

THE NEWSLETTER

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DOCKERS WARN O'HARE: 'HANDS OFF BLUE UNION!'

By Our Industrial Correspondent

OVER 9,000 Merseyside dockers took strike action last week after an attempt by a Transport and General Workers' Union official to stop members of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers from getting work. The strike was the Merseyside portworkers' answer to the TGWU leaders' attempts to smash the NASD—the 'blue union'—in the Northern ports.

During the strike the Merseyside district secretary of the TGWU—the 'white union'—Mr P. J. O'Hare, was reported in the *Liverpool Echo* (January 24) as saying: 'Anybody who is not in the Transport and General Workers' Union is a non-unionist.' This statement is regarded on Merseyside as a very important one, and along the Mersey waterfront a number of questions are being discussed which rank-and-file members of both unions would like Mr O'Hare to answer.

First of all, are men trade unionists when their organization is recognized as a trade union by the majority of their fellow-workers?

The majority of Merseyside dockers, including very many members of Mr O'Hare's own union, look on the 'blue union' as such—and three times in less than three years the majority of Merseyside portworkers have been on strike in protest against attacks on 'blue union' members.

Since Mr O'Hare is an avowed supporter of the official machinery of the trade union movement, workers are also

'100 PER CENT. BEHIND BUSMEN'— NORWOOD LABOUR PARTY

Norwood Labour Party General Management Committee has passed a resolution expressing 'complete agreement with the 25s. wage demand of the London busmen', pledging '100 per cent. support for any action they take to secure the increase' and calling on the NEC and the Parliamentary Labour Party 'to state publicly their support for the busmen in their actions'.

The resolution is to be sent to local bus garages, to Mr Frank Cousins, to Lambeth Trades Council and to the Press.

asking: is a man a trade unionist when his organization is affiliated to the Trades Union Congress and his right to be a member legally established?

But that is the position of 'blue union' members.

Perhaps what Mr O'Hare means is that anyone on the docks who does not contribute to the salary of a TGWU official is by virtue of that fact alone a non-trade unionist?

There are non-unionists on the Merseyside docks. The NASD area committee has repeatedly asked the TGWU for a joint campaign against non-unionism.

There has been no reply locally. But nationally, through the TUC General Council, the TGWU leadership has blocked recruitment to the 'blue union'.

For a number of years NASD members have been claiming that the final aim of the TGWU is to drive all other unions off the waterfront in both Northern and Southern ports.

The recent TGWU strike at Garston to deprive 'blue union' members of better jobs seemed to show that there is something in this charge.

And the massive support for the Liverpool stoppage last week shows that rank-and-file portworkers are going to defend the 'blue union'.

INDUSTRY

HYDE PARK RALLY FOR BUILDING WORKERS

THE newly-formed London building workers' rank-and-file committee is holding a rally in Hyde Park on Sunday March 9. Other working-class organizations, including the tenants' committees, are to be invited to take part.

This was one of the decisions taken by the committee, which consists of stewards from a number of big sites and delegates from branches of several unions, at its first meeting.

The committee agreed that there should be the fullest possible reporting-back on the January 19 conference.

Employers and trade union representatives are to be lobbied when they meet again on February 2 to consider the claim for an eightpence an hour increase and the 40-hour week.

And an action committee is to be established on each job.

Paddy Healy was elected chairman of the committee, Brian Behan secretary and Keith Ballock treasurer. The committee is to meet again on February 9.

FOOTNOTE: It is reported in the South London Press that more building workers than ever before are registering at South London Labour Exchanges.

LEEDS WOODWORKERS WANT JOBS INQUIRY

LEEDS No. 7 branch of the Amalgamated Engineering Union has sent a resolution to the AEU district committee expressing alarm at the danger of unemployment in the industry.

The resolution calls for a full inquiry into the position in local factories.

Leeds No. 9 branch of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers has sent the following resolution to the ASW area management committee, to be forwarded to Leeds Trades Council:

'That this Trades Council shall immediately make inquiries, with local management committees etc. of the various unions, into the unemployment position in Leeds, and that such information as is obtained be published in pamphlet form.

'This pamphlet should be used to initiate a campaign among trade unionists against redundancy in industry.'

COMMENTARY

DECLARATION OF WAR

WHO now can have any doubt about the Government's intentions on wages? Macleod's decision to refuse an inquiry into London busmen's pay is a declaration of war which should take nobody—except perhaps the Trades Union Congress—by surprise. With unemployment on the increase and overtime drastically reduced in certain industries, the Tories are pushing on with their offensive. Working-class living standards must come down, with busmen and railwaymen high on the agenda.

Nor can anyone doubt now that the Cabinet is the employers' general staff. The Minister of Labour has as good as admitted that he intervened in the London bus dispute on behalf of the Cabinet. Here is further proof that wage negotiations today bring the unions into conflict with the Government almost immediately. Once deadlock is reached on wages the overthrow of the Government becomes a matter of pressing concern. The most modest wage demand is now a political issue, calling for the combination of industrial and political action to make it impossible for the Tory Government to remain in office.

