

THE NEWSLETTER

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3 PER CENT WON'T DO FOR RAILWAYMEN

By Our Industrial Correspondent

THE Manchester railwaymen are not likely to accept a wage increase of 3 per cent. They are even less likely to accept it with strings attached. Harold Roberts, secretary of the Manchester district of the National Union of Railwaymen, emphasized this point in an interview on Tuesday evening.

He said that for a long time there had been pressure on the unions to get rid of those practices they had built up over the years for their own protection—so-called restrictive practices.

When the Government talked of more efficiency they meant doing away with restrictions on nine-hour working, being 'less difficult' about lodging turns, increasing spread-over duties and so on.

The Government wanted the unions to co-operate in worsening the railwaymen's conditions—and already there was a gigantic turnover of young men entering and leaving the industry because conditions and pay were not good enough.

Learned the hard way

I asked him what he thought the reaction would be in other areas to the proposals for 'co-operation'. He said:

'We in Manchester have had sufficient experience in the past. We have had to learn the hard way. And because of our struggles—and our successes—we have a much firmer attitude than in many other parts of the country.'

But he added: 'Up to now the railwaymen have been able to get other jobs if they were dissatisfied. It is not so easy now. I think that there will be a more determined attitude in other parts of the country too.'

Tories Are Preparing— So Must We

By NUR members Bob Shaw and Eric Badder

LARGE stocks of coal have been stacked around the country and in London for use in the event of a rail strike. There are also big stocks at points on the coast, where coal can be loaded on to coastal steamers and barges.

This is how the Government is preparing for the partial transport strike that would take place if the workers' ranks were divided. The Government is hoping for—and angling for—a split.

There is only one way to frustrate the Tories' schemes: by railwaymen closing the ranks with busmen, preparing for action now and calling on the dockers and lorry drivers for support.

Follow Manchester's lead

To accept an agreement that railwaymen should wait six or twelve months for a wage increase and then only receive 3 per cent. or 5 per cent. would be the worst possible betrayal. The lead given by the Manchester district should be followed on a national scale, strike committees organized and a date set for strike action.

It is said of the late Jim Figgins that as general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen he relied on some spontaneous militant action to strengthen his hand in wage negotiations.

And in the past the threatened strike has been enough to

(Continued overleaf)

'BLACK THE BOMB'—WOLVERHAMPTON TRADES COUNCIL

Wolverhampton and District Trades Council has carried unanimously the following resolution:

'This Trades Council calls on the TUC and the Labour Party to use every means in their power to press the Government to ban nuclear weapons and to cease their production and, by so doing, give a moral lead to the world.'

'It further requests the TUC to advise its affiliated associations to declare that their members will refuse to take part in the production of these weapons or the construction of launching sites.'

The resolution was moved for the executive by R. Garner (National Union of Public Employees) and seconded by the president, T. R. Thompson (Transport Salaried Staffs' Association).

BUSMEN TO LEADERS: WE WANT MASS MEETINGS TO PREPARE FOR MAY 5

By London bus driver George Farenden

'WHY are our leaders so quiet?'—This is the question that rank-and-file busmen throughout London's bus garages are asking as S-Day—May 5—approaches.

At many garages the complaint is that mass meetings of busmen should have been called. The lads want to know why these meetings have been shelved.

'Is this the way to prepare for a major dispute?' they are asking.

Again, it seems peculiar to many of us that Frank Cousins, general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, has been absent just when a big fight is on hand.

Rail leaders disappoint us

London busmen are disappointed at the way the leaders of the railway unions are acting. These leaders seem to want to avoid a showdown.

What a contrast with the splendid example set by the rank-and-file railwaymen, who have expressed support for the busmen, and whose calls for strike action have aroused admiration in the London garages.

By meeting the Tories the railwaymen's leaders seem to be rebuffing Cousins, and there is a danger that they will split the movement for higher pay.

London busmen would oppose any agreement with the Tory Government that would accept mass unemployment. They hope their brothers on the railways will resist any sell-out of the common fight.

COMMENTARY

A HOT CORNER

ADEN used to have a well-recognized place in the life of the British Army. To that bleak and parched corner of Arabia troops were sent who had 'blotted their copy-books': it was a punishment station, and it is not difficult to imagine the feelings of the soldiers who have now been sent there to put down a revolt of the local inhabitants. To the latter, Aden is part of Arabia, and like the people of Oman and other parts formerly thought of as 'non-political' they are on the move for unity and independence. The indignation of *The Times* at Aden, of all places, giving trouble, is terrible to behold, and understandable: why, even the Sultan of Lahej, 'a KBE, placed on his throne by British influence', is said to be wavering.

The acquisition of Aden was, in its day, symbolic of the power and ruthlessness of capitalist Britain when on top of the world. In the midst of pious speeches and firm diplomatic notes about the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, directed against Russian ambitions in the Black Sea area, Britain quietly annexed this then technically Turkish key to the Red Sea. Now, as then, Aden's strategic position, and above all its role as a *place d'armes* for control of the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf regions, makes it worthy of some expense of blood and treasure to retain, so far as Britain's monopolists and militarists are concerned.

