

THE NEWSLETTER

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LEEDS LABOUR BACKS ALL WHO BLACK THE BASES

From A Correspondent in Leeds

BY a substantial majority, Leeds City Labour Party has pledged its support to trade unionists who decide to 'black' work on rocket sites. This decision was taken after a heated debate, and against an amendment proposing merely that the installation of missile bases in Britain be POSTPONED until after a summit conference.

The amendment virtually repeated the joint statement of the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress international committees. And so the debate centred on the question: Should peace-making be left to heads of governments, or can the British workers stop war preparations by independent working-class action and so give a lead to workers in other countries?

The resolution finally carried, proposed by East Leeds Constituency Labour Party, strongly opposed the decision to build and operate rocket bases in this country, and went on:

'We are aware of the opposition shown by the Parliamentary Labour Party but feel that in spite of this the Government will still attempt to carry out their programme.

'Therefore we do pledge our support to trade union activity that may decide not to carry out work on the sites.'

The debate revealed clearly that those who support the 'official' policy of the Labour Party agree with the Tories on two basic points:

THEY WANT the West to have the bomb against Russia; and

THEY WANT Britain to have the bomb as well as the USA.

Their five campaign points are of minor importance and in any case are put forward as proposals to the Tory Government; they make no appeal to Labour people to struggle.

If the Labour Party as a whole had been leading the anti-H-bomb campaign the clash of two important meetings in Leeds on one night could have been avoided, and there would have been a much more effective demonstration.

Many city party delegates were sorry to miss the Priestley-Collins-Taylor meeting, but realized that their main duty was to get the Labour Party and trade unions to support the fight against the H-bomb.

This is understood by the East Leeds Labour Party, which is organizing an anti-H-bomb campaign in the week leading up to May Day.

Meetings will be held to protest against the H-bomb and films will be shown depicting the horrors of the atom bomb.

In at least one ward the municipal election campaign is focused on the H-bomb menace and the need to get the Tories out as a step in the struggle for peace.

The Aldermaston March

By FRANK ALLAUN, M.P.

THE Aldermaston march was originally envisaged as a fairly small affair. But support has gathered so amazingly that it is clearly going to be the biggest march by the British people since the hunger marches twenty-five years ago.

The job is to show the British Government how strong is the will that it should stop the H-bomb race.

(Continued overleaf)

PETROCHEMICALS WORKERS DOWN TOOLS

'WE are having none of your bums on this job. We will select our own labour,' a Wimpey site official is alleged to have told a steward on the Petrochemicals construction site at Flixton, near Manchester.

Two hundred riggers and pipefitters downed tools on Monday in protest at the management's interpretation of an agreement made on the site three weeks ago that all labour would go through the trade union office.

Last week three riggers were refused employment. One had previously been a convener on the site and another a steward.

The men say that after informing the stewards that no labour was required the management sent telegrams to eight men telling them to start work. Some of these eight were already employed at other firms.

On Tuesday Amalgamated Engineering Union divisional organizer H. Scanlon called out the whole site after the management had refused to negotiate on a clarifying amendment to the site agreement.

On Tuesday evening Wimpey bus drivers, who are out in sympathy, formed a chain across the road to block a bus driven by a foreman millwright.

STREATHAM LABOUR PARTY TO WOULD-BE MPs: 'BAN THE BOMB OR WE'LL BAN YOU!'

Streatham (London) Labour Party refuses to adopt any parliamentary candidate who does not support unilateral abolition of the H-bomb by Britain.

This decision was taken by the general management committee when it passed the following resolution:

'Streatham Labour Party reaffirms its opposition to the possession by this country of nuclear weapons and

calls upon the constituency Labour Parties to support this position and refuse to elect any parliamentary candidate who does not support unilateral abolition of the hydrogen-bomb by this country.

'It further calls upon all sections of the Labour movement to oppose the manufacture or testing of such weapons and to declare all such work black.'

COMMENTARY

ALL BEHIND THE BUSMEN!

THE London busmen are in the right. Labour Party members, trade unionists and co-operators must now rally behind them to a man, so that the strike, if it does take place, is speedily won. Frank Cousins and the leadership of the Transport and General Workers' Union should be backed to the hilt by the leaders and

ALDERMASTON (Continued from front page)

This venture has touched something very deep. Men and women want to show their feelings on this issue by marching for their beliefs.

When the marchers leave Trafalgar Square on Good Friday morning among their ranks will be the veteran miners' MP, S. O. Davies. 'S.O.' is no chicken, but he is determined to do part of the fifty-mile journey.

Other MPs participating in the four-days activity are Fenner Brockway, Ian Mikardo, John Baird (and his wife and son), Bert Oram, Stephen Swingle (with his wife and four children) and myself. Michael Foot will be one of the speakers in the Square.

Marches are going to converge from Wessex, including groups from as far afield as Devon. Contingents are travelling by train to London from Manchester, Cambridge and other centres.

Here is an example of the kind of working-class backing that is arriving. Recently print and newspaper workers obtained 5,000 names on a petition to the Government against nuclear weapons.