It is just this fact which Mr Frank Cousins and the TUC General Council will not face up to. So we have the instructive spectacle of the leader of Britain's largest union being humiliated by a senior civil servant. Avoid 'irresponsible action', advised Mr Cousins in his union's journal *Record*, published on the same day as Macleod's intervention. Mr Cousins was speaking to the London busmen, not to the Tories. He was trying to damp down militancy, in order to convince the Tories that, left to themselves, the Transport and General Workers' Union and the London Transport Executive might work something out and avoid strike action. Well might the TGWU assistant general secretary, Mr H. R. Nicholas, declare:

The Minister's decision is diabolical. It has placed us in a most difficult position with our membership, which is prepared to take strike action in support of the claim. We had moved from a situation of war into a situation of peace. Now we are pushed back into a war situation.

Yes, the Tories have decided to fight. *So we must fight back.* Cousins and Nicholas were taken completely by surprise, and have shown their inability to lead their members into action. The lesson for Labour is obvious. The TUC and the national executive of the Labour Party must stop fumbling and wasting precious time. Let the whole Labour movement unite and present a single, solid front to the Tory attacks. Every trade unionist should immediately demand that the TUC call a meeting of all unions concerned with wage demands, to plan a common strategy in defence of their claims. Let the rank and file of the unions arrange joint local and regional meetings to work out policy for action on the job. In particular, the time has come for the setting up of transport action committees to forge unity between busmen and railway workers.

The Tories have shown their hand. They defeated us in 1926—by united working-class action we can thrash them in 1958.

'QUEEN OF MIDLANDS' OWES 32 MILLIONS

THE City Council of Nottingham, 'Queen of the Midlands', has now piled up a net loan debt of £32,936,677. For every man, woman and child of the population the City owes £100, or nearly £400 per average family.

The housing debt alone has now reached £27, which includes part of a 1919 loan still not paid off. Out of £1,420,616 borrowed for housing purposes in 1919 £892,392 remains to be paid.

These facts were given in a lecture by George Dutton, Nottingham Labour Councillor, on 'A Socialist Looks at Rents'.

Coun. Dutton said that the housing queue had grown in 1957 despite the building of 873 houses. For people now joining the queue the outlook was grim.

Speakers in the discussion condemned capitalism as the cause of the creeping paralysis affecting the building of homes. The Labour Governments of 1945-51 were criticized, too, for: **failure** to nationalize the land and thus free councils from the heavy burden of land purchase; **failure** to tackle the monopolies; and above all **failure** to take over the building industry and the manufacture of building supplies.

THEY FIGHT 'GROSSLY UNJUST' RENT RISE

BECAUSE of a probable deficiency of £4,000 on its post-war houses, Hindley Green (near Wigan) Urban District Council has decided that the tenants of its hundreds of pre-war houses must pay increased rents.

The rise will be between 3s. and 3s. 6d. per week according to the type of house—on top of the rise of 4s. 11d. imposed last April.

In the words of Coun. Orlando Murray, Council chairman, this is 'grossly unjust'.

Because he is a tenant of one of those pre-war houses he was not allowed to vote or take part in the debate on the proposed increase, but he was one of the first to sign a petition got up by some of the tenants.

They hope to obtain the names of all those affected in the next few days, and the petition, which asks the Council to reconsider its decision 'as we feel it is contrary to social justice', will be taken to the Town Hall.

MARX AND ENGELS ON LITERATURE

The Tass Agency announces that a collection of the writings of Marx and Engels on literature and art is shortly to be published in the USSR.

This book, the report declares, 'will be distinguished from previous editions by the greater completeness of the material included'.

The collection of the writings of the founders of Marxism on literary and artistic questions which was published in Russian about twenty years ago omitted documents such as Engels's letters to Margaret Harkness and Minna Kautsky, which could not be reconciled with the Stalinist concept of 'socialist realism'.

THOREZ VERSUS THE PHILOSOPHERS

The philosopher Henri Lefebvre and four other communist intellectuals—Victor Leduc, Annie Kriegel, Lucien Sebag and Pierre Meren—have been removed from the editorial committee of the Communist Party review *La Nouvelle Critique*.

Two others, Emile Bottigelli, who prepared the first French translation of Lenin's 'Philosophical Notebooks', and J.-T. Desanti, author of a recent study on the history of philosophy, have resigned from the committee in solidarity.

SCIENCE | Some Facts on Thermo-nuclear Power

By Our Scientific Correspondent, J. H. Bradley

WHY is it that the search for nuclear energy sources is concentrated on the very heavy elements uranium, plutonium and thorium, and on the very light elements hydrogen, helium and lithium?

It is because energy can be liberated by converting any other element into iron, the atoms of which are about 56 times as heavy as an atom of hydrogen, or into any element of about that atomic weight.

Breaking uranium into two parts brings each nearer to weight 56; combining hydrogen into helium does the same. Many other processes are conceivable, but at the present time we are not within sight of their practical achievement.

So the fission of uranium and the fusion of hydrogen are the only processes for which we can hope to create the conditions at present; they also happen to be those which give most energy for every pound of fuel.

The various reactions which can be used to convert the three kinds of hydrogen into helium give roughly five times as much energy as the fission of the same weight of uranium.

