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PLANS LIKE THIS WON'T DO FOR LABOUR

By GEORGE CUNVIN

WITH the publication of 'Plan for Progress', the Labour Party has completed its series of policy statements. This last one will be discussed at the Scarborough Conference in October—unless a General Election in the autumn prevents the holding of Conference. In that case, presumably, it will be incorporated in the platform on which Labour will go to the country.

Planning has become a magic word which, some believe, can cure all economic ills. The question is never asked: Planning for what? For greater production and fairer distribution? Or for more profits?

The present Labour leadership belong to the school which believes that the important thing is to have a plan. All the other things which used to bother Labour people, such as the public ownership and control of the means of production, distribution and exchange, are dismissed as 'jargon'.

What is responsible for the economic stagnation which prevails in Britain today? It is not capitalism which is at fault, according to the authors of 'Plan for Progress':

'The present stalemate is the direct result of the Government's refusal to plan.'

If only they could!

There you have it! If only the Tories could overcome their belief that all Government intervention in economic life is an evil, all would be well with the nation's economy.

The Labour Party boasts that it is a 'constitutional' party. It would not dream of acting in a manner which is 'unconstitutional'.

Well, the party's constitution lays down that it is a socialist party and that means, if it means anything at all, that its policies must aim at destroying the capitalist system and building in its place a socialist order.

This the policy laid down in 'Plan for Progress' does not do, despite the fact that chapter 1 is headed 'Tory Stagnation or Socialist Expansion'.

The document is nothing but a blue print to make capitalism work more efficiently.

But will it work?

Will it work? With the central planners, under a Labour government, concerned with improving the national economy as a whole, and the owners of capital concerned with increasing their profits, the contradictions in Labour's hopes are apparent. Take, for example, the policy on control of investments.

'A Labour government will . . . require the large firms to draw up and report their investment plans in greater detail [than at present] and on a longer-term basis so that measures can be taken to retard or accelerate them according to economic needs' (p. 15).

Now, obviously, a Labour government would be able to direct a firm to use less of its capital in a certain direction, but how is it going to force a firm to invest more than it wishes to, and in a field which holds no hope of greater

(Continued overleaf)

INDUSTRY

WHY NOT A CONFERENCE TO DEMAND MORE DIRECT LABOUR ON LCC SITES?

By London County Councillor ELLIS HILLMAN

WHILE our attention is focused on the Tory Government's imperialist policies in the Middle East, we should not forget that these policies are only a continuation of Tory policy at home.

We have the problem of the eviction of thousands of tenants in October. We have the problem of preparing the Labour Party, the trade unions and tenants' associations for effectively halting Tory policies.

The fact is, that even if we were convinced that Labour intended to repeal the Rent Act on returning to office, and not just amend it, the urgent problem of a building programme to house tens of thousands of Londoners would remain.

With the overwhelming majority that Labour possesses on the London County Council, and the threat this is to Tory rule at Westminster, a bold, positive programme put forward by this Labour majority could not only frustrate the Tories in the implementation of the Rent Act, but also point the way to a solution of the housing shortage in London.

Towards nationalization of building

The building trade unions are on record in support of the general extension of direct labour—that is, building blocks of flats without the 'advantages' of the big building firms.

Moreover important sections of both the trade unions and the Labour Party welcome any move in the direction of the nationalization not only of the building industry directly, but also of building materials.

And finally, and not least important, there is a growing demand on LCC sites for an extensive take-over by the Council of the programme now being carried out by such big contractors as the Unit Construction Co. and Holland, Hannen and Cubitt's.

A well-prepared and well-organized conference which took up these demands would undoubtedly lead to the strengthening of the links between the Labour group on the LCC, the London Labour Party and the building trade unions.

And it would make the Council the pioneer of a socialist approach to the building industry.