The Labour movement should make it plain that it will not countenance any new colonial wars. The Aden region has an old trading and cultural relationship with Malaya and Indonesia, on the other side of the Indian Ocean. Let imperialist intervention against the peoples of both these areas cease in every form.

FLUFFY THINKING

LADY LEWISHAM (Mrs. Gerald Legge), the Tory glamour-socialite newly elected to the London County Council, has told the *Daily Mail* (April 22) what she thinks about some great questions of the day. Much of it is the usual knockabout unconscious humour one expects from this Blimpette. 'Labour is not really in favour of the Monarchy and they're not particularly for the country,' and so on. One crack, however, deserves comment. 'The march to Aldermaston,' says Her Ladyship, 'was a put-up job by the Communist Party. Everybody knows that.'

The Stalinists owe a great deal to people like Lady Lewisham, who ignorantly fasten upon them the credit for every militant and progressive action that takes place. In fact, the Communist Party ignored the campaign for the Aldermaston march until a couple of days before it was due to begin; or, rather, the party contributed negatively to this campaign with an article by George Matthews in *World News* against 'unilateralism'. Only after it had become plain that the Aldermaston march was going to be a big thing, in spite of them (and also, of course, after *Their Master's Voice* had spoken out for suspending tests), did the Communist Party's attitude change.

Lady Lewisham has much to learn. Meanwhile, nobody should take her as anything but the Lady Houston of the 1950s—though admittedly a much more decorative figure than the latter.

RAILWAYMEN (Continued from front page)

obtain a favourable settlement.

But the workers now face a much more determined opposition—a government bent on driving wages down, so that this time the threats of action will need to be carried into effect, with busmen and railwaymen engaged in massive retaliation against wage cuts.

Would this mean another 1926 strike? And will there not be another sell-out as there was then?

The Tory Government is already reeling under severe electoral defeats and is meeting growing opposition to its policy on the H-bomb and rents.

It is questionable whether it could survive even the threat of massive joint action by large sections of workers—provided it is shown that the movement is in deadly earnest.

This would mean that the rank and file mobilize support in the Labour Party, and that the Labour leaders be forced to declare their readiness to step into power.

For a generation no section of workers has had a more just claim than the railwaymen have today.

Preparing to use whip

A railway parcel porter receives £7 17s. 6d. a week—the GPO station postman gets £9 19s. The railway shunter gets £8 6s. 6d., the National Coal Board shunter £9 2s.

A top-rate engine driver on the railway gets £11 2s. 6d. for 44 hours, whereas the Ford Motor Co. pays £12 8s. for a 42½-hour week plus threepence to sixpence per hour bonus.

With its 'no money in the kitty' reply to these figures, the Forster Tribunal marked the end of the Cameron award tradition. The velvet-gloved hand has been withdrawn and the Government is preparing to use the whip.

When NUR leader Sidney Greene suggested during the negotiations that an 11½ per cent. increase would bring the railway labourer into line with the lowest wage paid in other nationalized industries the management's representatives were horrified.

All they would offer was advice to the railwaymen that they exercise restraint and patience in waiting for results.

Force Government to disgorge

The railwaymen's leaders should wake up to the fact that the Cameron Report is dead; that further talk now is of no avail if it is not backed up by action; that the Government has to be forced to disgorge some of its accumulated wealth.

What would be better than the launching of a great united movement in step with the busmen, on May Day, May 4?

Such a movement would have no need to fear the spectre of Jimmy Thomas, and would oblige all those who look timidly over their shoulders at 1926 to step aside.

CROSSMAN'S TOUGH TIME IN MANCHESTER

A DERISIVE Labour Party audience in Manchester last Saturday heard Richard Crossman say that American bomber bases in this country 'just grew' without any decision by the Labour cabinet to set them up.

'I don't believe the Labour cabinet ever agreed to the bases,' he declared. 'They grew out of the transit rights granted the United States Air Force during the Berlin air lift.'

His statement was greeted by groans, cries of 'Come off it' and 'Nonsense' and sarcastic laughter.

Crossman and Victor Feather, assistant secretary of the Trades Union Congress, were speaking to a conference on the statement on nuclear weapons recently issued by the national executive of the Labour Party and the General Council of the TUC.

The frequent interruptions, the questions and the speeches from the delegates showed strong feeling in favour of unilateral action on the H-bomb.

A wave of applause followed the declaration of one delegate:

'The statement of the NEC declares the issue before us

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Two Rank-and-file Railwaymen Write for The Newsletter

FOR YEARS WE HAVE SACRIFICED: NOW IT'S OUR TURN

By B. HILLEN, chairman of Bootle branch of the National Union of Railwaymen

IN February 1946 I had the privilege of joining the ranks of railway workers, an ambition I had nursed since leaving school at 14 years of age. My visions of glamour and adventure were quickly and rudely shattered.

I soon realized that the navy-blue suit with the glittering silver buttons was only a façade to hide from the travelling public the poverty and deplorable wages enjoyed by railway servants.

Conditions in goods yards and sidings were primitive and frustrating. Sanitation was disgusting. Rat-infested hovels which passed as messrooms were the rule rather than the exception.