In addition, hydrogen is easily obtained from water, while uranium and thorium are scarce in geological minerals, and difficult to extract and purify.

Over 10 million degrees

The most promising means of combining hydrogen into helium is by the use of very high temperatures, over 10 million degrees centigrade. Under such conditions all known materials vaporize, so the reacting gas must be kept well away from the surrounding vessel.

This may be achieved by a magnetic field, which curls up the path of an electrically charged particle into a spiral. All the atoms are electrically charged at such temperatures.

The reactor will have to be very large, or heat will be lost from the gas by radiation faster than it is replaced by the nuclear reaction. 'Very large' may turn out to mean several hundred yards each way.

For the same reason, the hydrogen must be extremely pure, as heavy elements cause too much radiation of heat.

Now, the necessary high temperatures can be reached by passing an electrical discharge through the gas. In order to avoid vaporizing any material from electrodes, the discharge must be coiled up in a circle and created by a coil wrapped round the tube ('doughnut'), in the so-called electrodeless discharge.

This is the method used in the Zeta apparatus.

Many wild speculations

Various Soviet publications have announced that neutrons were observed from a thermo-nuclear reactor, but no experiment has been published in which they clearly came from the desired reaction, rather than from undesired secondary processes in the walls of the vessel.

Many wild speculations have asserted that thermo-nuclear power is just round the corner, but in fact a whole maze of corners and blind alleys has yet to be traversed.

Perhaps it will be several decades before we make a reactor which will give out more power than we have to put in to start the reaction.

Years more may elapse before economic thermo-nuclear power flows into the National Grid. The cost will be thousands of millions of pounds, but the prize is beyond price.

The limiting factors are social and political, not scientific. The greatest obstacle is secrecy.

Although the radio-active dangers are not so severe as with uranium piles, thermo-nuclear reactors can cause very serious accidents, and public vigilance against irresponsibility is essential.

ECONOMICS

IT'S THE WORKING CLASS THEY FIGHT

By Our Economic Correspondent

ALL the important financial centres in the world are reducing interest rates in an effort to counter the American recession—all except London.

The recently whitewashed City of London and the Tory Government are still conducting a tremendous battle against inflation.

Reading the speeches of Amory and Thorneycroft one thing is clear: whatever their differences, both are determined to continue the fight against 'inflation' to the end.

On the surface it seems that either America, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium etc. are crazy or the Tories are. Either the rest of the world is wrong and world trade is not declining or the City is wrong and it is.

Look at the facts. In 1957 Britain's principal customers were as follows: The USA took £252 million, Canada £200 million, Australia £238 million, India £178 million, South Africa £174 million and New Zealand £141 million.

Extremely sensitive Congressmen

America and Canada are in recession. Unemployment in the USA is likely to go over 5 million by the spring; in Canada it is already 698,000 (equivalent to over 2 million in Britain) and it has not reached the peak.

In these circumstances can Britain sell £452 million-worth

of commodities in the USA and Canada in 1958? It is unlikely, to say the least.

The overwhelming probability is that sales in the USA will fall in 1958, especially as it is an election year and Congressmen will be extremely sensitive to the lobbying of home producers for protection against foreign competition.

Canada, Australia, India, South Africa and New Zealand are all primary producers. The prices of basic commodities, their products, have all fallen due to overproduction.

These countries will be unable to buy from Britain in 1958 as much as they did in the past.

True, Britain may be able to get a higher proportion of total sales to these countries than in the past, but this is extremely unlikely, for her proportion of the total expanding sales in the period 1950-57 has come down year by year without any exception, and nothing so far has indicated that her competitive power has increased.

It is more likely that in the scramble for markets that must take place in 1958, Britain's proportion will fall.

What they are really fighting

Then how explain the crazy economic policy? Why are the Tories and the City fighting an inflation that is at an end instead of cheapening credit, as their competitors are doing, in order to assist producers to cheapen their products?

In fact they are not crazy. Unemployment in Germany is over 1,200,000 and in the USA it is growing fast. In Britain it is only 350,000.

The Tories know that high interest rates are a handicap. But they also know that the only chance they have of competing with the USA and Germany—their major competitors

—is if they can reduce the wage level and increase the number of hours worked.

To do so the number of unemployed must be pushed up to at least a million. Hence the phoney fight against inflation.

They are not fighting inflation, they are fighting the working-class. The only real fight the Tories are putting up today is the fight against wage increases and the fight to force up the level of unemployment, a necessity to the Tories if the wages offensive is to be successful.

Gaitskell is a professional economist. Why did he not expose this racket in the economic debate? Wilson considers himself a future Labour Chancellor. Why didn't he? Because they too stand for 'wage restraint'.

LABOUR

MAKE IT A BAN-THE-H-BOMB MAY DAY

By Ursula Verity

INCREASING fear of an H-bomb war is shown in the growing number of resolutions passed in local Labour Parties. These express opposition to preparations for nuclear war, and usually call upon the party to initiate a national campaign against them.

We should be wrong to think that once such a resolution is passed at Constituency Labour Party or Borough Party level the rank and file have done their job. Transport House will not automatically organize effective opposition to the war preparations.

