

THE NEWSLETTER

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IT'S SLICK, BUT NOT WHAT LABOUR NEEDS

By WILLIAM HUNTER

SLICK. Glossy. Gaily coloured. Thumb-indexed. A high-power advertising job. That's the Labour Party's election pamphlet 'The Future Labour Offers YOU.' But is the policy inside as striking as the tinsel? Will this programme win the General Election?

Can Labour's leaders fulfil the promise made by Hugh Gaitskell in his foreword and build 'a Britain where—with . . . jobs for all and the full use of modern technology—production expands year by year and the growing wealth is fairly shared throughout the nation'?

Can they fulfil all the other promises set forth in red, green and a choice variety of types?

The **PROMISE** of a better life all round. The **PROMISE** of better housing. The **PROMISE** that the 'doors of opportunity' in education are to be opened.

The **PROMISE** that old age pensions are to rise (but only by 10s. a week). The **PROMISE** that new hospitals are to be built and Health Service charges reduced.

The **PROMISE** that the cost of living is to be kept 'steady'. The **PROMISE** that the housewife is to be protected against 'rigged prices, against profiteering and against unfair trading practices'.

Above all, the **PROMISE** that the first objective of a Labour government will be to 'restore full employment and to preserve full employment'.

But when we ask how all this is to be carried out, we find that the cover is not the only glossy thing about this pamphlet.

The foundation for 'Labour's bold programme for social progress' will be laid by replacing 'Tory stagnation' by 'con-

NEW BUS CUTS MEAN HARDER WORK FOR LOUSY WAGES

By Bob Potter (London busman)

BATTERSEA garage branch committee has sent a resolution to Frank Cousins expressing its 'dissatisfaction and disgust' at the full-time officials' obstruction of rank-and-file demands for positive action against the cuts in London bus services.

The committee has issued a leaflet to the members recommending that they 'work to agreement' and telling them how to implement the policy of 'non-co-operation'. This action had previously been declared 'unconstitutional' by full-time officials.

Terrific intensification of work

Over the past twelve months duties have been reduced by 13.85 per cent. altogether. This means a terrific intensification of work for the crews; it also means a drastic loss in earnings due to the ending of overtime.

Increased work for lousy wages—that is the LTE's policy.

One LTE official estimated that £3 million would be saved each year by the latest series of cuts, and that this would be eaten up entirely by paying the busmen their wage increase.

This is nonsense. The LTE has already told the Transport and General Workers' Union that average earnings of crews next year will be the same as last year, 'if not a few coppers less', in spite of the 8s. 6d. In fact they are likely to be considerably less.

The Central Bus Committee's non-co-operation policy has been thwarted by the officials. The rank and file solidly supported the Committee's boycott of the national conference; they shared the CBC's opinion that they had been let down by their paid officials.

With a critical eye

Many branches passed resolutions for action against the cuts. Chalk Farm have decided to work to rule. Enfield want a ban on standing passengers.

The latter point is a sore one with busmen. The LTE is cutting heavily at peak periods, on the ground that buses are 'half-empty'—which seems to busmen to contradict the LTE's insistence that standing passengers must be carried.

For the conductor with his Gibson ticket machine, standing passengers make the job twice as difficult. For the passenger there is obvious discomfort.

Busmen are looking at their union leaders with a critical eye. The general opinion is that the officials are paid to do a job which they are not doing.

The recent circular to branches threatening disciplinary action against any member who associates with 'unofficial' publications, and the statement of Ernie David, a member of the CBC, that the officials are 'scared stiff of The Newsletter', show the leaders' anxiety lest a strong rank-and-file

(Continued overleaf)

AS WE WOULD HAVE WRITTEN IT

The Newsletter is critical of the new Labour Party pamphlet, 'The Future Labour Offers YOU'.

Workers will ask: 'Could you have done better? What have you to put in its place? What is YOUR policy for beating the Tories?'

Fair enough. Next week The Newsletter will put forward a General Election policy for Labour as we think it should be presented.

Another article next week will discuss the political evolution of Councilor John Lawrence, and his decision to join the Communist Party.

trolled expansion'. How is that expansion to come about? Here the pamphlet has only vague phrases to offer.

'Expansion' is to be guaranteed by the use of the Budget and 'key controls'—as if the present state of the British economy were just the result of government manipulation.

The truth which this pamphlet avoids is that unemployment and the piling up of surplus stocks are features of a capitalist economy which can no longer find markets so easily as at the height of the post-war boom.

And capitalist investment is slowing down because employers no longer see guaranteed profits.

If the pamphlet were honest it would say that there are only two roads to expansion: through finding markets and profits—or through scrapping capitalism and planning the economy on socialist lines.

The first road is blocked. The second means a real struggle

(Continued on back page)

COMMENTARY

WHY THEIR VOTE FELL

THE French elections were rigged to reduce the number of communist deputies. But it is the policy of the French communist leaders, and not the electoral system, that has reduced the communist vote. These leaders are displaying all the fatal infirmity of will and paralysis of action that the German Stalinists displayed before Hitler in 1932-33. They are like rabbits hypnotized by a snake. Instead of rousing the French workers to bar the path to fascism, they supported the 'democratic' elements which smoothed de Gaulle's path to power; and they are making it clear that they are prepared to work within the new constitution. No wonder their supporters turn away from them in dismay and disgust. Between May and the elections was de Gaulle's honeymoon period. When he at last peels off the velvet glove the French workers will have to find new leaders, or be crushed.