Cheap fares, cheap freight were some of the relics of the cut-throat competition practised by the four main railway companies at the expense of the workers in the industry.

Nationalization has rectified some of the deplorable conditions, and the railwayman has regained a little of his pride and dignity.

If it had been given a fair chance nationalization would have proved successful. But it has been sabotaged by the managerial class, who desire a return to the pre-war days of mass unemployment, privilege and the big stick.

OUT-OF-DATE MACHINERY. There are no prospects for the industry while these people retain control. Out-of-date machinery and hand trucks cannot compete against modern methods.

Overtime and bonus working are a curse and an evil: they satisfy a few at the expense of the many, causing disunity in the ranks.

Road and rail integration is a must, with more workers' representation on the British Transport Commission.

Supervisory staff must be drastically pruned. One boss to every six workers is wasteful and unnecessary. Managerial positions, far too many of which serve no useful purpose, must be assimilated.

Each depot must be prepared to work as a team from top to bottom. Initiative and pride in the job must be encouraged.

These things, along with unearthly hours and dirty jobs, will only be accepted by a contented staff receiving decent pay.

THEY SEEK DIGNITY. A railwayman is entitled to his baccy or his pint, his wife to her bar of chocolate, his kids to their Saturday matinee. Our families are not asking for much. They only seek justice, dignity and a decent standard of life.

The BTC asks us to wait till 1962. Why not ask the shareholders to do without their yearly payout of £33 million until the industry is on its feet?

The railwayman and his family have always been sacrificed in these persons' interests. It is about time they did a bit of sacrificing!

With modernization and a staff receiving proper pay the industry could become the pride and joy of the nation and a shining example of the democracy of which we hear a great deal and see so little.

Railwaymen are prepared to play their part in making their industry successful. But the nation, having accepted stewardship of it, must wake up to its responsibilities.

DANGER, DIRT, RESPONSIBILITY— AND THIS IS OUR REWARD!

By KEITH HARDING, Leeds railway worker

AFTER reading the article by Brothers Shaw and Badder in The Newsletter last week, I decided to write an article in agreement with it. I am a young railway worker, married with two children and a member of the National Union of Railwaymen.

I have not been in a strike yet, but I will be quite willing to come out to maintain or improve my standard of living.

The Tory Press will do everything it can to turn public opinion against the railwaymen (and the busmen) by talking of increased fares, walking to work and so forth.

The Press also manages to spirit up a high 'average' wage. But what we should look at is a 44-hour week. The high average is reached by including overtime and bonus.

Let us take a few examples of a 44-hour week.

SIGNALMEN. This is a most responsible job. One mistake can mean lives lost. Yet here are the wages it carries:

Class 4	£8 8s. 6d.
Class 3	£8 14s. 6d.
Class 2	£9 1s.
Class 1	£9 10s.
Special A	£10 3s.
Special B	£10 10s.
Special C	£10 17s.

There are very few men drawing this last rate.

By the time all stoppages are deducted there is a very small take-home wage. Class 4 and class 3 signalmen have very little chance of getting any overtime to boost up their wage.

SIGNAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS STAFF. This is becoming an increasingly skilled job with the spread of electrification. The safety of the railway depends on the installer, who installs points, signals etc. Electrification makes his job more difficult.

Installer Grade 3	£7 19s. 6d.
Installer Grade 2	£8 5s. 6d.
Installer Grade 1	£8 10s. 6d.

PERMANENT WAY STAFF. These people keep the running track in good condition. A gang averages five men, who cover three miles of track in all weathers.

First year of employment	£7 8s. 0d.
Second year of employment	£7 16s. 6d.
Third year of employment	£7 16s. 6d.

In foggy weather these men work 12-hour shifts (12 on, 12 off) for which they get about 1s. 9d. per hour more. On this fogging job a man has to take three meals with him, which swallows the 1s. 9d.

This job is becoming more dangerous with the introduction of Diesels, because of their rate of acceleration. The low wage and increasing danger make it difficult to get people to do this job.

The wages of railwaymen do not compare with the responsibility the men have to shoulder and the dangers they have to face.

The Tory Government is attacking our standard of living. It is creating unemployment in order to 'discipline' the workers. The workers' organizations should fight against the attack of the employing class.

If all the unions connected with the railways act together it will strengthen our fight for a wage increase and a shorter working week.

BOMB (Continued from page 124)

is the survival of mankind itself. But what a response it would have got if it had concluded: "Because we believe in the future of mankind Labour will cease the manufacture and testing of the H-bomb immediately it takes power."

'The great deterrent is not the bomb but the working class,' said another speaker from the floor.

Said a third, speaking directly to Feather: 'You say that if we give up the bomb we will lose our influence in the

FRANKFURT TO ACT AGAINST H-THREAT?

Frankfurt City Council is reported to be considering cutting off essential supplies—gas, water, electricity etc.—from German troops stationed within the Frankfurt boundary if they are issued with nuclear warheads and rocket weapons.

world. But you ignore completely the power of the working class in Britain, America and Russia.'

