

THE NEWSLETTER

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GAITSKELL MUST GO, CLAUSE 4 MUST STAY!

By G. HEALY

Right-wing trade union leaders and Mr. Gaitskell are mobilizing their forces to get rid of Clause 4 when the National Executive meets on March 16. That is what lies behind the heated conflict at the National Executive meeting on February 24.

This is no side issue; behind it stands the retreat on the 40-hour week and the dropping of wage demands by the engineering unions. While the employers and the Tory government prepare a new offensive against the trade union movement, right-wingers such as Mr. Sam Watson from the National Union of Mineworkers are retreating pell-mell in front of the Coal Board's campaign to sack more miners. There is a real connection between the industrial struggles and the fight to retain Clause 4 inside the Labour Party.

What Mr. Gaitskell is proposing is to follow the German Social Democrats and ultimately get rid of all references to socialism from the Labour Party. This is to be done by stages. After Clause 4 has been removed, or amended in such a way that it is innocuous, other proposals will be brought forward which will give the leadership power to play down the nationalization question until it is finally removed altogether.

Gaitskell's strategy

Gaitskell's reference to nationalization at the Nottingham meeting was meaningless. His talk of renationalizing steel and road transport amounts to nothing more than undoing what the Tories have done so far as the 1945 programme of the Labour government is concerned. The only new piece of nationalization proposed is the nationalization of water. What Gaitskell is saying, in effect, is that the Labour Party can go no further than it has already gone.

Nationalization of water is just a cover for evading the need to nationalize basic industries such as engineering, shipbuilding and aircraft where monopolization proceeds almost daily. This fact alone argues for the nationalization of such industries.

Left unity can defeat Gaitskell

Gaitskell and the right wing can be defeated if the left wing of the Labour Party and the trade unions unite their forces for the defence and the strengthening of Clause 4. At the National Executive meeting on February 24, Mr. Boyd of the Amalgamated Engineering Union viciously attacked the left wing. But Mr. Boyd was not speaking for his union,

(Continued on page 70)

GAITSKELL'S CONSTITUENCY REJECTS HIS POLICY

By our Political Correspondent

Mr. Hugh Gaitskell has received a slap in the face from his own constituency party—the South Leeds C.L.P.

After the Leeds City Labour Party had passed, by an overwhelming majority, a resolution calling for more nationalisation, Right Wingers in South Leeds put down a resolution supporting Mr. Gaitskell's policy.

The resolution read:

'Despite the recent decision of the City Party, this A.G.M. of the South Leeds C.L.P. reaffirms its support for Mr. Gaitskell and for his policy and the proposals which he outlined at Blackpool.'

This resolution was defeated by 17 votes to 12.

The shocked Right Wing hastily moved another resolution expressing confidence in Mr. Gaitskell as their MP. This was passed with three votes against.

The defeat of the first resolution shows just how deep goes the opposition to Mr. Gaitskell's policy. South Leeds Labour Party has for years been regarded as one of the most right wing in the country.

At the time of the expulsion of Socialist Labour League members from the Leeds Labour Party, the right wing in South Leeds succeeded in suspending the credentials to the City Party of delegates who might vote against the witch-hunt—and restored them when the voting was over.

But not even they could get support for a blank cheque for Mr. Gaitskell. Life-long members of the Party who up to now have been prepared to support the leadership unconditionally are now beginning to jib.

THE TUC AND THE ETU

Statement by the Executive Committee of the Socialist Labour League

The Socialist Labour League has important differences with the leadership of the Electrical Trades Union. These disagreements, however, have nothing to do with the campaign which is now being whipped up by Catholic Action and the right-wing leaders of the Trades Union Congress.

In our opinion the only people who are qualified to decide upon the policy and elections inside the ETU are the rank and file of that union—and nobody else. Supporters of the Socialist Labour League who are members of the ETU, carry on the fight on the issues where they disagree with the leadership inside the union and not on the BBC and ITV.

The attack on the ETU by reactionary forces has widespread implications. It will not stop at the ETU. What is involved is the whole fight for democracy and democratic rights inside the trade unions. In fact the attack coincides and is related to the plan to remove Clause 4 from the constitution of the Labour Party.

The Socialist Labour League calls upon all trade unionists, irrespective of their political differences with the Communist Party, to tell the leaders of their respective unions that they will not tolerate any kind of disciplinary action against the ETU. We will support every step that is taken by the leadership of that union along these lines. There must be no retreat. United action is now imperative against this latest witch-hunting move by the TUC.

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1960

FOUR MINUTES TO BARBARISM

BUYING time at the rate of £2 million per minute, Britain is to contribute £8 million towards the cost of providing a ballistic missile detecting station at Fylingdales, Yorks.

The metal screen detector, liable to severely burn anyone passing within two miles, will cost £43 million and provide four minutes' warning of impending death.

Quizzed by M.P.s about the time warning, Air Minister George Ward replied: 'We hope to get enough (time) to get a substantial part of the bomber force into the air.'

The problem here is that most of us will not be able to get in one of Mr. Ward's bombers and get the hell out of it. No doubt all seats are booked in advance by the nuclear deterrent boys.

Ironically, by the time the detector station is built it will be an antique model. Reports already credit the Russians with having tested in the Pacific Ocean a 7,700 mile-range rocket which makes Fylingdales out of date before it is built.