HANDS OFF THE 'BLUE UNION'

DOCKERS are getting angry about worsening conditions. About 15 per cent. of them are without work each week now, and there are constant attempts to 'discipline' them and quench their fighting spirit. The leaders of the Transport and General Workers' Union want to ensure a tighter control over portworkers; to do this they would have to weaken the 'blue union', the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers. Hence the suspension of the 'blue union' by the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, a decision which was obviously instigated by the TGWU.

The General Council wants the 'blue union' to allow the TGWU to service its members in the northern ports. But the right of the northern men to be full members of the union of their choice, and to be serviced by it, was established in the courts in March 1956, when Mr Francis Spring of Liverpool secured an injunction against his expulsion from the NASD. This action cost the small union a good deal of money; the General Council knows perfectly well that if the NASD accepted its demands it could be landed in further litigation and perhaps destroyed. Here are trade union officials taking time off from their constant lectures to workers to be 'constitutional', in order to demand of the 'blue union' that it violate a legal decision.

The 'blue union's' members in the northern ports joined it of their own free will. Before the trade union bureaucrats divided industry into spheres of influence, TUC decisions on inter-union disputes were based on the principle that if men wanted to change their union their transfers should be permitted. Today there are rumours of a cut in the dock labour register. We understand that at a recent meeting of the Merseyside Dock Labour Board one TGWU official declared that 'blue union' men—he said they were 'non-unionists'—should be the first to go. The decision of the General Council will split the ranks of the portworkers and weaken the fight against unemployment unless it is condemned and fought by every serious trade unionist. It is certain that men on the docks, both 'blue' and 'white', will not stand idly by while TGWU officials shirk their duty to defend the livelihood of dockers and throw a number of militant portworkers out of a job.

BUS CUTS (Continued from front page)

movement should develop.

Holloway and Brixton have produced lively leaflets for public distribution. Battersea has got its trades council to hold public meetings in protest at the cuts, and to produce a leaflet.

'NUTS AND BOLTS, NOT DOUGHNUTS,' SAID STEWARD ON SAFETY-LAST SITE

By Bob Pennington

MASS meeting of London trade unionists on Sunday pledged full support to the locked-out men at the Belvedere power station site, asked the unions to stand firm, and gave a collection of £51, which included a number of job donations.

Chief steward Hugh Barr told the meeting, which was called by the Belvedere liaison committee, that the only two contracts on the job with 100 per cent. trade unionism—William Arrol's and John Brown's—were the very firms to sack all their labour.

It was not simply because they picketed at South Bank that they were sacked, he said. The real reason was their consistent fight for trade union conditions on the job.

'In one year at Arrol's we established a 44-hour week. The only time we permitted overtime to be worked was when it involved safety and essential maintenance work.

'Before the union was on the site we had a position where a foreman actually instructed a welder to fix steel. He told the man: "If you can't do it you will get the sack." The welder jacked the job in.

'Battle after battle was waged over safety. The first man killed was a Constructional Engineering Union member called Kelly. Although Kelly was a crane-driver he was killed while bolting up steel.

One man, one job

'We ended all that,' declared Brother Barr. 'The stewards' committee insisted: One man for one job.'

After the death of one erector, who fell into the coal bunkers, the firm put handrails up. He believed that if handrails had been there before, there would have been less chance of that man's losing his life.

They did not restrict their safety campaign to the job alone. Approaches were made to MPs, and one MP led a deputation to the Ministry of Labour.

A number of stoppages took place to enforce the employment of a full-time safety officer.

'It is our fight to obtain decent wages, better conditions and adequate safety that made Arrol's and Brown's act,' Brother Barr went on. 'Every attack made on the shop stewards and job organization today is a prelude to an attack by the employers on wages and conditions tomorrow.'

A steward at John Brown's raised a laugh when he told the meeting of a conversation he had with a boss on the job.

Six previous stewards sacked

'Before I was steward, the six previous stewards had been sacked. Then we had a strike to secure the reinstatement of some boilermakers who got sacked.

'The boss told me: "If necessary I'll build the job with butcher's and baker's boys."

"Oh no you won't," was our reply. "You'll build it with skilled men and trade union labour, who will erect it with nuts and bolts—not doughnuts and strings of sausages."

On Tuesday the Belvedere men picketed the premises of the Central Electricity Board, and were refused an interview with Shannon, one of the officials.

One executive type read a poster saying 'Nationalization, not National Assistance' and snorted: 'We don't want any more nationalization here.'

'Christ,' said a picket, 'to think people like that are running nationalized industries.'

MINEWORKERS ARE ANGRY AT MANOEUVRES OVER WAGE CLAIM

By Ted Woolley (Sandhole colliery, Walkden, Lancs.)

MINEWORKERS the length and breadth of Britain today are puzzled and angry at the latest manoeuvring over their wage claim.