Feather attuned himself to the strong feelings among his audience when he said in reply to discussion:

'Everybody waits for a lead. Why don't some of you give a lead? What if I went into your factory and called workers to strike? They'd say "Who is this fellow?" It's up to you.'

Came a voice from the audience: 'And you'll send them back.'

RENTS

TOTTENHAM DEMAND FOR REQUISITIONING

Meeting of about sixty tenants in Tottenham warmly supported every reference by Coun. Berkoni (Tottenham Council) and D. Finch (Lambeth Council Tenants' Association) to direct action by trade unions and Labour-controlled councils.

The tenants decided to hold an open-air meeting and poster parades, to distribute leaflets and to send deputations to Tottenham and Middlesex County Councils, asking them to requisition properties whether the Government agreed or not.

TENANTS, TRADE UNIONISTS, JOIN FORCES

Delegates from tenants' associations and trade union branches in Islington last Sunday called for the establishment of a joint tenants' and trade union committee 'to organize joint action to defend tenants against the Rent Act'.

The meeting condemned 'the arbitrary action of the all-Labour Islington Borough Council in carrying out Tory policy by increasing tenants' rents' and added:

'It would be far better for the Islington Borough Council to carry out a real socialist policy of "not a penny on the rents, not a penny on the rates", go into deficit and challenge the Tory Government.'

ECONOMICS

HAROLD WILSON'S BUDGET BLINKERS

By Our Economic Correspondent, Tom Mercer

WRITING on the Budget in the News of the World, Harold Wilson said the Tories 'are still fighting against rising prices when world prices are falling.

'They are still concentrating on the wages freeze when for thousands of families the problem is one of keeping their jobs. Above all their restrictive policies are holding down production and employment when our greatest need is for

expansion and full employment.'

But Wilson does not explain why the Tories are conducting such a policy. I agree that they are, and that it is a crime. But why?

BECAUSE exports are falling and will fall further.

BECAUSE British industry's competitive power has been losing the struggle for markets ever since 1950.

Year by year, without any exception, the percentage of world trade falling to British capitalism has gone down. That is why the Tories are doing as Wilson says.

There is a crisis, and the burden is being pushed on to the working class, which has to suffer a lower standard of living because of big business incompetence.

Economic anarchy: periodic crises

Wilson will not explain that the economic anarchy of the system has led to another of the periodic crises that have been a feature of capitalism since its beginning.

He does not explain that the reason for the present crisis is the same as for past crises: a fall in the level of investment due to big business deliberately cutting down the level because they could not see a reasonable profit.

Wilson does not explain these things because he dare not. If he did he would have to accept a Marxist explanation—and a Marxist solution.

He would have to embark on a serious struggle for power.

He would have to agree with the resolution of the Scottish Trades Union Congress demanding the nationalization of the principal industries.

He would have to go further and advocate the taking over of the banks and all other credit institutions.

The programme that Wilson advances is ludicrous, and would most certainly help to deepen the crisis, just as surely as the Tories' policy will.

The only practical answer to the crisis is nationalization and a planned investment programme.

USA

GET BUYING, BUD

QUESTIONER: Mr President, I would like to ask you a question about what people should do to make the recession recede.

THE PRESIDENT: Buy.

QUESTIONER: Buy what?

THE PRESIDENT: Anything.

This dialogue at a recent Press conference was reported on the Manchester Guardian's City page on April 21.

'Operation Optimism' has been launched in a number of centres, and the Wall Street Journal writes of a 'massive anti-recession psychological offensive'.

Examples given are the campaigns 'Keep Detroit Dynamic', 'Crusade for Confidence', 'Values for Volume', 'Buy and Be Happy' and 'O.K. Ike'.

SCIENCE

THE SPUTNIKS: FANTASIES AND FACTS

By Our Scientific Correspondent, J. H. Bradley

Two recent papers in the Proceedings of the American Institute of Radio Engineers suggest that the end of Sputnik 1 was not the simple plunge to earth presented by the newspapers.

The American scientists first observed that the radio transmitters of Sputnik 1 could be heard when it was near the

other side of the earth, as was mentioned also by Radio Moscow.

After the transmitters failed, it was found that station WWV in Washington could be received faintly in Columbus (Ohio) every night when the rocket passed nearby. The signals were being reflected from the rocket.

Five fragments were seen to drift slowly apart over several days and to fall to earth one by one. These scientists did not have a powerful radar set, and so far their report is the only one mentioning a break-up of Sputnik 1 before it crashed. So perhaps it should be treated with a little reserve, even though no other explanation is evident.

It is the distinctive time signals and standard musical notes broadcast by WWV which enabled the scientists to identify it. WWV is also silent for four minutes in each hour, and a clear break is visible in the record at these times.

WWV and its twin WWVH (Hawaii) on 20,000 megacycles gave an easy means of tuning to Sputnik (20,005 megacycles) where they could be picked up. Many shortwave receivers will only just separate them, and this led to the musical notes of WWV being attributed to Sputnik.

The situation was made worse by the fact that, as the scientists showed, WWV was heard in unusual places because of Sputnik passing by.

* * *

THE flaming end of Sputnik II has just produced a new crop of fantasies.