Nuclear weapon lunacy, dramatized by Fylingdales' 'white elephant', is not confined to Britain. America's budget for the financial year, starting July 1, 1960, totals 79.8 billion dollars. Of this, 41 billion dollars will be gobbled up by arms expenditure, compared with 4.6 billion dollars on education and welfare.

Awe-stricken and paralysed before the insoluble crisis of capitalism, the leaders of social democracy and of Stalinism are unable to do more than utter squeaks of protest. Labour M.P.s protested about the site chosen for the detector station, which is a national park. They seemed more concerned about the possible desecration of the countryside than the prospect of the country's devastation.

No opposition was voiced to Tory foreign policy and no notice was given that Labour intended to vote against the Tory defence estimates en bloc.

Last Friday, the Political Committee of the British Communist Party made a statement on the defence white paper. Castigating the Tories' increased arms expenditure it approvingly quoted the Russian government's reduction of its armed forces by one-third.

True to form they ignored the real reason for this reduction. In his speech to the 1,378 delegates of the Supreme Soviet last January, Khrushchev did his own 'rocket rattling' act. He explained the cuts by saying: 'Our air force and navy have lost their importance. Their arms are not being reduced, but replaced.' Boastfully he added: 'Though the weapons we have now are formidable indeed, the weapon we have today in the hatching stage is even more formidable.'

Taking their cue from Khrushchev's 'negotiate or else' speech, the British Stalinists conclude their statement by saying: 'There is only one way to defend Britain. That is by hastening international agreements now under negotiation. . . . Daily Worker readers are then urged to telegraph MPs asking them to vote for the 'cutting of the arms programme by half'.

As capitalism lurches towards a nuclear holocaust, devouring the wealth created by its exploited millions and poisoning and polluting the atmosphere in the process, the Stalinists suggest: send them a telegram!

The road to peace does not turn via the summit. Peace will not be achieved by Khrushchev's new weapons or by diplomatic gimmicks at the United Nations. It can be obtained and secured for all time only by mobilizing the millions of working people throughout the world in a struggle to smash this decaying system and replace it with a socialist one.

BOYCOTT MUST EXTEND TO INDUSTRY

By V. Mendelson

The Labour Party, the Trades Union Congress—and some of the Co-ops—are urging their members to take part in the boycott of South African goods which starts next week. Even British capitalism's SuperMac has chided the South African Nationalist government for its foolishness in pursuing a policy of apartheid.

What is it that makes it possible for the South African government to thumb its nose at so-called 'public opinion'? It is because the gold and diamond millionaires of the Rand are bolstered up by British investments. Macmillan hypocritically speaks against apartheid, but his fellow-Tories continue to reap the harvest from the exploitation of slave-labour in South Africa's farms and mines.

British big business doesn't want to bring economic pressure on South African capital because they need their support internationally. The capitalists are very conscious of the need for class solidarity. So it is up to British Labour to interfere with British capital's profits by refusing to handle South African goods, not only farm products but much more important—industrial goods.

Although Britain took nearly one-third of South Africa's consumer exports in 1958 and again in the first ten months of 1959, at a cost of £90 million a year, by far the most profitable of South Africa's exports are gold, diamonds and uranium.

A consumers' boycott can touch only the fringe of profits, mainly those made by British retailers and distributors. A boycott on the handling of South African goods by trade unionists would have a much more powerful impact.

The struggle against the Afrikaner and British farmers and mineowners in South Africa is not something which can be handled with kid gloves. The Nationalist government has no compunction about using the most brutal methods of repression; shooting, beating-up, banishment, strike-breaking through the use of convict labour. The British Tories shut their eyes to this—after all, didn't they teach their fellow-oppressors a thing or two in Kenya?

British Labour has nothing in common with such people. Our interests are those of the coloureds and Africans—who want to throw out their White exploiters. We can strike a blow in the struggle of the South African people if we insist on a boycott not just by housewives but by all trade unionists, dockers, transport workers, on the handling of all South African products.

WHAT ABOUT ALGERIAN WINE?

By our Birmingham Correspondent

At a recent pro-boycott demonstration in Birmingham, a leaflet was distributed listing on one side those South African goods which should not be bought and on the other a list of alternatives—including French wine. When reminded that the French were busily carrying on a bloody war of repression in Algeria and so their goods should be boycotted, too, the organizers replied that they couldn't help that, 'we can only deal with one thing at a time'.

INDUSTRY

HULL DOCKERS STAND FIRM

By our Hull Correspondent

In its second week the strike by 4,000 Hull dockers against hand-filling is still 100 per cent. solid. The justice of the men's case is so great that they have maintained a total stoppage and have not even had to use picket lines to maintain their ranks.

The Transport and General Workers' Union officials on their side have backed up the employers in their attempt to foist off on to the dockers an experiment in discharging the cargo whose result every docker knows before it is even started. They have refused to press for the demonstration which the dockers know will work because of the use of equipment which the bosses are ignoring. They have also tried to get back the deal carriers, who they say are not affected by the strike. The result was that 14 men turned up for work. It is obvious that the power of this union to lead the men back for the employers is a thing of the past.

The lesson must be learnt by every docker—that his strength lies in the fact that his ranks are composed of men of both unions led by their own rank-and-file committee. This committee must make absolutely plain that it is to them that the employers must turn if they wish to end this stupid stoppage. They are now the power in the port.