The original claim was for an all-round 15s. This was refused by the National Coal Board, which finally produced an offer of 7s. 6d. for day-wage men only, a nine months' standstill on all piece-work claims, selective Saturday work and an inquiry to 'remove' obstructions to 'efficiency'.

By a narrow majority the national executive recommended acceptance, as did a specially convened delegate conference.

The rank and file, however, had other ideas, and repudiated the offer in no uncertain manner at area and pit levels.

Rank-and-file workers might be forgiven for believing that in such circumstances a special policy conference would be convened to decide the next moves.

This belief was engendered by the deliberations and decisions of the last annual conference of the National Union of Mineworkers, during which a move by the Yorkshire miners to end compulsory arbitration was recommended to the NEC.

Meaning at pit level

To the miners at pit level, where verbal subtleties are not a favourite pastime, the conference decision meant that the NEC should take the necessary steps to carry it out.

Now, only five months after a conference took positive decisions on wages and arbitration, the NEC of the NUM returns to the National Coal Board, asking not for the full claim decided on but for the 7s. 6d. offered by the Board, with the plea that the strings be dropped.

As was expected, the Board would have none of this: and all the NEC could think of was a reference to arbitration.

And now the same court, headed by Lord Morris, which only last February rejected a previous wage claim, is asked to pronounce on the present one.

It may be that the temper of the rank-and-file miner will be a factor influencing the court's decision. But the NEC is

going to have to do some big talking to explain its actions to the members.

Nor is the reference to arbitration the only curious action taken by the NEC.

Contempt for the members

A joint statement by the two contending parties makes the point that while the claim will be valid from September 29 last, the condition providing for a freeze of piece-work claims is also in operation as from that date.

In other words the NEC has agreed to implement one of the strings which, by a large majority vote, the members of the NUM have entirely repudiated.

This shows a contempt for the rank and file and a shameful deference to capitalism. The NEC's behaviour cannot be allowed to go unexplained.

HARDER WORK, LESS PAY, DOWN THE PITS

From Our Industrial Correspondent

'MAKE the worker pay' is a time-honoured principle of capitalism. How well this has been applied in the coal industry is shown in the National Coal Board's accounts for the June quarter.

On the previous year's June quarter accounts there stood a book loss of £3,724,599. This year's figures show a profit of £5,351,430—an overall saving of £9,076,029. Quite an achievement, from the Board's point of view.

The worker, on the other hand, has been obliged to work harder and for less money.

Mining is an extractive industry, and the coal is harder to get each day. This implies that production would fall, or that more workers would be needed to produce the same annual tonnage.

In fact output per manshift is increasing, and production—allowing for a much reduced manpower and the ending of Saturday working—is only slightly reduced.

At the same time wages have decreased for all workers from an average of £14 12s. 2d. per week to £14 2s. 9d., or nearly 10s. per week.

For the ex-shareholders the outlook is far from depressing. No freeze for them: they drew £7,815,000 in the one quarter.

OUR CONFERENCE, OUR CRITICS AND OUR STRUGGLE

By BRIAN BEHAN

DELEGATES representing 37,752 organized workers were among the participants in the national industrial rank-and-file Conference called by the Editorial Board of THE NEWSLETTER.

And among the 500 to 600 workers who attended, many were visitors elected by their union branches, but unable to come as delegates because of the witch-hunt.

There is no doubt that the Conference, though only a beginning, was one the most important workers' gatherings for many years.

Twenty-two speakers took part in the discussion, the objects of which were to thrash out a common programme for halting unemployment and the employers' attacks, and to begin to develop the idea that workers should try to combine political and industrial action.

Socialists and workers' struggles

There have been many rank-and-file conferences since the war. The significance of this one was that it was not restricted to any one industry; nor did it confine itself to purely industrial questions.

On the other hand it did not adopt a purely political propagandist approach.

It established the right of socialists to participate in the workers' struggles; it ended any idea that socialists must disguise themselves or their aims and keep the struggle a purely industrial one.

The Conference was violently attacked by the ruling class. The Press tried to smash it by calling it a 'plot'. The leaders of the Amalgamated Union of Building Workers branded it a crime even to handle a leaflet about the Conference, let alone to attend it.

But the witch-hunt failed, because a conference of this kind corresponded to the workers' urgent need, in the present industrial and political situation, to prepare for struggle.

The witch-hunt failed so miserably that one of the biggest contingents came from the union that has carried out the greatest witch-hunt, including now the expulsion of the two more militants, Brothers M. Maguire and D. Nolan.

Attitude of the 'Left'

What is much more serious than these attacks, from the point of view of socialists, is the attitude of the so-called 'Left' to the Conference, ranging from the leaders of the Communist Party to another small group, the Socialist Review supporters. All displayed venom and hostility towards the Conference and The Newsletter.

The only group to support the holding of the Conference while dissociating themselves from the political standpoint of The Newsletter were the comrades around the publication Advance. All others, without exception, did their best to smear or strangle the Conference.

The Communist Party leaders, who call for the ending of bans and proscriptions, supported whole-heartedly the pro-

criptions of the Right wing. This did not prevent some thirty members of the Communist Party from attending the Conference, of whom three spoke as delegates.