More than probably, some official will write back that the resolution has been received and will be considered by a future national executive meeting, and meanwhile the Labour MPs have 'made their protest' in Parliament.

We know this run-around

If we do not keep on raising the question, that will be the end of it. Many of us know this run-around only too well. But the matter is too serious and the public feeling is too great to accept the routine now.

In each town and city the local Labour Party can be mobilized for poster parades and mass meetings of protest, even against the objections of the local Right wing.

We are not so far off May Day; Labour Parties can make these demonstrations the centre of anti-war feeling.

Once the mass of people are called into the streets, as during the Suez crisis, the Tory Government can begin to tremble. The Labour MPs will do a more effective job in Parliament when they feel behind them the people demanding the end of Tory rule.

Our leaders ought to welcome mass demonstrations now, which would help to ensure a speedy Labour victory.

Crime to curtail activities

The NEC's policy of curtailing the political activities of borough parties is a crime. Less frequent meetings and restricted discussion cannot fail to check the political vigour of the Borough Parties.

In this H-bomb age speed is essential, yet the NEC wants us back to penny-farthing methods, to borrow the words of the Wilson report.

Imagine six different constituency parties in a city separately organizing demonstrations! Militants should make sure, by being on the Constituency Committees and Borough Parties, that the demonstrations are efficiently organized and co-ordinated, so that maximum strength is mustered throughout the country.

And we have the job, too, of insisting that the NEC shall lead a national effort as part of the campaign to get rid of the Tories.

Cunvin's Column

It is not very often that this column finds itself wholeheartedly in agreement with the Daily Herald, but that paper had a point when it commented on Transport House's latest pamphlet 'Success Story' that it does not shout loudly enough.

'Success Story' examines the performance of the nationalized air, transport, coal, electricity, gas and atomic power industries.

The history of these industries, says Morgan Phillips in a foreword, is 'a vindication of the claims made for a policy of democratic socialism in contrast to the dogma of private greed and acquisitiveness'.

As far as it goes, the pamphlet performs quite a useful job of work. It effectively replies to some of the attacks made against nationalization by the capitalist class and its Press.

THE PROFIT CRITERION

Thus we find that whereas the general increase in retail prices was 165 per cent. above pre-war levels, railway fares were only 115 per cent. above.

In a single year up to March 31, 1956, the average price of electricity rose by only 2.3 per cent. compared with a general increase of 6. per cent. in retail prices.

The capitalist Press always plays up the failure of the nationalized industries to show a profit—the City Editors of most of our dailies know no other criterion for judging the success or failure of an enterprise.

The pamphlet points out that the finances of public industries are judged after they have paid interest on their capital, those of private firms before they pay interest and dividends to shareholders.

LEFT CRITICISM IGNORED

In its conclusions, the pamphlet complains that much of the criticism is ill-informed. But it is concerned mainly with the criticism that comes from the side of big business and its Press. It denies the charges of inefficiency and bureaucracy.

But it does not deal at all with the criticism which comes from the Left, the charges that the nationalized industries are being run on capitalist lines and not as socialist enterprises with the workers playing their full part in planning, management and control at all levels.

WHO WILL PROFIT FROM ZETA?

This headline is taken from the City column of the News Chronicle, edited by Oscar Hobson and Paul Bureau, both of them old-fashioned 'classical economists'.

It appears that 'private enterprise' will be well to the fore when it comes to raking in the profits from this achievement.

According to the News Chronicle, among the capitalist firms which will benefit by this new development are Associated Electrical Industries (through one of its subsidiaries, Metropolitan Vickers Electrical) and two other companies in the A.E.I. group—Edison Swan Electrical and British Thomson-Houston.

Two other companies involved are British Insulated, Calender's Cables and Firth and Brown (through its subsidiary, William Beardmore).

Labour must make it quite clear that when it is returned to power this vast new source of energy will be taken over by the State and used in the interests of the people, not for capitalist profit.

GEORGE CUNVIN

DEJA VU

QUESTION: 'Emergence from humble beginnings, ruthless rise to power, the rending of friends—where had we read all this before?' (George Matthews, in Daily Worker of January 27, expressing disgusted disbelief of Sefton Delmer's 'biography' of Khrushchev in the Daily Express.)

ANSWER: In Khrushchev's own speech about Stalin, to the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party.

MEDICINE

SCIENTIFIC AND LEGAL ASPECTS OF A.I.D.

From A Medical Correspondent

IN a recent judgment in the Scottish Court of Session Lord Wheatley ruled that artificial insemination does not, in law, constitute adultery.

This was followed by a statement by the Archbishop of Canterbury denouncing artificial insemination by donor (A.I.D.) and asking for 'new legislation to make the practice a criminal offence'.

Here are some basic facts on the matter which may be of interest to socialists.

Artificial insemination may be defined as the deposition of semen in the vagina or cervical portion of the womb by means of instruments. When the husband's semen is used it is called A.I.H., when a donor's semen is used, A.I.D.

The practice has been prevalent in the sphere of animal husbandry for a long time. The main advantages are that selected strains can be united under controlled conditions and that herds can be increased far more rapidly than would occur naturally.