Profits before lives

One Hull docker stated to a Newsletter reporter that many years ago his grandfather, after a life of basket filling, came in from work after seven, lay on the sofa exhausted, dropped off to sleep and never woke up again. His father, who had also constantly filled baskets, developed T.B. in his lungs. Older dockers have known men rolling on the floor for breath which has been choked out of them by dust in their ears, eyes, nose and throat.

The fact is that men's lives are being shortened and progress retarded so that a few inefficient employers can be saved the expense of buying the up-to-date mechanical means of discharging cargoes that are available.

What solutions do the dockers put forward? First, the senders of the cargo in the port of origin should bag the cargo and then it could be shipped and dealt with like similar cargoes which are bagged. Second, the weight of the cargo should be accepted on the lighterman's professional estimation—the dockers have to accept this for their pay on many cargoes, why not the bosses? Third, grabs or elevators could be used which could weigh the cargo—this is the point which the dockers are adamant about and, after all, they are the experts when it comes to questions of this sort.

Many years ago in a similar dispute the secretary of the National Dock Group of the Transport and General Workers described hand scuttling as 'a dirty, rotten, underpaid job that should have died with Victoria'. Never was a truer word spoken!

N.U.M. RECOMMENDATIONS NOT ENOUGH BETTESHANGER MINERS SAY—

As the strike of over 2,000 miners at Betteshanger colliery, Kent, enters its third week, the area executive council of the National Union of Mineworkers has put forward the following recommendations, all of which have been endorsed at mass meetings held at Kent's other three collieries.

1. That Kent miners will tolerate no recruitment of new labour to the mines in their area until such time as the 140 men declared redundant have either been absorbed in the industry or have found alternative employment.

2. That they will permit no transfers to or from Betteshanger pit until the dispute has been settled.

3. That all miners in the Kent area will take strike action should a single hundredweight of coal be removed from any pithead stock in Kent, while the dispute at Betteshanger continues.

Plans have been drawn up for picketing all coal stocks in the area. Appeals would be issued to lorry drivers and railwaymen should they attempt to remove the coal and the appropriate unions would be contacted.

The Kent Area Executive also recommended a levy in support of the Betteshanger men of 2s. per week (underground men to pay for three weeks, surface men for two weeks). The Chislet men immediately accepted the levy. At Snowdown and Tilmanstone even bigger amounts were pledged in support of the Betteshanger strike fund (5s. a week at Snowdown, 6d. in the pound at Tilmanstone).

Good as these measures are, the urgent need is still to extend the strike if redundancy is to be defeated.

The national executive of the NUM remains silent and inactive. Harold Davies, delegate to the Kent area executive from Tilmanstone pit, hits the nail on the head when he says: 'This (Betteshanger) concerns every miner.'

Understanding that the aim of the Coal Board is to fight the pits one at a time, Davies says: 'The Coal Board could never succeed in sacking miners if they had to face the united strength of the NUM.'

Asked about the attitude of the NUM executive, Davies adds: 'We take a dim view of the way in which our national executive are fighting closures and partial closures. They are letting us down in this struggle which concerns the livelihood of thousands of miners.'

Late last week the Tilmanstone branch of the NUM decided to send a special letter to the Kent area executive. This calls on the executive to circularize all branches in the country drawing the attention of all miners to the serious position that has developed in Kent. The letter also calls on the executive to urge all branches to let the NUM executive know of the disappointment and disapproval felt by miners throughout the country at the way their national executive is fighting the NCB plans for redundancy.

The step taken by the Tilmanstone branch is very important. It is now the duty of miners in every lodge throughout the country to respond to that letter and make known their solidarity with the Betteshanger men.

To date every struggle waged by miners against sackings has been suppressed by the national and local leaders. The national executive, from Paynter on the left to Jones on the right, has safely canalized all protests into harmless lobbies.

This must not happen at Betteshanger. If the executive refuse to lead once again, then the rank-and-file of the union must organize their own solidarity committees to support the Betteshanger fight.

CLYDE APPRENTICES DOWN TOOLS

Thousands of Clyde apprentices downed tools on Wednesday in support of their wage claims which the trade union bureaucrats have pigeonholed for so long. They came pouring out of the factories and congregated in Blythwood Square, a respectable office quarter in the heart of the city. From there they marched through the Glasgow streets escorted by the police.

Apprentices from John Browns, Rolls Royce, Remington Rand and dozens of other industrial establishments were there in strength. They were in a high-spirited mood, loudly jeering and ridiculing the mounted police who were posted round about.

Banners and slogans were dotted all around. And they reflected the apprentices' demands: 'End Apprentice Exploitation', 'We want cash—not trash'.

The token stoppage and the demonstration is the first step

in the struggle of the apprentices, whose fighting spirit has been thoroughly aroused. It is practically certain that the Clyde Apprentices' Committee will endeavour to establish contact with their opposite numbers down south. There is no doubt, too, that the trade union bureaucrats will do their damndest to put a block on the development of the unofficial apprentices' movement developing into a national movement.

For too long the apprentices in engineering and shipbuilding have been used as cheap labour. Now the lads are determined to get decent wages—it is up to all apprentices and engineering trade unionists to help them get them.

HARDY-SPICER WORKERS FIGHT VICTIMISATION

By our Midlands Correspondent

Birmingham, Monday.