The Newsletter of February 15 (p. 49) gave the weight of the Sputnik rocket motor—670lb.—as broadcast by Radio Moscow. It is therefore a little late in the day to be saying it may have been as much as four tons.

The trouble is that some people have misinterpreted

measurements on the flaming corpse of Sputnik II. They measured a size which included flaming particles being thrown off. Radar sets also gave the wrong size at the end because the extremely hot air near Sputnik reflects radar waves.

To explain this enormous, fictitious size they had to give Sputnik II an incredible weight, or it would have been stopped by the air long ago.

Measurements at Jodrell Bank in Cheshire four months ago showed Sputnik II was very much the size the Russians said.

As for the sputnik weighing six tons which, we are told on the authority of a Hungarian youth paper, is shortly to orbit round the earth and moon, the matter was set out quite clearly in The Newsletter of February 15.

Confirmed on Moscow Radio

The Soviets could now send a small and scientifically valueless rocket to the moon, and no more. This was explicitly confirmed by Moscow Radio a few days later.

A little consideration shows that to send a sputnik weighing six tons into orbit needs a rocket about seven or eight times the weight of the rocket used to launch Sputnik II. So such a rocket would weigh very roughly 4,000 tons at launching.

To send six tons round the moon is equivalent to getting this 4,000-ton rocket up to 2½ miles a second—using a rocket weighing one or two million tons.

There is room for much error in these calculations, but not nearly room enough to make anything but nonsense of talk about six-ton rockets to the moon with present-day fuels.

No doubt careful observations were made on the light from the burning of Sputnik II. Analysis of the precise colours of this light will tell anyone just what was burning, and roughly how much of each kind of metal was in the alloy, just as it has told us the composition of the sun and stars.

Joe the Speculator Gets his 50-50 Cut

By PAUL SIMON

PROPERTY speculation has a very special place in capitalist society. An industrial combine that can bring factories, plant, raw materials and labour power together and then produce, distribute and market a commodity is performing a complicated and socially necessary function, whatever surplus value might arise from the property relations in which the process takes place.

In the case of property speculation, however, even the most ardent bourgeois apologist would be hard put to it to discover any such socially necessary function.

I have always understood that 'profit' or surplus value arises not by selling something above its value, or buying below value, but by buying labour power for less than the value labour creates.

In the case of property I begin to wonder. Let me give an example. To begin at the beginning, most property development starts with land.

There is, of course, land and land. The land we are concerned with is not the land the farmer grows his crops on. Our land is much more complex.

It may start its life in capitalist society as part of the kitchen garden of a humble retainer in a Midlands village. Happy and peaceful, our bit of land might just sleep and sleep.

Capitalism transforms the village

Meanwhile, around it, capitalism transforms the village, builds factories (which need workers, who need houses) builds housing estates (which need shops) builds roads or widens existing streets, develops focal points of business activity and produces the modern urban 'multiple shopping position'.

Then our land might wake up and find that it is a highly desirable, immensely valuable bit of land. Because Woolworths and Marks and Spencers, Burtons and John Colliers, Sainsburys and the Co-op now occupy all the remaining plots, our land is the only bit left.

If it did but know it, our land has changed hands many times already, in each case corresponding to some socially

created change in the character of its setting. But now it begins life in earnest.

Our land is up for sale, 'ripe for development', and Joe Smith buys it. Note: Joe Smith buys it, not your favourite multiple. Today the big chain stores are less and less interested in owning the land on which their stores are built.

Joe Smith buys it, but Joe Smith is not Joe Soap, and does nothing foolish and obvious like using his own money.

Joe gets an overdraft

Oh no, Joe Smith's bank manager, fellow-Rotarian, fellow-Mason, and fellow-golfer lets Joe have an overdraft, which puts up the bank's profit figures, oils the wheels of commerce and greases or cements (whichever you prefer) fellowship all round.

Joe, not having a good enough handicap at golf, or possibly only being a junior member of the lodge, cannot persuade his bank manager to let him have enough credit to actually pay a builder to build a shop.

So another of Joe's pals, the managing director of a national firm of building contractors, agrees with Joe that his firm will put up the building required on credit. After all it is more work for the firm.

Although Joe's face does fit they will require a cut of the ultimate profit. After five gin-and-tonics and a gruelling five-course lunch the cut is agreed—fifty-fifty.

Work begins and soon our bit of land now has on it a completed building. The gap in the row of shops is filled. Because of its position there are many groups keen to occupy it.

Joe, however, is desperately unhappy. He is scared stiff of settling at anything but the maximum rental he can possibly get.

More gin-and-tonics, more gruelling lunches, sustain him through this difficult period and finally he gets what even he thinks is good.

Enter the household name

A household name takes out a 21-year lease at a rent of so much per annum, with increases at seven and 14 years.

It is obvious to anyone with the least bit of confidence in the capitalist system that the household name will continue to pay that rent during the worst slump, to keep going for the next boom, and the rent revisions in seven and 14 years are a useful buffer against inflation.

But Joe is not out of the wood yet. By no means. The bank manager only agreed to the overdraft for a short period—say 18 months—and he wants the money back.

