

# THE NEWSLETTER

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## 'BLACK THE ROCKET BASES' CALL FROM LIVERPOOL

**L**IVERPOOL Trades Council, at its monthly meeting, declared its opposition to the building of rocket bases in Britain and the carrying of hydrogen bombs over this country—and registered support for all trade unions that are in a position to 'black the work of building rocket bases'.

Another motion proposed 'demonstrations, leaflets, factory gate meetings, conferences of all trade union branches and Labour Party organizations' and 'a call to the trade union branches and shop stewards for industrial action against Government policy'.

### HAXELL OFFERS CLERKS 8s.—ARBITRATION?

Clerical workers employed at the Hayes Court head office of the Electrical Trades Union have asked for a 25s. pay increase. The ETU has offered 8s., and this has caused great dissatisfaction among the fifty or so workers concerned.

The Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union area official has suggested that the dispute be taken to arbitration, and this was being discussed this week at a staff meeting and a meeting of the CAWU's Bromley branch.

Some Communist Party members regard this as a scandalous suggestion, tantamount to 'blackmail'. Others think that Frank Foulkes and Frank Haxell are well paid for their services, and that rank-and-file electricians would not object to paying head office clerks, too, a decent rate.

### NO COMMONS PRESS TICKET FOR US

THE House of Commons authorities have refused to issue THE NEWSLETTER with an occasional ticket of admission to the Parliamentary Press Gallery.

According to the Deputy Serjeant at Arms, Lt-Col. P. F. Thorne, there is not enough accommodation in the Press Gallery for a Newsletter representative.

Yet when the application was first made, Lt-Col. Thorne asked to see a copy of The Newsletter. It was only then that it was discovered that accommodation was short.

On most days there is plenty of room in the Upper Press Gallery, where representatives of the foreign and periodical Press sit.

From 1949 to 1956 the Editor of The Newsletter, Peter Fryer, was Parliamentary Correspondent of the Daily Worker.

### 90 TO NIL AGAINST ABSENTEE COMMITTEES

Opposition to the proposed absentee committees continues to grow in the Lancashire coalfield, despite the fact that the proposals have received the blessing of the area executive and its full-time officers.

Out of the eleven pits comprising the St Helens panel five have already said they will not operate the committees.

Golbourne pit threw the idea out by a decisive majority in a pit-head ballot. When the matter came before the Cronton branch, out of a meeting of over ninety members not one person was prepared to volunteer for service on the committee.

### ANTI-EVICTION COMMITTEE IN TOTTENHAM

Representatives of Tottenham Trades Council and Labour Party have formed a committee to campaign against the Rent Act and against the expected evictions next October.

## BLACK THE H-BOMB — & THE BASES!

By PETER FRYER

**H**OW can we prevent the building of rocket bases on British soil, with everything that terrible and sombre step will imply? How can we stop hydrogen-bombers from flying continuously in our skies? How can we end, once and for all, the menace of the hydrogen bomb? How can we prevent a third world war, in which our island with its dense population and concentrated industry would be a target for swift and crushing nuclear retaliation?

These are the questions in the minds of millions of British men and women who have been horrified by the Anglo-American agreement for rocket bases to be established in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and East Anglia, and who want to end this madness that could lead to national suicide.

Solemn warnings are being given by eminent scientists and publicists. Bertrand Russell says that 'as things are now and as statesmen go, it is an even chance whether any human being will exist forty years hence'.

There is a spate of articles and pamphlets underlining these warnings with incontrovertible facts.

According to the Atomic Energy Survey, the strontium found in the bones of Welsh sheep has risen ten times—from 20 units to nearly 200 units—in the space of two years.

Strontium attacks children more rapidly than adults. The bones of two children who died early in 1957 were found to contain nearly twice the strontium discovered in any child in the previous year.

In sufficient concentration strontium is likely to produce bone tumours (sarcoma) or cancer of the blood (leukaemia).

### STRONTIUM: Menace to our health

If H-bomb tests continue at the present rate over the next few years, people in the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere will have 10-25 strontium units in their bones, reports The Lancet (December 28, 1957).

And according to the Atomic Scientists' Association a concentration of 10 units will produce over 500 cases of bone sarcoma in a city the size of London.

Added to this menace to our health we are now to have ballistic missiles and bases from which to launch them. Is this the way to defend Britain? Read what the Manchester Guardian says about it (February 25, 1958):

'They will make Britain more of a target. They certainly will not give greater safety either to these islands or to the Western alliance . . . . (Continued overleaf)

**BLACK THE H-BOMB (Continued from front page)**

'The "soft" bases, above ground . . . will be exceedingly vulnerable. A near-miss with a hostile hydrogen bomb will be enough to knock any one of them out, but it will also knock out a good deal of peaceful town and country as well.'

Much is known about the hazards of nuclear tests and rocket bases. But many of the facts are shrouded in secrecy.

The authorities are carrying out secret tests of the people's drinking water. They are preparing the pits so that miners can remain fourteen days underground.

The full extent of the dangers to the nation's milk and other food from radio-strontium, and of the biological dangers to future generations, are being deliberately and brazenly concealed by the Government.

The Tories have entered into an unconscionable conspiracy against the British people: a conspiracy to turn this island into a springboard for American imperialism, and so into a battleground and a desert.

