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MINERS' ACTION CAN FORCE NCB RETREAT

By TONY HARRIS (Cronton Pit, Lancashire)

OUR leaders are retreating at the very time they should be organizing the strongest resistance to the Coal Board's plans. This is the feeling in the pits. At Cardiff last Saturday Will Paynter declared 'We don't regard this as being the stage in the fight where we have to give consideration to strike action.' But the crisis we are faced with now is not one that can be resolved by sitting around the table.

When does Paynter think the time will be ripe for action? Are our leaders going to wait until the Coal Board produces another list of pit closures?

According to the national Press the Coal Board expects a surplus of 50 million tons by the end of next year. With industrial production dropping steadily month by month, the closure of thirty-six pits will not be the end, if the Government and the Coal Board have their way.

The time for talking things over, for 'joint consultation', for conciliation and arbitration, is over. The NCB, together with the employing class it represents, has flung the whole of this machinery out of the window.

Evidently our leaders are not prepared to bring our industrial might to bear on a national scale, or call for the help of the rest of the Labour movement. That way they would have some real power to fight against pit closures.

It is up to rank-and-file miners to forge links from pit to pit and with other industries.

The alternatives before the miners are clear. Either we take action to force a retreat on the government and the Coal Board, or we travel back along the road to the hungry thirties.

LABOUR MUST NOT LET THE MINERS BE ISOLATED AND DEFEATED

By Our Industrial Correspondent

THE decision to sack thousands of miners is the most serious threat that organized Labour in Britain has had to face since 1926.

For twenty years—during the war and since—both Tory and Labour governments have sat on the backs of the miners and demanded more and more production to 'save the nation'.

The trade union leaders, including communists, collaborated up to the hilt with the National Coal Board in denouncing strikes and in stifling demands that the miners should use their strength to restore the seven-hour day and win an equitable sick and pensions scheme.

At the 1957 Trades Union Congress Arthur Horner was able to boast that the miners had refrained from tearing down the pillars of the Temple, like Samson—had refrained from using their immense strength to enforce their demands.

Sam Watson, while busily applauding strikes in Poland and eastern Germany, made no attempt to restore to the British miners the absolute right to strike, suspended since the war in the agreement to refer all matters in dispute to arbitration.

Not one scrap of real preparation to meet the threat of the sack has been carried out by the mineworkers' leaders.

Now, with the closure of thirty-six pits, the sacking of 4,000 miners and the displacement of 8,000 or 9,000 more, Right-wingers, and spokesmen of the Communist Party, are calling for the sacking of the opencast men. This demand turns the question away from the responsibility of the Coal Board and the Tory government for the sackings.

And even if it were possible to stop opencast output, how

(Continued overleaf)

FITTERS STRIKE FOR RIGHT TO WORK

'This is a strike for the right to work and for the defence of trade unionism' was how convener David Forfar summed up the action of seventy fitters at Harland and Wolff's, Scotstoun (Glasgow).

Over the past month twenty-two men have been paid off. Last week two more were paid off, including the sub-convener Vic Mellin—and the management threatened further redundancies.

In its appeal for help the strike committee points out that the Clyde Employers' Federation are building up a pool of unemployed which will be used to lower the standards of those still at work.

WON'T LET BOSS SMASH TRADE UNIONISM

Sacking of five men by Norris Heating Engineers on the Gilbert-Ash site at Runcorn (Cheshire) has led to a strike of thirty-three plumbers and fitters.

Tommy Rattcliffe, one of the stewards, told The Newsletter: 'The men feel that the employers' plan to break up a newly built trade union organization on this job.'

'We have achieved 100 per cent. trade unionism in the last six weeks. About half the men on strike recently joined the union.'

NEWSLETTER CONFERENCE REPORT REPRINTED

The full report of the November 16 national industrial rank-and-file Conference, as contained in our issue of November 22, has been reprinted as a threepenny pamphlet.

Entitled 'The Newsletter Conference', it also contains the text of the Charter of Workers' Demands as amended and adopted by the Conference.

The article by Gerry Healy in last week's issue of The Newsletter is also being reprinted as a pamphlet and will be ready soon.

POLICE IMPEDE PEACEFUL PICKETING

Police intervened to impede peaceful picketing at the Burman and Sons factory, Birmingham, on Tuesday.

One driver refused to turn back, leapt out of his cab and adopted a threatening attitude to the pickets. Whereupon the police intervened, prevented the pickets from arguing with the driver—and gave him an escort to take his lorry across the picket line.

The strike started because of the presence of a non-trade unionist in the grinding shop. The workers claim that the management has been intimidating workers into refusing to join the union.

COMMENTARY

LESSON FOR MILITANTS

FOR over a year we have been warning that the employers were trying to cripple the shop stewards' movement. The Jack report clinches the argument. In this deplorable document are the intentions of the powers that be, set forth in a way that has been fastened on greedily by papers like The Times and the Manchester Guardian. How all these gentlemen hate the basic organizations that workers throw up to fight the boss! How happy they would be if only workers would leave things to the trade union officials, and not be so 'unconstitutional' and 'undisciplined' as to protect themselves against sackings and victimization. (The Daily Telegraph, believe it or not, even suggests that union officials should be paid more, to remunerate them for the arduous task of damping down their members' militancy.)