Printers, engineers, are marching

The organizers—mostly members of Natsopa, the operative printers' association—have to work on the Saturday night to produce the Sunday papers.

But they feel they must take part, so they are arranging for vans to take them by road to Maidenhead on the Sunday morning for the last two days.

Southall district committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union are not only bringing out their banner, but are marching with us from Southall to Turnham Green and then coming on with us the following day. (Incidentally, trade union banners but not political party banners will be welcome.)

More than 50,000 leaflets inviting workers to join in are to be given out this week at factories and tube stations (shop stewards should ring STAmford Hill 2262 for details).

Personalities taking part include Dr Niemoller, Humphrey Lyttleton, Doris Lessing, Kenneth Tynan, Benn Levy, Dr Soper, Canon Collins, Harold Steele, the Rev. Michael Scott and Dr Alex Comfort.

May I appeal to all readers of The Newsletter to organize contingents among their fellow-workers and friends. Don't forget the vital time: 11 a.m. sharp in Trafalgar Square on Good Friday.

Even if you can only manage a few miles, show willing. I believe this is going to shake the so-called 'leaders' of the nation.

As a great poet once said: 'We are the people of England, and we have not spoken yet.'

BIRMINGHAM STUDENTS SAY 'END H-TESTS'

By a majority of 321, with 3 against and 22 abstaining, a ban the H-bomb meeting at Birmingham University passed a resolution urging the immediate suspension of nuclear bomb tests.

Birmingham's Undergraduate Nuclear Disarmament Campaign is officially supported by the Labour, Socialist, Liberal, Middle East, Arab, Moslem and Jewish Societies.

members of all other trade unions. Let a united movement go into action behind the busmen, with all its resources mobilized.

There is no time to lose. The Trades Union Congress should be urged to call a meeting of all its affiliated unions to decide upon common action. An all-London meeting of TGWU members should be called straight away so that solidarity action can be organized. Let Gaitskell stop hob-nobbing with Macmillan on foreign affairs and get on the public platform supporting the busmen.

NOW IT'S THE WORKERS' TURN TO POLL

FIRST replies to The Newsletter's H-bomb poll have started to come in.

Most workers are answering 'Yes' to the first six questions, which were printed in full last week.

One of these, Mr H. F. Luggs, a Transport and General Workers' Union member and Labour Party ward chairman, adds: 'Whole energies should be concentrated on peace through international socialism.'

A north London TGWU officer comments: 'In addition to the replies, I am opposed to the production of all forms of armament.'

Mr L. W. Rolfe, a Labour Party ward secretary and Amalgamated Engineering Union member employed by British Railways, also calls for 'international socialist agreement'.

Mr H. De Ritter, a fireplace maker, writes: 'Not in favour of industrial action. Favour campaign against H-bomb with vigour.'

And a worker at the St Pancras (London) goods depot, a member of the National Union of Railwaymen, voting against unconditional opposition to H-bomb tests and rocket bases, but in favour of a Labour Party pledge to stop these things and launch a campaign for international working-class action, adds:

'Not in favour of industrial action, but favour campaign against use of nuclear energy for war purposes.'

'GIVE A LEAD BY BLACKING THE BASES'

DEMANDS that the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress should organize a *real* campaign against the H-bomb and rocket bases were made at the annual conference of the Lancashire and Cheshire region of the Labour Party last week-end.

E. Hough, moving a resolution on behalf of the Manchester district committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union calling for a campaign in the region, said that since the motion had been formulated the Labour Party-TUC campaign had been announced.

But 'if it is going to be restricted merely to calling conferences at 1s. per delegate it will be no good'.

Stan Orme (Altrincham and Sale Constituency Labour Party) who is also chairman of the Manchester Victory for Socialism, said the official policy was inadequate. His party wanted unilateral scrapping of the bomb by Britain.

He wondered whether the intention of the proposed conferences 'was to win support among the people for a fight against Tory nuclear policy or to convert the rank and file away from unilateral action to the official policy'.

Harry Ratner (East Salford CLP) called for mass demonstrations and declared: 'We must involve the trade unionists on the job in the fight. What better lead could the British Labour movement give to the international struggle against war than to "black" all work on the bases?'

The AEU motion was carried, together with another from the Manchester and District Council of the National Union of Railwaymen asking for a mass demonstration against the carrying of H-bombs over Britain.

VEHICLE BUILDERS WANT SITES BLACKED

Concern over nuclear weapons brings five resolutions on to the preliminary annual conference agenda of the National Union of Vehicle Builders.

Salford branch calls on the General Council of the Trades Union Congress to mobilize the trade union movement to stop the building of rocket bases and the manufacture and testing of nuclear weapons; it asks the General Council as a first step to declare 'black' all work on the building of rocket bases.

'BAN THE BOMB', SAYS WAR-SCARRED CITY

About 850 Coventry citizens unanimously passed a resolution expressing abhorrence at the continued testing and manufacture of nuclear weapons and calling on the Government unilaterally to ban their testing and manufacture.