The builder got his money to put the building up from his bank manager, with the same time limit. These sums together are a lot of money, and it would be nine or ten years before the rent would cover this, not even allowing for tax

deductions, interest charges and so on.

But Joe can cope. His third friend is a managing director of a large national insurance company. This company has huge funds at its disposal.

Some of this money it ties up in cast-iron securities showing a low return, to give it a solid foundation. Some it ties up to show a high return, so that it can pay for the claims that it is forced to agree to.

After several gin-and-tonics and another awful luncheon, the insurance company finally agrees to buy the site, with the building on it, with the lease of the well-known company, for sums of money equal to, say, twelve times the annual rent, giving them a return of just under 8 per cent. on their money.

This money pays off Joe's bank overdraft, the builders' bank overdraft, between a third and a half of what is left goes to the tax man, and of the remainder Joe gets his 50 per cent. and his builder pal gets his 50 per cent.

Joe's cut might be only a few thousand pounds, but he did it, please note, with no money of his own involved.

After a few years Joe gets to know his way around, and can refine the process in the most beautiful and subtle ways, mostly to do with cutting out the only real intruder in the whole process—the tax collector.

WHAT IS THIS 'FREE WORLD'?

By CLIFF SLAUGHTER

ERNEST BEVIN at least made no bones about his lack of solidarity with the oppressed peoples of the colonies. They must remain under British rule, he said, in order to maintain the living standards of the British workers. Now of course it can be argued to what extent British workers ARE better off as a result of Britain's colonial empire.

Apart from anything else, the preservation and expansion of such a system has involved our people in the bloodiest wars in history and killed them in millions. Allowances must be made, too, for the advances possible for the colonial countries if they were allowed to develop freely and contribute to an international division of labour and distribution of wealth.

Not everyone is as straightforward as Bevin. A common argument for the continued existence of imperialism is that without British or French or German domination the colonial countries would have remained in the night of barbaric backwardness and ignorance from which they were saved by the expansion of Western capitalism.

In fact there are hundreds of examples of exactly the opposite process. The Tasmanian aborigines were certainly culturally backward when discovered; now they do not exist.

In Australia the native people were killed off like flies or deprived of their land, which for a hunting people meant social death.

The remaining aborigines, only a fraction of the 300,000 first discovered, are discriminated against in some towns, barred from others, or more or less imprisoned in mission-run work stations which make a European slum look like a palace.

Reality and the myth

The gap between the reality and the official myth was well brought out by the recent Australian trip of the Queen Mother.

A specially dressed-up aboriginal woman was flown miles to be presented to her; at the same time, and in the same woman's home area, aboriginal prisoners in the hands of the local police were chained by their ankles day and night to the outside of the jail, for lack of space inside.

Such window-dressing for distinguished visitors is of course well known to every factory worker in Britain. One factory in Sheffield even prepared a red-plush lavatory seat for the use of a royal visitor. Alas, the work was wasted, for the call was never felt.

Another well-known example of the benefits of imperialism was the slave trade, which brought tens of millions of Negroes

from the west coast of Africa to the New World, often crammed like sardines into the holds of ships, and suffering under the whip of devout Christian traders and masters.

The struggling Negroes of the South of the USA are the descendants of these slaves.

Into all the island communities of the Indian and Pacific Oceans the Europeans carried syphilis, tuberculosis, measles, trade and the Bible.

Epidemics halved the population

For some people, like the Andamanese, this often meant a death rate which at least halved the population in one or two epidemics.

The romanticized South Sea Islands suffered the same fate, and the survivors went through generations of 'blackbirding', forced labour at starvation wages and every form of economic and social discrimination.

The rising colonial peoples of today come from largely peasant or feudal societies.

That is to say, they had developed to the stage of individual rights in land; in some cases the old tribal organization still survived and checked the growth of great inequalities; in others, the chiefs or neighbouring feudal monarchs had established a régime of tribute and tax which resembled European feudalism.

Has imperialism brought social advance to these peasant and feudal societies?

Besides the oft-quoted statistics of illiteracy and disease, it can be shown that in fact the social backwardness of these countries was intensified, rather than alleviated, by imperialism. The imperialists combined with the feudal lords to defeat movements of nationalism or democracy.

Led defeat of backwardness

The capitalist class of Europe led the defeat of feudal backwardness in Europe as a necessity for their own development.

They progressed to unified national States, with legal and financial security, as against the local military power of the feudal lords, which restricted the growth of trade and in-

dustry.

The old rigid bonds of status and superiority by birth were largely shattered, so that the path was created for democratic processes and free competition. In this atmosphere the Industrial Revolution could occur.

If we look at those agricultural countries which have come under the heel of imperialism, we find that they have not made these same progressive steps from feudalism.

Out of necessity, Western capital allied with the most reactionary classes and strengthened them.

Take any oil company in the Middle East: if it encourages democratic forces against, say, Feisal or King Saud, and these forces are successful, what will be the future of the company? There will inevitably come to power a class which wants native control of the country's resources.

Support of feudal landlords

For many years British imperialism rested on the support of the feudal landlords in Egypt, typical of many countries.