**NEVER: Such criminal rulers**

Never has our country had such criminal rulers as she has today. Some, like Selwyn Lloyd, are incapable of a coherent statement of policy. Others, like the authors of the latest defence White Paper, are showing symptoms of paranoia. Others again, like Macmillan himself, have lost every vestige of shame at the dark prospects their policy holds out for us.

Never have such colossal destructive forces been in the hand of so few persons, who are ill-equipped to understand the powers they are playing with, but on whose decisions the future of countless human beings depends.

Let no one speak any longer, however, of the 'apathy' of the British people in the face of these mortal dangers. The awakening has begun. Only the feckless, the stubborn or the blind can stand aside from the movement of revulsion now springing up.

The tide of public opinion has begun to flow strongly against the Tories and their policies.

At Rochdale 80 per cent. voted against the H-bomb. In London thousands gathered to demand unilateral renunciation by Britain of the bomb. Neither police brutality nor the silence of The Times can hold back this movement.

Most important of all, the entire trade union movement is against the Tories' 'defence' policy.

It is an excellent thing that the people's voice is being raised, louder and louder, against the bomb, against the bases, against the Tories.

But this is only a beginning. The people want to act. They want to fight. They want to know how to fight in the most effective way.

**STATESMEN: They are responsible**

We dare not leave it to the statesmen. Can we expect Macmillan, Eisenhower and Khrushchev to surrender the H-bomb without being forced to?

To ask the question is to answer it. It is the statesmen of the world, and first and foremost the statesmen of the capitalist countries, who are responsible for the bomb. It is their deterrent. It is their fetish.

The Soviet leaders, following the basic line of Stalinism in foreign policy, have abandoned working-class internationalism and rely on the hydrogen bomb and diplomacy, not on working-class struggle, to defend the USSR against imperialism.

The statesmen will never surrender the bomb voluntarily. It must be wrenched from their grasp and destroyed by the forces of sanity, by the working people.

That is why we should mistrust those who make out that summit talks are all that is needed to save the world from disaster.

What folly it would be to rely on the murderers of the Korean people, of the people of Kenya, of the Hungarian people, turning their H-bombs into ploughshares!

There have been summit talks before—but the war preparations went on. Only when the working people of all the major countries of the world take away from their rulers the power to make wars and weapons of mass destruction will the world be able to breathe freely once again.

The weapons now being developed and tested in ever more frightful forms can destroy humanity. And the only certain way to prevent this is for the greatest of all great powers—the working people of the world—to struggle against war, against warmakers, against the H-bomb, in the most active, vigorous and audacious way.

The famous Norwood resolution, for which 781,000 votes were cast at the Brighton conference of the Labour Party last autumn, is now clearly seen as the only socialist way forward—the only sensible way forward—for the fight against war to develop.

What did the Norwood resolution say? It called for a national campaign, led by the Labour Party's national executive committee, against nuclear weapon tests—on the militant lines of the Suez campaign.

It pledged the next Labour Government to refuse to continue to test, make or use nuclear weapons, and to appeal to the peoples of other countries to follow that lead.

And it called for discussions between the British Labour Party and the international socialist and trade union movement 'on how best the full force of the international working-class movement can be mobilized to stop any further tests'.

Here is the key to the international situation at the present time. Let doubters, faint-hearts and traitors speak about 'Leftism' or 'pacifism': the fact remains that it lies in the hands of the international working-class movement to banish the spectre of war.

If the Norwood resolution had become official Labour Party policy, what a difference there would have been in these five months. What a tremendous example to the workers of other countries would have been set by our own Labour movement.

For the fight against war is an international question, that leaps over national boundaries just as insistently as do the poisons generated by the tests we are seeking to end.

**LEADERS: Stand in the way**

Let us put an end to the patronizing attitude towards the workers of other countries. Neither in the USA, Russia, Japan nor anywhere else are the workers blind to the dangers that confront them.

They are our allies in the fight against war. All that is needed is a clear, unequivocal lead. And why should that lead not come from the oldest working-class movement?

What stands in the way? Artificial barriers set up by leaders. Leaders who call themselves socialists. Leaders who call themselves communists. This is what is holding back the working-class fight against war.

The Right-wing leaders hesitate and dither. Gaitskell and Macmillan, says the Daily Telegraph (February 20, 1958), seem to be 'dancing in time to the same minuet'. Bevan, cocking an ear to the mounting pressure inside and outside his party, waffles to such effect that no one knows whether he is now naked or decently clothed in thermo-nuclear fig-leaves.

If the Labour Party leaders would only make a clear declaration, would only give a lead, would only strike off the shackles of bi-partisanship that still clog their footsteps—what a response they would get from the organized workers!

The leaders of the Communist Party are fettered, too. They will fight for peace—in the way Moscow tells them to.

This means that a Stalinist-controlled union such as the Electrical Trades Union supports Bevan at the Labour Party conference and votes against the Norwood resolution.

It means opposing the demand for unilateral renunciation of the H-bomb that was such a striking feature of the central London meetings—for the Stalinists are in favour of Britain having the bomb, just as they are in favour of conscription.

It means diverting the workers from genuine struggle

against war into the blind alley of marches behind the Union Jack on U.S. air bases.

What useful purpose is served by these marches? Who is impressed? But a decision to black all work on rocket bases, and all work connected with H-bombs, would raise the whole struggle to a new level of militancy, and would heat still further the fire that is smouldering under Macmillan and his colleagues.

The marches on the American bases push right into the background the fundamental class nature of the fight against war.