The conclusions of the Jack report fly in the face of the evidence given to the court of inquiry. But they cannot alter the basic facts of the dispute: that the BOAC management made a deliberate attempt to smash union organization as a prelude to sackings; and that the workers went on strike to defend their organization and prevent victimization. For fighting for trade union principles and defending the workers' interests the stewards are attacked, and their activities are lied about.

But the really serious thing about the Jack report is not the lies it tells, but the distinctive contribution it makes to the witch-hunt against militants. This new

attempt to split the workers and deceive them carries a major lesson for rank-and-file members of the Communist Party. Their comrades at London Airport are attacked for standing by their fellow-workers. Our comrades at South Bank have been attacked for the same 'crime'. THE NEWSLETTER is dead against witch-hunts. Unhappily, the leaders of the Communist Party, in their blind hatred of this paper, have played right into the hands of the witch-hunters. The Jack report is an example of the sort of thing that happens when the Daily Worker calls *some* stewards 'trouble-makers' (October 23). *All* stewards, irrespective of their political affiliations, must be defended against the employing-class attack.

THE ONLY POWER

ALL sincere socialists will join in paying tribute to the courage of the Swaffham demonstrators in the face of violence, and in protesting against the brutal treatment they were subjected to. With their aim of halting work on the construction of rocket bases we are in complete agreement. But are their tactics wise? Is this kind of external intervention by middle-class opponents of rocket bases the best way of mobilizing working-class opinion against their construction? Marxists, who have participated in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament from the outset, do not think so. There is no short cut. The slogan 'Black the H-Bomb and the Rocket Bases' will become a reality only when those who support it work patiently and consistently within the organizations of the working class to convince workers that this kind of work is against their true interests, and that theirs is the only power which can put an end to it.

MINERS (Continued from front page)

would it solve the problem? The NCB quite frankly admits that, because industry as a whole is not expanding, these measures are only the first of a series.

Let us be quite clear: the crisis in the mines is part of the crisis of the whole capitalist system.

The total consumption of coal has dropped over the last twelve months by 16 million tons. Almost half of this fall is due to the decline in iron and steel production.

Stopgap solutions like the sacking of the opencast men would only very temporarily—if at all—delay the closure of other pits and the sacking of more miners.

Of course the Coal Board knows very well that to sack thousands of miners is a paying proposition, in that it puts a whip over the backs of the rest.

The present sackings are aimed just as much at those who in the future may try to resist bad piece-work rates by going slow.

The existence of a pool of unemployed miners will greatly help the Coal Board when it has to meet demands for higher wages and improved working conditions.

The real solution is not to sack opencast men, but to resist any sackings at all. And if production needs to be reduced, then let the miners be given back, with no loss in pay, the old seven-hour day snatched from them in 1926.

Other leaders, like Abe Moffat, are arguing that it is necessary to lobby MPs and demand a national policy for coal.

The Daily Worker reports such demands as these. But it is interesting to note that the Daily Worker refuses to comment on them. It refuses to say openly and honestly what it feels the miners should do.

Part of this coyness is undoubtedly due to the fear that miners will begin to check the statements made by the Com-

munist Party and the Daily Worker in the past, when they were hell-bent for full production and against strikes.

Rank-and-file communist miners, and other militants in the pits, should beware of being taken for a ride again.

Let the Daily Worker and the Communist Party speak up and tell the miners plainly: are they for the miners' using their power to resist sackings?

Any attempt to use this crisis to pick up the general secretaryship of the National Union of Mineworkers for Paynter would be a betrayal of the clear lead that socialists are duty bound to give to workers in struggle.

The Newsletter fully supports the lobbying of MPs and the staging of great demonstrations. The question is: what demands do we make of the MPs—what sort of a national coal policy do we fight for, as distinct from that of the Tories and the Right-wing Labour leaders?

The Newsletter stands for the immediate and unconditional cancellation of the £374 million paid each year in compensation to parasites who made fortunes out of colliers' sweat and blood.

Throw out old administrators

This money should be used to shorten hours and pay proper sick benefits and pensions.

Drastic changes are needed in the administration of the mining industry, as of all the nationalized industries, to stop these industries' being used as cheap labour for private capital.

Why is it not possible to find out the price per ton that big business is paying for its coal?

How does it come about that in a so-called uneconomic industry the firms living off the by-products of coal can show handsome profits and fat dividends? That the 2s. shares of a firm like Coalite are quoted at double that figure on the Stock Exchange?

It is only too evident that the Tories' attack on the miners

is intended to discredit nationalization in the minds of the working class as well as the middle class.

But the crisis in the pits can be solved finally only by the extension of nationalization to all the main fields of industry—under a socialist government, determined to throw out of the Coal Board the old administrators and put in their place workers from the pits, together with other socialists, who will be guided and controlled by the working class.

It is clear from the lessons of the past that unless the demand for no sackings is backed up with the threat of militant action, then this demand will be ignored.

The decision of the miners' management committee at the Maypole pit in Wigan not to tolerate the closing down of their pit shows the way forward.

A united stand by all miners, backed by other key sections of the working class, would not only prevent sackings, but would bring down this government that is trying to drive us back to the hungry thirties.

The bosses hope to isolate the miners from the rest of the working class. Workers should remember that this was the pattern in the 1920s; that in 1921 and 1926 the betrayal of the miners by the leaders of the Labour movement began periods of defeat for the whole working class.