The meeting was called by Coventry North Labour Party at three days' notice. Representatives of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and National Union of Vehicle Builders were on the platform.

PRESS SLAMS CLUMSY M.I.5 ISIS PROBE

BRITAIN'S secret police has come in for severe criticism from the Observer and the Manchester Guardian for the way it investigated stories on British spying and anti-Russian provocations in the Oxford student paper Isis.

An extract from the article in question, which appeared in the special H-bomb issue of Isis, was printed in The Newsletter on March 8 ('Captains Courageous', p. 70) long before the matter was given prominence in the capitalist Press.

The Observer points out that M.I.5 has handled the matter so 'clumsily' that 'a great many people will think that the allegations were true. For why, otherwise, should M.I.5 bother to investigate at all?'

The Observer adds: 'The answer may very likely be that some of the stories were correct, but that the actions taken by the Navy and RAF were perfectly legitimate. Unfortunately, it is in the nature of these matters that simple answers can never be given.'

The Manchester Guardian calls the police action 'heavy-handed' and says police have visited Fleet Street newspaper offices to warn that offences may have been committed by re-publishing parts of the Isis article.

'It is far from apparent just how the Official Secrets Act can be interpreted so as to make this an offence . . . The way the matter has been handled is almost beyond belief.'

FOOTNOTE: East Salford Constituency Labour Party has protested at the police raid on the offices of Isis.

EX-DAILY WORKER NEWS EDITOR EXPELLED: MACEWEN TO JOIN LABOUR PARTY

MALCOLM MACEWEN, who resigned from the Daily Worker at the time of the Hungarian events, has been expelled from the Communist Party because he is on the editorial board of the New Reasoner.

He was asked whether he would resign from the board and whether he would stop contributing to the magazine.

In reply he asked the party leaders if they took the attitude that in principle any contribution, whatever its content, was

inconsistent with party membership. Only if their answer was 'no' would he consider resigning from the board. Their only answer was to expel him.

MacEwen was on the staff of the Daily Worker for sixteen years, serving as correspondent in Greece, parliamentary correspondent, news editor and foreign editor. He has been a party organizer, and a parliamentary candidate on several occasions.

He has applied for membership of the Labour Party.

INDUSTRY

CONVENER SACKED—140 OUT FOR 7 WEEKS

ON strike for seven weeks in protest at discrimination against their shop stewards' convener are 140 Tyneside engineering workers at the Armstrong Whitworth (Pneumatic Tools) factory, North Shields.

They include members of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, Electrical Trades Union, National Union of General and Municipal Workers' and Boilermakers Society. The NUGMW and the AEU have declared this strike official.

The convener, Mr Albert Ogle, was given notice immediately after he had supported a refusal by an AEU tool-grinder to wash his machine down, which would have meant taking a labourer's work from him.

When reporting for work the next day, the convener, instead of being allowed to work his notice, found his card and wages at the clock-on.

Attempting to enter the works, he was prevented by an 18-stone, ex-policeman security officer. The workers walked out in protest against the assault and for reinstatement.

At Tynemouth Magistrates' Court, convener Ogle was found guilty of assaulting the security officer and bound over for six months.

Out of 122,875 £1 shares in this factory, 122,871 are owned by the Thor Power Tool Co., a U.S. subsidiary. One of the four directors in Britain is Mr R. G. Faverty, an American citizen.

Support is being sought from all trade unionists and Labour movement branches. Tynemouth and Whitley Bay Trades Council has expressed unanimous support and subscribed ten guineas.

Attacks throughout the country

In a personal statement to The Newsletter Mr Ogle, who was chairman of the Chirton Estate strike committee in the national engineering strike last year, said:

'I link my victimization with similar attacks by the employers throughout the country. For example, at the Sunderland shipyard of Austin and Pickersgill Ltd the shop steward, Terry O'Connor, was paid off and thirty welders and six apprentices of the Boilermakers' Society are on strike.

'At Armstrong Whitworth the management have been trying to speed up our rates to times taken in American factories.

'They recently wanted to cut the time taken to cut "concrete-breakers" from 186 minutes to 60 minutes. Without consultation they have cut the "coverage rate" from 100 per cent. to 75 per cent., and the day before my sacking, they were trying to cut turners' prices.

'They are employing a higher percentage of women and apprentices. I recently stopped them replacing a labourer with a 17-year-old girl. Apprentices, whenever possible, are not being re-employed after their national service.

'Shop stewards are being victimized because they resist these employers' attacks.'

Scrap-heap for Portworkers? Not on Your Life!

By PETER KERRIGAN

WE in the docks industry are faced with demands from the Dock Labour Board and the employers for a reduction in the register. It seems that the Transport and General Workers' Union officials have nothing better to offer than consultation—and perhaps compensation.

For many dockers that could only mean the scrap-heap of unemployment. Portworkers must not fall for that.

If the employer cannot provide employment and a decent living wage, then the Government must provide work. Our policy must be voluntary temporary release and no sackings.

At a mass meeting of Liverpool dockers last November a prominent TGWU militant told the men that a circular on redundancy had been sent to all branch secretaries.