It is high time to hoist the banner of working-class internationalism in this fight, and to see the American workers and conscripts, not as 'one reactionary mass', but as a great potential ally in the struggle.

The fight against the H-bomb is not a matter of a Saturday jamboree and a few shouts of 'Go Home Yankee!' It is a serious fight, for it concerns the future of the human race.

The whole Labour movement must engage in this fight and take emergency measures to carry it forward—not in a spirit of panic or adventure, but in full awareness of the urgency and magnitude of the task.

### **NOW: Working-class action**

We have had plenty of warning. The time has come to act.

The time has come to work out a common programme of struggle on which the movement can campaign.

Meetings and demonstrations and resolutions; protests of all kinds; rousing speeches in Parliament; declarations by the great and the wise: all these are excellent.

But the need of the hour is for something more, something that will really give the Tory Government and the American ruling class pause—direct intervention by the British workers.

The moment the British workers say they will not lift a finger to help the manufacture or testing of the H-bomb or the construction of rocket bases and appeal to the workers of other countries to follow their example—in that moment the capitalist class will know we are in earnest.

What the Aberdeen plumbers and the Liverpool Trades Council have done is an example to the whole of the British Labour movement. Let that example be followed.

When it comes to safeguarding living standards, defending jobs and wages and workshop organization, the workers are ready to meet the challenge.

How much more should they be ready to employ the strike weapon when it is a matter of defending their families against bone cancer and cancer of the blood, defending their homes against a nuclear holocaust.

### **WORKERS: Black H-bomb jobs**

How often have workers refused to touch 'black' goods—goods that have been produced by scabs? How often have they made real sacrifices rather than cross a picket line? There is no finer spirit in the working-class movement than the morality, handed down to us from our fathers' struggles, that 'black' work is beyond the pale.

**Every job connected with the H-bomb, every job connected with rocket bases, is a 'black' job—because it means death and disease to workers and their wives and children.**

Any worker who lets himself be used to build these bases should ponder deeply whether he is not acting as a scab, because he is preparing the agony and the sorrow that will be visited on his own people.

In no way is the lunacy of capitalist society more clearly shown than in its manufacture of terrible and terribly costly weapons. It is the workers who, by their class position, see this lunacy most clearly.

Though vast numbers of middle-class people are raising their voices powerfully against the bomb and the policies associated with it, it is the workers who are in a position to strike the most telling blows against the bomb.

The working-class struggle against the H-bomb is at the same time the struggle against the Government which makes

it and cherishes it, and against the society whose evil offspring it is.

In fighting against the bomb the working class is fighting to smash the Tory Government and to replace it with a new Labour government that will put into effect a socialist peace policy.

A new Labour government must turn the war industries over to peaceful production. It must utilize nuclear power, not to spread affliction, misery, pain and fear, but to cure disease, lighten human labour and bring blessings and comfort to ordinary folk.

It must join with the working-class movements of all lands to sweep away the warmakers, their fiendish weapons and their bankrupt system and end forever the capitalist system that causes wars.

This is the programme for which British Marxists pledge themselves to campaign—a socialist peace programme, designed to mobilize millions of working people throughout Britain and the world, putting their faith not in diplomatic deals but in 'their own right hand', to banish the H-bomb menace from our planet:

- 1** Let the Trades Union Congress and the executives of the unions concerned, with the full support of the Labour Party national executive, black all work on the building of rocket bases and on the manufacture and testing of hydrogen bombs.
- 2** Let Labour launch an international working-class campaign for the ending of the manufacture and testing of the H-bomb.
- 3** Let Labour pledge that the day it is returned to power it will stop British tests, unilaterally renounce British manufacture of the H-bomb, halt the construction of rocket bases and revoke all military agreements with the USA.
- 4** Let the leaders of the Soviet Union declare their support for an international working-class campaign against war along these lines, and declare that they will join forces with a British Labour government pledged to such a policy.
- 5** Let an international conference, including representatives of India, Yugoslavia and all the small nations, be summoned to discuss the withdrawal of all troops from foreign soil and the extension of the Rapacki plan for a zone of nuclear disarmament to the whole of the globe.

We appeal to all who read this article to raise these demands on the job, in shop stewards' committees, trade union branches, local Labour Parties and all other organizations of the working-class movement.

Make them the common property of the whole movement, so that the ranks of British Labour will be roused to fight and defeat the forces of death, destruction and reaction.

### **AEU BRANCHES PROTEST AT ROCKET BASES**

London (North) district committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union has so far received thirty resolutions from its branches protesting against H-bombers and rocket bases in Britain.

### **'JOIN LABOUR PARTY,' SAY YCL OPPOSITION**

Following the expulsion of Ken Weller and Doug Little from the Young Communist League and the expulsion of Brian Green from the Communist Party, the London YCL Opposition Group has decided to advise its members to join the Labour Party.

A third issue of the group's bulletin explains the reasons for this action. Another opposition group is working in the Hampstead YCL.

## RENTS

### TENANTS SWARM TO 'HEARTBREAK HOUSE'

By Coun. Harry Finch

No fewer than 10,000 people have been to the Birmingham borough Labour Party offices for advice on rents and repairs since the latest Rent Act became law.

At these offices, nicknamed 'Heartbreak House', Coun. Ray Jones interviews the tenants. He told me that in response to an advertisement by the City Housing Management Department, 605 people had applied for forms on which to state their likely circumstances in October 1958.