A loud shout of accord greeted the chairman's statement: 'The resolution before you is: "We remain out until the firm reinstates Brother Troth".' Only one hand was raised against this motion, on Monday, when over 1,000 workers at Hardy-Spicer Ltd., Birmingham, met to discuss the sacking of their senior shop steward—Frank Troth.

This factory, which supplies 95 per cent. of the motor firms with propeller shafts, has not been long organised. A group of strikers told me 'The management for years tried to stop us organising and now that we are organised, they have been doing everything possible to stop the union functioning properly.'

The chairman outlined the position leading to this—the second strike at the firm in the last month.

Sacked for writing leaflet

'After the refusal of the management to grant us our demand for a new factory wage structure, we recommended a ban on overtime. The management posted notices up saying that this ban was unconstitutional. On our instructions, Brother Troth wrote out a reply proving that an overtime ban is permissible and is not a breach of national agreements. A copy of this notice got into the management's hands. They immediately sacked him and said that they had consulted their lawyers as they considered his statement on other points libellous. Well, we have our lawyers, too. We have been discussing this at the union office over the week-end.

'Now, when the night shift came in on Friday and heard that Bro. Troth was sacked, they immediately stopped work. Brother Troth was not in favour of this action, but the men were adamant. They appealed to the day shift men to support the night shift in their action.'

They did. Pickets were immediately posted after the meeting finished.

This obvious attempt by Hardy-Spicer management to break up the union must be combatted. All Midland engineering workers must see this fight as theirs. This sacking is similar to the BMC 'Horsman' sacking. The victimisation of shop stewards, who are only carrying out their members' wishes, must be stopped now—otherwise the practice will spread throughout the industry.

TOKEN STOPPAGE AT JARVIS'

Last Friday, the management at Jarvis' site, Stockwell Road (South London), sacked four men. One of these a West Indian, was sacked on the grounds that he went to the lavatory not to use it but to sit down and have a smoke. The men object very much to the notion that a foreman has the right to throw open lavatory doors and investigate the activity of the occupants.

After the men had stopped work for an hour the management indicated that they had the right to hire and fire whom they pleased.

This site is going to hear a speaker from the Socialist Labour League next Friday to consider the question of electing delegates to the London Assembly of Labour.

UNITED GLASS BOTTLE STRIKERS RETURN TO WORK

By our Industrial Correspondent

Last Friday the situation looked very grim for the United Glass Bottle management.

Their factory in Charlton was shut completely, with the staff working round the clock to keep the furnaces alight.

In Scotland, their factory was threatening to strike in sympathy with the Anchor Lane men.

At the St. Helens Lane factory, work was interrupted by a series of token strike actions.

All products from the factory had been blacked not only by the rank and file of the milk companies but, more important, by the dockers and lightermen.

The management, in desperation, had asked the Ministry of Labour to intervene.

Everything seemed to indicate a resounding victory for the strikers. But instead, a shabby compromise was negotiated between the management and the union officials.

Baldly stated the items of settlement were that:

1. The management withdrew the dismissal of Wally Morton—the sacked steward—but he would be suspended for a period of three working days.

2. The management asked the union to examine the fitness of Brother Morton to act as steward. The district official, Brother Parker, indicated that this would be done by the South London District Committee of the A.E.U. and a report made back to the management.

3. The management asked that the whole function of shop stewards in the factory, plus the working of the procedure agreement be examined.

And while such an examination is being made Brother Morton should not act as a shop steward in the factory.

Officials praise Ministry

Brother Parker, full-time official of the AEU, said he 'regarded the settlement as a victory. We had', he said, 'knocked the employer for the count of nine.' Moving an amendment that the plant should stay out, a striker said, 'Why should we let him take the count of nine, why not knock him out?'

The seconder to the amendment said 'There's only one way to raze Brother Morton in and that's let him go first and we follow him.'

The officials worked might and main to convince the men to return. Parker and Biggin spoke of their gratitude to the Ministry of Labour officials who in their opinions were working with them to 'knock some sense into the heads of the management'. When the vote was finally taken a forest of hands went up to remain out. Brother Doust declared that it 'Looked fifty-fifty'. The vote was taken again with Brother Doust asking everyone to remember the gravity of the occasion. This time the decision to return was narrowly carried.

The management have gained partly what they set out for. They have succeeded in removing Morton from the position of shop steward.

It is heartening that 125 copies of The Newsletter were sold at the meeting and a number of workers disgusted with the betrayal, inquired about membership of the Socialist Labour League.

WHAT IS MARXIST THEORY FOR?

By Alasdair MacIntyre

A NEWSLETTER PAMPHLET

Price 3d.

The Crippling Burden on the Railways

By OUR INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

As Britain's old-fashioned railways plunged deeper into the red, Tory leader of the House of Commons, R. A. Butler, announced: 'Plans for the future are in everybody's mind.'

Very much in Butler's mind, no doubt, is the industry's rapidly mounting deficit. In 1957 the government advanced £250 million, supposedly to last until 1962. All that has been more or less spent now. After 1958's deficit of £90 million, 1959's figure is expected to top £70 million. The recent five per cent. increase, estimated to cost £19 million, will now add to the deficit.

Undoubtedly the government's new plans, which appear to include the scrapping of the British Transport Commission and the extensive decentralization of its various sectors, are aimed at slashing the labour force and increasing productivity.

Hardly a new policy! In the ten years from 1948 to 1958, 100,000 men left the industry never to be replaced. After the three per cent. wage increase of 1958, 12,000 shopmen—ten per cent. of the labour force—were marked down for redundancy.