Despite the hardship that redundancy would cause to a section of dock-workers (if it were implemented) there had been no branch discussions on the problems.

The likely effects of redundancy never pricked the conscience of the TGWU officials—they have a job for life—and a policy of combating the threats of sackings was not considered necessary.

It was said that a certain port labour officer had been openly threatening dockers that they would be on the list if they did not 'toe the line'.

Employers try to dictate

Last attempt to reduce the register drastically was in 1951-52, when a temporary release scheme was adopted by the National Joint Council. But in the end the terms of release differed from what the employers wanted.

The latter, of course, always try to dictate 'hiring and firing'. Examination of a man's record (for militancy and other crimes) and 'first on, last off' are always suggested as solutions to redundancy.

Even the original draft of the temporary scheme had to be modified so as to enable the released docker to return to the docks should he want to do so.

The employers would have liked a two-year minimum period, but with qualifications. It was finally agreed that a docker voluntarily released could return upon notice in three months.

It is worth noting that despite the fact that post-war recovery in building and other industries was at its peak (in days gone by building sites provided alternative employment for dockers), the temporary release scheme did not satisfactorily reduce the register.

The docker to-day is well aware that the Government's policy is to establish a percentage of unemployment.

He also knows that restrictions on imports, cuts on imports by colonial countries, and a cut by India, will produce nationwide redundancy.

Jumping into the river

Headlines about 50,000 building workers unemployed (owing to cuts in local authorities' housing programmes) will not encourage any docker-worker to seek temporary release. It would be a case of jumping into the river to get out of the rain.

The general indications are that the national port employers anticipate little response to a temporary release scheme and will try to sack men, perhaps on a large scale.

In 1951-52 the levy which sustains the administration of the dock labour scheme reached an all-time high figure of 22½ per cent., and the terms of the scheme require an Act of Parliament if a further increase is necessary over 25 per cent.

This was used by the TGWU officials to try to persuade dockers that redundancy had to be accepted or the scheme would go to the wall.

Although the constitution of the TGWU pledges a policy

to gain control of the industry in which its members participate, this policy of nationalization of port transport was not put as a solution to the dockers' problems.

The present low percentage of levy (12 per cent. daily workers) shows how little justification the officials had for crying: 'The scheme!', 'The scheme!'

It also raises questions in the mind of the rank and file about the policy of the union representatives on the National Joint Council.

Is it a coincidence that following each wage award a concession in the shape of reduction of the employers' levy is

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This is the first of two articles by Peter Kerrigan, well-known Liverpool militant portworker, on the problems of the docks industry.  
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agreed to by these gentlemen? Through these reductions in levy, the employers received a rebate of £545,000 in 1955 and approximately £600,000 in 1956.

While they are quick enough to pocket the profit from high employment they are quicker still to share the poverty among the dockers should the levy be threatened by an increase.

Officials don't scream 'The scheme!' when through reductions in the levy they hand the employers a nice bonus.

While agreeing on a maximum, the unions should also force through a minimum levy at say 20 per cent., which would safeguard the dockers' guarantee.

The object of the scheme was 'to ensure greater regularity of employment'. That means regularity not for the chosen few, the 'blue-eyed boys', but for all trade unionists in the industry.

We should remember the policy of the TGWU in relation to the settlement of the British Motor Corporation dispute in 1956. The strike leadership settled for compensation and consultation. The words meant in practice that the employers would not sack any more men without first consulting the unions.

How much consolation is it to know that before you are sacked your boss told your union official about it?

BRICKIES CEMENT UNITY WITH DOCKERS

A club with concert-hall accommodation for 300 will be opened in the Mersey port of Garston in about a month's time.

A former bakehouse, it has been taken by members of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers (the 'blue union') as a social centre for the community, with a subscription of 5s. a year.

The work of reconstructing the building is being done voluntarily by bricklayers and plumbers as a mark of solidarity towards the Garston portworkers.

LEEDS BOSS HITS AT WORKSHOP RIGHTS

MANAGEMENT of the Leeds clothing factory of John Barran and Sons Ltd is attacking rank-and-file organization. It has suspended meetings with the cutting room shop committee 'until guarantees of constitutional behaviour in the future are forthcoming'.

A shop steward had found that a change in the method of production was taking place in one of the departments connected with the cutting room.

The constitution of the joint consultation committee states that no change in the method of production will take place without its first being discussed with the shop committee. So the steward told the department to stop the practice.

The management accused the committee of acting unconstitutionally, and put a note in the workers' pay packets suspending meetings with the cutting room committee and stating that

ECONOMICS

WHAT IS BEHIND THE CUT IN BANK RATE?

By Our Economic Correspondent

THE reduction in Bank Rate to 6 per cent. may be, as the Press has said, merely a re-establishment of the relative levels of interest rates of Britain, America, Canada, west Germany and other countries as they were last September.

It is certainly true that Bank Rates in these other countries have all fallen since September and that the gap between 6 per cent. and the U.S. rate of $2\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. is even greater today than in September (when the rates were 7 per cent. here and $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in the USA).