For readers of Socialist Review, as for readers of the Daily Worker, the Conference did not exist until it happened.

Then Socialist Review came out with a two-page article, coyly disguised as a contribution to its Forum, which slandered The Newsletter in pretty well the same words as those used by the AUBTW Right wing.

In common with the News Chronicle, the Communist Party leaders and the Right wing, Socialist Review believes that the South Bank men have not been victorious because sup-

porters of The Newsletter were present; that socialists have no right to take part in the struggle of working men; that a rank-and-file movement must restrict itself, not only in policy, but by fighting within the trade union machine.

Farce of disputes machinery

Now whatever the merits of Socialist Review on other matters, we of The Newsletter disagree most sharply on these questions.

The trade union machine in Britain, during the years after the General Strike, developed a form of class collaboration machinery which found its ultimate expression in the building industry's 'green book' procedure.

Busman and Miner Discuss Newsletter Conference

WE NEED UNITY IN ACTION

—LONDON BUSMAN

By Kevin Corley (Holloway Garage)

AS far as I am concerned, the most important lesson of the national industrial rank-and-file Conference was the need to build powerful rank-and-file movements. My own industry, the buses, clearly shows the need for this.

For some years now the London Transport Executive has been steadily chopping services. Since 1953, 58,000 seats have been lost to passengers.

Thirty Sunday routes are now to disappear.

In Holloway garage before the cuts there was a shortage of 83 drivers and conductors. After the introduction of the cuts there is a so-called 'surplus' of 88. This means that 44 buses are lying idle in the sheds.



GARAGE AFTER GARAGE. Holloway's experience is being repeated in garage after garage in London.

The rank and file are anxious to fight these cuts. They recognize them as an attempt to impose harder work and disguised wage reductions on bus workers.

Busmen will draw up to £4 per week less because of the cuts. And the public will suffer hardship through having to wait longer at bus stops.

Yet the executive of the Transport and General Workers' Union had refused to take any real action until pressure was brought on them by the rank and file. This pressure expressed itself at last Sunday's delegate conference.

Only this produced the decision to 'work-to-rule' after our proposal for a 'ban on standing passengers' was ruled out of order.



REAL CAMPAIGN NEEDED. This 'work-to-rule' decision is a good step, but it is not enough, as time will show.

The bus delegate conference should now prepare a real campaign among busmen, and within the general Labour movement, to win support for a fight against the cuts.

This means of course that workers in other industries must give their support to the bus workers in solidarity action to fight the Tory offensive.

This is of course a political fight. The Tories want to run the buses at a profit, at the expense of the bus workers and passengers.

The only solution is a genuinely non-profit-making public service efficiently run under workers' control. In order to achieve this we must fight for the removal of the Tory government.

The rank-and-file Conference was a step forward in achieving 'unity in action' of workers in all industries in their common fight against the employing class.

A DEFINITE STEP FORWARD

—SCOTS MINER

By Lawrence Daly (Glencraig branch NUM, Fife)

DESPITE weaknesses, The Newsletter's rank-and-file Conference on November 16 represents a definite new stage in the development of a militant, socialist movement in Britain.

It gathered together a surprisingly large number of youthful delegates from industry who are ready for a fighting lead in the struggle for radical social change.

Though Brian Behan can be criticized for exceeding his already generous allocation of time, we can forgive his Irish volubility when we remember that seldom, if ever, can so many rank-and-file delegates have spoken at any previous one-day conference.



A REFRESHING CHANGE. The ready acceptance by the platform of most of the amendments to the draft Charter of Workers' Demands was a refreshing change from the bureaucratic attitude of so many of our trade union 'leaders'.

To attack trade union officials merely because they hold such posts, however, is very mistaken. If I detected such an attitude on the part of some of the delegates, I hope they will agree that this was not their intention.

Too much time was given to discussion of unemployment and the building trade, though one can understand the deep concern of those comrades who are personally affected.

But more time could usefully have been spent in the problems of nationalization and workers' control, trade union democracy and the role of the Labour Party.



CIRCULATE THE CHARTER. Much in the Charter needs clarification, and I supported the amended Charter with reservations on a number of questions.

The Charter should now be widely circulated throughout the Labour movement. Discussions on it should be organized in trade union branches, the Labour Party, Co-operative guilds and so on.

And a fresh discussion on it should be launched by The Newsletter.

It was certainly inspiring to meet and hear so many militants who brushed aside the strictures of Fleet Street, Transport House and King Street!

This lays it down that there can be no stoppage of work or intervention by the trade union concerned until the case has been referred to the disputes machinery.

There is not a single case yet recorded in the thirty years of the disputes machinery in the building trade where a shop steward has been declared victimized. The disputes machinery is a farce, designed to help the employer.

No one can deny the need for trade unionists to attend their branches and try to change policy. But if this is all they need to do, then what happens to the living expression of trade unionism, the shop stewards' organization, when they are sacked as they were at South Bank?

To have advised the South Bank men to rely on the machine would have been disastrous. The machine, in the shape of the conciliation board, had already decided on their sacking.

How the movement grows

The machine, in the persons of three trade union officials, visited the site on the day of the sackings and told the men point-blank that it was they who had caused the sackings by limiting their hours to forty-four per week. This was before a single copy of The Newsletter had been seen on the site!