**Replies came from 243 people who in one way or another will be evicted in October.**

Most had just been told to get out; others had been offered new three-year leases at fantastic rents which they could not afford.

With 67,000 on the council's housing register, awaiting houses, any increase over the average number of evictions (evictions through tenants' dying, with owners' taking re-possession from sub-tenants) will greatly worsen the whole chronic housing situation.

It is estimated that out of 44,000 houses in Birmingham of rateable value over £30—to which the new Rent Act applies—8,000 are landlord-owned houses.

Coun. Jones told me that the borough party expects more reports of threatened evictions toward the end of next month, when the landlords must give tenants notice to quit if they wish to throw them out by October.

And next month the second part of the increases can be imposed. Rents have already gone up for thousands of tenants by the initial 7s. 6d. per week.

Apart from necessary advice in filling in repair forms, helping tenants to claim certificates of disrepair and similar details, there is so far no attempt to prepare the people actively to resist evictions and to engage the unions and the Labour Party in a massive movement against the landlords.

If this is not done the real heartbreak of evicted families walking the streets of Birmingham will become a reality.

## Cunvin's Column

### WOT, NO STRIKES?

**A** COUPLE of weeks ago I singled out Mr Alfred Robens MP, the shadow Minister of Labour, for praise because of his firm assurance that the next Labour Government will renationalize steel despite all the efforts of the steel magnates.

Now this same Mr Robens has blotted his political copy-book.

Addressing members of the Industrial Co-partnership Association last week, he described strikes in the second half of the twentieth century as an anachronism.

'They are a blunt instrument,' he said, 'with all the dangerous propensities of a boomerang.'

### BALM TO THE BOSSES

Mr Robens said that he believed the British method of voluntary arrangement between workers and employers was the best in the world.

**But collective bargaining is effective from the workers' point of view only in so far as they are prepared to back up their demands with a show of strength.**

No amount of logical argument would convince the bosses that a pay rise or a shorter working week was justified if they could be sure that the argument would not be taken beyond the conference table to the rank and file.

Collective bargaining works only because behind the demand of the workers' representatives lies the threat of strike action.

This is as true now as it was fifty years ago and perhaps even more so, for British capitalism is in a less favourable position to grant concessions to the workers today than it was at the turn of the century.

Speeches like this from responsible Labour leaders only bring balm to Labour's enemies. It is certainly not a good augury for the day when Mr Robens becomes the Minister of Labour.

### BAN ON DAVIDSON

**R**EPLYING to protests from Labour MPs against the banning of Basil Davidson from the Central African Federation and the East African High Commission countries, Colonial Under-Secretary J. D. Profumo said he was not prepared to make public the reasons why any individual had been or was declared a prohibited immigrant.

Every colonial territory, according to Mr Profumo, had legislation governing the entry of people who were not natives. This had been introduced by local legislators with the general purpose of protecting the local community and safeguarding their welfare.

What he forgot to add was that these local legislators were drawn almost exclusively from the small select group of white settlers.

### WHITE MEN'S LAWS

In most of the African colonies the great majority of the people are either not represented at all or less hopelessly under-represented.

**These laws which lay down who is and who is not permitted to enter these territories are designed to safeguard the privileges of the white minority.**

The latter are fearful of 'their' natives establishing contact with the outside world, especially with the world of international labour, lest they pick up some dangerous ideas about democracy, freedom and the right to organize and strike.

That is why progressive writers like Basil Davidson are banned. Not only have they a tendency to get into touch with the 'wrong' people but also to tell the truth about conditions in the countries they visit.

GEORGE CUNVIN

## ECONOMICS

### 'THREE WISE MEN' WANT WAGE CUTS

By Our Economic Correspondent

CUT workers' wages. This recommendation to the Tory Government is the real meaning of the Cohen Council's first report.

Of course, the 'three wise men' are wise enough not to say this openly. But no one reading their 75-page report objectively can doubt that the report has only one purpose—to help the Government and the employers to resist wage claims despite the increased cost of living.

It openly hopes for an increase in unemployment to help this end.

#### I. Facts and Figures—the Rise in Prices

The 'three wise men' argue that the price rise since 1946 has no parallel in the past hundred years and in support of this claim they produce a chart showing the rises and falls in prices throughout the period 1850-1957.

They omit to point out that in 1931 and again in the autumn of 1949 the pound sterling was devalued, on the latter occasion from \$4.04 to \$2.80. (Continued on page 66)

## I Joined the Labour Party

THE day I left the Communist Party I joined the Labour Party. It seemed to me that socialist inaction was an impossible contradiction in terms. I left the Communist Party because it can only be, now, what its leaders make it and joined the Labour Party because it might possibly be what its members make it. That is the critical difference.

Part of the story of what has happened since may be of some interest to those who have not yet made up their minds what to do and don't really know what to expect if they do join the Labour Party.

I received a really fraternal welcome. There had been a special discussion of my admission and it had been approved by an unanimous vote.

I had one or two general resolves in mind. Pretty obvious but extremely important. They have been endorsed by subsequent experience.

**FIRST REQUIREMENT—WORK.** First, an ex-communist has got to earn his passage into real acceptance in the Labour Party. He cannot and must not trade on his welcome. The first requirement is work. He has to put in the man-hours, plenty of them.