The 6 per cent. today will therefore attract just as much capital to London as 7 per cent. did in September, and the flow of gold and dollars to London ought to continue.

But if that really is the reason for the change why was it not carried out some time ago when the foreign rates were falling?

The rate was maintained (together with the other anti-inflation measures which according to Mr Heathcoat Amory are still to continue) to resist demands for increased wages.

'No doubt the Government would like to reduce taxation . . . and bring the Bank Rate down to a . . . more moderate level than 7 per cent. . . .

'When one looks at the wage negotiations alone it becomes apparent that either relaxation would be very difficult to achieve . . . It would be very damaging if after struggling with wage demands for months a generous budget resulted in a major break through by the unions.

Perhaps a little later when the current negotiations have been settled one might look for a slightly lower Bank Rate . . . (Financial Times, January 29).

Impact of American crisis

If the obstacle to reducing Bank Rate was the wage claims, why reduce it now? None of them is settled. What is it that is really new? Obviously the worsening of the crisis in the USA, and its impact on Britain and the rest of the world.

The growing unemployment, accentuated by Government policy for the last six months, is sufficient reason for the change and for further changes in the near future.

The relaxation will of course affect the cost of credit and should normally, despite Government denials that it would do so, lead to increased investment.

But the anticipated fall in prices and loss of markets due to the crisis will more than offset such benefits and the level of investment is more likely to fall than rise.

If so the crisis, already world-wide, will deepen and the numbers of unemployed will rise steeply.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE IS SLOWING DOWN

RATE of increase in capital expenditure by industry is slowing down.

According to provisional estimates (Board of Trade Journal, March 14) the increase for last year was only 7 per cent. in manufacturing industry and 6 per cent. in other industries, compared with 20 per cent. in both these categories in 1956.

In the last quarter of 1957, the increase was only 2 per cent. higher in manufacturing industry than it had been a year earlier (compared with increases of 13 per cent., 9 per cent. and 5 per cent. respectively during the first three quarters of 1957).

In other industries and services it was only 4 per cent. higher than during the last quarter of 1956, compared with increases of 3, 4 and 14 per cent. during the first three quarters of the year.

Capital expenditure on building work in fact declined in the last quarter of 1957—by 11 per cent. in manufacturing industry and 12 per cent. in other industries and services.

RENTS

COUNCILLORS RUN TENANTS' GAUNTLET

BOOS and shouts of 'Traitors', 'Tories' and 'Call Yourself Socialists?' greeted councillors leaving a meeting of the all-Labour Islington Borough Council.

The Council had just rejected a petition presented by a deputation representing Islington's 5,000 council tenants, which called for the withdrawal of rent increases ranging from 8s. to 18s.

Several times the 150-strong crowd surged forward and surrounded councillors; they were only extricated by large police reinforcements, who roughly handled several of the crowd, including women.

The petition followed a mass meeting of over 500 Islington Borough Council, London County Council and private tenants, called by the Islington Borough Council Tenants' Central Committee, whose chairman is Coun. A. Macdonald, one of the five councillors who voted against the increases.

The meeting passed unanimously a resolution calling on the council to resist the Government by refusing to collect money or place the burden on the tenants and ratepayers, and adding:

'We call on the trade unions and Labour movement to take up the whole question of rising rents and evictions in a new and vigorous way, and with the help of the tenants' organizations, to unite all tenants in a campaign aimed at making the Government repeal the Rent Act, change its financial policy—or get out.'

Coun. Macdonald said the council should refuse to pass on the increases; it should fight the Tory government and go into deficit.

The best way to fight for a change of policy was for tenants to join the Labour Party and fight within its ranks.

WEMBLEY WORKERS PLAN EVICTION FIGHT

'WE must not allow a single tenant to be put out on the streets!' declared Coun. T. Davies, chairman of Wembley South Labour Party, opening a local conference on 'How to Fight the Rent Act'.

The meeting was attended by fifty delegates from twenty trade union branches, shop stewards' committees, Co-operative guilds and Labour Party wards in the borough, as well as representatives of Wembley Tenants' Association.

A resolution was carried unanimously setting up a Tenants' Defence Committee, with the job of mobilizing 'Wembley residents and workers in local establishments to . . . organize positive resistance to each case of eviction'.

Trade union delegates, supported by the prospective Labour candidate, Ted Mackenzie, stressed the importance of industrial action in any campaign against the landlords.

It is estimated that 400 Wembley families will be homeless in October. Neither Wembley Borough Council nor Middlesex County Council has shown any sign of helping these people.

One delegate suggested that if evictions do take place, homeless families should be accommodated in Wembley's £500,000 town hall.

'There is even a Council members' bar on the premises', he pointed out.

VFS Is Lagging behind the Working Class

RESUMABLY the final aim of the Victory for Socialism group is socialism. Immediately, however, they want to initiate a discussion in the Labour movement that will put some teeth into the next election campaign instead of gearing everything to the largely imaginary 'floating vote' which castrated the decisions of the Brighton conference.

