

THE NEWSLETTER

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MANCHESTER RAILWAYMEN ARE READY TO STRIKE

By Our Industrial Correspondent

'WE are prepared to withdraw our labour in support of any wage claim.' This is the message of the Manchester district council of the National Union of Railwaymen to their fellow-railwaymen all over Britain. And the flat rejection of the London busmen's 25s. claim can only strengthen the railwaymen's determination to win wage increases and better conditions.

The NUR (membership 367,000) was the first of the three rail unions to put in a claim. It asked for a 'substantial' increase in wages—the amount was not specified—a forty-hour week and an additional week's holiday in the winter.

The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (membership 73,000) followed with a claim for a 10 per cent. wage increase and the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (membership 87,000) asked for a review of salary scales.

The history of the TSSA claim is interesting. The last wage increase of 5 per cent. early this year included a 'strings' agreement among the British Transport Commission, the NUR and the TSSA.

This allowed for periodic wages reviews and tied them, rather ambiguously, to increasing productivity in the industry.

A few months ago the TSSA made an application for a review of railway salary scales under the terms of the agreement.

The BTC refused to consider this as a valid claim, saying that the agreement was not binding since it had not been signed by the ASLEF.

The TSSA replied, rather bitterly, that BTC did not explain this condition when the agreement was signed, and applied for an increase through the normal machinery.

Only at first stage

All these claims have to pass through several stages of machinery, and negotiations will be protracted. At present they are only at the first stage, the Railway Staff Joint Council, awaiting a reply from the BTC.

If, as is likely, no agreement is reached, they then go to a higher internal body, the Railway Staff National Council.

Again no decision is likely, and then the claim will go to the third and final stage of the negotiating machinery. This is the 'independent' Railway Staff National Tribunal, which is composed of an independent chairman, one member nominated by the BTC and a third nominated by the unions.

Their decisions are not binding, but as yet the BTC has never refused to implement any of their decisions (although the NUR did so on one occasion).

The tragic loss of Jim Campbell will be felt throughout

(Continued overleaf)

POLICE HOMES OR EDUCATION? LIVERPOOL LABOUR COUNCILLORS REBEL

THE Labour-controlled Corporation of Liverpool decided that a recently bought building should be used to provide new administrative quarters for Liverpool police.

The alternative was to use it as desperately needed accommodation for the teaching of educationally below normal children.

Eighteen Labour Councillors strongly felt that the needs of these children were far more important than those of the police. They voted against the Labour whip on the issue.

Now there are rumours that the officers of the Corporation Labour group are proposing disciplinary action against them.

Tory councillors supported the application of the chief of police for the building. However, local Labour parties are supporting the eighteen rebels.

Garston divisional Labour Party has passed a resolution congratulating them. Together with Edge Hill DLP it has deplored the attitude of the Labour group.

'LONDON GROUP' WANTS OPEN DISCUSSION

MEMBERS of the Communist Party in different parts of the country have received a duplicated bulletin from 'The London Group'.

The bulletin gives details of recent disciplinary action against Communist Party dissidents in Bromley (Kent) and Leeds, and says there is a danger that re-registration figures will disclose 'alarming losses in membership'.

'We believe it is necessary to overcome this reluctance of the national executive to keep the membership informed of these differences which seem to lead to expulsions etc.

'We believe that only by open discussion can we resolve our differences and create some sort of solidarity and prevent the decline in membership.'

The authors of the bulletin, whose aim is 'to preserve and strengthen our party', say they cannot sign the bulletin by name or give an address 'or the treatment meted out to us would be the same as dealt to the Bromley and Leeds comrades'.

'The London Group consists entirely of party members' and holds regular meetings, the bulletin adds.

A Prophecy

Let the slave grinding at the mill run out into the field,
Let him look up into the heavens and laugh in the bright air;
Let the enchained soul, shut up in darkness and in sighing,
Whose face has never seen a smile in thirty weary years,
Rise and look out; his chains are loose, his dungeon doors are open;
And let his wife and children return from the oppressor's scourge.

* * *

For Empire is no more, and now the Lion and Wolf shall cease.

WILLIAM BLAKE (born November 28, 1757)

COMMENTARY

STAR AND SPARKS

WHATEVER may or may not be going on inside the Electrical Trades Union, the London *Star's* call for a public inquiry into ETU elections is a piece of cheeky stunt-mongering. When were the editor and proprietors of the *Star* elected? Who elected them? What credentials have they to give advice to trade unionists? The members of the ETU are quite capable of counting how many cocoa beans make five without the help of the Cadbury family. If their house needs putting in order, then they will put it in order themselves.

They showed this at their annual conference last June, when, under militant leadership, they routed their Stalinist leaders and carried by a large majority a resolution supporting 'the workers' revolution in Hungary' and condemning the Russian intervention against it. Now Brother Frank Haxell and Brother Frank Foulkes are in as precarious a position as Ernö Gerö was before that revolution broke out. But they have no Russian tanks to help them stay in power. They have to rely on other methods. Sooner or later, however, the rank-and-file electricians will transform this microcosm of a 'people's democracy' into a genuine instrument of working-class advance. Then the *Star* and the employers will really have something to worry about.