Now as then, a defeat for the miners would be a defeat for the whole working class, and what happens to the miners sets a precedent, now as then, for other sections.

And so it is the elementary duty of trade unionists everywhere to rally to the support of the miners. In their own best interests, they must not see the miners defeated.

Local solidarity committees should be established. Miners should be invited to put their case to other trade unionists.

The railwaymen and dockers in particular should beware of their turn coming after the miners'; should do all in their power to see that the justice and correctness of the miners' struggle is fully understood; and should be ready to take solidarity action, if need be, to help the miners win a decisive victory.

MINISTRY FIGHTS TO LAST DITCH AGAINST LOCKED-OUT MEN'S DOLE CLAIM

MINISTRY of Pensions and National Insurance is contesting a decision of an insurance tribunal that the 240 locked-out workers at the Belvedere (Kent) power station site are eligible for unemployment pay.

They were told that they were not eligible for unemployment pay because they were involved in a trade dispute. This ruling was later reversed by an insurance tribunal, which ruled on one man's claim as a test case.

The Ministry is now appealing against this decision to Sir David Davies, the National Insurance Commissioner.

Meanwhile no unemployment benefit has been paid to the sacked workers. If they win their case, they will get about £20 each in back-dated unemployment pay. If the Ministry wins, they will get nothing.

MERSEYSIDE RANK-AND-FILE CONFERENCE IN THE NEW YEAR

PLANS for a Merseyside rank-and-file industrial conference to be held early in the New Year were discussed at a recent meeting in Liverpool.

The meeting of miners, builders, factory workers and portworkers was called to hear a report on the November 16 rank-and-file Conference, given by William Hunter.

'The Conference was a great step forward,' declared a member of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers. 'It was a success despite the Press attacks and the proscriptions of certain trade union leaders. That shows how firmly militant workers felt the need for such a meeting.'

'At the top of the trade union movement are people scared by the big struggles which are coming. That is why they are chopping down on the rights of trade union members.'

A river worker said the future Merseyside conference must give its main attention to the problem of unemployment,

which on the Merseyside was higher than the national average. Slump was a problem of capitalist society and to overcome unemployment a socialist programme was needed.

'The miners have taken the busmen's place,' said portworker Peter Kerrigan. 'The main weight of the employers' offensive is now concentrated on them. They must get to the rank and file of other trade unions and explain how nationalization of the coal-mines in a capitalist economy has served private industry.'

Peter Kerrigan referred to the 'blacking' of work on 'flags of convenience' ships.

'There is one of these ships on the Mersey at present,' he said. 'She is a floating coffin. I have been told that the men on her suffered a reduction of £2 a month in wages once they were out at sea.'

'The strike against these ships is officially supported by the Transport and General Workers' Union. But nowhere on the dock has an official of that union set up a platform to explain to the dockers what is involved.'

'The reason is clear. They are afraid that if they get up to speak for solidarity internationally, they may be asked some awkward questions—why, for example, do they not advocate the same solidarity among dockers, or with the London busmen?'

'It has been left to what they call "pseudo trade unionists" like myself to explain the issues'

They must be represented

Building workers who had been at the Newsletter Conference paid a tribute to the serious way in which both the platform and the delegates got down to discussion.

'Socialists in the trade unions must ensure they are represented in the Labour Party,' said another AUBTW member.

Dealing with the attacks on the Conference in the capitalist Press, the Daily Worker and Socialist Review, plumber John Connor remarked:

'To criticize the Right wing is not to split the movement but helps the fight to unite it. The greatest crime of all today is that of the trade union leader who, by his actions, aids the employers' offensive.'

'If men are apathetic then it is only because they have not been given leadership. Hugh Barr showed at the Conference how strength on the job had bettered conditions one hundred per cent.'

'Leaders have got to be made to realize that either they lead or get out. Unless we face them up with fighting policies we are as responsible as they are for any success the employers may have.'

While endorsing the idea of a Merseyside conference, the meeting also agreed that monthly Newsletter meetings should be held to discuss and popularize the Charter of Workers' Demands.

SHADOW CHANCELLOR'S SHADOWY SPEECH AT CONFERENCE ON UNEMPLOYMENT

'WHEN I left school to go to work there were twenty mills in the town. Now there are only three and all three are on short time,' said a textile worker delegate from Hyde (Cheshire).

He was speaking at a conference called by the Lancashire and Cheshire Federation of Trades Councils to discuss the growing unemployment in the north-west.

'In my youth,' he said, 'when I joined the Labour movement, we argued that a socialist policy and the public ownership of industry were the only solution to the scourge of unemployment.'

'Today socialism is still the only hope. If Labour tries to run capitalism more efficiently than the capitalists it is doomed to failure. The 29 per cent poll at Finsbury shows that. But today we have heard no clarion call from this platform.'

He was one of the several hundred delegates from union branches and trades councils who had just heard a lengthy and shadowy speech from Labour's shadow Chancellor, Harold Wilson.

If they had expected a positive lead from him they were disappointed. The only alternative Wilson put to the Tory policy was that Labour would encourage 'expansion of industry'.

But on the question of how a Labour government could enforce this expansion and plan the economy without taking over the ownership and control of finance in industry Wilson was silent.

Nor, apparently, had he given thought to how the Labour movement could be roused and led in the fight against unemployment and the Tory offensive.