Last week's statement of aims stresses the 'rapid extension of the social ownership' of the banks, land and factories. No nonsense about share-buying.

But having said this, the statement proceeds piecemeal, instead of from the recognition that the workers' enemy is the capitalist system, defended to the last by the capitalist class.

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'CLEAN' STOCKBROKING? From this viewpoint it is a little comical to talk about 'eliminating the gambling functions of the City'. What does this mean? That the City will retain some 'positive functions'? 'Clean' stockbroking, like the clean bomb?

Similarly, it is a little in the air to talk about effective control to make the private sector of the economy work in the national interest, without raising the question of who will direct this power.

The section on the nationalized industries begins to approach this problem of workers' control—'an effective system of workers' and consumers' participation in management'—yet its first demand is for 'more accountability to Parliament' of the nationalized industries.

This won't do any more. We are entering a period in which questions of socialist principle are raised by the daily experience of the workers.

Thus the miners are under attack, not from a section of the employers, but from the system which uses coal and the railways as cheap service industries, then tells the railwaymen they are well paid and turns down flat the miners' claim.

These sections will need a programme of struggle

against the capitalist class as a whole, against the capitalist system.

VFS will win wide support only if it is linked to the industrial fight. It must get away from the domination of the parliamentarians and the bureaucrats who failed to defeat the steel bosses in 1950 and repudiated socialism at Brighton.

Britain's problems are not to be solved within these shores alone, and the document recognizes this. However, even without considering the complete omission of any reference to the colonial struggle, it must be said that again the class emphasis is lacking.

The first demand, for unilateral suspension of H-bomb tests and manufacture, will bring wide support. But it must be shown in its connexion with the fight for socialism itself.

It is not enough to call on the next Labour Government to take this step. We must press for the Labour Party to initiate a great campaign here and to encourage links with the movement in other countries.

Only this entry of the international working class will have decisive effects for peace.

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UNIFIED STRATEGY NEEDED. The growing threat of mass unemployment, the deliberate attacks of the bosses on the workers' organizations and standards, require a unified strategy of struggle, and in this context the anti-bomb slogan will be in no danger of becoming a pacifist delusion.

It will raise questions like the nationalization of the armaments industries, and the planning of the nation's production for prosperity rather than war.

In my opinion VFS in this statement lags behind the real movement of class forces. Instead of more or less radical amendments to present Labour policy, let the discussion start from the urgent need to bridge the gap between the militant needs of struggle in the immediate future and the creaking machine of parliamentarism and trade union bureaucracy.

CLIFF SLAUGHTER

Cunvin's Column

TAKE BESSIE AT HER WORD

TRANSPORT HOUSE is reported to be most indignant because a recent Tory leaflet says the Labour Party wants to see old age pensioners evicted under the Rent Act so that it can use these incidents for propaganda purposes.

There is one sure way in which the Labour Party can give the lie to the Tories.

Let the party officially issue the same advice to all who are threatened with eviction in October that Bessie Braddock gave to her constituents: 'Sit tight! Refuse to move until acceptable alternative accommodation is made available.'

This advice means that every local Labour Party, together with the trade unions and the Co-operative organizations in the area, should organize action squads that will help the old people and others to resist eviction.

COST OF SUEZ

WHY are prices rising despite the fall in cost of all commodities on a world scale?

The three so-called wise men and orthodox economists have a ready answer for this—the high cost of wages.

But every working-class housewife knows that wage increases have not at all kept up with the increased cost of her household budget.

There is a clue to the soaring cost of living in the just-published Army Appropriations Account.

Tucked away in three lines of this document is the information that British imperialism's Suez adventure cost £52,476,000—for a war which lasted only forty hours.

That works out at £1,000,000 an hour. The working class of this country and of Egypt are still paying.

THE SEAMEN'S FAREWELL

FULL marks to the special correspondent of the Manchester Guardian who covered the Duke of Edinburgh's visit to Liverpool on March 21, for the following piece of mickey-taking:

'What the Duke might well have taken for rudeness turned out to be a polite piece of "scouserie".'

'At one point his car drew away from a small crowd of merchant seamen huddled bleakly against the wind, their wintry faces turned expressionlessly towards him.'

'He leaned towards the seamen with a smile of unaffected delight. He waved, but all that the seamen did in response was to stare. The car moved on.'

'Not a flutter of emotion had crossed their faces. Was this a rebuff? Not at all. The seamen had been deeply moved by the encounter.'

'One of the younger seamen, apparently embarrassed by the continued silence after the Duke had gone, made a coarse remark. His elders looked at him sharply and frowned.'

'The elders were still silent as they shuffled back to the warmth of the seamen's mission hut to enjoy the royal gesture in isolation.' (A 'Scouse' is a Liverpoolian.)

TWO KINDS OF UNEMPLOYMENT

'At the Waldorf-Astoria, in New York, over 2,000 business banquets were held last year, involving three to four million executive man-hours, while at the city's fifteen other big commercial hotels another five million executive man-hours passed quietly away at further banquets.'