COMMENTARY

SLIDING FROM THE SUMMIT

ACCORDING to Thursday's Daily Mirror 'all sensible people are bitterly disappointed' that 'the immediate summit talks will not take place'. It is not clear whom the Daily Mirror includes in its definition of 'sensible people'. Chiang Kai-shek, perhaps, and General de Gaulle? Certainly no one who accepts a socialist approach to the problems of war and peace in capitalist society is 'disappointed' by Khrushchev's sudden and unexpected descent from the summit. The prospect of a summit share-out did not thrill us in the first place; we had no hopes to be dashed. In fact we admire the refusal of the Chinese people—there are 600 million of them—to allow a representative of the Kuomintang to help decide on Middle East affairs at a Security Council 'summit'. For it is clear that Chinese pressure, and not any uneasiness or suspicion on Khrushchev's part, compelled the latter's tactical retreat. (He now finds himself, incidentally, in the disreputable company of the Yugoslav 'revisionists' who on July 20 also 'urged the indispensability of an urgent session of the General Assembly'!)

Our scepticism about the value of summit conferences has upset some people who, like us, do not want war, but who believe that this kind of negotiating is the way to prevent it. We remain as sceptical as ever. In our opinion neither a summit conference, the Security Council nor even the General Assembly can bring peace and freedom to the oppressed Arab peoples. As long as imperialism exists the danger of aggression in the Middle East will exist. Only a socialist Europe can establish relations of fraternity, equality and mutual co-operation with the Arab peoples. International solidarity demands that the British Labour movement, while remaining vigilant against any summit horse-deals at the expense of Arabs, Asians and Africans, should renew its struggle for the withdrawal of imperialist troops from the Middle and Near East and for the overthrow of the Tory Government.

THIRST FOR THEORY

SINCE the Khrushchev revelations many people have turned to the books. Some have read more than others, if only because many of the important books are long out of print. Copies are being passed around till they fall to pieces. To those who want to be revolutionaries there has been no more pregnant 'discovery' than the existence of a serious Marxist analysis of what 'went wrong' in Russia—a corpus, practically a library, of books which examine Stalinist theory and practice from a working-class standpoint.

These books, together with older classics of Marxism, are helping to rear a new generation of young workers, many of whom are quite untainted by Stalinism or social democracy. As we approach a new upsurge of working-class activity, so we come within sight of the ending of that gulf between 'theoreticians' and 'practical workers' that has so long hampered the British Labour movement. Contempt for theory is giving place to a real thirst for knowledge. This must be satisfied, systematically, with a stream of reprints, study guides, syllabuses and lectures. Hundreds have already been saved for Marxism. Thousands of workers can now be won for Marxism.

LABOUR (Continued from front page)

profits, without raising the ogre of confiscation?

Maybe a Transport House economist could answer this? The pamphlet itself asserts that:

'Fortunately, we have in the nationalized industries a group of large investing industries whose capital programmes can be directly controlled by Government decision' (p. 13).

This is surely an argument for bringing all the other large investing firms under direct Government control by nationalizing them.

Playing about with it

Playing about with the capitalist system will only irritate the capitalists, who will inevitably sabotage Labour's efforts, and bring no final solution to the problems.

There are useful reformist suggestions for dealing with such matters as short measure in pre-packed foods, unscrupulous manipulators of hire-purchase agreements and so on.

But these measures would themselves become superfluous if a genuine socialist policy was pursued instead of this half-baked effort to make capitalism work better.

This is no policy to rouse the enthusiasm of the working-class voters at the polls when the election comes.

Let us leave the running of capitalism to the capitalist class. The task of Labour is to overthrow capitalism once and for all.

WITHDRAW BRITISH AND AMERICAN TROOPS —LEEDS TRADES COUNCIL'S CALL

LEEDS Trades Council has passed the following resolution:

'This Council condemns the intervention of the British and American Governments in the internal affairs of Lebanon and Jordan, and is convinced that this is a grave threat to world peace.

'We therefore call:

'(1) Upon the British and American Governments to immediately withdraw all troops;

'(2) For Parliament to continue sitting until a date for the summit talks has been announced.

'Further, this Council urges the TUC General Council to immediately convene, in accordance with Rule 8, clause (k), a special congress, or a meeting of the executive committees of affiliated organizations.'

SCIENCE

IN HOME AND FACTORY, THERE ARE NEW DANGERS WE NEVER HEAR ABOUT

By Our Scientific Correspondent, J. H. Bradley

MODERN life has several dangers quite as common and insidious as radio-activity. Like radio-activity, they differ from the old dangers—fire, shock, injury—because they are invisible, and special instruments are needed to show them before it is too late.

The commonest is television, which has led to 85 per cent. of American children getting minor abnormalities of the spine due to too much hunching over the set.

