and above all of religion; in one word, such as respectable England used to applaud when perpetrated by the Vendéans on the "Blues" (French revolutionaries), by the Spanish guerrillas on the infidel Frenchmen (during the Peninsula War), by Serbians on their German and Hungarian neighbours, by Croats on

Viennese rebels (in 1848-49), by Cavaignac's Garde Mobile or Bonaparte's Decembrists on the sons and daughters of proletarian France. However infamous the conduct of the sepoys, it is only the reflex, in a concentrated form, of England's own conduct in India, not only during the epoch of the foundation of her Eastern Empire, but even during the last ten years of a long-settled rule. To characterize that rule, it suffices to say that torture formed an organic institution of its financial policy. There is something in human history like retribution; and it is a rule of historical retribution that its instrument be forged not by the offended, but by the offender himself.

'The first blow dealt to the French monarchy proceeded from the nobility, not from the peasants. The Indian revolt does not commence with the ryots (peasants), tortured, dishonoured and stripped naked by the British, but with the sepoys, clad, fed, petted, fatted and pampered by them. . . .

Belgian Imperialism and Russia

Pre-revolutionary Russia had some of the features of a semi-colonial country; in particular, foreign capital played a big role in its industries. The Russian workers' struggle brought them directly up against world capital. It was a French factory-owner who by protesting to the Tsar put a stop to police-chief Zubatov's experiments in

'controlled' trade unionism—no sort of trade unionism at all should be tolerated in Russia! It was in the British-owned Lena goldfields that the shooting of strikers took place in 1912 which aroused such a wave of fury throughout Russia.

Alongside the British and French investors, Belgians were prominent, especially in the metal industry. After the suppression of the Kronstadt mutiny, Trotsky wrote a sarcastic article in Pravda (March 23, 1921) commenting on the rise in 'Russian' shares which had taken place on the Brussels stock-exchange during the course of that struggle. The Belgian exploiters had glimpsed an opportunity to ride back into possession of their property in Russia on the shoulders of the mutineers.

Profiteer Parasites on Nationalization

The attempt of Pye, the Cambridge television and electronics group, to break into the monopoly of the Telecommunication and Engineering Manufacturing Association, dominated by Lord Chandos (better known to the older generation as Oliver Lyttelton, ultra-Tory MP), has again focused attention on the way the nationalized industries are milked by private concerns through the profits they make when supplying equipment to these industries.

And it has not escaped notice, either, that the managing directors of TEMA and of Pye Telecommunications are both former Post Office officials. When retired officers of the armed services proceed from jobs in the Admiralty, War Office or Air Ministry to directorships in armament firms, cynics always speculate as to whether these officers' connections with the firms in question really began only at the moment they left the official jobs where they had influence on the placing of contracts. It seems unfair that similarly-placed civilians are not more often subject to such sordid speculations!

My father worked in a naval dockyard and was familiar with the gossip that always arises when such moves from Whitehall to the City take place. When a high-ranking naval officer objected to the 'system', that was definitely news. In 1919, the fact that Admiral of the Fleet Lord Wester Wemyss, First Sea Lord, was passed over in the war honours list occasioned a lot of knowing comment in naval circles; but it was only in 1935, when Wemyss's widow published a 'Life and Letters' of her husband that the general public learnt what his great offence had been. Apparently he had grown sick of the log-rolling for contracts that he had seen so much of at the Admiralty and had submitted a memorandum to the Cabinet advocating . . . the nationalization of the armaments industry.

Incidentally, the demand to nationalize the manufacture of all the means of waging war provides today an obvious link between the fight to implement Clause Four and the fight to equip the Labour Party with a real socialist policy on defence; two struggles which the Right will try to separate and even counterpose one to the other.

Comparative Co-efficients

John Archer has pointed out to me that there is at least one other title to be added to the 'little books' through which Trotsky became well-known among thinking Left-wingers in Britain in the 1920s, namely, 'Towards Socialism or Capitalism?', published here in 1926.

This was the book in which Trotsky advanced the key idea that the triumph of socialism could not be assessed merely by crude output figures, important as those were: 'The economic superiority of bourgeois states lies in the

fact that so far capitalism produces cheaper goods than socialism, and of a better quality.' The Soviet consumer buying a pair of Soviet boots would inevitably think: 'Before 1917 a pair of boots cost so many roubles and lasted so many months', and by that standard he would judge his new boots. And though the passage of time was steadily reducing the number of those whose memories went back to pre-revolutionary years, the number of those possessing either first-hand or second-hand knowledge of conditions in the outside, capitalist world was also increasing, and they would make similar comparisons—with 'abroad'.

The basic type of lie in Stalinist Russia, that great realm of lies, was the lie about the quantity, quality and price of Soviet-produced goods in comparison with foreign goods. For political reasons it was necessary for the bureaucracy to exaggerate the real achievements and conceal the no-less-real failures and setbacks in the economic sphere. Trotsky's insistence on honest, scientific attention to the 'comparative co-efficients' was perhaps his major real crime in the eyes of the bureaucratic swindlers. The habit of lying about economic matters infected all spheres of Soviet life, and, of course, spread to the foreign Communist press—if only because the editor of the Daily Worker and the rest had to remember the reader in Lenin-grad as well as the reader in London!

Glass-House-Dweller Throws Stones

Amid much sound and useful criticism of the recent book by Leonard Schapiro, 'The Communist Party of the Soviet Union', Andrew Rothstein remarks ('Menshevik History Warmed Up', in the June issue of Marxism Today), that Schapiro is wrong when he describes Trotsky as having been chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet in October, 1917.