—(Manchester Guardian, March 20)

'Mr Robert Goodwin, director of the [American] Bureau of Employment Security, said that there is no sign of a reduction in the number of people drawing unemployment compensation, which reached a record of 3,282,455 on March 1.'

—(Same paper, same day)

GEORGE CUNVIN

AUSTRALIANS HELD IN CHAINS

According to a dispatch from the Darwin correspondent of The Times, aborigines held prisoner at Halls Creek (Western Australia) are kept chained by the ankle while under detention.

Only a few months ago as many as twelve prisoners were in chains simultaneously.

The chain round the ankle is padlocked, then attached to a veranda post at a small police station. The reason is said to be that there is inadequate cell accommodation.

Violent prisoners are bound bodily and chained to a ring bolt set in the concrete floor at the station.

People living in Halls Creek are said to be appalled by the practice but have no power to stop it.

CEYLON

STRIKERS WIN COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE

From Our Colombo Correspondent

WAVE of strikes led by the Ceylon Federation of Labour in the private sector of Ceylon's economy is just coming to an end. It dealt a severe blow to the Government's new anti-working-class legislation.

According to this legislation the Government could refer any industrial dispute at any stage to an industrial court, and the parties to the dispute were forced to abide by its decision and refrain from other action during and after the proceedings.

Shell, Standard Vacuum and Caltex workers thereupon nearly paralysed the country's road transport in support of their demand for a special allowance to meet the rising cost of living.

Engineering workers, shop and office workers, hotel workers and gasworkers also struck. All these strikes, except for that of the engineers, who are still fighting, were successful.

FRANCE

WORKERS ARE PAYING FOR ALGERIAN WAR

From Seymour Papert

PARIS

COST of the Algerian war is beginning to be seriously felt by the French working class. After a period of stability from 1952 to 1955 prices began an upward movement during 1956 which has become explosive in the last six months.

The Liberal bourgeois newspaper Le Monde admits that real wage rates have fallen by 5 per cent.

There are two cost of living indices in France, known as the index of 179 articles and the index of 250 articles. The former is used to calculate the sliding scale of minimum wages which is supposed to go up automatically with prices; the latter is used for 'scientific' purposes.

According to one of these indices the cost of living has risen 10 per cent. since July 1957, according to the other by 14 per cent. Readers can guess which index registers the lower figure!

It was Guy Mollet's 'socialist' Government, backed by trade union support, which carried out the most blatant fiddling. It got away with more than others would have dared to try on because of the protection offered by its name and the Mumbo Jumbo about its being a 'workers' party'.

* * *

FRENCH newspapers have been showing increasing concern about the nature of the arms used by the Algerian rebels.

At first these were mainly old rifles, shotguns, home made grenades and the like. Today they include large numbers of rifles, bazookas, mortars and heavy machine-guns.

More than one correspondent has found it remarkable that units of the ALN (National Army of Liberation) wear uniforms and march in step!

French journalists seem to be more than half taken in by their own terminology, which consistently refers to the rebels as 'the outlaws' or 'the gunmen', as if nothing were involved but an outbreak of gangsterism.

An interesting sidelight on the mentality of French officialdom is provided by the charge of conspiracy brought against a large Parisian manufacturer of shoes.

His treason: size 41 shoes were marked 39.

Explanation: the sale of certain kinds and sizes of shoes is forbidden in Algeria; the government considers that they are 'suitable' for the rebels. No doubt the sale of bazookas is also forbidden.

Constant Reader | Dockers Against War

THE Communist Party's current hesitancy on the question of industrial action against war preparations calls to mind its reaction to British dockers' refusals to handle cargoes of ships carrying munitions to Japan, towards the end of 1937 and the beginning of 1938.

This movement, which began in Glasgow and passed through Southampton and Liverpool, culminated in the sending away empty, first from Middlesbrough and then from London, of the 'Haruna Maru', which had come to collect a cargo of scrap-iron.

These incidents aroused tremendous enthusiasm throughout the working class, expressed in hosts of solidarity resolutions

by trade union branches and trades councils.

They were duly reported in the Daily Worker, and there was even the beginning of a campaign to extend the movement.

But the leaders of the Transport and General Workers' Union frowned and the Government spokesmen muttered about the Trade Disputes Act, and the whole thing faded out.

They were embarrassed

When George Hardy wrote a survey, in World News and Views of February 4, 1939, of British trade union activity in the fight against Japanese aggression in China, he had nothing to say about this type of activity.

The fact was that class actions by the workers, however effective, were somewhat embarrassing then, as now, to King Street.

Demonstrations calling on Chamberlain to introduce an embargo, yes. Campaigns against buying Japanese toys as Christmas presents, yes. But strikes . . .?

The difficulty was that the Stalinists then, as now, were concentrating on an attempt to bring about a change in the camp of the ruling class, helping to power a section they hoped would be friendlier to Russia.

The partners they hoped to win for their 'broad alliance' would be antagonized by forms of struggle that brought workers into conflict with employers. So the dockers' efforts were quietly played down, lest they 'rock the boat'.