It will be a catastrophe if illnesses due to lack of exercise spread to other nations.

Very few readers of The Newsletter, however, are likely to get heart disease and hardening of the arteries through sitting too long eating and drinking too much at too many banquets—an exclusively ruling-class affliction!

Most of the dangers come from new chemicals. A few people react violently to some of the new (or old) drugs.

Penicillin used to be sold indiscriminately, and many people got acute dermatitis.

Another reason for its restriction is that unskilled use can breed new strains of resistant germs.

At present the chief drug danger is from imported meat which may have been fed on antibiotics (penicillin, aureomycin, terramycin, sulphonomides etc.) to make it grow faster.

The effects of prolonged small doses are quite unknown—and some commercial interests regard this as reason enough for their unbridled use.

New insecticides and fungicides are another potential source of trouble, as they can be taken up even through the skins of plants and animals.

Dangerous flavours and colours

Hormones used to treat plants are less likely to be dangerous, but the giving of sex hormones to meat animals (and people, in proprietary drugs) is strongly to be condemned.

Flavours and colours in foods can be dangerous. The Ministries of Food and Health have a fairly good record, but not nearly up to U.S. standards, which themselves leave room for improvement.

Plastics give no reason to fear danger in themselves, but a watch should be kept for solvents and modifiers which might be used with them.

Solvents can cause cancer and many other slowly developing illnesses upon long exposure to even very small amounts, as well as immediate poisoning. Several dozen new solvents come into industrial use every year.

It is now known that several distinct types of chemical groupings of atoms incline the substance to cancer formation, and others may always be found in the future.

Real identity often masked

Their real identity is often masked under trade names, a practice which should be prohibited. At least the full chemical names and amounts of the ingredients of mixtures should be stated.

Oils, tars and smokes are all potentially dangerous unless carefully refined. Chimney sweeps are notoriously prone to cancer of the skin due to soot; crude oil has traces of similar substances. Pure refined oils are not dangerous in most cases. Many of the dangerous cancer-producing substances will take the colour out of iodine solution in small amounts.

The commonest poisons are, of course, the soot and sulphur dioxide from coal and oil, and the tar from tobacco, which pour into our lungs.

Mercury is found chiefly in fluorescent lamps outside industry, and in an increasing number of industrial electronic valves.

Not so strict industrialists

A few valves contain radio-active materials, and the colour markings (an orange band) should be well known. Any cut from them should be well washed immediately, all material gathered carefully together and buried—**NEVER BURNED**—and the matter reported to a doctor.

Happily, beryllium has almost vanished from modern

fluorescent lamps after causing many deaths, but a large beryllium industry is being built up for atomic energy work. The Atomic Energy Authority is exceedingly strict; one cannot expect the same of all industrialists.

The departmental machinery of the Ministries of Food and Health and the Factory Inspectorate have not led to legislation at anything like a reasonable rate.

They should be transformed into public bodies based on the trade unions, and their dealings well publicized in the Press. Pious phrases and advice which it is never intended to enforce must be replaced by adequate powers.

Robbery with violence is a capital crime, if anyone is accidentally killed. But an employer who fails to take the most elementary precautions for the lives of his workers is not even prosecuted. This shows a complete lack of the 'sense of proportion' which our ruling class boasts that it possesses.

It must be a first principle that no substance, process or method should be used until all foreseeable dangers have been tested and overcome.

Onus on the employer

Adequate scales of compensation must be set up for any remaining risks, with onus on the employer to prove he was not responsible.

Many thorough tests will take several years, and a few mistakes will slip through. Older workers should be employed where long-term risks are unknown, so that diseases shall not have time to develop before they retire.

Too expensive, Mr Employer? Not at all. Human life and health are too cheap.

FRANCE

SHORT OF A MIRACLE, DE GAULLE CAN SETTLE NOTHING

By John Archer

'FRANCE'S present economic problems are so critical as to threaten her very existence', wrote the Daily Telegraph editorially on June 3, 1958.

There is now little chance that a stroke of luck plus the evacuation of Algeria will save either the budget or the balance of payments.

France's bankers and her American creditors alike need a 'firm' government, in view of the 'growing body of evidence that western Europe is running into its first serious post-war recession' (Observer, June 9).