BABYLON OR JERUSALEM?

MYSTIC, prophet, poet, engraver, painter and unrepentant rebel, William Blake was the first to comprehend what was happening to the England of his time. The spinning jenny was invented when he was nine; the spinning mule when he was 21; the steam engine three years later; the power loom three years later still. Before his eyes the 'pleasant pastures' were defiled by 'dark Satanic mills'. Through his poetry run the clangour of brass and iron, the groans of women dragging tubs of coal in the darkness, the tears of six-year-old children working in the mills from five in the morning to nine at night. Albion could become Babylon, 'buildd in the Waste, founded in Human desolation'. Or it could become Jerusalem, 'buildd over with pillars of gold'. Those who chose Babylon called Blake mad and tried him for sedition. Two centuries after his birth the same choice confronts us who live in a new age of dizzying advances in men's tools and skills.

CASH STILL NEEDED

THE ready response to our appeal for financial help a fortnight ago has been very encouraging, and has enabled us to weather the immediate crisis caused by postal charges. Long-term problems remain, however. THE NEWSLETTER has made a place for itself in the socialist movement. Its continued existence, improvement and development depend on the generosity of readers who understand the need for a small independent weekly which can manage such a 'remarkable publishing achievement' (the phrase is *Tribune's*) as the 1917-1957 special issue; and who understand the constant financial strain of producing a paper which, far from enjoying any 'subsidy', is barred from W. H. Smith bookstalls.

RAILWAYMEN (Continued from front page)

these negotiations. His standing among NUR members was considerable and he was an able advocate.

The acting general secretary, Sidney Greene, will have a severe testing in giving the leadership that the new situation calls for.

His lack of prestige in the union will make it more difficult for him to reach agreements out of keeping with the feelings of the rank and file.

The days of almost automatic wage advances have ended and as overtime earnings decline the low wages of railwaymen become even more keenly felt.

Railway workers, particularly locomen, are facing a more ominous threat from the modernization plan. As it gathers speed it is clear that the number of railwaymen will be reduced.

The new agreement for the manning of diesel and electric locos and trains will considerably reduce the need for firemen, for many of the new units will carry only a driver.

The BTC claim there will be no redundant staff to lay off but time will tell. It is true that in the next ten years thousands

WHAT TORY POLICY MEANS TO THE RAILWAYMEN

The porter at £7 7s. a week is faced with increased rents, higher health contributions and all the heavy load of rising prices.

The engine driver at £11 2s. 6d. is to work harder—with faster turn round and more journeys per shift—for the same money.

Guard, shunters and signalmen too are asked to work harder while real earnings fall.

of railwaymen are due to retire, but even so the promotion prospects for many grades are far from bright.

Not that promotion is wanted for the status it brings. It is sought mainly because wage increases are often tied to higher grade jobs in the railway industry.

The demand for a forty-hour week and longer holidays will increase the opportunities for promotion and is an important part of the railwaymen's fight.

This is the first time for some years that the NUR and ASLEF have gone into the fight together. There was no prior agreement between the unions to do this but it has been brought about by events.

The struggle that will develop over these claims will bring the rank and file together and may well heal bitter memories of independent action in the past.

It is only from the rank and file that the militant voice of railwaymen will be heard. The inter-union rivalries are a luxury that railwaymen cannot afford any longer.

HILLINGTON WORKERS FIGHT SPEED-UP

Workers at GKN woodscrew factory in Hillington (Glasgow) are resisting speed-up and challenging the legality of the conditions under which a time study of new machines has been made.

They allege that factory regulations providing that 'efficient mechanical appliances shall be provided for moving driving belts to and from fast and loose pulleys' were not being observed.

The workers have passed a resolution protesting against the manager's suggestion that resistance to the speed-up was coming from a 'crank'; they have challenged him to debate with the 'cranks' at a mass meeting.

BATTERSEA C P SECRETARY TO QUIT PARTY

Cyril Holloway, secretary of Battersea North Communist Party for the past four years, and secretary of Wandsworth branch of the Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union, does not intend to re-register in the Communist Party for 1958.

He feels that the leadership refuses to face the disagreements in the party, and that the rank and file can do little about it.

TRIBUNAL DID NOT ENDORSE DOWNGRADING**By Our Industrial Correspondent**

I was wrong to say on November 16 [p. 233] that the Appeals Tribunal had 'endorsed' the downgrading of the five Garston coal trimmers following the Transport and General Workers' Union strike against the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers.

The position is that the Appeals Tribunal, which is governed by the Dock Workers' Regulations, held that it had no jurisdiction to hear the appeal and no power to make any decision on the dispute.

ANOTHER MANAGEMENT TRIES IT ON

The Sperry Gyroscope Co., Brentford (Middlesex) recently suspended three men for scrapping work, though scrap is a normal part of the mass production process in the engineering industry.

This aroused indignation among the workers, and two meetings were held in working hours. The management agreed to defer the suspensions and to negotiate through the official procedure.

There was some feeling that the workers should strike on this issue, which militants argued was the thin end of the wedge. But the shop stewards' committee failed to give a forthright lead.