Still the crisis mounts. The urgent need of the railways—modernization—proceeds at a snail's pace. Money urgently needed to provide for electrification and the introduction of new diesel multiple-units is not available in sufficient quantity.

Where diesel units have been introduced they have invariably led to an increase in receipts and a sharp decline in running costs. On the Southend line, receipts soared by £500,000 in the first year of electrification. On the Chelmsford line they shot up by one-third and on the Kent coast route, in the first six weeks of electrification, receipts rose 27 per cent.

The money is there

The railways have grossed the necessary money to finance modernization. From 1947 to 1958 the railways made an operating profit of £309 million. Payments to ex-shareholders, however, snaffled £545 millions. Interest paid out during 1958 on capital borrowed to finance modernization took another £26 million. Deliberately low freight charges made to private industry also ensure that employers receive a hidden subsidy at the expense of the British Transport Commission.

CEYLON

CEYLON WAITS FOR THE IDES OF MARCH

By M. Banda

While the people of Ceylon are preparing for the general election scheduled for March 19, the Prime Minister, Mr. Dahanayake, is preparing for what seems suspiciously like a coup d'etat.

Like the proverbial thief Daha (as he is commonly known) accuses his opponents of the very things he is attempting to do: subverting democracy by violence and intrigue. This is only a cover for his own machinations to instal dictatorial rule and they include the following measures:

1. The creation of a Ministry of Internal Security after the dissolution of Parliament and in violation of the constitution.

2. The appointment of Sidney de Zoysa, cashiered from the police force after the Bandaranaike assassination—and an aspirant 'strong man'—as permanent secretary to the new Ministry.

3. The conversion of the government radio into what The Economist calls 'a ventriloquist's dummy'.

4. The propagation of rumours and half-truths designed to provide a pretext for the suspension of the constitution

and the declaration of an emergency.

5. An unsuccessful attempt to transfer the files of the Bandaranaike assassination case from the Ministry of Justice to the new Ministry of Internal Security; and most recently, a proposal by the Ministry of Internal Security to create special police JPs with power to disperse 'unlawful assemblies'.

On January 25, a conference of seven of the opposition parties unanimously condemned the creation of the new ministry and called upon the armed forces not to carry out any illegal orders of the caretaker government. This was followed by a statement from the Lanka Sama Samaja (Trotskyist) Party headquarters calling upon the trade unions and youth leagues to be prepared for immediate and direct action against any attempt to impose a dictatorship upon the people.

The LSSP has put forward 101 candidates (there are 151 seats). It is the only opposition party which is contesting seats, both in the predominantly Tamil north and the Sinhalese south. In a direct appeal to the people the LSSP has outlined its major objectives; (a) the maintenance of national unity; and (b) the planned economic development of Ceylon.

If returned to power it promises to bring down the price of rice, abolish the taxes on essential foods and other necessities; give every man a job within three years, provide every family with a house within three years and provide education for every single child in the country.

Bled by the ex-shareholders, compelled to pay high interest rates and made to subsidize private industry, the railways' plans for modernization have become hopelessly bogged down in a financial swamp. Meanwhile, railwaymen, despite their five per cent. increase, scrape through on abysmally low wages and continuously deteriorating conditions, with an ever-increasing threat of redundancy hovering over them.

Both the unions and the Labour leaders are without a plan. All they can do is look hopefully to the Tory government and pray Thorneycroft won't get his way. A plan is urgently needed and Labour's Left-wing must develop a policy to meet this situation.

What Labour can do

It should demand the immediate suspension of all compensation payments. These total some £45 million a year. When the BTS considered its 15-year plan for modernization it estimated it would have to borrow some £800 million outside the industry entailing, at five per cent. interest, annual repayments of around £40 million. This money should be used to finance electrification and other necessary modernization, not for paying out redundant shareholders.

Labour should also demand that all money required by the BTC for new projects should be made available interest free, thus avoiding placing a crippling debt on the industry.

No depots, stations or workshops should be closed down and men sacked without the BTC first proving the economic necessity to elected committees of railwaymen. If the men are satisfied such closures are necessary then transfers at equivalent rates of pay should be guaranteed to all the workers affected. Where men do not wish to be transferred, they should be kept on the books at full pay until they find alternative employment.

The finance for this can be found quite easily from the compensation payments and the slashed interest charges.

The unions should set up a joint commission to inquire into present freight charges. Industry must be made to pay the full costs of having its goods transported and the increased revenue used to finance better wages, improved conditions and the introduction of a 40-hour week.

Railwaymen must fight for the adoption of such a programme. Further, they must ensure that their union branches campaign inside the Labour Parties for that programme.

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CINEMA**All Quiet on the Western Front (Cameo-Poly)
Hiroshima Mon Amour (International Film Theatre)**

'All Quiet on the Western Front' is a re-issue of the film made in the '30s, based on Remarque's anti-war novel of the same name. Despite occasional lapses of gaucherie in directing and acting, the film stands out as a protest against the squalor, the brutality and the waste of war. This is a film with a purpose, nobly conceived and, on the whole, artistically executed. The fighting is depicted by magnificent shots of the planned chaos—waves of men dashing against men in stormy murder. In war, life is held cheap, and yet remains dear to the soldiers.