Obviously the Fourth Republic is not a political tool suitable for the 'drastic surgery' needed to cut State spending and mass consumption.

It has laid the basis for a possible fascist movement of the future, in the cynicism of the masses of the people. But neither

NOW—HELP US TO HELP THE DOCKERS

IF, as seems likely, the dockers are soon going to enter a historic struggle, The Newsletter will have an important part to play.

As during the London bus strike, there will be a need for a paper that will be written by strikers themselves, to give their point of view to workers in other industries, appeal for solidarity action and cut through the lies and slanders of the capitalist Press.

We assure our readers that we are ready to do everything in our power to help, since the cause of the dockers will be the cause of the whole working class resisting the Tory onslaught on living standards, conditions and trade union organization.

But our serious lack of funds could prove a grave handicap. May I therefore appeal to readers to spare something—out of your holiday pay, perhaps?—for The Newsletter's development fund.

If you can manage a few shillings or a pound or two to help produce the first docks broadsheet we are planning, send it straight away. We need it badly.

Many thanks to Coventry readers for a timely donation of £4, to a Manchester reader who sends 15s. and to a comrade in Leicester for 10s.

IVY READ

fascism nor the workers have yet evolved a convincing programme round which to rally support in struggle for or against the great monopolies.

Mind not made up

The capitalist class has not yet finally made up its mind to risk again the disasters to which Mussolini and Hitler led their patrons.

No would-be fascist adventurer has yet built a basis solid enough to win much capitalist money or confidence, or to attack the workers' organizations.

The Fourth Republic did not contain within itself any forces to defend it. The stock excuse of the radicals and

This is the third of four articles which John Archer is contributing to the debate on de Gaulle's coming to power.

socialists who voted for de Gaulle is that he alone could avert the rumoured paratroop invasion of France.

Already the police demonstration and the massive indiscipline of the officers showed how little 'defence of democracy' can be expected from those whose salaries 'democracy' pays.

For the State forces consist of living men, soldiers, policemen and functionaries.

Who serve the cannon

'Constitutions rest on cannon', said Lassalle; those who serve the cannon will only follow people who look like being able to fight for themselves, not political eunuchs who appeal to others to fight for them and then go over to the enemy.

The radicals and socialists were terrorized by the paratroops, and they lacked all confidence that the workers could or should organize mass resistance. All their excuses boil down to one: they can see no alternative to de Gaulle. Such is the end of Republican rhetoric.

De Gaulle came to power not only because the capitalist class could no longer tolerate the inefficient Fourth Republic as a capitalist State form, but also because, at the time, neither the fascists nor the workers had anything to put in its place.

From Left to Right alike, de Gaulle is supported as the 'lesser evil'.

The colons and the colonels know that he cannot rule Algeria from Paris; if he cuts off their supplies, he cuts off one of the branches on which, for the moment, he rests.

Can he lull workers?

If he can lull the workers into tolerating him as the 'lesser evil' to Soustelle and the torturers, the fascist offensive can be prepared under his protection.

But the Algerian reactionaries cannot hope to go on calling the tune. Whether Algeria existed or not, the bourgeoisie need a 'strong government' to solve the crisis at the expense of the masses.

The Algerian coup d'état is really a secondary episode, which happened to serve as the occasion for testing whether anyone cared enough for the Fourth Republic to fight for it.

No one did, or even looked like doing so. But the French capitalists may decide, like the British in India, that they have to put out, willynilly, from Algeria. Many FLN leaders, like Ferhat Abbas, welcome de Gaulle as a conciliator!

De Gaulle is in power simply because no decisions have yet been made.

Pay him their compliments

On the one hand, he is the figurehead of the most reactionary, Catholic, militarist circles in France, which identify their old enemy 'Jewish finance' with 'American finance'.

At the same time, the Governments of Britain and the USA hasten to pay him their compliments!

For U.S. finance wants to keep him in NATO and to share the exploitation of the oil and minerals in the Sahara fringe, the Algerian hinterland.

Even the Tunisian leader Bourguiba makes up to him in the hope of getting a modest commission as 'honest broker' between the French capitalists and the North African Arabs.

We can draw the conclusion: short of a miracle, de Gaulle can settle nothing. But the longer the Centre and Left support the illusion that he can somehow protect democratic liberties, the more urgent becomes the task of breaking the spell, of raising demands in the common people's interests.