A rank-and-file movement does not grow out of propaganda visits to trade union branches by well-meaning socialists.

It grows out of the conflict between workers and employers, and the failure of trade union leaders to defend their members. The job of socialists is to see that the fullest solidarity is maintained in a dispute, and to carry the lessons into the branch.

The Newsletter made a contribution to the South Bank fight, and the vindication of its work is the thanks of men like Hugh Cassidy, chief steward at South Bank, Tom Richards, the chairman of the Belvedere lads, and many other militants.

What about the charge of political interference in trade union affairs?

We say quite openly that we do not object to the Communist Party members within each union meeting together to decide a common policy; nor do we object to the hundred and one other groupings, Right-wing and religious, that meet, discuss and plan.

Tories' attack is political

We are opposed to the conception of a 'non-political' trade union or a 'non-political' dispute.

Not to draw political lessons from industrial struggles is to play the Tories' game. In their attacks on the working class they unite industrial and political action of their own.

At South Bank McAlpine laid under contribution the whole machinery of the capitalist State. While McAlpine and the Right wing shouted in chorus 'There is no dispute',

the Labour Exchanges were denying men benefit on the ground that 'There is a dispute in progress.'

To the aid of McAlpine, when this failed to break the ranks, came 400 foot police, ten mounted police and half a dozen tenders for arrests.

To the aid of McAlpine came the BBC, with its repeated announcements that the site was open for all who wanted to go to work.

To the aid of McAlpine came union officials, whose words were reprinted by the firm on scab charters 3ft long, posted all around the site.

Still fighting for reinstatement

With such a combination of brutality and deceit, and bearing in mind that the stewards were giving leadership to hundreds of unskilled men, new to trade unionism, is it any wonder that the site reopened with the stewards outside?

The Newsletter is still fighting for the reinstatement of the stewards.

For too long British socialists have tended to isolate their socialist thinking and activity from the workers' struggles taking place around them. Today the employers and their government can be defeated only if the workers use their power, industrially and politically, to that end.

The rank-and-file movement that must be built if this job is to be done has got to have a political—i.e., socialist, anti-capitalist—outlook.

This outlook is not acquired in coffee houses, valuable though those establishments may be. It comes when socialists boldly proclaim that the sectional struggles are part of one and the same class struggle against a common enemy, and that this struggle must be fought with the utmost determination.

Despite the wails and warnings of some elements, the hard-headed industrial workers who came to our Conference saw nothing mysterious, conspiratorial or destructive in the Charter of Workers' Demands.

Around its proposals can now be built a powerful movement, in which all sections of the Left can unite on principles.

We would point out to all concerned that to help the Right wing in their search for 'pure', bloodless, castrated trade unionism is to invite destruction. No one can buy immunity from the witch-hunt by attacking The Newsletter. What has happened in the north London AEU proves this to the hilt.

Let the leaders of the Communist Party and the other 'Left' critics tell the workers precisely what they object to in the Charter of Workers' Demands.

We are convinced that rank-and-file socialists, whatever their differences on other questions, will see in the Conference and the Charter an important step towards the defeat and eventual overthrow of the capitalist class.

Some Lessons of the South Bank Dispute

By TERRY SCOTT (member of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers)

WHEN the history of the industrial workers' struggles in the post-war years comes to be written, the South Bank dispute will be seen as a landmark in more than one sense.

McAlpine's vicious action in sacking 1,250 men has no precedent in the building industry since the 1865 lock-out. It came at a time of worsening economic crisis and of rapidly growing unemployment.

The last fourteen years have been a heyday boom for the tycoons, speculators and big business sharks, for the big master builders like McAlpine, Wimpey and Unit Construction Co.

During this period paltry concessions have been made

in the form of bonus earnings.

But these earnings have depended on the determination of strong shop committees backed by the united support of the men.

A twelvemonth of haggling

Meanwhile, after a twelvemonth of haggling, chit-chat, 'Well, old boy, you must play the game', a piddling penny here and halfpenny there were squeezed out of the employers.

Now we have entered a new situation. The government, applauded by the employers, have thrown the negotiating tables out of the window, removed the farcical disputes machinery and launched a full-scale attack on the stewards

and militants.

If they can weaken our ranks and break our resistance, then we shall be in for a repetition of the hungry thirties.

The arbitration and disputes machinery has been a veil for the Right-wing trade union officials, who have always sought, and will always seek, to prevent any real clash with the employing class.

Among the national paid officials today there are some who are quite prepared to disrupt and destroy industrial action.

And even among the 'Lefts' there are officials prepared to compromise with the Right wing, and acquiesce in the betrayal of the rank and file for reasons of expediency, or for positions of influence.

Long series of attacks

Such fork-tongued conniving only assists the witch-hunters. Loyalty to principles, not to leaders, should be the criterion.

The lock-out of 1,250 men by McAlpine followed a long series of attacks on militants and stewards on this site, with lads withdrawing their labour on each occasion to secure their reinstatement.

Certain trade union officials must consider our intelligence very low if they think they can deceive the rank and file with their misrepresentations and inaccuracies about these disputes.