Already in 1881 there occurred a nationalist revolt against the Turkish Empire, but democratic Britain regarded this as a threat, not a welcome victory over the feudal régime.

British troops intervened and defeated the new national government, and all the old feudal relations and ties were confirmed. But for this intervention, Egypt might have led a successful Arab revolt throughout the Middle East.

The key to Britain's motives is not hard to find: six years earlier, in 1875, Disraeli had bought 176,602 shares in the Suez Canal Company, the gateway to India.

In order to preserve 'law and order' on the banks of this golden hundred miles, progressive Britain preferred a nation weak and backward, and pressed on from Egypt to control the head-waters of the Nile by a ruthless conquest of the Sudan.

Within a few years of British conquest Egypt had a far greater inequality of wealth and a more rigid class structure than under the Ottoman Empire.

Preying on the fellahin

The small landlords and village headmen became big landowners, tax-farmers and money-lenders preying on the poverty-stricken fellahin.

These poor peasants lived in debt from birth to death, unable to escape the grip of feudal tyranny. In 1882 in Egypt, 80 per cent. of the people were illiterate; under the British in 1920 the percentage was 90.

A similar story could be told of India, China, the kingdoms of Africa, and the whole of the Middle East. In China, the rival imperialist powers sided with different warlords for their own purposes, and combined to suppress the revolt of other classes.

In the Arab Middle East the British and others divided up the area into artificial States with no regard for national interests.

India under British rule saw the rise of a wealthy landlord class far above anything previously existing, yet Indian native industry declined, and the country was deliberately kept divided by the British.

Professor Rushbrook Williams frankly admitted in the Evening Standard of May 28, 1930:

'The situation of these feudatory States, checkerboarding all India as they do, are a great safeguard. It is like establishing a network of friendly fortresses in debatable territory. It would be difficult for a general rebellion against the British to sweep India because of this network of powerful, loyal, native States.'

In every case imperialism prevented national unity and discouraged the development of political democracy and individual rights.

Iraq was one of the Arab countries involved in the national struggles of the first world war and its aftermath. In 1919 Britain took over from the Turks, and by 1932, when the

country achieved nominal independence, a new powerful class of wealthy 'sheiks' had been built up as imperialism's puppet and defence against democracy.

South America, Africa, the whole of the underdeveloped and dependent world, have undergone the same experience in one form or another.

Their economic and political progress has been sacrificed to the accumulation of wealth by the Western powers, and this has demanded the retention of all the old political and social backwardness.

In this way the 'Western democracies' defend progress and stand for the 'free world' against the 'barbarism' of communism and the East.

LETTERS

DIRECT APPEAL TO WORKERS IS ESSENTIAL

DURING the Aldermaston march I was handed a leaflet headed 'Aldermaston—What Next?' Some of the statements in this leaflet indicate a complete misunderstanding on your part.

During the preliminary work on the Aldermaston project a good deal of thought was given to the question of whether a direct appeal should be made to the workers there.

The general division of opinion was that the pacifist and religious people thought that a direct appeal should be made, but our political friends (including some who write in The Newsletter) insisted as the price of their participation NO direct appeal must be made to the workers.

As a marcher who has a religious, moral and humanitarian approach to this subject I think it essential that a direct appeal must be made to the workers and trade unions, although I should probably not use the same terminology as yourselves.

Welling (Kent)

Laurence M. Brown

HIDING THE FACE OF THE LABOUR PARTY?

Brian Pearce says [April 5, p. 105] there are divided views as to whether the campaign against the H-bomb should be linked with the fight for socialism, or whether it should be on a 'broad' basis including people of all political views; and that the latter is linked in some people's minds with 'Stalinist' united front tactics.

Surely anybody who realizes the seriousness of the atomic threat must realize also that the widest possible number of people must be brought into the campaign against it, and that a Leftist policy of 'no ban on the bomb without a ban on capitalism' is lunacy.

This kind of sectarianism could be disastrous.

Bromley (Kent)

Bert Storey

BOYCOTT OF SOUTH AFRICAN ELECTIONS

YOUR Cape Town correspondent, in writing about the elections which have since taken place in South Africa, has made factually incorrect statements as well as a false assessment of the situation.

He states that the South African Coloured People's Organization (SACPO) had called for a boycott of the so-called Coloured representation in Parliament. In fact SACPO put up as its candidate Mr Beyleveld, who is one of the persons standing trial for treason.

The only organization which has consistently called for a boycott of all dummy representation in South Africa is the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM).

This is a federal organization composed of the Anti-CAD (Anti-Coloured Affairs Department), and the All African Convention (AAC).

The AAC was founded in 1935 to fight against the taking away of the African vote by the Hertzog-Smuts government.

The organization was federal in structure, and consisted

of existing local bodies such as those of teachers, religious groups and voting associations, as well as of the African National Congress.

The AAC called for a boycott of the election of the 'Native Representatives', as well as of the election of Africans to serve on the 'Native Representative Council'. Both these institutions were created as sops to pacify the Africans for the loss of the vote.

Shortly after this decision to boycott these dummy institutions, the so-called Liberals in South Africa presented themselves as candidates for the positions of 'Native Representatives', and persuaded certain prominent members of the African National Congress to stand as members of the Native Representative Council.