Nearly half the socialist Deputies, all the communist Deputies and many other figures of the Left are against de Gaulle at this moment. Why does not a 'popular front' emerge?

Parliamentarians' conception of 'defence'

Because such a parliamentary opposition would run up against both the fascists and the police as soon as it began to develop such a programme as would attract the masses of the people.

The parliamentarians' conception of 'defence of the Republic' is a blind alley, because the State forces will not defend it and nobody else can be mobilized under the banner of defending a republic which offers no material benefits to workers or peasants.

Organized mass resistance could, of course, wipe the fascists off the earth, and could divide the army on class lines.

There can be no doubt that there is time to mobilize the workers and poor peasants and work out with them a social and economic programme for which they will fight.

Not without cause, they distrust the republic, and the leaderships identified with it. But twelve years of boom and full employment put them in a better position to fight than the German workers had in 1932 after years of unemployment.

If tail wags dog

The fight to lower the cost of living and repulse the fascists could not be contained within 'legal', 'constitutional' forms.

Will it be the police, or workers' defence guards, that protect the people's demonstrations against the fascists? How else can the cost of living be lowered than by busting the trusts, which means nationalizing them?

Such a struggle is doomed in advance if it is based on an alliance in which the radical tail wags the working-class dog.

Only a working-class leadership which boldly appeals to the workers and peasants over the heads of the impotent radicals can 'win over' the masses of the people and 'expose' the radicals.

If the price of 'unity' is that they refuse to sanction class struggle, then it is a false unity which deceives and does not lead the people.

There is not the slightest reason for fatalistically accepting de Gaulle. The workers have not fought back—yet. But then no one has yet asked them to do so in convincing language.

USA

UNITED SOCIALIST TICKET IN NEW YORK

Corliss Lamont, noted educator and civil liberties fighter, and John T. McManus, general manager of the National Guardian, have been nominated by the United Independent-Socialist Campaign Committee for the posts of Senator and Governor of New York respectively.

Dr Annette T. Rubinstein, former leader of the American Labor Party, has been nominated for the post of Lieutenant Governor.

Dr Lamont had declined nomination earlier, but decided to stand when American imperialism intervened in Lebanon.

Constant Reader Workers in Uniform

ERNEST BEVIN'S outburst in 1920, which I quoted last week, against military discipline being used to 'outrage the conscience' of a soldier, related to the use of British soldiers to break a strike of dockers in Danzig.

The dockers were refusing to unload arms for Poland's war against Soviet Russia.

Later in life, as is well remembered, Bevin lost his strong feeling against the use of men under military law for strike-breaking purposes.

With the possibility of renewed trouble in the London docks, the principle he enunciated in the days when he was 'the dockers' KC' may nevertheless once again become a living and topical one.

Sailors took steps

Bevin spoke towards the close of a period in which soldiers and sailors had been taking their own kind of 'industrial action' on an extensive scale.

The history of mutinies in the British forces during the first world war and the series of little wars that followed it has yet to be written. Tom Wintringham's 'Mutiny' (1936) is useful but only skims the subject.

There is a legend that the Royal Navy had no troubles comparable to those of the German and Austro-Hungarian navies until after the Armistice had been safely signed.

That this is untrue is shown by the testimony of Lionel Yexley, editor of *The Fleet*, and closely in touch with lower-deck feeling, in that paper's number for June 1919:

'In July-August 1918 the men of the Navy were very seriously considering the question of a "strike"; so seriously, in fact, that the matter had gone beyond talk and steps were being taken to put the plan into effect.'

Only a leak of information about these 'steps', followed by an Admiralty promise of pay concessions and the posting elsewhere of locally-influential militants among the 'sailors', prevented a British 'Kiel'.

Hangover from Stalin era

KHRUSHCHEV'S recent startling denunciation of vodka may revive, in spite of everything, the rumours in certain circles that the man is a secret Trotskyist.

For the question whether or not to relegalize vodka was one of the issues on which the Left Opposition clashed with Stalin, back in 1924.

After the Revolution vodka and all strong liquors of more than 20 per cent. alcohol content were prohibited in Russia. When in 1923 somebody ventured to suggest reviving the State monopoly of vodka production, on the ground that this would provide badly-needed revenue, Pravda retorted:

'He proposes to get rid of the bankruptcy in our budget. But he would drive that bankruptcy into the bodies and minds and souls of our people.'