SCR CRITICS STAND FOR EXECUTIVE

This year's general meeting of the Society for Cultural Relations with USSR will be unusually interesting, as a number

of members who are known to be critical of the Pritt-Rothstein tradition have been nominated for the E.C.—R. W. Davies, Alfred Dressler, Brian Pearce and Joan Robinson.

Dr L. Crome, a member of the old E.C. who is understood to be critical, is standing for re-election. There is a postal ballot.

LEEDS LABOUR WILL NOT BE STAMPEDED

THE November delegate meeting of Leeds City Labour Party refused to be stampeded into accepting the executive's suggested amendments to the constitution.

These amendments arise from the NEC's decision, which was endorsed by the annual conference, to halve the number of meetings held by the City Party and to abolish both ward representation and financial contributions to the City Party.

Executive members had considered the amendments submitted by the party officers and had been allowed four days in which to put forward further alterations.

Ordinary delegates, however, were to be given time in which to study the foolscap sheet of amendments before reaching a decision.

Affiliated bodies were not to be consulted at all, although in the early stages of the dispute with the NEC they had been requested to protest to Transport House.

After a long debate the executive was defeated by a large majority, and all affiliated bodies will now be able to study and discuss the proposed amendments and suggest alterations to them.

Behind the Headlines

'NATO row brews over arms to Tunisia—France boils over', reads the headline. And once again NATO comes into prominence.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization came into being in 1949, with the avowed object of uniting the western capitalist countries militarily and, to a degree, economically. Planning was required for such things as shipping, petroleum, finances, as well as general military purposes.

For the military control, a committee consisting of the chiefs of staff of the member countries sat in permanent session, in (naturally!) Washington.

A subsidiary, as you might say, of the same firm, the European Defence Community, was set up in May 1952 by Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and Holland. But already, even in this honeymoon stage of unified defence schemes, the rift could be seen.

The EDC agreement made it clear that member States were expected to contribute their land and air forces, but not their navies, to EDC, 'apart from forces required to defend colonies etc.'

So that when it came to a question of priorities for the sending of troops by France to Indo-China, or NATO, the position became a little difficult. And, as we know, the colonial question is always with us, and will be until the colonial revolution is successful. So for Indo-China, read Algeria. Or Cyprus. Or Suez.

General Gruenther admitted in October 1955 that his command had been adversely affected by the withdrawal of French troops to combat revolts in North Africa.

And economically, too, there have been difficulties. This was made clear in September 1954, when the British Government said that it was prepared to maintain four divisions and a tactical air force on the continent.

But to this there would be two conditions. An acute overseas emergency might make it necessary to withdraw troops, or a heavy strain on Britain's external finances might make it necessary to ask the NATO

council to review the financial conditions on which the formations are maintained.

In December 1956 Macmillan made the point at a NATO conference that Britain was spending too much on arms and could not afford it. And in February 1957 notice was given of Britain's intention of cutting the NATO force serving in Germany.

France, too, beset by her own worsening economic difficulties, demanded a reduction of NATO forces.

More and more do the American representatives have to use all their tact and coercive powers to hold NATO together. And as they rush about trying to smooth out the difficulties of Tunisia, Suez, Algeria, the 'democratic safeguards' on NATO are more clearly swept aside.

In December 1954 it was agreed by the fourteen NATO countries that the use of atomic weapons should only be sanctioned by the governments and not the generals. A few days before Christmas 1954 Eden explicitly stated in the Commons that responsibility in this matter rested with the governments.

Contrast this with the statement of General Thomas S. Power, commander of America's Strategic Air Forces, who declared:

'We have aircraft at the end of the runways, bombs aboard, and crews sleeping beside them. They can get away in a matter of fifteen minutes at most.'

And this was followed by Dulles: 'If U.S. forces are in the area, the field commander would respond immediately.'

He added: 'In the event of attack on NATO forces anywhere in the world, the immediate decision would be left to the commander in the field.'

So this is NATO at the end of 1957, uneasily clinging together, torn by the self-interests of the rival capitalist classes, and with the generals having the final say.

Or so they imagine. The millions of European workers have yet to speak.

Has the Post-War Boom Come to an End?

By TOM KEMP

THE powerful upward thrust of world capitalism since the end of the war prevented the periodical downturns in business activity from resulting in a general slump and unemployment.

This long period of expansion and prosperity has generated many illusions in Government and business circles and among certain 're-thinkers' travelling with the Labour movement.

How often have we heard that capitalism has changed, that business has become 'responsible' and that the State can and will prevent another slump? How much 'thinking' in the Labour Party is based on the assumption that full employment has come to stay?

Since the summer it has been clear that the economic climate has changed, not merely in Britain but throughout the capitalist world. There is not a country which is not facing serious economic dilemmas and the immediate prospect is more unsettled than it has been since the war.

If awareness of the threat of a slump is spreading in the Labour movement there is, as yet, all too little understanding of what is happening and what can be done about it.

One learns, for example, from Tribune's financial reporter in its issue of November 8 'that all the classic signs of a slump are already here . . .' But the reason given for this state of affairs stops short of a fundamental criticism of capitalism.