The first job I did was to organize a jumble sale on old-fashioned Communist Party lines—to some people it was quite new-fangled! The result was that the bankrupt ward found itself with £13 in the kitty.

Second, not to worry too much about the real or imagined sins of Transport House. If the basic units of the party are in good health the conditions will exist for change. Without that—nothing.

You must not let the overall situation in the local party get you down. It is liable to be rather depressing. Still, I think we are all hardened to that.

I find it most useful to break the situation down into its thousand and one component parts and tackle them as they come. Then I and everyone else can see the results and the party is in better heart in consequence.

I'll give you what you may think is an extraordinary example. It concerns Father Christmas.

**THE CHRISTMAS BAZAAR.** Early in the autumn I joined the social committee of the city party on behalf of my ward. We were discussing the Christmas bazaar.

It appeared that last year there had been a crisis over Father Christmas. Presents had been given (and bought) for his lucky dip. They were worth a shilling or more. A lucky dip ticket cost only sixpence.

One or two unscrupulous Mums got wise to this and sent their children back time after time to take advantage of the promoters' generosity. The supplies ran out in no time and some children had to go without.

This led to an acrimonious discussion and the whole atmosphere and memory of the bazaar was poisoned. How to avoid this happening again?

It was now proposed that a complex system of tickets be adopted so that one child should be allowed only one lucky dip. This was going to be very difficult to operate and the committee faced a regular wrangle that boded ill for the bazaar as a whole and the spirit of party workers in general.

This was the situation as I found it. Having actually been Father Christmas in past Daily Worker bazaars it seemed to me that there was really no problem at all.

All that was needed was to ensure that as a general rule the cost price of the presents should not be greater than sixpence and that the total number should be at least as great as the maximum estimated demand. (I also

knew how to get the presents cheap!)

In this way all children would be able to come back for more as often as they liked. All my suggestions were adopted. Eventually I ended up as organizer of the bazaar.

We made over £50 (the thing was on a small scale). Everyone was very pleased and we plan now a major bazaar for next Christmas—in the Guildhall with all the trimmings.

This may all seem shockingly insignificant and a thousand miles from the class struggle. But it's not.

You will probably find in your local Labour Party all sorts of petty problems and peculiar personal animosities that stand in the way of good political work.

**THE REAL ENTHUSIASTS.** You may well find that politics are hardly ever discussed. There may be ward meetings but no distinct ward committee. Everybody is on the committee, and meetings that ought to be discussing policy only discuss business. So only the real enthusiasts turn up—to grumble about the inactivity of the rest.

The royal road to remedy is to secure political discussion at ward and constituency party level and to devise means to get the business done as well.

From the ward of which I am secretary we have raised the subjects of the H-bomb, civic rights and education and sent regular resolutions to the city management committee.

We have had Press reports of our open ward meetings—written by myself, delivered to the Press the same night as the meeting and printed verbatim.

It is not only a question of letting a hundred flowers bloom. A thousand deeds add up.

Team work is the thing. It is not much good denouncing bureaucracy unless we appreciate the significance of its opposite—the collective principle in action.

**A CREATIVE ACTIVITY.** This is the great discovery of the twentieth century. It is more important than nuclear fission. It produced nuclear fission.

And another thing that is not often found in print. Socialist politics is a creative activity. As such it is to be enjoyed. It finds expression in a vast complex of personal relationships that are to be regarded as valuable in themselves, not simply as factors to be weighed in the political balance alone.

He who regards people simply as agencies and 'forces' to be manipulated knows nothing at all about the foundations of socialism. He will be about as useful in action as certain gentlemen in King Street.

Or perhaps he may serve as an eloquent decoration for an armchair. If he doesn't enjoy himself then there is something wrong with his politics and he will communicate nothing significant to anybody.

Finally—to be utterly frank and straight, uncompromisingly 'Left' yet faction-free. The job is to 'carry' the party as a whole. There is an immense amount of wisdom in the principle of 'the utmost good faith'.

The annual general meeting of the Cambridge city party has just taken place. There were over twenty nominations for the eight ward seats on the executive committee. I was elected.

I have just spent a Sunday organizing a working party to sand the worn and knotted floor of the Labour Hall in Cambridge. People have been talking about doing it for years—like socialism. Now it is being done.

PETER CADOGAN

**'THREE WISE MEN' Continued from page 64)**

In 1945 the index was approximately at 245 and in 1957 between 410 and 420. But in real prices, calculated in dollars, the figure of 420 becomes 291, an increase of approximately 1.7 per cent. per annum and not between 4 per cent. and 5 per cent. as stated in the report.

**II. Where the Money Went**

'In Britain in 1946,' we read, 'the total sum paid out for home-produced goods, services and imports was £11½ billion. (Throughout this report billion means 1,000 million).

'From 1946 to 1956 the actual supplies of these goods and services increased by about one-third. So if prices had not risen 1956's total supplies could have been bought for about £15½ billion—an increase of about £4 billion.

'In actual fact they cost . . . £24½ billion . . . The difference . . . £9 billion . . . is the extra money paid out on account of rising prices' (p. 9).

In reality, if we again calculate the rise by a fixed and therefore comparable yardstick, i.e., in dollars and not pounds, the figure is £17 billion (1946 pounds), or an increase of only £1½ billion, not £9 billion.

A real increase of £730 million went to wages and salaries, not £4,500 million as stated in the report. Nor is any mention made of real prices or of devaluation in these sections, because to do so would largely spoil the argument.