Anna Louise Strong records, in her useful book about pre-Stalinist Soviet Russia, 'The First Time in History' (1924), a talk she had with Trotsky about the strategy and tactics of the struggle against vodka. After outlining the police measures taken to put down home-brewing, he observed:

'But no repressions will solve the problem at the root. The basic cause is the emptiness of the peasants' life, and this must be filled by higher standards of culture, by education and recreation and wholesome social life.'

She quotes Lenin's dictum:

'Whatever the peasant wants in the way of material things we will give him, as long as they do not imperil the health or morals of the nation.'

'If he asks for paint and powder and patent leather shoes,

our State industries will labour to produce these things to satisfy his demand, because this is an advance in his standard of living and 'civilization', though falsely conceived by him.

'But if he asks for ikons or booze—these things we will not make for him. For that is definitely retreat; that is definitely degeneration that leads him backward.'

'Concessions of this sort we will not make; we shall rather sacrifice any temporary advantage that might be gained from such concessions.'

The fight against vodka was abandoned in October 1924, on the excuse that revenue must be obtained from this source.

The alternative was higher taxation of kulaks, cutting of officials' salaries and other measures unacceptable to the leadership which had usurped power after Lenin's death.

Russia has paid a heavy price, economically (through accidents at work, absence from work and so on) as well as in other ways, for their 'realism', as Khrushchev is now being forced to acknowledge.

Review of reviews

LEADERS on Hungary, France and the industrial conflicts at home, in the latest issue of **LABOUR REVIEW**, are followed by articles on the London busmen's strike and the economic situation.

The sociologist Cliff Slaughter contributes a long review of Peter Worsley's 'The Trumpet Shall Sound' and Norman Cohn's 'The Pursuit of the Millennium', under the title 'Religion and Social Revolt', and Tom Kemp a trenchant critique of Djilas's 'The New Class', which contrasts with Ivor Montagu's feeble and question-begging effort in *Marxism Today*.

Other features include an analysis of the economic and social basis of apartheid by Seymour Papert, a 'Reply to Harry Hanson' which was rejected by the *New Reasoner*, and a review by Peter Worsley of a study of the Labour movement in the Sudan.

* * *

Worsley is also the author of what is perhaps the most useful article in the summer issue of the **NEW REASONER**—'Britain—Unknown Country', a critique of sociological studies in Britain today.

Among other readable items in this journal I found Peter Smith's contribution to the discussion on 'the welfare State' particularly thought-provoking.

He suggests that the defeat of Labour in 1951 came because 'as soon as the [1945] election was completed the struggle to implement the programme was virtually confined within the walls of the House of Commons'.

* * *

In the summer **UNIVERSITIES AND LEFT REVIEW** Michael Segal and Ralph Samuel trace the background to de Gaulle's accession, noting the key importance of the French Communist Party's abandonment in 1956 of active opposition to the war, in illusory hope of securing in return a French break from the American alliance.

E. P. Thompson, writing on 'NATO, Neutralism and Survival', gratifyingly rebukes Bevan for his 'shamefully wrong' attack at the London Labour Party on those whom the *New Statesman* called 'neo-Trotskyist irreconcilables'.

Voice of the British?

'How splendid it would be if, at this hour of deepening crisis, the common people of India threw off the Nehru yoke.'

—Daily Express editorial, July 31.

BRIAN PEARCE

LETTERS**UNITY DOESN'T MEAN GAGGING OURSELVES**

READER Florey has raised the hoary old arguments which have been answered over and over again since the socialist movement began.

His objection to the separate demonstration organized by The Newsletter on the Middle East is misplaced. On behalf of The Newsletter my colleague Brian Behan twice approached the Movement for Colonial Freedom with a request that our paper be represented in the march to Trafalgar Square.

This request was turned down categorically. We therefore decided to arrange our own demonstration.

Unity, Comrade Florey, presupposes an identity of views on some of the fundamental questions of our time.

Common programme and policy

When you talk of unity, do you mean a genuine fighting unity based on a common programme and policy on these questions? Or do you mean the ephemeral 'unity' which lays aside principles and subordinates the interests of the working class to the interests of other classes?