Tribune suggests that 'guaranteed markets, price stabilization and greater economic aid, to under-developed countries and relieve the situation.



First slump in 20 years—then they tell me this guy Keynes is dead'

It is said that 'only a stupid, dangerous and stubborn Tory government seeks to perpetuate the illusion of inflation'. Apparently the 'smoke-screen of inflation' is being put up to 'hide the growing threat to full employment'.

Basically we are not here concerned with a question of party politics but with a specific example of the anarchy of capitalist production, of the inherent instability of the system.

What then is the position of the Tory Government? It flows of credit into the system. It has to be able to take a is the custodian of British capitalism, responsible in particular for safeguarding its external position and regulating the longer and broader view than the business men and firms.

May panic under stress

It also has to think of its electoral prospects, which makes it often impossible to follow: the advice to be tough with the workers and consumers which is bestowed from the editorial chairs of the business Press or canvassed in the board rooms.

At the same time economic theory is not a strong point with some Ministers, and collectively they appear likely to panic under stress. The economic situation is certainly complicated and the job of steering British capitalism through the troubled waters that seem to lie ahead is going to tax the staying powers of the Government very severely.

They are not supermen, but they are not stupid: they know what they have to do—if not always how it should be done. They have to keep the system in balance, consolidate its world position, maintain its profitability, knowing full well that decisions made in this country alone cannot ensure this outcome.

Since the Tories took office the economy has been, for the most part, expansive. The whole world trend has been

strongly upward. The main danger was that investment would be carried too far and that incomes would increase faster than the output of goods. This would mean that the price rise might get out of hand.

At the same time, the rise in incomes meant that imports tended to rise while exports might be handicapped—so special attention had to be paid to the trade balance.

Under these conditions, too, the power of organized Labour increased: it was in a strong bargaining position for winning wage rises—though these could be passed on to consumers owing to the prevailing boom conditions.

Employer resistance has, of course, stiffened over the past eighteen months or so because the position was altering and there was a danger that higher costs would eat into profits.

The disadvantages of full employment for an effectively functioning capitalist system have been consistently pointed out in the Economist for many years. In a recent issue it stated bluntly that money must be made more scarce 'so that it becomes more difficult for employers to grant wage increases, and to make unemployment less rare so that it becomes more difficult for the employees to demand them'.

Take us down a peg

In the same issue it was pointed out that if the 7 per cent. Bank Rate policy is to succeed not only will there have to be cuts in investment but there can be no prospect of the new equipment resulting from the investment boom of the past few years being employed.

A classic slump—of reasonable dimensions, of course!—is here being contemplated: to squeeze the slack out of the economy and take Labour down a peg or two.

This savours rather of the sorcerer's apprentice. Nobody can tell in advance whether such a policy will lead to a cumulative downward trend or not: just as it is not possible to say at what point inflation is going to shoot into a runaway phase.

Let us repeat: the economic mechanism is complicated. There has been a danger of inflation getting out of hand, more especially of jeopardizing the external value of sterling.



Well, what was good enough for Father. . . .

At the same time deflationary forces resulting from the exhaustion of some of the forces responsible for the boom have been criss-crossing through the economy and the world market.

Every capitalist government is therefore on the horns of a dilemma: shall it counter inflation and risk reinforcing these trends or shall it try to forestall the prospective slump by measures which may add fuel to inflation.

Shall it step on the brake or the accelerator? Such is the basic problem of economic policy for capitalism at present.

The scope for error is immense. But there are pressing problems on the agenda. Decisions must be taken, which sometimes have the appearance of shots in the dark. Action may be over-hasty. It also may take a long time to put into effect.

At one time we were assured that governments could prevent slumps by countermeasures, deficit spending. Now the Economist is not so sure. It has discovered that the American authorities are not as well fitted to carry out such a policy in time to prevent a slump after all because of the slow process of getting Congress to make the necessary appropriations.

So the Economist's editorial writer stakes on the American

consumer stepping up his (or her) spending sufficiently to hold depression at bay; others bank on higher arms spending.

It all becomes rather comical—if we were not here concerned with a threat to the jobs and security of millions of people throughout the world.

If policy can overshoot, or be too long delayed, the economy itself is piling up problems in the meantime.

During 1956 in many countries the high rate of investment which had been going on was showing signs of slackening, but the upward trend continued. This year a change is taking place. The great boom has called into being its own nemesis in the shape of expanded productive capacity and growing production.

To a considerable extent, too, the investment in industry consists of equipment incorporating new, higher technical levels of greatly increased efficiency.

As this capital comes into use, so the chances that markets will be choked up grow. Business men revise their prospects about future profits and cut down on new investment being put in hand.

Wage rises threaten profits

If there were excess purchasing power in the hands of consumers then expansion should continue. But things are not so simple. The continued rise in prices tends to eat into purchasing power. Some kinds of investment may have been carried too far, while elsewhere there is still leeway to be made up.

Increases in wage rates (and other factors raising costs) threaten profits: and this, more than any falling off in consumption, leads to cut-backs in the rate of new investment.