It was left to the few delegates who had time to speak from the floor to introduce some breath of life into the discussion.

Brother Scanlon, Manchester district secretary of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, outlined his committee's policy on redundancy: the banning of overtime where redundancy threatens; and if this is insufficient to absorb the surplus labour, the shop stewards should attempt to negotiate a guaranteed week of 34 hours to spread the work.

But, Brother Scanlon warned, 'we must be under no illusion that we will always reach agreement with the employers.'

'In that case no amount of resolutions of support from the Labour movement will do the job. The workers on the job will have to impose the 34-hour week on the employers.'

'Our shop stewards have held meetings in all the big factories and in no case have the workers failed to endorse the policy recommended by the district committee.'

TRIVIAL MISTAKES 'BOOKED' BY INSPECTORS: BUSMEN SACKED

From Our Industrial Correspondent

MASS meeting of 400 Leicester Corporation bus workers demanded the resignation or relegation to the rank of conductor of an inspector who had been accused of submitting 'Gestapo-like reports' about busmen.

It was stated that workers had been sacked every week as a result of the reporting of trivial mistakes.

In a letter to a local paper an inspector's wife claimed that her husband 'was called before his superiors and asked to explain why he had so few "bookings"' and told 'that it was part of his duty to "book" all mistakes, whether small or large'.

There has been much dissatisfaction about the way discipline is enforced, and the mass meeting was summoned as the result of a petition signed by 300 bus workers.

ECONOMICS

EXPANSION? IT'S MUMBO-JUMBO IN A CAPITALIST ECONOMY

By Tom Kemp

'EXPANSION' has established itself as the pre-election cant word. Its appeal in the first serious post-war recession is obvious.

It conjures up comforting visions of an endless procession of new steelworks, hospitals and motor-cars. It bewilders the honest rank-and-file member and trips easily off the tongue of the sleek Right-wing 'expert'. Abe Moffat, communist leader of the Scots miners, joins the throng of those who bow down before it.

The flagging of the great boom confirmed what many discerning defenders of capitalism, outside the Labour movement, knew quite well: that since the system cannot expand endlessly it has phases of contraction.

That is the way the system works. As long as capitalism exists it is profits, not social needs, that determine the extent of its expansion.

Since it contains forces which tend to restrict the rate of

profit as it expands, it has an effective 'stabilizer'—one which holds back further growth until new, profitable opportunities for investment are found.

Labour's 'Plan for Progress' has one interesting characteristic, among many others; it does not use the word 'capitalism' nor analyse the way the system works. Perhaps its authors thought that the system had turned into something else in 1945! In any case, by evading the question of what is capitalism's driving force, it eases the way for acceptance of its own truisms, tautologies and evasions.

The Labour leaders, if they are sincere, believe that 'expansion' can be secured by the use of a few simple talismans provided by the followers of Keynes. By leaving the components of expansion to be guessed at they carefully foster belief in their own magic.

As long as capitalist relations prevail, no one can tell in advance what policies will produce expansion. The co-ordination of investment plans would be impossible without detailed controls incompatible with the retention of the profit system.

A partial co-ordination, devised through incentives working on profitability, would not only face opposition from the capitalists, but would pile up disproportions.

Not an impossible account

It would mean that major decisions would be left to the capitalists and something on the following lines might happen:

The government might sponsor the building of new steelworks to counteract a recession. Before these came into production important user industries might have turned over to the use of other materials such as aluminium, plastics and fibre-glass. Or they might have met the limits of their market and entered a phase of contraction.

This is not an impossible account of future relations between steel and motors.

After all, the present problem of the coal industry has elements of this. 'Expansion' is hardly the key to this one.

Expansion, for private business, means profitable investment. For some key sectors it now means automation.

No one denies that automation makes for surplus labour. The 'best' employers and the 'responsible' trade union bright boys speak of 'planned reductions', letting normal wastage do the job as far as possible and compensating those who become redundant.

In one of its characteristic phrases the Labour programme solves this by saying 'full employment ensures that alternative work will be available'.

Will do the trick

The government will do the trick with its magic formula of expansion. Presumably this will imply State intervention adapted to the needs of big industry.

There will be a constant and increasingly frantic race to forestall and correct the system's instabilities.

Under capitalist conditions uninterrupted expansion requires the existence of hypothetical conditions not found outside the theorist's imagination.

Nor does the Utopian world of the inveterate 'expansionist' survive contact with reality.

Even with continued arms expenditure, budget deficits and Labour's policy, the anarchy of the market would continue to impose itself and further disproportions might be added to it.

Today there are unsold stocks of coal. Tomorrow, who knows . . . ?

All expansion under capitalism prepares the conditions for its own exhaustion. State action can influence, but not basically determine, its course.

Inflation, already feared as an outcome of the moderate stimulus given by the Tories, can check the process and raise nightmares of its own.

And, of course, there just is no formula for expansion in one country if the rest of the world capitalist market is stagnating or contracting.

USA

AMERICAN SOCIALISTS, OF ALL SHADES OF OPINION, EXCHANGE VIEWS

From Our New York Correspondent

CONFERENCE of American Socialists held last week at Cleveland (Ohio) was the most broadly representative gathering of U.S. socialists to sit together in one hall for many decades.

It was called to discuss the experiences of socialists in the 1958 elections, and to exchange views on the prospects for the further development of united socialist political action—with an eye to the 1960 elections.