**III. Increased Productivity**

When the report deals with the level of production the method of using entirely different yardsticks to arrive at percentage increases is employed only, and then the percentage increases are used to the detriment of wage levels and wage demands.

For example, in calculating increases in productivity 1948 prices are used throughout.

Despite these different measuring rods the report states:

'Against this production increase of about 3 per cent. a year, wages and salaries rose by about 7½ per cent. a year.

No mention is made at all of the different value of the money used in determining these indices. The impression is created that wage claims are responsible entirely for the increases, and not the gradual fall in the value of money after 1949 as the effects of devaluation permeated the whole of the economy.

This is either stupidity or dishonesty.

The only place real prices are mentioned is under the heading 'Gains and Losses'. But even here no real explanation is made.

Again no attempt is made to explain the effects of devaluation.

Where devaluation is mentioned later in the report its effect on prices and therefore on wage claims is not dealt with.

**IV. Dampening Down Demand**

The report says: 'It may well be argued that in present circumstances, even if the downward pressure on investment is not reduced, the pressure on consumption should be increased.'

This council goes further than the Government or the Financial Times in its eagerness to combat wages.

It wants to intensify the existing measures against inflation.

Everybody with any sense knows that the present trends in world economy are deflationary, that there is a crisis in the USA and in the primary commodity producing States, and that instead of further intensifying the anti-inflationary measures the Government should abandon them and pursue the opposite course.

But the Cohen council wants to intensify the present policy and to produce a higher degree of unemployment than is developing at present.

'The percentage . . . registered as unemployed, which was 1.2 in January 1956, was 1.8 in January 1958. No one should be surprised or shocked if it proves necessary that it should go somewhat further . . .'

On this question they have gone too far even for the Financial Times, which on February 21, 1958 hoped that the Chancellor would ignore their advice on investment. I am not surprised.

The risks to the economy that are being taken by the Government in order to resist wage claims are worrying most professional economists.

To go further and raise purchase tax and curtail hire purchase sales, as the Council suggests, is the height of folly, even for Tories.

**V. Wages under Controlled Demand**

It is in this section that the instructions are given to those concerned with arbitration to either refuse to give any increase at all or to limit such increases.

Before giving such instructions the council returns to its previous arguments about wage increases and production.

'It must also be remembered by all concerned that wage increases in the past few years have not only exceeded the rise in the cost of living, but . . . have gone beyond what would be justified by the average increase in productivity.'

Here again indices are based on prices calculated in money of a different value in one case than in three others—and they know it.

But it is with such misleading statistics that they embellish their instructions to the arbitration courts.

Here are the instructions: 'We would hope that if any wage increases are granted in 1958, they will be substantially below the average of the last few years . . .'

'If wages—or wages plus profits—are forced up at the points where productivity has increased most to the full extent of the increase in productivity there, there will be a tendency for money wages to be forced up also at the points at which productivity has increased less or not at all . . .'

'The result will be a rise in the level of average wages in the country in excess of the rise in average productivity and a consequent rise in the general price level . . .'

'We think too that the considerations to which we have drawn attention . . . should be continuously present to the minds of those who are called on to take any part, by conciliation, arbitration and the like, in negotiations about wages.'

**HEALTH SERVICE CLERKS' LOW WAGES**

FOUR out of five National Health Service clerks get gross earnings of less than £11 11s. a week.

This is revealed by a recent survey conducted by the National and Local Government Officers' Association, published in the February 1958 issue of the NALGO monthly Public Service.

Of all administrative and clerical workers in the NHS, 36 per cent. earn less than £400 a year. Another 46 per cent. earn between £400 and £600.

Effective salary of these grades has fallen by 15 per cent. since 1948. Recommendations of their official Whitley Council were recently turned down.

**BOOKS****ARE SOVIET JEWS SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS?**

*Jews and the National Question*, by Hyman Levy  
(Hillway Publishing Company, 4s. 6d.)

INTO this 93-page book Professor Levy has packed a brilliant historical survey of the Jewish people and a profound Marxist analysis of their position in the capitalist and socialist sectors of the world, and of the special position of Israel in the Arab world.

The book, however, gives its main emphasis to the changed situation of Soviet Jewry since the early years of the Revolution. It will be remembered how the Jews of tsarist Russia greeted the liberating Revolution, which meant the end of the

Pale of Settlement and freedom to take any occupation and to live where they willed.

There was then a flowering of Jewish culture in the language of the Jews of eastern Europe, the Yiddish language. Jews were recognized to be a national minority and their passports were marked accordingly.

Yet, at the same time, the Jews could not be fitted into Stalin's definition of a nation.

If not a nation, they certainly regarded themselves as a people and were and are profoundly interested in the position of the Jews throughout the world.

Perhaps this internationalist outlook predisposed them also to accept the international outlook of Marxist socialism and accounts for the high proportion of Jews in the socialist movement.

It is the view of Prof. Levy that, with the advent of the State of Israel and the profound interest in its welfare which was shown by Soviet Jews, Stalin and the Soviet leadership took alarm.

They saw the new State leaning heavily on U.S. financial aid and they feared that Israel would line up with the USA in the event of war with Russia. In that event, they calculated, the Jews of the Soviet Union would regard the USA, as Israel's ally, with sympathy.

In short, they saw Soviet Jews as potential enemies, another enemy within!