The first A.I.H. was probably performed in 1790 by the famous surgeon and pathologist John Hunter (reputed author of the famous query 'Why think, why not try the experiment?') on the wife of a linen draper in the Strand whose husband suffered from a structural defect of the genitals.

Obviously come to stay

The practice gained ground slowly. By 1934 a survey showed that it had been successfully carried out in only 123 cases.

In 1952, however, an American authority estimated that there might be some 20,000 children growing up in the USA who had been born as a result of this procedure. Whether the Archbishops like it or not A.I.D. has obviously come to stay.

About 10 per cent. of marriages remain childless. Male infertility is the cause in a proportion variously estimated between 25 and 60 per cent. In about 3 per cent. of marriages the male partner is hopelessly sterile.

The indications for A.I.H. are cases where the husband is impotent (but not sterile) or where some local physical disorder in either partner prevents the normal sexual act.

A.I.D. has been resorted to in cases of male sterility and in cases where the husband is suffering from some serious and inheritable defect or disease.

Its use has also been advocated in cases where the paternity of a man of conspicuous endowment is desired or in cases of single unmarried women who desire to bear children. No figures are available as to its use in the latter type of case.

Medical opinion considers it advisable that the recipient of artificial insemination should not know who the donor is, and that the donor should likewise be kept in the dark.

Of proved healthy stock

As far as possible donors are chosen among married men with families of their own, and of proved healthy stock. The blood group of the donor should resemble that of the husband as far as possible (to avoid possible future litigation).

There are no medical objections to A.I.H. One serious objection to A.I.D. is the risk of endogamy (marriage of children of the same donor).

This could have harmful genetic effects should the donor be carrying some unrecognized and deleterious recessive gene. The risk can to a large extent be obviated by limiting the 'donations' of each individual donor.

The moral objections put forward by the religious and professional mouthpieces of the Establishment range from criticism of the mere concept of A.I.D. (as alien to 'human nature' and to the 'sanctity' of marriage) to condemnation of the methods of collecting semen.

Fears have even been expressed that exclusion of the husband from the process of procreation would result in a weakening of 'paternal' authority and a return to the worst features of a matriarchal society.

The legal objections centre first around the problem of the registration of the birth. In a case of A.I.D. it would be a legal offence under section 4 of the Perjury Act of 1911 to declare the husband the father of the child (an offence liable to a maximum penalty of seven years' penal servitude, if dealt with by indictment).

On the other hand registration of the real father's name would not ensure the element of secrecy deemed essential for the psychological well-being of all the parties concerned.

'Legitimacy' and property inheritance

The law is also (naturally) very much concerned about the 'legitimacy' of the birth (the inheritance of property attracts higher death duties if the illegitimacy is disclosed to the Revenue authorities), about 'protecting' the child against third party claims, and about all the complicated problems relating to the inheritance of titles, fortunes and estates.

The lawyers are also worrying about such questions as who has custody and who pays maintenance if the legal parents fall out.

The potentialities of A.I.D. have scarcely been assessed as yet. Preservation of frozen semen is already possible for periods of several months and considerable progress along these lines is likely.

Genetic selection of spermatozoa (separation of those sperms which will give rise to male offspring from those which will give rise to female offspring) is a problem that is likely to be solved within the next decade or so.

This would enable the sex-ratio of a given family (or community) to be planned and could well have effects on the institution of monogamous marriage.

Genetic factors more subtle than those which control the determination of sex may also eventually prove amenable to direct treatment of spermatozoa prior to A.I.D.

The elimination of several hereditary diseases and the possible introduction of new and beneficial genetic features are both on the cards.

ALGERIA

TWO ROADS BEFORE ALGERIA'S REVOLUTION

By Michael Banda

THE defeat of the 1945 insurrection did not fail to affect the People's Party of Algeria, now renamed the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties (MTLD).

In Algiers the efforts of the French administration to woo the Algerian moderates on the basis of small reforms and much demagoguery were successful.

These moderates included a majority of the MTLD central committee. By a series of subterfuges and manoeuvres the majority (known as 'Centralists') managed in 1953 to impose their watered-down policy on the party.

Inevitably this angered the ordinary members. In March 1954 Messali Hadj appealed to the ranks above the heads of the Centralists.

After a long battle the Centralists gave way and a Congress was convened in July 1954 in Belgium which repudiated them

This is the last of three articles by Michael Banda on the Algerian people's struggle for national independence.

and charted a course for armed insurrection.

The twenty-seven Centralists, who included the present leaders of the National Liberation Front (FLN), were expelled; they turned to Cairo and formed the Revolutionary

Committee for United Action (CRUA). The MTLD majority changed the organization's name to Algerian National Movement (MNA).

Knowing that the followers of Messali were preparing a national insurrection, to begin early in 1955, the CRUA, with the support of Cairo, launched an isolated insurrection in the Aures region in advance of the MNA. This sparked off a general insurrection throughout Algeria.

Thanks to the support of Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco the FLN today has a majority of the partisan bands under its military command. But this does not mean that the members accept its political policy.

Nor does it mean that the FLN is the sole representative of the Algerian people. The more successful it is on the field of battle, the more discredited it becomes politically.

The Melouza and La Fayette massacres and the murder of dozens of MNA members have confirmed the FLN's bourgeois and anti-democratic character in the eyes of many socialists.