It was not accidental that on January 1, 1938, the slogan 'Workers of all lands, unite!' finally disappeared from the mast-head of the Daily Worker.

'Come to slump-stricken Ulster'

NORTHERN IRELAND is in some ways a mirror just now of what the capitalists would like the whole United Kingdom to be.

On top of the traditional, carefully-fostered division among the workers, which binds one section closely to their employers, there is heavy unemployment.

The advertisement in The Times of March 12 inserted by the Northern Ireland Development Council (chairman: Lord Chandos) shows a group of business men, looking variously wolfish and foxy, sitting around a table and deciding to solve their problems by setting up a factory in the Six Counties. The letterpress tells us that:

'Over 9 per cent. of the labour force—over 30,000 of them men—are looking for jobs. They are hard-working and loyal; absenteeism and labour turnover are low: output is high and shift-working is practicable.'

Well, they make no secret of what suits their book. Such frankness is welcome in that it can help Ulster workers in their turn to see what's what and bring back the spirit of 1919, when working Belfastmen of both 'sorts' (and none) stood together in fighting unity against their common exploiters.

Brailsford on Trotsky

THE late H. N. Brailsford wrote, in 'The Russian Workers' Republic' (1921), one of the best accounts of the early years of Soviet Russia.

His pen-pictures of leading personalities of the time included the following:

'The Red Army is certainly the most efficient creation of the Revolution. Trotsky has a genius for organization, and he has battled with sharp severity against the slovenly unpunctuality traditional in Russia. His Ministry runs like clockwork . . .'

Brailsford heard Trotsky speak in the Moscow Opera House: 'It was more like a professor's lecture than a demagogue's speech . . .'

Marshal Bagramyan speaks

THE quotation we published recently from the Communist Review, on Red Army Day, 1922, was a bitter reminder of how the builders and best leaders of the Red Army were destroyed during the Stalin era.

Renewed confirmation of this fact is now available (as I briefly mentioned the other week), from the pen of Marshal Bagramyan. Writing in the Moscow Kommunist on the fortieth anniversary of the Red Army he states (I quote from the version given in Soviet News for February 21):

'The tremendous and fruitful work done by the party in this field [i.e. the training of officers], however, was considerably harmed by the criminal gangs of Yagoda, Yezhov and Beria and their accomplices, who snatched from the ranks of our

armed forces a considerable number of experienced commanders and political workers.

'As a result of this, towards the beginning of the war many posts in the army and navy were staffed with officers and generals who did not have sufficient experience and knowledge for work on a scale that was new to them' (which was one factor in the setbacks suffered by the Soviet Union in 1941-42).

The Daily Worker has not published this important statement, doubtless because it clashes so sharply with that paper's propaganda in the past that the execution of Tukhachevsky and the others 'strengthened the defences of the Soviet Union'.

35,000 were purged

It is interesting to note the length of the period covered by Bagramyan's statement. Yagoda was head of the NKVD from its formation in 1934 until September 1936, when he was replaced by Yezhov.

Yezhov 'reigned' until December 1938, when Beria took over, to remain directly or indirectly in charge of the Soviet security forces until his arrest in July 1953.

According to R. L. Garthoff, in the symposium 'How Russia Makes War', the 1937-38 purge in the Red Army affected 35,000 officers in all, or about half the total officer corps, including 90 per cent. of all the generals and 80 per cent. of all the colonels.

Of the eight military members of the tribunal that 'tried' Tukhachevsky, six later disappeared, including Marshal Bluecher.

Orders from King Street?

COMRADE X for several years taught English to Soviet Embassy staff. During 1957 he emerged as an active and well-known critic of Stalinism from the Marxist standpoint.

Relations with his pupils remained unaffected, however, even when, towards the end of the year, he was expelled from the Communist Party.

Indeed, the Ambassador's son was assigned to him for teaching, and the Ambassador himself arranged to begin lessons with X in February of this year.

On January 28, when calling for a pupil at the Soviet Consulate, X came face to face with Harry Pollitt in person. Nothing was said between them; but in the week immediately after this encounter X's pupils began to cancel their arrangements with him, on grounds of illness, pressure of work etc.

By the end of February he was left without any pupils at all, and with no prospect of getting any more.

An experienced ex-member of the party 'apparatus' to whom X told his story observed: 'You see, it's of infinitely less importance to them that the Soviet comrades should improve their English than that you should be deprived of a source of income.'

BRIAN PEARCE

LETTER

LET'S NAG, NAG, NAG TILL IT'S BANNED

I, AN unmarried woman, regard with horror the complacency of many mothers of this country towards the issue of nuclear war.

Centuries of 'leaving politics to the menfolk' have culminated in an outstanding apathy.

I care about the future of the people of the world, and in particular about the children. In order to rouse the present generation of mothers to the H-bomb menace, I appeal to all women—and men too—to become 'naggers' and 'pests' and even 'bores' on the subject of banning the bomb.

The issue is a simple one—ban the bomb or ban the future of mankind.

Rusholme (Manchester 14)

Elfrida Gainsboro