Government action in raising interest rates, in order to safeguard the external position has, in fact, hastened this process along but did not initiate it.

But the high level of activity in Britain has corresponded with a worldwide expansion. It is especially liable to be influenced by changes overseas which reduce export prospects. Just such changes have been occurring.

During the boom there was investment in expanding production of mines and plantations overseas. Now the increased output is coming forward on to the markets—which are getting choked up.

Prices of primary products have been falling; anticipating further decline, businessmen have allowed stocks to run down. But falling prices and smaller sales mean that the countries producing such commodities can buy fewer manufactured goods from countries like Britain.

Intensified trade rivalry

Hence another serious adverse factor in the situation—which cannot be overcome quite as smoothly as Tribune assumes—with a prospect of intensified trade rivalry.

Dear money in Britain will also oblige Commonwealth countries to make cuts in their investment programmes or, like India, to seek credits from the USSR.

Whatever the exact outcome of the trends which have been discussed, it hardly now seems premature to state that a phase in the history of post-war capitalism appears to be drawing to its close and a new and more troubled one beginning.

As always it seems clear that an attempt will be made to solve the problems of capitalism at the expense of the working class. The stand of the employers and the Government on the wages question is a case in point.

'Inverted Marxists', like the staff of the Economist, understand very well that if capitalism is to function with full effectiveness it requires a 'reserve army of labour'—this may be the time to bring it into being again.

Far too many errors of judgment have been made in mistaking 'recessions' for full-scale depressions for a categorical prediction to be made. There seem to be a number of possibilities.

Continued high Government expenditure, particularly on arms, may set a bottom on any cumulative downward trend and prevent a deep depression. A judicious alternation of different Government measures may keep it at bay. Some hidden reserves of energy may be squeezed out of the system to keep it for a further period on an upward course.

Or there may be a long period of relative stagnation as far as prices, production and incomes are concerned.

In any case, there will be sudden shifts and turns—tensions and difficult readjustments—which will call for a full mobilization of the working class for the socialist alternative to capitalist anarchy.

LABOUR

END THIS PURDAH IN THE LABOUR PARTY

By URSULA VERITY

MOST delegates to the Labour Party conference have now given their reports to the organizations which sent them there. In our division there was most interest in the business of the private sessions, for most members had read the more dramatic public reports in the Press.

When I, as delegate, reported on the fate of the resolution to abolish the women's places on the national executive of the party, there was a murmur of indignation.

This was natural enough, for when the vote was taken first, on a show of hands, the resolution was decisively carried; it was defeated only because the chairman announced a card vote, thus bringing the crushing might of the trade union block vote against the desires of the constituency parties.

For those who have only lately joined the Labour Party, it should be explained that the votes of the women's section on the NEC are usually given to the reactionary policies

URSULA VERITY is a member of a local Labour Party in a provincial city. She will be contributing regularly to The Newsletter on the problems and activities of her party.

advocated by the Right-wing trade union leaders, who already have twelve places, and against the more dynamic policies desired by the constituency parties, who have only seven places.

The resolution asked that the five women's section places should be given to the constituency parties.

'Why should the block vote be used against something which is mostly the business of the constituency parties?' my members asked. They felt that the trade union leaders were not likely to have been mandated on this question by their millions of members, whereas the constituency parties feel strongly on it, and always mandate their delegates.

Why should the women's groups within the party always lean to the Right? For, within my own experience as a rank-and-file worker, they always do.

My ward women's section meets monthly but does little besides selling toilet rolls towards its funds, and gossiping.

Did a good job at first

The more politically active women attend the ward meetings and take part in the political and financial activities of the ward, but they mostly work in factory or office and 'can't be bothered with nattering housewives'. In the division, things are similar.

When the women's sections were first formed they did a good job in enabling women who were tied up with children to meet together in the afternoons, while their husbands attended the evening meetings.

Very often, in time of strikes, the women's sections were more militant than the party proper.

The idea has been encouraged, however, that women need an organization that will pander to their economic backwardness without expecting them to think for themselves. Thus too many of them are satisfied to run whist drives and tea parties, and 'leave politics to the men'.

This backwardness has too easily been exploited by the bureaucracy in the party leadership, who can use an unquestioning following to further reactionary policies and personal ambitions.

(Continued overleaf)

LABOUR PARTY (Continued from previous page)

I believe, and so do many other Labour Party members, that the struggle of women members cannot be separated from the men's struggle. Of course there are problems which concern women more than men.

The rate for the job, day nurseries, infant welfare, are only a few of these; but we cannot achieve any of our own reforms without the co-operation of forward looking men in the movement, any more than they can run the party without us.

And certainly the building of a socialist society is the job of all socialists, men and women.

Here and now, our perils confront us jointly. Unemployment will affect both sexes alike. The H-bomb will destroy us all, and our children, if we let it; we shall not defeat it by putting ourselves in political purdah.

A woman is a woman by accident of birth, but she is a socialist because her thinking made her so. We must fight, at Conference and before it, for the abolition of the women's places on the NEC of the Labour Party, and let women leaders do as Barbara Castle did.