The conference was called on the initiative of a group of Ohio socialists of different views, and the impetus behind it came in large measure from the united socialist campaigns in New York, California, Washington and Chicago.

By unanimous vote it was agreed to reconvene in no later than one year's time to decide whether or not to stand a united socialist candidate in the 1960 presidential elections.

The Ohio sponsoring group's steering committee was charged with the job of promoting a continuing exchange of views and experiences.

They were all there

All organized socialist groups had been invited to attend, along with unaffiliated socialists. The Socialist Labour Party and the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation had both publicly rejected the invitation and denounced the conference in advance.

The Communist Party gave no public indication of its attitude.

Yet all three parties were represented, along with the Trotskyist Socialist Workers' Party, which had urged maximum participation by all socialists.

Political opinion ranged from Christian socialism to the ultra-Leftism of followers of the late Hugo Oehler's Revolutionary Workers' League.

The main issue in the discussion was independent political action as opposed to working in the Democratic Party and supporting its candidates (the current Communist Party line). The great majority of the delegates favoured independent socialist political action.

Among the latter, two approaches were apparent. One view, generally associated with the Socialist Workers' Party, was that if socialists are to build their own movement they should not support candidates of either capitalist party at any time.

Attitude to Soviet régime

The other view, generally associated with the National Guardian, was that while socialists should oppose the two major parties they should not rule out on principle the possibility of supporting one or more candidates of these parties.

A majority of the independent socialists at the conference probably supported the second viewpoint.

The second important issue on which there were divergent views was on socialism and democracy, and especially the attitude of socialists towards the Soviet régime.

Here there were four different strands of opinion:

1) **The SP-SDF view:** for them the crimes of the Soviet bureaucracy are a pretext for supporting American imperialism in its drive against the Soviet Union;

2) **The official Communist Party view:** anyone who expresses concern for workers' democracy or civil liberties in the Soviet Union is in the anti-Soviet camp or on the way there;

3) **The Socialist Workers' Party view:** socialists should fully support the movement of the Soviet workers for socialist democracy, but should also vigorously combat the efforts of

the capitalist powers to exploit this issue for their counter-revolutionary aims;

4) **The view of many independent socialists:** recognition of the need for reforms in the Soviet Union, but a feeling that the present process of development is in the right direction.

All viewpoints were heard in an orderly, fraternal manner. As John T. McManus, a member of the administrative committee of New York's Independent-Socialist Party, quipped: even the observers of the observers got the floor.

Tribute to Trotskyists' integrity

Referring to the part played by the Trotskyists in the Independent-Socialist Party campaign, Dr Annette Rubinstein, a union organizer, said:

'If some of us had been offered a Militant three or four years ago, we would have recoiled as if it were a snake. But we found them honest people, with integrity and capable of working loyally together.'

And when one participant denounced the Communist Party as representing 'red fascism', a union official with no sympathy for the policies of the Communist Party rose to a point of order, pointing out that name-calling had no place at a socialist conference devoted to the exchange of ideas.

He was immediately upheld by the chairman and vigorously applauded by the entire gathering.

IRELAND

IRELAND'S WORKERS NEED A PARTY BASED ON CONNOLLY'S TEACHINGS

From a Special Correspondent

RECENT mass break-out by Irish Republican Army prisoners from the internment camp in the Curragh shows how far from solution is the 600-year-old question of Irish freedom.

In the South, politicians hide their betrayal of the national struggle behind the fig-leaf of 'constitutional' solutions.

In the North a Tory government making use of religious differences maintains a state of armed terror against all, Catholic or Protestant, who want a united Ireland.

Like their predecessors in the national movement, the IRA fighters lack neither ideals nor courage. But Irish socialists doubt whether their present methods and policies can solve the national question.

Want a clear answer

Workers and small farmers with bitter experience of 'freedom' in the South will not transform the national struggle into a mass struggle until a clear answer is given to the question: 'Freedom for whom?'

Since the South was made 'free' the problems of unemployment and emigration have continued. True, the capitalists of southern Ireland have carried out a series of reforms in health and housing and have established native industries. All this was valuable.

It is equally true that there is chronic unemployment, at double the present rate in England.

The economic problems of the two parts of Ireland cannot be solved merely by uniting them. Unification would lay the basis for prosperity only if it was accompanied by a clear socialist programme:

For guaranteeing full employment at the expense of the rich;
For taking over the big estates and either distributing the land or farming it under the management of a workers' State;

For getting rid of the American and Canadian speculators who at present are busy exploring Ireland, looking for oil and minerals to exploit.

For using our land and resources, not to benefit big foreign monopolies, but to enrich the Irish workers and peasants.

If such a programme were made the heart and soul of the national struggle, then the working class of both North and South would unite in a determined effort both to win national unity and independence, and to end economic slavery.

The day must come when Irishmen who hold these aims will form an Irish socialist party that can play a vital part in the national and social struggle.

Such a party would have to learn the lessons from Irish socialists' past mistakes.

After Connolly's death Irish socialists tended to separate themselves from the national struggle. Stalinism bears a big share of the responsibility for this.

The growth of unemployment in England is preparing an explosion in Ireland. What will happen when the already weak economies of both North and South have to bear the added strain of not being able to export their discontented and oppressed?