Among the worst of these crimes was the murder last year of Bekhat and Fillali, leaders of the Algerian Workers' Trade Union League (USTA), the 70,000-strong trade union organization which supports Messali Hadj.

Importance of land reform

Without land reform no regime or army can hold out for long against the French, as China and Indo-China prove. Algerian independence is meaningless without a solution of the land problem.

The MNA proposes a radical redistribution of the land to the peasants and the seizure of the big estates.

What does the FLN propose? Let me quote an article by Raffaello Uboldi, foreign political correspondent of Avanti, in a recent issue of France-Observateur:

'Agrarian reform has been promised in the programme of the FLN, but has not yet been achieved for reasons which seem mainly political.

'The FLN is waiting for a settlement of its future relations with France before determining definitely its economic policy towards the French settlers and big landowners.

'That is why, at the moment, even where the settlers have abandoned their farms, the large estates remain untouched.'

On the question of the election of a Constituent Assembly Messali has stated explicitly that all parties should have a right to participate.

Yet the FLN states that only its own Revolutionary Council can be considered representative of a free Algeria. The democracy of the FLN is democracy based on the exclusion of its rivals!

The case of Bellounis

Much has been said about the case of Si Mohammed Bellounis, one-time militant of the MNA and one of the original organizers of the insurrection in central Algeria.

'Bao Dai', 'Mikhailovich' and 'traitor'—these are some of the labels that have been stuck on him by certain dubious friends of Algeria such as Gilles Martinet.

A shrewd and resourceful partisan leader, Bellounis had organized a considerable militia and liberated a large slice of territory in central Algeria.

The French made numerous attempts to crush him but failed. He placed his militia under the banner of the MNA and organized his own administration in the mountains.

Then came the massacre at Melouza¹ where more than 300 supporters of the MNA were butchered by an FLN band. This incensed Bellounis, who issued a tract against the FLN. The FLN retaliated with a series of armed attacks.

The French, who until then had directed their repression mainly against the MNA—going to the extent of even imposing a total blackout of news about the MNA in France—now suddenly switched and permitted MNA supporters to return

¹See 'What Really Took Place at Melouza', in The Newsletter for July 6, 1957, p. 64.

to Algeria to serve under Bellounis.

What happened after this is best described by Action (October 28, 1957) the organ of the Neo-Destour Party of Tunisia (no friend of the MNA):

'Bellounis, since the beginning of September, has effected a modus vivendi with the French officers in the region. In endorsing the written agreement he had signed himself as "Bellounis, local commander of the Army of National Liberation".'

'This was the first written document in which the French authorities officially recognized the Algerian Liberation Army.

'Algiers, which had openly encouraged and supported this "Operation Bellounis", realized after the event the importance of this recognition. They attempted to break off the agreement.

'Bellounis, who in the meantime had tripled his zone of influence with the support of the French, refused to surrender the document and ambushed the French patrol which was sent to recover it.

'The present situation is as follows: Bellounis disposes of about 500 men. He travels in a car bearing the crescent and star emblem.

'He declares himself to be with the MNA but refuses to acknowledge the authority of the MNA leadership in France.

'The French authorities provide him with arms and food. They flatter him and push him against the FLN. But they are worried. "I do not know how this story will end," a close friend of Lacoste has commented.'

Since then Bellounis has renamed his units 'Algerian National People's Army' (ANPA).

Such is the story of Bellounis. An opportunist? Yes. A traitor? Who knows. In any event, the FLN's responsibility for what has happened is paramount.

Only two roads lie before the Algerian revolution:

EITHER the disarming of the rebels and a horse-deal between France and the FLN along Tunisian lines with the help of the USA and the United Nations;

OR a protracted guerilla war brought to a victorious conclusion through the adoption of revolutionary measures and with the support of the European workers.

It must be stated that a major share of the responsibility for the starting and continuation of France's dirty war in Algeria rests on the Stalinists and social-democrats of France.

Suez proved that wars can be prevented, if not stopped, by the independent action of the workers. Let us hope that 1958 will see the French workers take such action.

CONTESTED ELECTIONS IN SOVIET UNION?

Pravda of January 22 publishes specimens of the ballot forms to be used in the next elections to the USSR Supreme Soviet.

A striking feature of these forms is that space is left for several candidates' names to be printed, and the forms include the following instruction to voters: 'Leave on the ballot form the name of the **one** candidate for whom you are voting, and cross out the others.'

Newsletter Pamphlets

● Into Battle!

BRIAN BEHAN, BOB POTTER, TOM KEMP 3d.

● Defend the ETU against Fleet Street and King Street!

PETER FRYER 2d.

Obtainable from The Newsletter, 180, Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4.

Five Years of Brutal Suppression – and Still the Heroic Kikuyu Fight Back

By CLIFF SLAUGHTER

In 1952 the Government of Kenya announced that it had uncovered a secret society called Mau Mau, which aimed to organize the native population for the overthrow of the Government.

With a speed unrivalled anywhere in the world, the British capitalist Press began to fill its columns with stories of the 'terrorism' and 'atrocities' of this organization.