She gave up her place as a woman and stood for election in the constituency parties section. She won because she had a socialist policy.

USA**FIVE WITCH-HUNT CHARGES ARE DROPPED**

THE U.S. Department of Justice has dropped charges against five Massachusetts residents indicted in May 1956 on charges of conspiracy to teach and advocate the violent overthrow of the Government of the United States.

The five were Mrs Anne Burlak Timpson, Otis A. Hood, Daniel Boone Schirmer, Michael A. Russo and Sidney Lipshires. One of the original defendants, Edward Strong, is dead, and the seventh, Geoffrey White, was dropped from the case last August.

Mr Lipshires said:

'I am sure that this return to sanity has been made possible in part by the relaxation of international tensions. Let us hope that this relaxation will lead to a rebirth of personal liberty in both the United States and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

'I hope this atmosphere will lead to the freeing of such political prisoners as Gus Hall and Gil Green in the USA and Milovan Djilas, Imre Nagy and Wolfgang Harich in Europe.'

Other defendants characterized the decision as, 'a victory for the American people', and 'a victory for the Bill of Rights.'

CANADA**CANADIAN COMMUNISTS' 'SERIOUS ERRORS'**

THE Canadian communist magazine *Canadian Jewish Weekly* (Toronto) has published a 'Declaration of Aims and Principles' which is a confession of past errors.

In connexion with the 'historically important role' which the 'progressive Jewish Press' such as the *Kampf*, the *Weg* and the *Morning Freiheit* had played during the 'past three decades or so', the *Canadian Jewish Weekly* writes:

'At the same time we recognize that throughout that period our Press committed a number of serious errors. During our existence . . . harmful nihilistic tendencies appeared in our approach to Jewish cultural-communal life in Canada . . .

'We failed to present properly to the Jewish people our positive approach to the State of Israel. We did not succeed in adequately differentiating between opposition to political Zionism and the great significance of the establishment of

the Jewish State, and the warm sentiments of the Jewish people towards this historic event . . .

'Consequently some sections of the Jewish population concluded that we were opponents of the Jewish State.'

USSR**EASIER TO CONSULT THE ARCHIVES**

Colonel A. Gorlenko, director of the USSR Central State Archives of the Red Army, urges in a recent article in *Krasnaya Zvezda* [Red Star] that more use be made of the material in his care.

... 'It is deplorable', he writes, 'that as yet few authors, researchers, commanders or political workers have turned to these materials . . .

'It would not be an exaggeration to say that many of our scholars and propagandists follow the well-beaten track in their researches or propaganda articles . . . The same examples and the same heroes pop up in one article after another . . .

'It is clearer to us who staff the archives than it can be to anyone else that not enough use is made, either in scholarly works or in propaganda, of the valuable and varied documents on military history.

'It has become considerably easier in recent times to work on the documents. In fact, any commander or political worker who is in Moscow on business may now have access to the archives.' He concludes by calling for extensive publication of Red Army records.

A WREATH AND A SNUB FROM YUGOSLAVS

According to *Pravda* of November 6, the Chinese and Bulgarian delegations visiting Moscow for the anniversary celebrations each laid two wreaths at the Lenin-Stalin mausoleum—one dedicated to the 'great leader' Lenin and the other to the 'great Marxist-Leninist' Stalin.

The Korean, Mongolian and Japanese delegations each left a single wreath 'to Lenin and Stalin'.

The Yugoslavs left a wreath dedicated to Lenin only.

BOOKS**A FORGOTTEN PAMPHLET OF KAUTSKY'S**

IN HIS interesting article on 'Some Early Views on the State' in *World News* of September 28, Frank Jackson mentions that among the Marxist classics available in Britain in the early 1900's were certain of Kautsky's pamphlets.

One of these pamphlets, which Jackson does not name, called 'On the Morrow of the Social Revolution', and we know from another source that it was a great favourite with Lenin.

Chapters 4 and 5 of this pamphlet make particularly interesting reading today.

Entitled 'The Means of Attracting the Workers to the Work' and 'The Increase of Production', these chapters envisage the increase of production under socialism being accompanied by an equivalent improvement in workers' wages, and also democratic control of industry by the workers.

There is to be no dictation in the intellectual sphere. 'Communism in material production, anarchy in intellectual production' is given as a principle of socialism.

These ideas were generally accepted in Marxist circles long after Kautsky had abandoned Marxism, and right down to the rise of Stalinism.

9-1 PROTEST AGAINST KENT EXPULSIONS

By nine votes to one, West Wickham (Beckenham) branch of the Communist Party has protested against the expulsion of three members of the Bromley branch.

LETTERS | Alison Macleod Has Started a Debate

WAS LENIN A TROTSKYIST AFTER ALL?

ALISON MACLEOD has misread Lenin's *The Deception of the People*. The socialist-revolutionary writers and newspapers Lenin criticizes in his speech of May 1919 were free and active when he spoke, and remained so for two years thereafter at least.

That Lenin's readers had access to the publications he mentioned is indicated clearly enough by some of his expressions, e.g.:

'No doubt you have encountered in the newspapers the names of the S.R.s Volsky and (I think) Svyatitsky, who wrote recently in *Izvestia* . . .'