There may well be repeated the pattern of the thirties, when, for the first time, the Irish could not leave home, and some had to return.

Big struggles are in prospect. Though there have not been wanting, inside and outside Ireland, those who sought to destroy Connolly's teachings, as well as those who sought to use him for their own narrow ends, there is now no task more urgent for Irish workers than the creation of a party dedicated to his principles.

Constant Reader | South Bank and Tolpuddle

No serious struggle was ever without its casualties. What hypocrisy is revealed by those whose response to the current persecution of militants is to blame THE NEWSLETTER for 'inciting men to activity which imperils their livelihood'.

No alarm at the creeping advance of unemployment, which will engulf many hundreds of thousands in the near future if the capitalist class and its Tory government are not taken by the throat—alarm only at the fight to rouse the workers in time, in face of all the usual intimidation.

A few weeks ago the trade union and Labour Press was full of 'tributes' to Robert Owen.

If some of the present-day bureaucrats of the movement, and their hangers-on, had been alive at the time of the Tolpuddle prosecution, we may be sure that they would have rebuked Owen for 'causing', by his agitation and setting-up of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, 'the penalization of ignorant labourers'.

Vanmanship

That van, with loud-speaker attached and union emblem prominently displayed, which The Newsletter has advocated as the proper form of transport for trade union officials, seems to have caught the public's imagination.

Important in itself, this proposal is even more important because it sums up and symbolizes a whole conception of what trade unionism is and is not.

Charlie Dukes told the conference of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers in 1941:

'Every officer in this union knows that whereas some thirty years ago your job was at the street corner, today it is in the conference room.'

With all due appreciation of the work done in the conference room, The Newsletter thinks that there is as much need today as ever there was for trade union officials to direct their main attention, if not to 'the street corner', then certainly to the factory gate.

And that's what the van is for.

On alien foundations

No sane person denies, I suppose, that substantial gains have been made by the British workers in the last fifteen or twenty years. The point is, though, that these gains have not touched the fundamental structure of capitalism.

So long as the capitalists retain economic and political power they can take back what they have surrendered owing to a particular temporary set of circumstances.

Indeed, there are plenty of signs that they are already in process of doing just this.

In 1934 the splendid social achievements of the social-democratic municipality of Vienna were destroyed as the result of a reactionary coup d'Etat. The bombardment of the

'Karl Marx Hof' workers' model flats by the guns of the Heimwehr symbolized for many young socialists of that period the smashing of their 'welfare State' illusions.

An Austrian social democrat had, shortly before, told the Soviet journalist Ilya Ehrenburg with some complacency that in Vienna they had begun with the T-square and compasses instead of with the machine-gun, as in Russia.

'Don't you ever have the feeling you are building on somebody else's land, and that one day the owner will assert his rights against you?' Ehrenburg asked.

He should indeed

THE December issue of Labour Monthly devotes its two middle pages to John Milton, in honour of the 350th anniversary of his birth. The heading is: 'Milton! Thou shouldst be living at this hour.'

It is good to commemorate the anniversaries of great fighters for freedom, especially when their legacy has proved so valuable to succeeding generations as Milton's has.

For instance, he wrote 'Areopagitica', a classic exposure of the fallacies and iniquities of censorship. Communists and socialists have made good use of passages from that work on numerous occasions—during the fight against the Sedition Bill in 1934, for example.

It does not get even a mention in Labour Monthly, though. Doubtless the Pasternak case makes 'Areopagitica' one of those classics it is not expedient to remind readers of, for the time being, lest 'dangerous thoughts' arise.

Milton and Trotsky

That R. Page Arnot, managing editor of Labour Monthly, is an admirer of Milton we have long known.

'Within its compass it is probably the best short statement and defence of Soviet Russia that has yet been written...

For any parallel we have to go back to John Milton's "Defence of the English People".'

Thus wrote Arnot in his review, in Labour Monthly of October 1921, of Trotsky's 'In Defence of Terrorism'.

Arnold Kettle, the authority on English literature who is also a member of the Communist Party's executive committee, is, I believe, another Milton fan.

Might it not be an educative exercise for his students to 'compare and contrast' Milton's book and Trotsky's as polemical defences of revolutionary governments against their detractors?

Novel source of a scoop?

Don't look now, but I think I have discovered where Roy Nash of the News Chronicle gets his stuff about a Red Club meeting clandestinely in a central London pub. It's all in 'The Princess Casamassima', a novel by Henry James, published in 1886.

BRIAN PEARCE

LETTERS

THE NEWSLETTER'S HELP WAS 'ARTIFICIAL' AND 'SECTARIAN'

BRIAN BEHAN writes (THE NEWSLETTER, October 29) that:

'In common with the News Chronicle, the Communist Party leaders and the Right wing, Socialist Review believes that the South Bank men have not been victorious because supporters of The Newsletter were present; that socialists have no right to take part in the struggle of working men; that a rank-and-file movement must restrict itself, not only in policy, but by fighting within the trade union machine.'

This is untrue. What we do believe in this connexion can be briefly stated.

1) It was the Right-wing and Stalinist trade union leaders that ruined the South Bank men's chances of beating McAlpine. The presence of Newsletter supporters did no harm.

What did harm was the artificially close association of the dispute with The Newsletter (through publishing the strike bulletin as a Newsletter supplement; through getting the strike committee to support the Newsletter Conference—as a body and without the matter having been put to the committee—etc.).

