

THE NEWSLETTER

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RAIL AND BUS STRIKES MUST BE WON

By R. SHAW and goods guard E. BADDER (members of the National Union of Railwaymen)

THE British Transport Commission is playing for time. It is trying to drive a wedge between the railway unions to prevent a national transport stoppage. This is the meaning of Sir Brian Robertson's statement that there can be no wage increase 'at this time'—a phrase he mentioned three times.

Militant railwaymen say that despite traditional inter-union rivalries and old sores it is vital that the BTC should not succeed in splitting them. They believe that now is the time to close the ranks and set up rank-and-file committees in every district composed of members of the National Union of Railwaymen and Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen—along with the busmen.

The Forster Tribunal's decision has swept away any remaining illusions about the 'good faith' and 'fairness' of the arbitration machinery. Railwaymen see it as just a tool of the Tory Government, which is determined to keep their rates appallingly low.

A porter or labourer receives a bare £7 for a 44-hour week after stoppages. If he is lucky and can work overtime and his rest day he may raise this sum by another 30s. per week.

A top rate guard may have a take-home pay of £9 to £11, provided he can get the overtime, night rate and rest day working.

A top rate engine-driver has a rate of £11 2s. 6d., which may reach average earnings of £12 or £13 with overtime or milage.

The overtime is not worked for 'adventure'. It has always been dictated by necessity. Now, however, it is being rapidly reduced and the 44-hour week is the rule.

Sunday work has been slashed to the bone and all jobs are subjected to rationalization. How are the shunter, guard, porter or platelayer to replace earnings they have relied on for ten years or more?

Their local negotiating machinery offers them no redress when as a result of a reversion to the 44-hour week their wage drops £1 per week.

On the other hand, union officialdom sanctions and condones the schemes introduced by the management in the interests of nationalization, to rationalize the work.

Schemes will mean sackings

These schemes do not produce unemployment yet, but given the continued decline of traffic and modernization, sackings in some departments are inevitable.

An example of this is the redundancy of sixteen firemen at one engine depot in the Midlands owing to the introduction of diesel trains. Most of the young cleaners there were given the option of transferring to grades other than locomen, or the sack.

At another guards' depot the decline in work plus rationalizing of the job reduced the labour force by 15 per cent. in two years.

(Continued overleaf)

SAYING OF THE WEEK

'It's not leading a strike I am worried about—it's holding the lads back' (Sidney Greene, general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, quoted in Daily Express, April 11).

Amory Wants Wage Cuts and More on Dole

By Our Economic Correspondent, TOM MERCER

THE main aspect of this week's Budget is that it continues the Tory offensive against wages. That is why it makes very few changes in the overall tax position.

'At home our first priority must continue to be to finish winning the battle against inflation,' said Mr Amory, in spite of the American depression and almost official recognition that its impact on the British and European economy will be considerable.

Amory is still fighting inflation—despite the fact that Britain's top five best customers after the USA itself (Australia, Canada, India, South Africa and New Zealand) have all suffered serious loss in income through the fall in basic commodity prices and will therefore be unable to buy as much from Britain this year as last.

Amory said himself that the reason why he is continuing the policy of investment restriction, dear money etc.—even

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though it has almost doubled the number of unemployed compared with last year—is in order to break wages, to cut the workers' standard of living.

'If wage increases in general go beyond the national increase of productivity this is bound to damage the national interest . . .

'In the light of all this it is clear that it is too soon yet to contemplate any general relaxation on the economic front, although the economy is capable of meeting a higher level of demand this year than is likely to be made on it.'

It is clear where the Cohen Council's policy of cuts in real
(Continued on back page)

COMMENTARY

PREPARE FOR VICTORY

AMORY'S port wine and profits Budget serves notice on the workers that they must either fight to maintain living standards or go to the wall. The Chancellor went out of his way to condemn wage increases, and this should spur the busmen and the railwaymen to enter the battles that now face them with determination and militancy. If they were beaten it would be a grave setback for all other sections as well. They have got to win. The guarantee of victory is the degree to which preparations are made now, in the garages and depots.