Balanced against the school-room scene early in the film, when the patriotic teacher urges his boys to go and fight for the Fatherland, is the picture months, even years later, when we watch the soldiers questioning war. Perhaps here the dialogue is a trifle naïve, yet one is moved to applaud. These are not only German soldiers speaking bitterness in 1917, but all men forced out to fight, and asking: why?

Remembering and forgetting

There is a temptation to compare this film with another, in rather different genre: 'Hiroshima Mon Amour'—a combined Franco-Japanese production. Whereas 'All Quiet' as a film is a product of the American 'realism' of the 30s, 'Hiroshima' is an intricately poetic work. The characters, a French actress, engaged in an anti-war film being made in Hiroshima, and a Japanese architect, symbolise the unceasing struggle between the memory and the forgetting of the Hiroshima nightmare. Herein lies part of its artistic strength, for the infinite richness of the theme is expressed in the complex relationship between these two people. If the theme is 'forgetting', around it is spun and interwoven time present and time past—the girl's past in Nevers, France, her reawakening to love in the present, and the holocaust of Hiroshima. Just as the girl is forgetting her German soldier lover, killed by the Resistance; just as the humiliation of her shaven head and the bleeding agony of her loss are becoming dulled, so the world is forgetting Hiroshima. Just as war destroyed her love with a Bavarian peasant, so it destroyed a city and a population. And just as her Japanese lover pursues her inexorably, forcing her to experience her own past and through this, her present, so the memory of Hiroshima, and with it the awareness of all war, penetrates to the viewer, probing and hurtfully reopening remembrance of destruction. What was it like in Paris on the day the bomb was dropped?—he asks. The sun shone, and the people rejoiced because the war was ending.

The military 'art' of World War I, when men in mass were used to bombard the enemy line, was replaced by the clinical 'science' of World War II, when one neat bomb devastated a city. Both films plead for remembrance; but were this sufficient, there would have been no 'Hiroshima' to compare with 'All Quiet'.

BENITA TEPER.

OUT FEBRUARY 25th

LABOUR REVIEW

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LETTERS**IRISH WORKERS' UNION**

Why has The Newsletter had nothing to say about the Irish Workers' Union? A month ago the North London Press declared 'New Marxist Organization in North London—Irish Workers Are Urged To Fight Imperialism'.

In the next issue a letter appeared from a B. Wilkinson, doubting whether the Irish Workers' Union was capable of fighting imperialism because of its 'Trotskyist Support'. Wilkinson implied that the Trotskyists could only do harm to the established organizations who were, he claimed, already fighting imperialism, namely, the Connolly Association and Sinn Fein. The week after this, the North London Press told another story: 'Irish Workers' Union "Not a Marxist Body"'. This time a Mr. Callinan, organizer of the Irish Workers' Union, took the floor to tell us that his organization was 'positively non-Marxist'. Well, is it or isn't it?

North London Reader.

EDITOR'S REPLY

The Socialist Labour League is in no way responsible for, or connected with, the Irish Workers' Union.

Featured in the constitution of the Irish Workers' Union is a clause making 'members of the Communist Party and its auxiliary organizations' ineligible for membership of the IWU. For good measure Fascists are also banned.

The Socialist Labour League is absolutely opposed to witch-hunting and considers that this clause is designed to deny the rights of Communist Party members who are members of a legitimate working-class party.

We are anxious to establish the maximum of united action on the left to defeat bans and proscriptions and therefore would be opposed to our members participating in the Irish Workers' Union as long as that clause remains in its constitution.

The Catholic Herald has no doubts about our attitude on this matter. On February 5, ex-Stalinist Douglas Hyde writing in the Catholic Herald said: 'The IWU takes the view that as Marxists they (the Trotskyists) are just as unwelcome as the Communists themselves and it has already made its intentions plain by expelling one of its own leaders as a Trotskyist.' Hyde is evidently referring here to the expulsion of Pat Donovan from the IWU who wrote in The Newsletter of January 2, denouncing the 'exclusion' clause in the union's constitution.

MARXISM IN AFRICA

What does James Baker mean when he says: 'So far there is little sign of the emergence of a Marxist leadership among the Africans; but neither is there any sign of reformism'? While agreeing with the first part, can we say that there is 'no sign of reformism'? The very absence of a Marxist leadership gives the middle-class (and thereby the native capitalists) the hegemony of the revolution.

The revolutionary middle-class leadership has a contradictory character. Imperialism has nothing to fear from a few dozen native lawyers, doctors and politicians, but when these few dozen mobilize the poor peasant masses (Nyasaland and Algeria) and the workers (Kenya and Rhodesia, etc.) on a limited anti-capitalist programme in support of their own banner of pan-Africanism, then imperialism is seriously threatened.

African constitutional reformists of the Banda-Nkrumah type say to the imperialists: 'Give us political power or else we will be unable to hold back the "extremists"' (i.e., workers and poor peasants). In no other way can we assess the All-African People's conference held in Tunis or Mboya at the Kenya conference.

African reformism is prepared to compromise for political control. But independence without agrarian reform and nationalization quickly becomes dependent on foreign capital. African reformism has no answer to this, the answer lies in the hands of the masses who are the motive force that puts the reformists in power.

G. Kennedy.

Constant Reader Black Friday and Red

Somebody said to me the other day that he could always recognize Socialist Labour Leaguers by the way 'they harp on Black Friday, Red Friday and all that'. As a trend in the working-class movement we are, I suppose, distinguished by (among other things) a greater awareness of the lessons of the movement's history and concern to impart those lessons. And that is not to our discredit.