'Not long ago I read a splendid article in . . . *Pravda* in which were quoted the theses of citizen Sher, one of the most "socialist" of the Menshevik social-democrats . . .'

White Army at the gates

Presumably Alison Macleod was misled by Lenin's reference to the confiscation of certain S.R. publications on one particular occasion, in connexion with a conspiracy detected in Petrograd when the White Army was at the city gates.

An account of the status of the opposition socialist parties in Soviet Russia in this period will be found in E. H. Carr's 'The Bolshevik Revolution'.

He mentions, incidentally, that Lenin was criticized by a speaker at the 1919 party congress for allowing so much freedom to these groups!

It is useful that Alison Macleod has drawn attention to 'The Deception of the People'. This speech, though issued here in 1933 in the Little Lenin Library, was excluded from the twelve-volume *Selected Works* which began to appear in 1934.

Unfashionable propositions

The reason may have been that the work in question is exceptionally rich in propositions of a kind which were then being characterized as Trotskyism. E.g.:

'Now, surely, has any of the Bolsheviks ever denied that the revolution in its final form can only be victorious when it embraces all, or at least some, of the most important of the advanced countries?'

'A society in which a class difference between workers and peasants remains is neither communist nor socialist society.'

'In practice the issue of the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie decides everything, while the intermediate, middle classes . . . inevitably hesitate between one camp and the other.'

London, N.

B. Pearce

ALISON MACLEOD IS ABSOLUTELY RIGHT

ALISON MACLEOD is absolutely right in warning that old-world 'Trotskyism' is too narrow and too arid a path for THE NEWSLETTER or any other serious Marxist force to follow today.

She touches on one point that has been far too little noticed by ex-Communist Party members and other Left-wing socialists since the Twentieth Congress—that many of the repressive and inhumane features of Soviet society, with their consequent bad reflection upon the international movement that defends that society piecemeal, have existed, not since 1934, not since Stalin took power, but since the Revolution itself.

There is indeed no guarantee that Trotsky would have been any better than Stalin.

That is just one reason why the development of the forces that will lead to socialism in Britain must be absolutely independent of foreign control.

Bromley (Kent)

Socialist

'PERSECUTION MANIA' THEORY NO HELP

THE two theses of Alison Macleod's letter seem to be (a) that Lenin was a gambler rather than a scientist and (b) that his work contains the germs of the Stalinist perversions that came later.

No course of political action at such crucial moments as 1917 is free from risk. What has to be decided is the size of the risk.

If Lenin counted on a revolution in the West, his gamble was well justified since the people of the West were weary of the war and, as experience showed, ripe for revolution.

Presumably what he should have done was to wait with scientific detachment until the West had risen and then turned round and given the workers permission to revolt.

For the second thesis, Alison Macleod adduces as evidence Lenin's dissolution of the Constituent Assembly and his insistence that the people should not be allowed to read the works of 'socialist-revolutionaries'. And where, she asks, is the difference between this and Stalin's suppression of the works of Trotsky?

The difference is clear: Lenin's speech 'The Deception of the People' was made when the young Soviet republic was in danger of being drowned in its own blood and when 'revolutionaries' like Savinkov had done all they could to strangle it; Stalin's suppression, when the position of the Soviet republic was for the moment relatively secure.

Concept of psycho-analysis

Indeed, Miss Macleod contradicts herself within a matter of two sentences. For if Stalin's refusal to read anything distasteful to him was the culmination of a process begun by Lenin, why did Lenin (in her own words) find it **necessary** to read the works of his opponents?

Of course the notion that Lenin's work contains the seeds of Stalinism deserves consideration and it would have been instructive if Miss Macleod had tried to trace their germination.

Instead, the whole explanation is given as 'persecution mania'. There is no need to analyse class interests or historical circumstances. Simply transfer a concept of psycho-analysis to the sphere of social studies and give it the infectious property of bubonic plague and hey presto! we beg the whole question.

Unfortunately this process is dangerous, since only by tracing the real roots of Stalinism can we ever hope to combat it.

London, S.E.29

T. Newman

TROTSKY-STALIN ARGUMENT: THE FACTS

MAY I suggest that V. Frank gets his facts right before launching forth in print?

The argument between Trotsky and Stalin was not whether the USSR could outstrip the West or not, but whether the contradictions existing within Soviet society could be resolved in one country.

Trotsky held that the USSR could not reach socialism except through the elimination of the bureaucracy and the linking of the fate of the USSR with socialism abroad.

Stalin believed that socialism could be realized in one country, that is, the apparatus of bureaucracy could be dismantled without the base of socialism extending to the European and colonial countries.

London, S.W.3.

E. S. Hillman

DEFEATS? A HOLLOW VICTORY AS WELL

WHAT did you mean when you referred [November 23, p. 238] to the British workers' having suffered a succession of political defeats following their industrial defeat in 1926?

The first general election after the great strike came in

1929 and produced the defeat of the Tory Government of Baldwin and the inauguration of the second Labour Government, Labour getting a bigger vote than ever before.

I imagine that what you must have had in mind is something more complicated than your words convey.