To Stalin and those trained by him the weapon against ideas was the well-tryed one of physical force. The leaders of Jewish culture, the writers, poets and actors, were arrested and killed.

The Jewish theatres, newspapers and publishing houses were closed down and a policy of cultural genocide was embarked on.

Then came the Jewish doctors' plot and the tales of an international Jewish conspiracy à la Hitler. The plot story was dropped with the death of Stalin, but the policy of suppressing Yiddish culture was not changed.

With the advent of the Baghdad Pact and anti-Soviet bases on the territory of Arab States, the Soviet leaders decided to back the Arab nationalist movement.

### Reaction's traditional weapon

Such movements are, of course, progressive in so far as they lead to a diminution of U.S. and British influence, but they are no more socially progressive than other bourgeois political movements.

Prof. Levy asks: What of the Israeli working class? Are their interests not being sacrificed by the Soviet Union in its wooing of the Arab sheiks and effendis?

Prof. Levy sees the attack on the position of Soviet Jewry as the response by the present leaders of the USSR to the Baghdad Pact-Israel situation.

**But I fear that the truth goes a good deal deeper than this.**

**The singling out of Jews for attack is the traditional weapon of reaction throughout the centuries.**

Is it an accident that the régime which attacks Jewish interests should, at the same time, suppress those elements in eastern Europe and Russia who struggle for freedom of discussion?

The Jews with their international outlook were the natural recruits to the revolutionary movement and were praised for this more than once by Lenin.

To the bureaucrats now ruling the Soviet Union this is no longer an asset. The Jews are a nuisance—they must be excluded from the party, the diplomatic service and the Defence Ministry, their culture must be suppressed and they must lose their identity as a people.

The infamous statement attributed to Khrushchev at the meeting of the Polish politburo—'there are too many Abramovitches here'—is not the mere expression of stupid prejudice; it is a political statement in a highly political meeting.

The present rulers of the Soviet Union are the creation of Stalin, they served him in his barbarous conduct, they were trained by him, and although they attack the cult of the individual, they nevertheless carry forward Stalin's policy.

There will be no change in the position of the Jews in the

Soviet Union until the Soviet people take power into their own hands again and resume their onward march to socialist democracy.

There is widespread confusion in socialist circles about the position of the Jews in the world, especially in the Soviet Union. Prof. Levy's book will be of great help to Jews and non-Jews alike in stimulating fresh thought.

HENRY COHEN

### THIS PAMPHLET MAKES ONE'S BLOOD BOIL

MERVYN JONES has done a service to the struggle for Arab freedom and the anti-imperialist movement generally with his pamphlet *Ordeal*. (6d.)

Published jointly by the Union of Democratic Control, the Universities and Left Review Club, the Movement for Colonial Freedom and The New Reasoner, this tells the story of Djamila Bouhired, the Algerian girl supporter of the FLN who was framed up, tortured and sentenced to death last year for 'complicity in terrorist acts'.

Jones describes, in a way that makes one's blood boil, the investigation and 'trial' of Djamila, and shows how barbarous the French imperialists are becoming in their methods.

'Ordeal' is issued in aid of the campaign for the reprieve of Djamila Bouhired which has been sponsored by Barbara Castle, Michael Foot, Doris Lessing and others. Regardless of any disagreements with the FLN, all supporters of the Algerian people's fight should help to get a good circulation for this pamphlet.

## ANNIVERSARY

### WHAT WAS THAT AGAIN, COMRADE POLLITT?

'There can be no doubt that those who are carrying on his work in leading positions in the Soviet Union today, such as Malenkov, Beria, Molotov, Bulganin and Kaganovich, owe their development as Marxists and leaders to the very great help and assistance which Stalin always gave to those who worked with him.

'And Stalin's help and advice was always ready, not only for Soviet leading people, but also for leaders of the Communist Parties from other countries.

'I know how much I have learned from him, not only from his works, but from the friendly counsel he has given me. There is not a leader of any Communist Party in the world who has not had such personal help from Stalin.'

—(Harry Pollitt, *In Memory of Joseph Stalin and Klement Gottwald* (1953).)

## USSR

### THE CULT IS DEAD; LONG LIVE THE CULT!

MARSHAL OF THE SOVIET UNION A. I. Eremenko, writing in *Kommunist* (no. 1, 1958) on the fifteenth anniversary of the Battle of Stalingrad, gives the latest version of the revised history of the war.

He dismisses contemptuously and authoritatively the legend ('created under the influence of the personality cult') that it was Stalin himself whose 'creative' strategy was responsible for the encirclement and defeat of the German fascists.

But in his roll of honour of the architects of victory one looks in vain for the names of Marshal Zhukov whose relief armies dealt the decisive blow in the direction of Kalach, or of Marshal (then General) Chuikov whose 62nd Army had held the city against overwhelming pressure.

Marshal Eremenko pays tribute to the officers and men of Stalingrad whose courage, high morale, and self-sacrifice earned the admiration and gratitude of the whole world.

But who—if it was not Stalin—inspired the defenders of Stalingrad and the conquerors of the German 6th Army?

Le culte est mort, vive le culte. Enter a new personality:

'This lofty and painstaking work (i.e. of raising morale and discipline by explaining the military and political significance of the battle in progress) was accomplished with the direct participation and under the leadership of the member of the Military Council of the Stalingrad and South-Eastern front—N. S. Khrushchev.'

A.D.