This, says Rothstein, is a 'well-worn myth'. Not Trotsky but Podvoisky was the chairman! Well, I must confess I had never met the statement before that Trotsky occupied this particular position at that time. He was, in fact, as is well known, rather more important—he was president of the Petrograd Soviet itself. But let a real authority speak on this matter: 'All practical work in connection with the organization of the uprising was done under the immediate direction of Comrade Trotsky, the president of the Petrograd Soviet. It can be stated with certainty that the Party is indebted primarily and principally to Comrade Trotsky for the rapid going-over of the garrison to the side of the Soviet and the efficient manner in which the work of the Military Revolutionary Committee was organized. The principal assistants of Comrade Trotsky were Comrades Antonov and Podvoisky.'

The writer of these lines was, of course, the late J. V. Stalin (in Pravda of November 6, 1918). My quotation is taken from page 30 of the 1941 reprint, by Lawrence & Wishart, of a collection of Stalin's articles called 'The October Revolution', originally published in English in 1933. If you look for this passage in the 'definitive' version of the article given in Volume 4 of Stalin's Works (English edition, 1953), you won't find it, I'm afraid.

It is all very fine for Andrew Rothstein to pick holes in Schapiro's book; but such facts as this unscrupulous 'editing' of an historical document show that unfortunately there is something for writers like Schapiro to base themselves on when they allege a degeneration of the Soviet Communist Party, even though their understanding of the process may be at fault.

BRIAN PEARCE.

Portworkers Wage Decision Delayed

More Lessons for Militants

By W. HUNTER

ON Thursday, July 14, the National Joint Council for the Port Transport Industry met, discussed the dockers' wage claim, and decided to adjourn the meeting for 'further consideration at a mutually convenient date'.

Thus the employers and trade union leaders who sit on the NJC rebuffed Merseyside dockers who, three weeks ago, went on strike demanding a 25s. a week increase and a 40-hour week. They went back to work after nine days on the basis of a resolution which warned that 'any delay or an inadequate offer by the employers will inevitably lead to a national withdrawal of labour'.

The members of the NJC knew the eyes of dockland were on their meeting. Yet they postponed a decision on wages indefinitely. Why did they feel able to do so?

The strike was the most solid that Merseyside had seen since the end of the war. There was strong feeling about wages and hours in Hull and Manchester. There was this threat of national action.

Evidently, the employers considered that the threat was an empty one. Why? **Because they measured what they had to fear from the men by the quality of leadership given by the portworkers' committee.**

The tactics of the employers are clearly to keep the issue dangling in mid-air, believing that militancy will waste away in confusion because there has been, so far, no serious organization for a national stoppage.

Docker members of the Communist Party, in particular, have a duty to face up to the lessons of this situation.

They should ask themselves: What type of leadership was needed on the docks, and what type of leadership have they given during the past few months? For it was their policies which dominated the Merseyside portworkers' committee, it was their members who led it.

Now, if the men begin to feel that the nine days' strike was wasted and that the employers are laughing, then that is their responsibility.

Communist Party policy is not based on the need of rank-and-file committees to develop the strength and initiative of the rank and file. They go along with portworkers' committees but seek at all costs to avoid too sharp a clash with officialdom.

This leads their members to a constant search for a formula to prevent a struggle developing too far, and the tendency in every struggle to feed the docker a diet of mythical victories.

Such was the case, for instance, in the strike which they led last October in Liverpool's number three area. The strike was for more pay on the unloading of dicolite, and the portworkers' committee was formed as a result of it.

The dockers were told they had won a victory because Mr. Tim O'Leary, national docks secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, would come to Liverpool and address a mass meeting of dockers.

The Daily Worker (October 19) hailed a win on 'vital points' and even went so far as to say that the strikers had 'won more than they originally set out to get'. Which was nonsense, and known to be nonsense by CP members.

Once the men were back at work, O'Leary denied he had ever promised, or was ever asked, to address a meeting. The way the portworkers' committee leaders have led to the present confusion has been touched upon in previous articles in The Newsletter.

First, from the beginning, they refused to prepare for

national action and to campaign for a national rank-and-file leadership. Illusions were created that petitions or partial action would get the union leaders to move speedily, and the employers to give substantially.

Part of the preparation should have been a thorough discussion at control meetings and at a final mass meeting, on forms of action that would get a wage increase.

The resolution put to the final strike meeting on Merseyside by the portworkers' committee declared that one of the gains of the strike was that a definite date had now been agreed for the commencement of talks for a wage increase.

But the meeting of the NJC which took place last week had already been fixed before the strike began—when the wage claim was first presented by the union at the NJC meeting of June 9.

Once again the docker was told of a victory that never was. The real achievement of the strike, unplanned as it was, lay in the fact that it brought the need for action on the issues of wages and hours sharply before dockers in other ports. But that achievement can only mean something if it is built upon, if there is real preparation for a concerted effort nationally.

That means getting a leaflet around the other ports explaining the case of the Merseyside men. It means getting as big as possible an exchange of dockers between ports. It means a campaign of meetings in every area and port to organize really representative committees.

Militants have a responsibility, too

Many militants in the Transport and General Workers' Union or in the 'Blue' union will make the same criticisms of the portworkers' committee as those in this article.

The leadership of that committee, however, is the leadership of default—the default of those militants who do not step forward and take their place on committees.

There are militant dockers who say they cannot go on to the portworkers' committee as they will only be a cover for people who are being discredited. That is a negative attitude.

If militants in every area organized meetings, got representatives elected and fought for a consistent, realistic and honest policy, both in the port and nationally, then this portworkers' committee could be transformed.

In this way the present spirit of the dockers would not be expended uselessly. But these militants must realize it all depends on them.

SUMMER HOLIDAY :

NO NEWSLETTER JULY 30, AUGUST 6

We recommence publication on Saturday, August 13.

Articles and news items for this issue should reach the editorial office not later than Tuesday, August 9.