They are heading for a shock! The workers are beginning to see who are the real 'conspirators' and 'usurpers'. This has been one hard lesson of the South Bank.

Time and again in the past fourteen years unofficial strikes have won decent working conditions, higher bonus earnings and have given stewards and militants protection. And never has full official support been given.

What an indictment! The officials who advised workers at South Bank to cross the picket line if they wanted to be good trade unionists could not have acted differently if they had been hoping for a knighthood.

McAlpine had able assistants

If McAlpine managed to get scabs on to that site, he did so with the help of certain union officials, whose words were printed on large posters and stuck up all round the site.

But he had other able assistants, too—the police. They made a mockery of 'peaceful', 'constitutional' picketing.

Mounted police savagely rode down pickets, shouted like wild beasts, openly vented their hatred. Pickets were attacked by drunks armed with iron bars—it would be libellous to say who paid them to do it—while the police turned a blind eye.

'Two pickets a gate and keep moving!' was the refrain of the police.

We witnessed pickets dragged by the hair, punched round the head and thrown, bruised and bleeding, into police vans. This rams home another important lesson: effective picketing means standing firm against both scabs and their protectors.

The Tory government not only helped McAlpine by sending an army of police to the site. It helped him also by refusing unemployment benefit and National Assistance for five and six weeks after the site reopened.

By some strange coincidence

And, by some strange coincidence, the posters with the 'cross the picket line' appeal of one union official were prominently displayed at Labour Exchanges, and workers were told: 'Vacancies at McAlpine's only.'

Legal considerations prevent my commenting on an appeal now pending. But I can say this much: each worker who took his place on the picket line was by virtue of that act alone already condemned in the eyes of the capitalist State.

This dispute has been a testing ground. It has set a pattern for the future, for both the employers and the workers. We must learn the lessons and prepare for the struggles ahead.

The magnificent financial support and solidarity received by the South Bank men from the rank and file of the Labour

and trade union movement shows that the stand of the South Bank men has been not only correct but vital.

They have fought on behalf of the whole working class of Britain to stop the establishment of a dangerous precedent. Not to have fought at South Bank would have been tantamount to telling every employer in the country: 'You can sack whom you please, when you please, as you please.'

The workers must have many more opportunities such as the national industrial rank-and-file Conference, to meet, discuss and thrash out their problems.

An understanding that each partial fight is the proper concern of the whole of our class will help us to build unity, consolidate our forces and go over to the counter-offensive against the employers and their government.

STUDENTS HEAR MARXISTS' CHALLENGE ON WORKERS' CONTROL

From a Correspondent

LAST week-end's school arranged by the National Association of Labour Student Organizations at Oxford saw a vigorous challenge from Marxist speakers greeted with interest and enthusiasm by students from many universities.

Liveliest discussion of all came when William Hunter debated with John Hughes on workers' control.

Hunter said it was false to see workers' control as part of an 'encroaching revolution' within capitalist society. It arose out of class conflict, when the workers sought to impose their will on the employers.

In the session on present-day capitalism Cliff Slaughter, a member of the Editorial Board of The Newsletter, firmly rejected John Saville's suggestion that capitalism had undergone fundamental changes in the last two decades.

Slaughter cited the South Bank struggle to show that the problems which the editors of the New Reasoner tend to ignore are still very much with us.

The South Bank dispute, and the national industrial rank-and-file Conference, were very much to the forefront in the discussion.

At the close of the school a leading figure in the Universities and Left Review Club was heard to say how worried he was about the influence The Newsletter was beginning to exert among students.

USA

SOCIALIST CANDIDATES WIN 'MODEST BUT SIGNIFICANT VOTE'

From Our New York Correspondent

THE independent socialist 'slate' of candidates got what its supporters call 'a modest but significant vote' in New York City in the recent United States elections.

Senatorial candidate **Corliss Lamont** received 37,927 votes; **John T. McManus** and **Annette T. Rubinstein**, candidates for Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, 23,538; **Hugh N. Mulzac**, candidate for Comptroller, 27,096; **Scott K. Gray, Jr.**, candidate for Attorney-General, 25,322.

These votes are the largest polled by any socialist ticket in New York since the 1930s.

Unfortunately, the figure of 50,000 votes for the candidate of Governor was not reached. This would have ensured a place for the socialist 'slate' on the ballot for at least four years.

Some responsibility for this failure must be borne by the U.S. Communist Party, which violently opposed the independent socialist grouping because, though it included one of their own former star fellow-travellers, Corliss Lamont, it also included the 'Trotskyist' Socialist Workers' Party, which they do not like very much.

USSR**KHRUSHCHEV PREPARES FOR CONGRESS BY SLATING PASTERNAK AND BULGANIN**

From a Correspondent

THE storm over Boris Pasternak and the Nobel award to him reflects the internal stresses in the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Embassy in London has released the text of the letter sent by the editorial board of Novy Mir to Pasternak in September 1956, giving reasons for rejecting the manuscript of 'Dr Zhivago'.

It has also put out a covering letter, of October 24, 1958, explaining why the letter of rejection is being made public (Soviet News, November 4).