Yet until this time the name 'Mau Mau' was almost unknown, and was mentioned in Government reports along with other suspected tiny societies of very slight influence.

The sudden announcement of the danger of Mau Mau's terrorist conspiracy was a result of invention rather than discovery: it was the excuse for proclaiming 'a state of emergency', and suppressing the Kenya people's movement for independence.

Commissioner said: 'What terrorism?'

One piece of evidence especially supports this. At the time when the emergency was proclaimed, Mr Davies, Kenya Native Commissioner, was in London and was asked to comment on the terrorism.

He replied: 'What terrorism? I do not know of any terrorism, but there is a small subversive element which I think should be controlled before it gets larger'.

To readers of The Newsletter the words he used are no doubt familiar.

Why was this moment chosen to repress the Kenya people with police and soldiers? Because for the first time there

This is the first of two articles by Cliff Slaughter giving the background to the struggle of the Kikuyu people.

was developing the real possibility of a joint African and Indian organization commanding the allegiance of all non-Europeans in Kenya.

In 1950 a joint conference in Nairobi had declared its demand for self-rule, and the Kenya Africa Union, led by Jomo Kenyatta, was expanding rapidly.

Set up since the war, this body put forward a petition to the United Nations signed by 400,000 people, asking for the extension of democratic rights to Africans.

If the Mau Mau was originally only one of many small secret societies, the policy of the government soon transformed it into a powerful organization, and forced upon it many of the methods of which it had first been wrongly accused.

Many tortured and beaten

All legal and democratic channels of struggle were barred to the Kikuyu, their settlements were attacked by troops, thousands of them were imprisoned and many tortured and beaten—as the official courts have had to acknowledge—concentration camps were set up where tens of thousands were incarcerated.

These camps have been courageously exposed by the Quaker Eileen Fletcher.

Uprooted, their leaders arrested, their brothers jailed and beaten, what were the Kikuyu to do? Forms of struggle depend upon the conditions in which men fight.

Although most of the reports of oath-taking ceremonies, sacrifices and atrocities are exaggerated a hundredfold, and the less justified terror on the other side has been more or

less ignored, it is true that the Kikuyu were forced to adopt violent and conspiratorial methods.

The fact that after the brutal and savage suppression of the last five years the Government has discovered a new society 'of the Mau Mau type' testifies more than anything else to the courage and spirit of the Kikuyu people.

A few examples of the repressive methods of the 'emergency' will show how unbreakable must be the spirit of the people.

Collective punishment has always been one of the favourite methods of British imperialism. First in the Nyeri and then in other districts, cattle and land were seized from the people.

Then the terribly over-populated native reserves were flooded with thousands of labourers expelled from the Rift Valley Province, where they at least had had employment.

On November 1, 1953, 700 families were evicted from the Eastleigh area of Nairobi. Within a few days these people were arrested as vagrants or arrested along with other friends who 'gave shelter to unauthorized persons'.

Special taxes were imposed and freedom of movement for whole areas was suppressed. Arbitrary arrests and the sudden drafting of troops to towns and villages made the life of Africans one of dread and terrible insecurity.

Often these 'security checks' were made the excuse for arresting trade unionists and open spokesmen of democratic rights and national independence.

Why is it that measures of this kind were found necessary by the European settlers? What sort of conditions and experience could have forced the Kikuyu and their neighbours to a revolt apparently so dangerous?

When a régime must resort to measures of this kind, it only condemns its own failure to command the respect and allegiance of the people. A glance on Kenya's history will explain the present crisis.

DOCUMENT

ASSOCIATED WITH BUILDERS' RANK-AND-FILE MOVEMENT—EXPELLED FROM CP

Jack Baker, a bricklayer's labourer and member of the Bromley (Kent) branch of the Communist Party, has been expelled from the party for associating with the rank-and-file building workers' movement.

He is the fourth member of the Bromley branch to be expelled since November.

Last Sunday he handed copies of the following letter to delegates attending the party's Kent District Congress.

DEAR COMRADES,

I was elected as a delegate to this Congress by the Bromley branch. Yet last Sunday I was expelled from the party without having had an opportunity to answer the charges levelled against me.

At no stage prior to my expulsion was I given the charges in writing.

Last September I was relieved by London district of my responsibilities as secretary of the S.E. London Amalgamated Union of Building Trades Workers [Communist Party] Advisory Committee and member of the London and National Advisory Committees for that union. Here again, I did not have the opportunity to answer the charges made against me.

What in fact had I done?

In accordance with the party's policy for building working-class unity in action, I had arranged meetings between Communist Party building workers and other building workers; on every such occasion I sent invitations to the London

district Industrial Department; and I had been elected secretary of a broad building workers' organization.

This organization was last Sunday successful in achieving the largest gathering of London building workers for many years—attended among others by Comrade Jack Pascoe, a member of our party's executive, who is now a member of the rank-and-file stewards' committee which this conference set up to fight on the issues now confronting our industry.

I think I can claim that this broad movement among building workers has already made real progress (particularly in the field of trade union democracy—see any recent issue of the *Building Worker* for a reflection of our work!) and that

WHO ARE THE 'LIQUIDATIONISTS'?