The defeat of the General Strike, with the subsequent wave of victimization and demoralization, strengthened the grip of MacDonald, Snowden, Thomas and Co. on the Labour Party.

At the same time the Communist Party withdrew into ultra-Left self-isolation, as described in the well-known Joseph Redman pamphlet.

Consequently, the Labour Party which emerged in 1929 as the largest political grouping was in no state to control its untrustworthy leaders, who duly piloted it on to the rocks and then abandoned ship in 1931—the Communist Party proving quite incapable of taking over the leadership of the movement in this tragic situation.

The victory of 1929, though certainly not a defeat, thus proved a hollow victory.

Willesden

F. King

SECRET HISTORY OF ALLEN HUTT

IN an article in the special issue of *World News* on the fortieth anniversary of the October Revolution, devoted to the history of Anglo-Russian relations, Allen Hutt mentions that the writings of a certain British visitor to Russia were used by Marx in his book *Secret Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century*.

Hutt does not, however, mention that this book was omitted from the collected works of Marx and Engels published during the reign of Stalin—its attitude to tsarist expansionism was incompatible with the glorification of tsars and their generals which developed as part of Stalinist ideology from 1934 onward.

A new edition of the complete works of Marx and Engels is now being produced in the Soviet Union; it will be interesting to see whether the 'Secret History' is included this time.

Incidentally, am I not right in thinking that it was Hutt who, under the pseudonym of 'H. A. George', wrote a pamphlet in 1937, called 'Eight Soviet Generals Plotted Against Peace', blackguarding the generals who were murdered by Stalin in that year and have since been rehabilitated—Tukhachevsky, Gamarnik, Eidemann, etc.?

Jersey (C.I.)

P. Le Sueur

BUT CLAIRE, THERE WAS A 'FURORE'!

REVIEWING in *World News* of November 16 Vera Panova's novel *Span of the Year*, recently published by Harvill Press, Claire Yuille writes:

'It deals with a question not so different in some respects from Dudintsev's "Not by Bread Alone", yet it has caused none of the furore over here produced by the latter.'

'Span of the Year' appeared in Russia in 1954. The British Communist Party's publishing house, Lawrence and Wishart,

undertook to bring out an English version, and translation work began on the novel.

Then a review attacking it came out in Pravda. King Street gave instructions for the project to be stopped, and it was stopped.

There was quite a 'furore' about it. And that's why it is a 'bourgeois' publisher that presents this novel (described by Claire Yuille as 'well-conceived, dramatic') to the British reader today, just as in the case of Dudintsev's book.

London, W.8

C. Ryan

WHO IS MISLEADING WHOM?

THE letter from Beatrix Tudor-Hart in your issue of November 16 deserves comment.

I would not challenge the honesty of her belief that the Hornsey amendments 'were put forward quite spontaneously'.

This I do know. The voting on them **was not**. The conference was flooded with members of a certain organization (Labour Review), who attended under a strict discipline and **voted as a bloc** in favour of the amendments.

Needless to say, a considerable proportion of them have never been seen in the Forum movement before and will probably never be seen in it again.

Their motive? To see that the Forum movement was not allowed to pass beyond the discussion stage and thus constitute an alternative pole of attraction to Labour Review. In short the amendment was utilized as part of a sectarian move designed to strangle further Forum development.

Beatrix Tudor-Hart (and others) have been cruelly misled. There is no sound reason to believe that the conference vote **in fact** represents the view of a majority of Forum members. If the meeting had not been packed the amendments would hardly have been passed.

London, S.W.

H. Kendall

FORUMS

WHAT LONDON FORUMS ARE DISCUSSING

THE first quarterly meeting of London socialist forums will be held next Friday. Two representatives from each forum will review forum activity and discuss problems of future development and winter activity.

A bulletin issued by the acting secretary of the London Socialist Forum, Richard Goss, shows that five local forums have discussed the Labour Party conference, with local delegates leading the discussion, six 'Contemporary Capitalism' and four the Moscow Youth Festival.

Other subjects discussed include 'The Class Struggle in Britain Today', 'The Attitude of British Socialists to the Colonial Peoples', 'Homes for the Future', 'Automation', 'The Future of the Left in the Labour Movement' and 'The Nature of a Socialist Journal'.

Groups at Boreham Wood and Canterbury are reported to have closed down; new forums have been set up at Harlow and Herne Hill.

Diego Rivera

DIEGO MARIA RIVERA entered the Academy of Fine Arts in Mexico City when he was six. His early murals depicted the history of the Mexican people's struggles. He joined the Mexican Communist Party and edited its paper, but later broke with the Stalinists.

During a long visit to the USA he painted another series of murals; the one at the Rockefeller Centre arousing a storm because Lenin's head was prominent

in it. In 1937 he persuaded President Cardenas to grant asylum to Trotsky.

He was a man of gargantuan energies, who drew inspiration from the wealth of Mexican, European and modern American artistic traditions, who spread acres of vivid, pulsating colour on his country's public buildings. Rivera restored the mural to its proper place in civic art, and brought the history of the common people directly to their hearts and minds. A.V.P.