This provided the Right-wing and Stalinist trade union leaders with an easy alibi to sell out the men. It saved them from the exposure that was, and always is, needed.

2) Socialists have not only a right, but the duty to take part in the struggles of working men and to further class warfare in every way.

Socialist Review need not be ashamed by its record. It pointed the central issues of the South Bank dispute long before the lock-out (see Socialist Review, July 1 and August 1).

Supporters of Socialist Review were active on the picket line from the very first days of the dispute. We offered all the practical help we could: secretarial assistance, transport, contacts.

We also pointed out the dangers of not utilizing to the full the resources available to the South Bank men.

3) No rank-and-file movement can afford to restrict itself in policy, or to constitutional channels. On the other hand, it must never jump so far ahead of the rank and file that it becomes a sectarian group.

To associate a body of workers in battle with your paper, although, in Behan's own words, not 'a single copy of The Newsletter had been seen on the site' before the dispute, to associate them with a paper they knew nothing of, was a sectarian act, calculated to take you out of sight of the real rank and file.

Finally, I hope you will not suppress this letter in the way you tried to prevent supporters of Socialist Review from attending your Conference.

London, N.W.3

Michael Kidron

(for Socialist Review)

[Kidron alleges that the decision of the Shell-Mex stewards to sponsor the Newsletter Conference was taken 'without the matter having been put to the committee'.

This is simply untrue. The Editor of The Newsletter was present in the café used by the stewards as their headquarters when the decision was taken, and he was told of it by Hugh Cassidy, Federation steward, in person.

Kidron's complaint about the publication of the South Bank Special as a supplement to The Newsletter was answered in advance by Cassidy, at the Conference, on November 16; as he said, 'the decision to accept the paper's offer of space was taken by the thirty-two stewards on the site'.

There was nothing 'artificial' about the South Bank Special. The bulk of the material was written by Cassidy himself, and the rest by various stewards on the site.

The Newsletter's big crime in the eyes of the capitalist Press

and Right-wing trade union leaders was that we provided rank-and-file building workers with 'twenty-six soldiers of lead'—their own Press, giving an up-to-the-minute presentation of their case in newspaper format that could be distributed to the public in thousands of copies.

In the eyes of these gentleman it is nothing short of 'red anarchy' to help workers in this way. In our view this is exactly what a socialist newspaper is for.

Kidron declares that the Right-wing and Stalinist trade union leaders had 'an easy alibi to sell out the men' because our paper acted as it did.

This is nonsense. The Right wing sold the men out right at the start, when they agreed with McAlpine's that the sackings should take place; and the Stalinists sold out when they reversed the decision of the London divisional council of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers.

These leaders sold out because that is how bureaucracies in the Labour movement behave when it comes to a decisive stage in the struggle.

The Newsletter exposed these betrayals, and in doing so it helped in the political development of many of the South Bank workers.

This is the real reason why socialists are active in strikes: to help workers draw political lessons so that they will be better prepared for future struggles.

This is the essence of Kidron's differences with The Newsletter.

Linked Marxists and workers

In one sense our paper was ahead of the workers in dispute—politically ahead; and so it should be; otherwise what use would it be to them?

But the South Bank Special was not ahead of the workers, because they themselves wrote it, read it, sold it and used it as an instrument for bringing their case to many more workers in their own and other industries.

The South Bank Special was a link between the Marxists who support The Newsletter and the workers who were in battle with their employers.

A member of the Editorial Board of The Newsletter addressed a crowded meeting of the workers in the middle of the dispute, and outlined this paper's political policy. He was enthusiastically received.

We have no apologies. Any body of workers in struggle will always receive political as well as industrial guidance from The Newsletter.

That is why our paper, though small, is rapidly gaining in influence. That is why our Conference was so successful, despite the witch-hunting of the capitalist Press.

As editor of Socialist Review, Kidron agrees with one Robert Emmett, who attacked us in a curious two-page article under the heading 'Forum'. Can it be that this 'Forum' was not a Forum after all, but a . . . disguised editorial statement?

Lastly, Kidron and his friends were subjected to the same scrutiny as every other visitor to our Conference, and quite properly so. The capitalist Press was kept out and they were allowed in. What more did they want?—Editors.]

UNITY MOVEMENT AND FREEDOM CONGRESS: A REPLY TO JOHN REX

JOHN REX makes assessments of the political organizations in South Africa, and accusations against some of them, without examining their composition or policy.

The Unity Movement is a federal body embracing various organizations. Its main strength comes from the workers and peasants.

Its significance lies in its policy of non-collaboration with the machinery created by the ruling class to enslave the non-whites.

It not only teaches the people to cut the chains tying them to the oppressors and their agents, but also gives them the prospect of mobilizing their forces in the struggle for the overthrow of white supremacy.

That the leadership of the Unity Movement is 'largely Cape

Coloured petty bourgeois' and that the movement 'consists very largely of white-collar groups', is simply not true.

Perhaps John Rex has been away from South Africa too long to be acquainted with the real state of affairs there.

He does mention that many teachers have been drawn into the Unity Movement, but does not seem to understand the importance of this.

In a country where the mass of the population is illiterate, teachers can educate people about political affairs and organize them.

This is what members of the Unity Movement did, and that is why they were sacked from their jobs and hounded from their homes.