**FOOTNOTE:** The Sunday Times of February 23 published a picture of Khrushchev addressing a recent meeting in the uniform of a lieutenant-general in the Soviet Army.

## STRUGGLE FOR ARAB UNITY—AND ITS LIMITATIONS

By Michael Banda

JUST as the Suez nationalization—despite a military defeat for Nasser—gave a tremendous fillip to the growth of Arab national consciousness, so too the unification of Syria and Egypt, despite the obvious and numerous limitations, threatens to disrupt the precarious balance of forces in this very vulnerable area.

The idea of Arab unity is a very old one, but took a long time to mature, being hampered by the extreme backwardness of the region, by the lack of modern communications and by dynastic conflicts.

The building of the Hejaz railway by the Turks, by bringing the tribes and towns of the Arabian peninsula into closer contact, did more to cement the unity of Arab nationalism than much of the propaganda of the secret societies.

The first attempt of the Arab people in 1916 (led by Hussein, Sherif of Mecca, and the tribesmen of the Arabian peninsula) to unite Arabia with Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq proved abortive.

This was the famous revolt immortalized by Lawrence and betrayed by his government.

This betrayal took the form of the Balfour declaration of 1917 and the Sykes-Picot agreement in 1916. The former proposed to create a Zionist enclave in the heart of the Arab homeland; the latter proposed to dismember the Arab nation.

### Arab revolt went on

Under the terms of the Sykes-Picot agreement geographical Syria (i.e., Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan) and Iraq were divided into spheres of influence. Lebanon and Syria (together with Mosul) went to the French, Iraq and Jordan were grabbed by Britain. Palestine was placed under an international trusteeship.

The international trusteeship of Palestine was later modified to become the British mandate.

The Arab revolt did not end with the expulsion of Hussein from his capital, Damascus. In Iraq in 1920 a new revolt broke out which lasted three months and cost the British government £40 million.

During the same period Egypt witnessed the birth of a powerful national movement, led by the Wafd, which strove to overthrow the British protectorate.

A third rebellion against imperialism flared up in the Levant. This was the insurrection of the Jebel Druse in 1925, which threatened to throw the French out of Syria.

Arab unity received a new and invigorating impulse during the second world war. Owing to the Allied blockade, trade between the Arab countries trebled. Industry grew.

The defeat of the British by Rommel's armies shattered the myth of British invincibility. In Iraq the ill-fated coup of Rashid-Ali nearly toppled British power. In Syria and Lebanon the struggle against the French was resumed and resulted in the winning of complete independence in 1946.

The first condition for Arab unity is the economic integration of all the Arab countries. This remains a hopeless objective so long as imperialism continues to dominate the Middle East, its finances, its commerce, its industry.

From this standpoint the unity of Syria and Egypt—and

the Yemen—will not evoke great hopes. Their essentially similar economies, the absence of common frontiers and the restricted market caused by low living standards militate against a viable and effective integration.

Unity, while it fills a long-felt need, has a reactionary aspect which it would be dangerous to ignore. The formation of one party to rule over the unified Arab State smacks of totalitarianism.

By imposing this condition Nasser not only eliminates the Left but also guarantees to the Egyptian bourgeoisie the virtual monopoly of the Arab State.

Man cannot live by language and culture alone. More important than unity is the liberation of the Egyptian fellaheen from perennial poverty and premature death by a thorough-going social and political revolution which would abolish landlordism, usury and all the other evils of an aborted capitalism.

Neither Kuwatly nor Nasser, but only the Arab workers, can achieve this.

## LETTER

### PAT DOOLEY LOVED PEOPLE—AND TRUTH

A former colleague of Pat Dooley's writes:

MAY I add the following to your obituary of Pat Dooley?

There were two things about him that all of us who knew him will long remember.

First, he was a warm-hearted, sincere man who loved people and would do anything on earth for a friend.

Second, he was never afraid to speak the truth, no matter what high personage he might offend and no matter what pressure might be put on him to keep quiet about the truth.

It was these qualities which, in the days before the war, made him first a great campaigner for the unemployed, and later a fearless fighter for the cause of Ireland—for years he wrote and spoke continuously for Ireland.

On the Cominform journal he saw a group of bureaucrats who lived well, who divided their own ranks into a strictly graded hierarchy, who were steeped in intrigue and who had little but contempt for ordinary working people.

Incidentally—and this infuriated Pat—they had little but contempt for the British Communist Party.

### Refused to believe him

He came back, already a sick man, but determined to tell the truth. Most of us, to our shame, refused to believe what he told us—though his words left a mark.

But we closed our eyes and our minds; unlike Pat, we did not face reality—we held back till it was forced on us later by Khrushchev, Poland and Hungary.

But he bore no grudge against those of us, his comrades, who refused to believe him. He was too big a man for that.

I met him on the day that Khrushchev's speech about Stalin was reported in the British Press. He could have been crowing with triumph. But he wasn't.

Instead he listened to my tale of woe, and said he believed this would cause a change in the attitude of the Communist Party. I believed it, too. We were both wrong.

Later, after I left my party job, he helped me get work when I was in urgent need, though I and others had done nothing to help him when he was in similar straits. He helped many people.

He was a great enthusiast—whether it was for socialism, for his work as a journalist, for the antiques he cherished or for the cottage where he and his devoted, charming wife found peace for a few months.

Above all, he was an enthusiast for people and for justice to people. We shall miss him.