We of The Newsletter have no wish to be isolated from the mainstream of the socialist movement. We do not refuse to work and struggle alongside those who do not share our views, but we do demand the right to express our views!

We have always tried, and will continue to try, to secure the maximum unity of Left-wing socialists on all issues where agreement is possible. But we will never buy 'unity' by abandoning principles.

London, S.W.12

Michael Banda

PROSTITUTION IN THE SOVIET UNION

THE characterization of Communist Party Councillor Barney Borman as a Pharisee in THE NEWSLETTER last week is an apt one.

What was not mentioned, however, was that his apparently strange role in leading the 'anti-vice committee' in Stepney follows logically from the attitude that has been expressed in the Soviet Press towards the problem of prostitution.

Those familiar with recent Soviet statements on this subject are aware that it is now admitted, after decades of denial, that prostitution exists in Soviet cities.

Demands have been voiced in official quarters for vigorous prosecution of prostitutes, without any discussion of why, after forty years of what is claimed to be socialism, there should still be customers for this trade.

Bureaucracy's façade of puritanism

What was clearly understood even in the last century in the socialist movement as a complex social problem, involving the basic economic question of women's position in society and the falsehood of bourgeois marriage, with its effects on men as well as women, is often obscured today among those claiming to be Marxists.

However, this should come as no surprise when we recall the nature of the Soviet bureaucracy and its resort to a façade of puritanism which ill conceals the urge of a privileged caste to perpetuate itself, thus making its attitude to the family little different from that of the middle-class Philistine in capitalist society.

London, N.W.6

P. McGowan

WHAT DEFEATED THE SUEZ ADVENTURE?

You ascribe the defeat of the Suez expedition to the actions of the Arab and British workers.

Surely it was the Soviet 'rocket-threat' note and the American statement of disapproval that were decisive in bringing

that affair to a sudden end?

Though the resistance of the Port Said workers and the Trafalgar Square demonstration played their part, it would be editing history to support a theory to maintain that these were the major factors.

Jersey (C.I.)

P. Le Sueur

UNEMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRANT WORKERS

It may be that colour prejudice enters into the resolution of the Meridan Constituency Labour Party so roundly denounced by George Cunvin last week. But it is possible that it was drawn up by well-meaning people seeking to protect the welfare of the coloured immigrants and that he has read into it more than was intended.

Of course, it shies away from the real problem. But it is not enough merely to contrast the situation under capitalism with what it would be under a planned, socialist economy.

Incidentally, even under such conditions it is misleading to say 'the more workers there were, the greater would be productivity', as though the one was derived from the other.

The immediate issue is that for the first time for nearly twenty years large numbers of workers are going to be confronted with threatened or actual unemployment and short time.

It is not enough to tell them that this arises from the nature of capitalism. They must also be presented with a policy and a lead in this new situation in the shape of simple, understandable transitional demands.

Winning the new proletariat

And this policy must be framed in full recognition of the position of the new proletariat of immigrant workers, whether coloured or not, who must be won for these demands and integrated into the movement.

Not only will these workers be the first to feel the brunt of unemployment in many cases, with the danger that others will stand by indifferent to their fate.

There is also the distinct possibility that they will be made use of to undermine conditions generally, along classical lines.

Fundamentally this has got nothing to do with 'colour' or any other kind of prejudice; attempts will always be made to play off one group of workers against another when it is to the advantage of the bosses.

The increasing difficulties of the ruling class will undoubtedly drive it to make use of every kind of division and difference which it can exploit in order to hang on to its threatened positions.

Hessle (Yorks.)

Tom Kemp

THE PETRO-CHEMICAL WORKERS' PROTEST

IN your issue of August 2 you reported a unanimous stoppage of work for one and a half hours by building workers on the Petro-chemicals site, Flixton, against British and American intervention in the Middle East.

Unfortunately this report is not completely factual. These are the facts:

As a result of a petition to the shop stewards' committee a meeting was called to protest against British and American intervention in the Middle East; 130 men out of about 400 stopped work to attend the meeting, which lasted about 45 minutes.

A resolution was unanimously adopted at the meeting, protesting against the landing in the Middle East of British and American troops, recording the workers' belief in the right of self-determination, and opposing intervention by any power in the internal affairs of any nation.

Liverpool, 8

John Connor