'Pasternak has been awarded a Nobel prize. It is quite obvious that this award has nothing at all in common with an impartial assessment of the literary merits of Pasternak's work itself [and] is a purely political act hostile to our country.' So runs this second letter.

The editorial board had told Pasternak:

'The spirit of your novel is that of non-acceptance of the socialist revolution. The general tenor of your novel is that the October Revolution, the civil war and the social transformations involved did not give the people anything but suffering, and destroyed the Russian intelligentsia, either physically or morally.

'The burden of the author's views on our country's past and, above all, the first ten years after the October Revolution . . . is that the October Revolution was a mistake . . . and that everything which happened afterwards was evil.'

After the civil war

Literary discussion in the Soviet Union has come to bear a special meaning since those days, over thirty years ago, when Stalin launched his so-called 'literary discussion' of Trotsky's 'Lessons of October'.

It is not just a coincidence that the present objection to Pasternak's book is that it raises the question: 'What happened in Russia after the civil war?'

What the editorial board terms 'social transformations' can be translated into 'what happened in Russia when the Stalinist bureaucracy became dominant' (when not only the intelligentsia was affected!)

Several questions immediately arise. Why, at the time they wrote this letter, two years ago, did the editorial board not report to 'a higher authority' that such a book was being offered for publication, so that 'proper' action could be taken?

Why should we be asked to think that Pasternak was so naïve as to invite disaster for himself by offering his book to the Soviet public?

If Khrushchev could speak out, might not another?

The Soviet editors say the book was rejected in 1956. The British publishers say it was accepted for publication in the Soviet Union.

In old Stalinist fashion

If the first is correct, and the full story, why did Pasternak persist in releasing his work, in spite of the warning from editors Agapov, Lavrenyov, Fedin, Semyonov and Krivitsky that it was so completely unacceptable? (There is no evidence that he suffered from mental aberration.)

The answer to this series of questions is related to the currently revived denunciation of Bulganin, Kaganovich, Malenkov and Molotov as members of an 'anti-party group'.

Khrushchev is preparing the ground for the forthcoming Twenty-First Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, in the old Stalinist fashion, with repressions and threats of various kinds.

Questions are forbidden; discussion is forbidden; no thought-provoking, awkward books are allowed. The party is to remain monolithic, in Stalinist fashion.

The award of the Nobel prize for literature to Pasternak came providentially to Khrushchev. Pasternak was brought down in warning to others, not necessarily in the first rank.

As the legendary NCO almost said, Khrushchev is telling Russia: 'Do as I say, not as I did.'

Constant Reader**For the Attention of Mr Roy Nash**

I WONDER if the building trade union leaders who have penalized Brian Behan and others for associating with THE NEWSLETTER remember a weekly called The Trade Unionist (An Independent Paper) which appeared briefly in the early months of 1926?

It carried front-page articles, signed 'Militant', demanding preparation by the movement for the show-down which duly came in May of that year, with the General Strike.

It reported quite fully, and in a friendly spirit, the 'special action conference' called by the National Minority Movement.

It published a review of Trotsky's 'Where Is Britain Going?', which book, it said, 'puts to the British Labour movement certain searching questions which can perhaps all be reduced to the one most searching and most unseemly of all questions—"Is it in earnest, or is it playing a game of humbug and hypocrisy?"

'Get the book,' it urged readers, 'and don't worry one way or the other with the personal gibes. Get hold of the arguments. Face the question it raises, honestly and fearlessly.'

The chairman of the editorial board of this independent and unorthodox little paper was Richard Coppock, then not yet Sir Richard, but already general secretary of the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives.

Associated with him was Jack Tanner, Amalgamated Engineering Union, now of IRIS.

Chuck it, Holmes

WALTER HOLMES is annoyed because the national industrial rank-and-file Conference called by THE

NEWSLETTER got a substantial amount of publicity in the Press.

It wasn't like this (he implies in his 'Worker's Notebook' in the Daily Worker of November 20) 'thirty years ago', in the days of the National Minority Movement.

'Have the Press lords changed their attitude as to reporting the activities of revolutionary Marxism?' The inference you are supposed to draw—wait for it—is that the capitalist Press LIKES us.

Well, as it happened, I had had occasion, shortly before reading that paragraph in the Daily Worker, to look at the report of the annual conference of the National Minority Movement 'thirty years ago' in The Times of August 27, 1928.

It filled nineteen column-inches—as good a showing, I think, as any paper gave our Conference, and a great deal better than most!

So what?

Let's face it—these elderly cocks of innuendo and slander won't fight any more now. Times aren't what they were for Stalinist techniques of discrediting political rivals. Facts must be checked, style-cramping though this may be.

Inside jobs

WHEN a case comes to light such as the recent affair of a government department's mailing list being supplied by one of its officials to a private organization of property-owners, for them to use in their propaganda work, one wonders how much of this sort of thing goes on

that we never hear about.

After all, the higher reaches of the Civil Service are overwhelmingly filled with men of upper-class connexions.

And there have been some notorious precedents—for instance, Robert Morant and the Cockerton judgment.

In the 1890s, when there was no State provision for secondary education, the elected local School Boards which administered the State primary schools in those days began in some areas—in London, Bradford and Sheffield particularly—to set up what were called Higher Grade Schools.