Latest re-registration figure for the Kent district of the Communist Party is 604. This is a drop of almost 400 members since the spring of 1956, and of 181 since the end of 1956.

in taking part in this activity I have been carrying out party policy, and carrying out my duty as a communist in accordance with the decisions of our 25th (Special) Congress.

Despite all this, I have received a letter from Comrade Gil Bradbury [Kent district secretary], informing me that I have been expelled from the party, and giving four 'reasons' for this action.

1) 'You refused to carry out the decisions of the party organization to which you were responsible, i.e., the London district.'

Yet it was a decision of the London AUBTW Advisory Committee last August that we communist building workers should 'continue to work' with such militants as Brian Behan, Mick Gammon and Jock Steven.

2) 'That you refused to discuss the questions which had arisen.'

The only invitation I have had to discuss these questions is a letter from Comrade Jack Eighteen, dated August 30, 1957, which stated that 'your action is **apparently** not in line with decisions previously taken'—(My emphasis—J.B.).

On September 15, 1957, I wrote to Comrade Eighteen as follows: 'I would be pleased to discuss any point you desire, but feel this can most appropriately be done at my branch, as the basic unit to which I belong.'

Branch not consulted or informed

Again, on September 29 I wrote to the same comrade: 'I demand that you immediately place these charges in writing and provide me with the opportunity to place this matter before a London aggregate of the AUBTW members in order that we may thrash out this whole business and also to see whether the comrades in the building industry endorse this action of the district committee.'

In the same letter I asked for my branch to be given 'the opportunity of discussing this question with all details'; action had been taken against me without my branch being consulted or even informed.

3) 'That you continued to associate with a group in direct opposition to the decisions of the party.'

If such decisions were in fact taken, then they are:

(a) contrary to the decisions of last year's National Congress; and

(b) contrary to the present practice of such leading party building workers as Comrade Jack Pascoe and Comrade Joe Rootes, the former of whom is closely associated with the building workers' rank-and-file movement.

Yet for being associated with this movement myself I am thrown out of the party!

4) 'That in spite of the discussion which took place at the district committee on November 3, you carried on these activities.'

I was called up to the Kent district on that date, along with other party members, about the internal affairs of the

Bromley branch, and about no other matter.

It was I who volunteered some criticisms of those leading the party's work in my industry; no questions were put to me on this, nor was there any discussion about it.

What is more, a resolution from my own branch, the Bromley branch, calling for an inquiry into these criticisms that I raised of the party's work in the building industry, was submitted for the agenda of this very Congress—yet it is not published in the list of resolutions.

It appears to have been suppressed by the district leadership.

At the last National Congress Comrade Peter Kerrigan himself had to describe the way the party's work had been carried on in the AUBTW, as far as one particular matter was concerned, as 'fantastic'.

How then are we to describe the action of the Kent district leadership in expelling a comrade rather than allow an impartial inquiry into the criticisms he had to make?

Is such an expulsion in the best interests of the party?

I submit that the method of expelling comrades who have criticisms to make, rather than face up to their criticisms and allow frank discussion of things that are wrong in our party, is not calculated to strengthen the party.

I shall appeal against expulsion. I ask for your support.

Yours fraternally,
JACK BAKER

LETTERS

MURDERS OF MILITANT WORKERS

COMMENTING on the murders of AKEL cadres in Cyprus by EOKA gunmen the *Daily Worker* of 24 January editorializes: 'Why should a small group of people now embark on the assassination of trade unionists? The only people who benefit from such action are the imperialists.'

This is absolutely true. Why, then, had the *Daily Worker*—and, still more notably, its Paris equivalent, *Humanité*—nothing to say against the recent wave of murders of Algerian trade union leaders in France?

Scores of active members of USTA, the Algerian workers' organization, were shot dead by gunmen of the FLN, the body which corresponds in the Algerian national movement roughly to the Cypriot EOKA.

The answer is, of course, that the USTA is a non-Stalinist organization—indeed, the French Communist Party regards it as 'Trotskyist'—so the party line is 'good luck to the gunmen'.

When a similar wave of murders breaks out in Cyprus, and the victims this time are members of a Stalinist body, the *Daily Worker* protests.

The murders of militant workers by bourgeois-nationalist thugs, among the Algerians and the Cypriots alike, have been made possible by the Stalinist policy in the colonial revolution—the policy which produced its first disastrous harvest in the massacre of the Shanghai workers by Chiang Kai-shek in 1927.

Newcastle-on-Tyne

A. Rahman

SOME QUESTIONS FOR JOHN WILLIAMSON

IN John Williamson's recent *Daily Worker* article he tried to present a picture of a militant, class-conscious Communist Party fighting on all fronts against 'the ruthless ruling class of the U.S.'

All who were critical of the party line were 'revisionists', 'liquidationists', 'hangers-on of the capitalist Press' etc. 'who strove to strip the working class of the experience and leadership of a fighting Communist Party based on Marxist-Leninist principles'.

Perhaps it was lack of space that prevented John Williamson from informing his readers that the main political line of the leaders of this 'fighting Communist Party' is to urge the workers to vote for the Democratic Party, which represents this same 'ruthless ruling class of the U.S.'

Leeds, 15

Jack Gale