The recent success of the railwaymen in extracting a small increase from their employers, and now the Government's decision to subsidize the railways, provide good reason to recall both Black Friday and Red, with a view to helping the working class to do what must be done in the coming months.

After the great rail victory in the autumn of 1919, the Government and the bosses got ready their strike-breaking organization and waited for a better opportunity. This came in the spring of 1921, when unemployment had reached big dimensions and was affecting the mood of the workers. Against this background, an attack on the miners revealed weakness and worse in their leadership, and this in turn was used as the pretext for the railway and transport unions to cry off their solidarity obligations under the 'Triple Alliance'

FOR THE RECORD

It is now the Communist Parties which are the advocates of the peaceful and constitutional path of transition to socialism by the support of the majority of the people expressed through a parliamentary majority (the Communist Party's British Road to Socialism since 1951). The peaceful transition to socialism, which was once regarded as the hallmark of Social Democracy against Communism, has now become the hallmark of modern Communism. . . .

R. P. Dutt, Notes of the Month, Labour Monthly, January, 1960.

fact. The day when this happened, and the unions went down to defeat, so opening the road for a general drive against the workers' conditions, is known in history as Black Friday.

Four years later, the occasion when the miners were faced with a fresh attack, and the General Council of the Trades Union Congress threatened a general strike in their support, so that the mineowners and the Government had to retreat, is known as Red Friday (1925).

The Government agreed to subsidize the coal mines for a year. Meanwhile, it further perfected its strike-breaking arrangements, and when the subsidy period ended, faced the miners with a brutal challenge. The result was the general strike of May, 1926—and its betrayal by the trade union bureaucracy, which 'winded' the movement for many years after.

What might have saved the day in 1921 and 1926 was a Marxist leadership firmly rooted in the working class and organized to take the initiative out of the bureaucrats' hands. In 1921, however, the Communist Party had only just been created—and that only in the formal sense of the fusion of a number of propaganda groups. By 1926 the process of 'Stalinization' had begun, and this meant that the Communist Party, misled by Moscow's flirtation with certain allegedly 'pro-Soviet' trade union leaders, did not see the need to prepare for independent leadership of the working class.

RIGHT HONOURABLE LIARS

Listening the other night to the rebroadcast of 'Scrapbook for 1919' I caught the words: 'Miners demand nationalization—government refuse.' While appreciating that a lot of events

have to be squeezed into a short space of time in these radio scrapbooks, and that this inevitably means some telescoping, it did seem to me a glossing-over of one of the most shameless swindles ever perpetrated on Britain's miners.

In January, 1919, the miners demanded nationalization of their industry, and a strike ballot showed an overwhelming majority for action. The government was caught on the wrong foot—with riots in Glasgow and Belfast and mutinies in the forces, this was, from its point of view, no moment for a big industrial clash on a nation-wide scale. So it announced the setting up of a commission, the Sankey Commission, to investigate the problems of the coalmining industry. The Tory minister Bonar Law, Beaverbrook's protégé, wrote to the secretary of the Miners' Federation on March 21, 1919, in the name of the Cabinet, that 'the government are prepared to carry out in the spirit and in the letter the recommendations of Sir John Sankey's report'.

The miners withdrew their strike notices, trusting to the Cabinet's pledge. In June, the Sankey Commission reported in favour of nationalization. On August 18, Lloyd George, the Liberal head of the Coalition Cabinet, announced in the House of Commons that the Government rejected nationalization. In the subsequent debate a spokesman of the miners spoke of 'a huge game of bluff' and of his members having been 'duped'.

That is the instructive truth behind the smooth formula: 'Miners demand nationalization—Government refuse.' And this column is in business to keep straight the record of such episodes, and draw the perennial lesson—never to trust the promises of capitalist governments.

BULLSHINE

The John Bull article on the Socialist Labour League tells readers in one paragraph that a member had been 'squeezed out' because he devoted some of his spare time to seeing his girl-friend. This is presumably to warn all normal young people that the League is no place for them—all the ordinary person's amusements must be given up: 'abandon fun, all ye that enter here'.

A little later, however, it turns out that what is particularly dangerous about a certain well-known North of England Leaguer is that 'he is neither a crank nor an ascetic. . . . He enjoys watching football or taking his wife and 18-months-old baby for a spin in their 1948 car'!

Another anomaly in the article concerns the membership figure of the League. 'The League, he [Gerry Healy] said, now has branches in most big cities and a total membership of 1,200 (Fryer puts it at 400).' One of the headlines to the article reads: 'In cities throughout Britain—1,200 fanatical members.' That doesn't show much confidence in the information provided by ex-comrade Fryer, does it?

LABOUR JPs

A neighbour of mine, Mr. Norman Wallace, a supporter of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, has been dis-trained (I believe that's the word) for non-payment of that part of his rates which goes for 'civil defence'. He thinks that what is called civil defence is a fraud.

The chairman of the bench of magistrates who decided on this action was Frank Bailey, leader of the Labour group on Hornsey Borough Council, and his fellow-magistrate was Labour MP Harry Hynd.

Whether one agrees or not with Mr. Wallace's type of individual protest, it is certainly, I think, disquieting to find prominent members of the Labour movement functioning as repressors of such a protest. Incidents of this sort bring up the whole question of Labour JPs and what happens when socialists take positions in the repressive organs of the capitalist State.