In these schools secondary education with a marked technical and scientific basis was provided, free of charge in the main.

Not only did they give working-class children opportunities that were not elsewhere available to them, they even attracted quite a few pupils away from the expensive private grammar schools. The heads of the latter set up a committee to fight the Higher Grade Schools.

Holiday task

A reactionary official in the Education Department, Robert Morant, allowed an enemy of the School Boards access to the Department's papers in order to help him prepare a case showing that the School Boards were acting beyond their legal powers by sponsoring secondary schools.

Morant let his friend into the office early one Boxing Day morning, when none of his colleagues was about, so as to minimize the danger of discovery.

With Morant's help, a court action was successfully brought against the London School Board, and the 'Cockerton judgment', in 1899, destroyed the legal basis of the Higher Grade Schools.

Working-class children's chances of getting secondary schooling were thus severely reduced, and technical education in England received a blow the effects of which are still with us.

But Morant got promotion and a knighthood, and the biography of him by Bernard Allen, published in 1934, is sub-titled: 'A Great Public Servant.'

Keep Left

A MERSEYSIDE correspondent tells me that the Birkenhead Corporation are now rehousing the families from Morpeth Buildings and are proceeding to demolish these tenements.

They have their grim place in history as the scene of the worst police brutality during the unemployment riots in Birkenhead in September 1932.

On that occasion the police were let loose to do a sort of 'Famagusta' against the most militant sections of the local unemployed, who had been demonstrating for better relief payments.

They raided Morpeth Buildings in the small hours, smashing the windows, breaking in the doors, dragging men from their beds and savagely beating them, just to 'teach them a lesson'.

That Morpeth Buildings should be demolished is doubtless a good thing; but the memory of these outrages ought not to be allowed to die with them.

As it happens, the October issue of our bright contemporary, the young socialists' paper Keep Left, carried an article about the affair and its outcome, in its series on working-class history.

BRIAN PEARCE

LETTERS

SOUTH AFRICA: A COMMENT ON SAUL SCHEEPERS'S VIEWS

MAY I, as one who has participated in a small way in the South African freedom movement, and who is now a member of the Labour Left, be allowed a comment on Saul Scheepers's article in your issue of November 1 [p. 282].

Mr Scheepers claims that the treason trial is really aimed at members of the so-called Unity Movement. Yet none of

the members of that movement is on trial.

Mr Scheepers further claims that the three groups which form the Unity Movement are the real leaders of the peasants and the proletariat.

In point of fact the Unity Movement consists very largely of white-collar groups. Thus it is not surprising that the evidence of victimization of its members is that 'many teachers belonging to . . . them have been dismissed'.

As to the struggle waged by the 'illiterate peasants' of Sekhukhuniland, it is indeed a magnificent struggle. And it has been led by the African National Congress, which is now banned in the area, while the agents of the Convention and the government move freely in the area.

I appeal to The Newsletter to look carefully at the facts of the situation in South Africa before publishing articles like this.

The Freedom Congress represents a broadly-based mass movement uniting democrats of all races.

The so-called Unity Movement is a laughably small splinter group, largely Cape Coloured petty bourgeois in its leadership and so fanatically anti-communist that it is prepared to lend itself to attacking Verwoerd's enemies as vigorously as Verwoerd himself.

Leeds 6

John Rex

WHY IS THE NEWS CHRONICLE BECOMING A BRITISH McCARTHY?

ON November 21 I sent the following letter—which so far has not been published—to the editor of the News Chronicle:

'Your smear campaign against The Newsletter and the Trotskyists leaves a distinct smell in the nostrils of many of your Labour Party readers.

'Just why has the News Chronicle adopted the role of a British McCarthy? Is it because recent Gallup polls revealed that the Labour Party would win wider support if it had a more distinctively socialist policy?

'By provoking a witch-hunt within the Labour Movement does it hope that the hard-pressed Liberal remnant will stand a better chance of resurgence and take the place of the Labour Party as the alternative government?

'If the News Chronicle is really interested in the activities of clubs, it should turn its attention to some of those in the neighbourhood of St James's and the Mall.

'It is within the precincts of these august establishments that decisions are taken which eventually become Tory government policy, affecting the lives of millions of people in this country and in the colonies.'

Richmond (Surrey)

C. van Gelderen

LABOUR (Continued from front page)

against the employing class.

The promised controls, however, would leave the real economic power of big business untouched. The 'expansion' envisaged is to come by restoring the confidence of the employing class in its own system!

Labour is to 'ensure' that its 'expansion' programme is not held up by 'any timidity on the part of managers and investors'.

The Labour government will continue the arms burden and support NATO. And one of the 'advantages' of a Labour government is that the unions will more readily keep down wage claims because 'they know that if there has to be restraint under a Labour government it will be restraint all round'.

'Restraint all round'! With this fighting slogan on its banners, Labour is to sweep to victory.

Regardless of their disappointment at the failure to produce a real socialist policy (which would not need dressing up like a brochure for some Continental tour) militants in the trade unions and the Labour Party will work wholeheartedly for the defeat of the Tories.

If they are successful, the fight for a real socialist programme will become all the more urgent. And only the mobilization of the working class can achieve such a programme.