This was followed by the withdrawal of the African National Congress from the AAC. Since then the Congress has been dominated by the African-racial-chauvinists on the one hand, in alliance with the Communist Party element on the other. It has consistently put up candidates for Parliament and for the Native Representative Council.

In 1943 the Smuts government took the initial steps calculated to remove the Cape Coloureds from the common voters role. It set up a Coloured Representative Council, and the Native Affairs Department.

In response to this attack on the limited rights of the Coloured people, the National Anti-Coloured Affairs Department was formed.

It organized a boycott which brought the government's plans at that stage to a halt, since the overwhelming majority of the Coloured people supported the boycott. The Communist Party attended the first conference of the Anti-CAD, but soon withdrew.

Coloured people's main organization

Since that time the Anti-CAD has been the main organization among the Coloured people. In 1945 the NEUM was formed, with the AAC and the Anti-CAD as the two major organizations.

The Communist Party was instrumental in forming the South African Coloured People's Organization in an attempt to show that it had the support of a Coloured organization.

This was to be the 'Coloured pillar' in the structure of the Joint Congresses, composed of the African National Congress, South African Indian Congress and SACPO.

The two former organizations have a long history of opportunism and attempts at gaining concessions for the rising non-European middle class.

It is interesting to note that the SACPO candidate got only 813 votes, as compared with the United Party candidate who got 2,381, in a 44 per cent. poll.

It would seem that this attempt to get the Coloureds to vote by putting up as a candidate a man standing trial for treason did not fool the Coloured people. The boycott organized by the Anti-CAD seems to have drawn in the majority of the politically conscious Coloureds.

Those who voted for the United Party are the outright reactionary element; while only a small handful of misguided progressives voted for the SACPO candidate.

Finally there is no evidence to indicate that there is a progressive element of white workers in South Africa. The white working class forms a white aristocracy of labour and because of this has been completely reactionary in excluding the black workers from its organizations.

If your correspondent has any evidence to support his contention, as he seems to indicate he has, I for one would be very pleased to know of it.

London, S.W.10

A. James

NUFTO CHIEFS SNUB WORKERS' DEPUTATION

Executive of the National Union of Furniture Trade Operatives refused to meet a deputation of six representing the 61 workers sacked when the union ended the strike at E. J. Moorhouse (Apex) Ltd, Bury (Lancs.).

JOURNAL

FIRST THINGS FIRST

To former members of the Daily Worker staff there is no satisfaction at all in seeing the difficulties our old paper is experiencing.

Reading it now is a depressing duty—all the more depressing since the loss of staff, circulation, standards and prestige is the result of deliberate policy.

Nor are matters helped by pep-talk letters such as the one in last Monday's issue, signed 'Over Ten Years a Reader', which said:

'The Daily Worker contains more news, efficiently assembled, and is a more readable paper to those who go in for "first things first" than all the sheets of its rivals bundled together.'

REUTERS MADE READABLE

All right, let's see. The same issue contained an item, taken from Reuters, on the recent big increase in radio-active fall-out in Europe. The same Reuters message was used in the Manchester Guardian.

The Daily Worker version began: 'Radio-active fall-out has increased heavily in Europe in the past fortnight and has swept across America to affect even vegetables in California.'

The Manchester Guardian version began: 'Radio-active fall-out traced to the most recent Soviet nuclear tests has increased about ten-fold in Europe in the past fortnight and has swept across America to affect even vegetables in California.'

One passage in the Daily Worker version read: 'Britain: A spokesman for the Atomic Energy Authority said the increase was noticed all over the world. It was due to short-lived fission products and had no biological significance.'

Now read the passage as Reuters sent it out: 'A spokesman for the British Atomic Energy Authority said the increase was noticed all over the world. It was due to short-lived fission products which came apparently from the Russian tests and had no biological significance. But it would be months before measurements could be made of radio-active strontium, caesium, and cobalt—the products most likely to cause genetic damage.'

WHO 'SUBBED' IT?

I wonder which of my old friends on the Daily Worker sub-editors' table 'subbed' this story with such 'efficiency'?

Was it Ted Armitage, perhaps, who after the Hungarian Revolution took over my job as London correspondent for the Budapest party Press, and who, after the march led by the Newsletter contingent from Trafalgar Square to Hyde Park the other Sunday, came up and asked me:

'Where do you think you are going to get with this? Do you get a meal ticket out of it?'

Or was it Allen Hutt himself, whose own small child is just as vulnerable to the strontium from Russian tests as to that from British or American tests?

TITO'S TENDER EARS

Talking of 'first things first', the same issue carried the information that 'the Communist Party announced yesterday that it will not be represented at the Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia'.

'Yesterday' was Sunday, when the same information was first available to readers of the Observer.

Reason given for the boycott is that the British party 'does not consider that it would be proper to criticize the Yugoslav League of Communists' programme at its congress'.

Perhaps we shall soon see a new edition of that classic of Stalinism 'From Trotsky to Tito', brought up to date by author James Klugmann to include the criticisms that would offend the tender ears of the Yugoslav communists if they were made on the spot.

P.F.