The 'Freedom Congress', far from being a 'broadly-based mass movement uniting democrats of all races', is in fact dominated by opportunists who from time to time hurry the

The defiance stunt was calculated to show that under the extremely oppressive rule of the nationalists the Africans were being driven into revolt. Therefore, they reasoned, the white electorate would be frightened into returning the United Party.

The Freedom Congress must be judged in terms of a leadership that represents the interests of merchants, traders and puppet officials who have reason to fear the organized might of the people, and who exploit their militancy.

It is true that the Congresses receive more attention in the White Press than does the Unity Movement. While the nationalist sector of the ruling class will suppress any opposition, the more subtle United Party and Liberal wings appreciate the value of a mass movement controlled by opportunists and have given them publicity, and even support at times.

One final point. The Unity Movement criticizes Congress; it exposes its bad leadership. This is what any organization trying to liberate people from oppression is in duty bound to do when it thinks mistakes are being made.

London, S.W.2

Benita Teper

SCOTS MINER'S LETTER SUPPRESSED BY DAILY WORKER

Lawrence Daly, delegate from Glencaig (Fife) branch of the National Union of Mineworkers to the national industrial rank-and-file Conference on November 16, wrote the following letter to the Daily Worker on November 20. It has not yet been published.

ADDDED to your misleading report on November 17, the remarks of Walter Holmes on the Newsletter Conference call for comment. As the Scots miner who criticized the draft Charter, may I say how much I welcomed this Conference and found its youthfulness and militancy a source of real inspiration?

Headlines for it in the capitalist Press are no more or less sinister than similar headlines for the Communist Party.

But what really worries the capitalist Press is that the Newsletter militants cannot be discredited by 'mouthpieces of Moscow' attacks which the Communist Party so readily invites by its voluntary (and sincere) subservience to the Kremlin.

It also worries Walter Holmes. Unless, of course, the 'publicity' he gave the Conference means that, like the Press lords he is (by his own logic) really a secret friend of The Newsletter!

Twenty-five delegates spoke at the Conference, yet the Daily Worker gave half its report to the one delegate who attacked The Newsletter as such.

It gave no mention to two Communist Party members who spoke in support of the Conference while openly declaring their party affiliation.

I had direct experience of the Communist Party's efforts to stop delegates from attending.

Will the Daily Worker ever take seriously its own slogans about working-class unity?

Ballingry (Fife)

Lawrence Daly

people into action in accordance with the immediate sectional interests of the 'bargainers', i.e., the merchants and officials of puppet bodies.

In 1944 this same leadership launched the 'Passive Resistance Campaign', in which hundreds of poor Africans and Indians went to jail.

The merchant class poured money into the venture, because they wanted to force the South African government into a round table conference with India to protect their property rights, which were being threatened by the 'Ghetto Act'.

The gains, in terms of building a movement, were nil. In fact it took people some time to recover from their disillusionment.

In 1953, on the eve of the white 'general' elections, these leaders brought the people out in the defiance campaign. The opportunist leadership had had more room for manoeuvre under the British-style United Party than under the Afrikaner nationalists.

So they raved about 'the lesser of two evils', 'defeating the forces of fascism' and so on.

A DEBATE ON 'CONTEMPORARY CAPITALISM'

I MUST correct the report appearing in the November 29 issue of THE NEWSLETTER of the week-end school held at Oxford by the National Association of Labour Student Organizations.

The impression given by your report is that, in the debate on 'Contemporary Capitalism', John Saville (co-editor of the New Reasoner) and I took up opposed positions; it is implied that Saville sided with those who see a recent fundamental change in the nature of capitalism.

So far as I know this is not Saville's opinion: his article in the third issue of the New Reasoner on the Welfare State seems to me to be in fact one of the best pieces of work in refuting such ideas.

In the debate at Oxford Saville laid the main emphasis on the need for a thoroughgoing analysis of modern capitalism on the scale of Marx's 'Capital', and stressed that without such a scientific analysis the work of socialists would have less basis for success.

This I did not disagree with at all: my argument was that all those theories which argue for a liberal self-reform by capitalism ignore the political realities of class struggle and international economic and political ties.

The basic explanation of these factors is still possible only from the point of view of Marxism.

If there were differences between Saville and me in this discussion they were differences of emphasis only.

I have no doubt that had the question been pursued we would have found plenty to differ about, but your correspondent is entirely wrong in giving the impression that Saville took the line of reformists such as Strachey and Crosland, and that I attacked him as one of their supporters.

Lecds 15

Cliff Slaughter

[Our correspondent writes:

I regret that the necessary compression of an entire morning's discussion into two brief interpretative sentences has appeared to give a false picture of the argument between Saville and Slaughter at the NALSO school.

In his articles and lectures Saville has stated his disagreement with the Right-wing and Centre reformists, and he did so at Oxford.

However, he also reiterates that the Left is bankrupt of ideas and lays the main emphasis on the need for a new analysis of present-day capitalist society before a path forward can be found.

Whatever Saville's private opinions may be, this approach and his failure to take a positive attitude to current struggles suggest to his hearers that he believes the classical ideas of socialism are no longer relevant to present problems.

In this sense Slaughter's defence of Marxism and the frequent illustration of his argument by reference to the present struggles of the working class refuted what seemed to this observer the negative arguments advanced by Saville, even if Slaughter personally intended only a difference of emphasis.]