BRIAN PEARCE.

ALL OUT FOR THE LONDON ASSEMBLY!

By BOB PENNINGTON

As the time for the London Assembly of Labour comes closer, there are only eight days to March 6, the importance of the Assembly becomes ever more evident.

During the last two weeks the employers have been able to remove from the agenda three big wages and hours' claims. The railwaymen were put in cold storage for five per cent., 7s. 6d. a week hardly turns a basic wage of £7 12s. 6d. into a living wage.

At a most favourable time for a fight to secure a 40-hour week and a £1 wage advance from the engineering employers, the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions settled for a rotten compromise of 42 hours and no wage increase.

In building, where last year the men's claim was turned down flat, the unions in the National Federation of Building Trade Operatives accepted 2½d. for skilled men and 1½d. for labourers.

The employers and their Tory government no doubt consider themselves fortunate to have got away so cheaply. Once again they have been saved by their friends, the Right-wing trade union leaders.

The Communist Party, apart from deploring the fact that the Confederation did not immediately lodge a new wage claim, tamely accepts the sell-outs.

Again we have seen a most favourable situation allowed to pass by; again the need for a new leadership comes to the top of the agenda.

In Denison House next Sunday, we shall be preparing for such a leadership. Delegates from jobs, union branches, workshops and Labour Parties all over London will be attending. They will discuss how to fight for shorter hours, increased wages, how to defend shop stewards' organizations

and how to carry forward the fight for socialist policies into the Labour Party.

Prominent in the discussion will be the need to struggle against bans and proscriptions inside the Labour and trade union movement. The Assembly will certainly not fail to draw the lessons of the situation inside the Electrical Trades Union. Only by adopting a programme such as that advocated by the National Assembly of Labour can members of the ETU fight against and defeat the witch-hunters.

This week, fresh delegations have continued to come in. The shop stewards' committee of Sir William Arrols, Belvedere, will be sending six of their stewards. On Thursday, two other jobs on that site will be holding meetings to discuss electing delegates. On Tuesday, electricians in Camden Town ETU elected their delegation, and last Monday one of South London's biggest bus garages decided to be represented. Students in the Socialist Societies at both University College and Imperial College have elected observers. A number of Labour youth sections will be represented.

We now appeal to every reader of The Newsletter to make sure that his or her organization is represented at Denison House on March 6. Those unable to attend as delegates we urge to attend as visitors.

LEEDS ENGINEERS CONDEMN CARRON

From our Industrial Correspondent

Anger is mounting at the failure of the Engineering leaders to fight for the 40-hour week and £1 rise. (See last week's Newsletter.)

The Shop Stewards' Committee at George Mann's (Leeds) has passed two resolutions.

The first—to go before the Leeds Shop Stewards' Quarterly meeting—says:

'This committee is aware of the benefits of a two-hour reduction in the working week, but nevertheless expresses its profound disgust at the cowardly action of the A.E.U. Executive Committee and the Confederation in accepting without any semblance of a struggle the 42-hour week without a substantial wage increase.

It especially condemns the E.C. of the A.E.U. for not fighting inside the Confederation for the policy of the A.E.U. National Committee on wages and the 40-hour week.

Further this committee deplores the anomalies created by the settlement, which shop stewards will have to handle, and

—realizing that our financial position remains the same—demands that a claim for a substantial wage increase, retrospective to the date of application, be placed immediately before the engineering employers'.

The second resolution is to go to the A.E.U. District Committee, if it meets before the N.C.—otherwise to go as an emergency resolution to the N.C.

This says:

'This Committee, in view of the abandonment of our claim by the E.C. for a substantial wage increase, and bearing in mind the forthcoming application by the E.C. to the Rules Revision Committee for up to £6 a week increase for full-time union officials, calls upon Rules Revision delegates to grant no monetary increase greater than that obtained for engineering workers as a result of the recent settlement on February 11, 1960.'

Leeds No. 5 Branch of the A.E.U. has also passed a resolution condemning the leadership's lack of fight, and the question will probably be raised in a number of other branches.

GAITSKELL MUST GO! (Continued from front page)

because the AEU, as part of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, has gone on record for the nationalization of the engineering industry and has, in fact, proposed a plan. Members of his union should call Mr. Boyd to order. He is not representing union policy. All the shouting about left wing members of the NEC speaking in public is just hot air. Mr. Boyd and those like him do not care two hoots about the decisions of their unions and are in fact constantly ignoring them. It is not Harold Wilson and Anthony Greenwood who should be called to order, but Mr. Boyd.

The left in the Labour Party must extend their campaign into the trade unions. That is where the real forces exist to prevent Clause 4 from being removed. Nationalization is

the foundation upon which rest all the struggles of the rank and file of the trade union movement. That is why the Socialist Labour League was proscribed. All the League asked was the right to fight for socialist policies inside the Labour Party. It is perfectly clear now that the ban on the League was part of the struggle to remove Clause 4 from the Labour Party constitution.

The Socialist Labour League will fight shoulder to shoulder with all sections of the Labour movement who stand against the removal of Clause 4. We will support whatever struggle members of the NEC such as Wilson and Greenwood engage in towards this end. Local Assemblies of Labour, whose national campaign of conferences will commence on March 6, will discuss how best to unite all the forces of the left against the proposal to transform the Labour Party into a semi-Liberal, non-socialist party.