Most important of all is the establishment of contact between busmen and railwaymen, and between these and other transport workers. Rank-and-file committees should now be set up to run the strike at local level, and should seek contact with dockers, road haulage men and, above all, the men who drive petrol tankers. (The active support of these sections is essential to the busmen in particular.) The strikers will have against them the whole might of the capitalist State, including a formidable propaganda machine seeking to whip up ill will against them. Therefore everything possible should be done to present the workers' case to the public in as clear and straightforward a way as possible, to nail swiftly and decisively every Press lie or attempt at splitting and demoralizing. As many strikers as possible should be involved in picketing and the work of welfare, publicity and entertainments committees. Picketing itself must be well-organized and thorough. Women workers and colonial workers should be drawn into activity. Last but not least, direct approaches should be made to the local Labour Parties to show their solidarity by giving financial aid, taking collections, providing premises for strike committee headquarters and helping the production of local strike bulletins.



FINGER MEN

MEMBERS of the Communist Party are worried about the expulsion of Professor Levy. Hence the statement in the Daily Worker on Wednesday denying that he had been expelled for writing a book on the Jewish question. His real crime was that 'Prof. Levy wrote an article for the November issue of the Fryer News Letter (now the organ of the Trotskyists)'. This description of THE NEWSLETTER has only one aim: to draw the fire of Transport House against this paper. This was what the leaders of the Communist Party did in the case of Socialist Outlook before it was banned by the Labour Party Right wing; they always support Transport House when it comes to attacking Marxists. Readers of THE NEWSLETTER know that its columns have always been open to socialists of widely differing opinions. Labour MPs, industrial militants, communists, ex-communists of every shade and hue, priests, professors, even Right-wingers: all have written for THE NEWSLETTER. The growing number of militants who read this paper and appreciate the service it gives will view with contempt this attempt at witch-hunting.

RAILWAYMEN (Continued from front page)

The introduction of diesel shunting engines has drastically cut the number of locomotive firemen and has speeded up shunting operations, thus clearing the goods lines and reducing the size of trained staff needed.

In the past these measures have met with approval from the trade union leaders and little resistance from the rank and file, since nobody was unemployed and extra earnings were still available. But now that the slump winds are blowing the rank and file are becoming worried.

In recent months goods trains have been running with a third or a quarter of the freight carried a year ago. Wagons are being stored in mid-winter which previously would have been transporting coke for iron and steel works.

Another sign of the times is that train-loads of coal are now being worked to points around the country for dumping.

The decision of the NUR executive to shelve the demand for a 40-hour week was a big mistake.

The NUR leaders argue that the wages question takes priority, but these two problems, wages and hours, cannot here be separated and to refuse to press the attack on one is to store up trouble for the future.

Defence against speed-up

Another problem facing railwaymen is how to defend themselves against the speed-up drive. Primitive welfare conditions and a complete disregard for the workers exist alongside the most modern developments in technique.

Trains have been speeded up, thus increasing the strain on the crew. More freight trains are being run with full vacuum-fitted vans.

These trains travel at 50 miles per hour and have the speed and stopping power of a passenger express.

Injuries to guards, caused by the inadequate brake vans in which they must ride, are too frequent.

Manchester guards were recently required to learn in two days a section of the railway which they had not seen before and which contained twelve pairs of catch points (runaway points placed on steep gradients).

At other depots trainmen are being pressed to cut down the time required for 'road learning'.

'WE HAVE TO FIGHT' IS LANCS. VERDICT

By Our Industrial Correspondent

'We have to fight—we have no alternative,' said Mr H. Roberts, secretary of the Lancashire and district committee of the National Union of Railwaymen after the meeting of the area executive to consider the findings of the Forster Tribunal.

'If we don't fight, then our standards will be driven down even further—and they are low enough as it is,' he added.

He said the report was long-winded—'they usually are, in order to confuse the workers'—but it was interesting to see that the Commission agreed there was every justification for the claim, even though they said it could not be met.

Commenting on the minority report of Edwin Hall (an area official of the Lancashire National Union of Mineworkers.) Mr Roberts said the recommendation of a 3 per cent. increase was also completely inadequate. His own feeling was that a minimum of 6 per cent. or 8 per cent. was the only offer that could be considered.

Facts for mass meeting

So his committee has decided to place the facts before a mass meeting of railwaymen at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, on Sunday, April 20, and to recommend to branches that they should make the necessary arrangements for strike action and the setting up of strike committees.

I asked him what he thought the feeling of the rank and file would be. He felt they would be 'hopping mad' over the

The Tories Cannot Split the Busmen

By London bus driver **GEORGE FARENDEN**

BUSMEN were not surprised when the announcement came that the railwaymen's pay claim had been rejected. We expected that Forster and the employers' representative would carry out the Tory Government's policy.

Nor were we impressed by Sir Brian Robertson's glorious speech about not having any money in the kitty to pay increased wages, but he expected busmen and railwaymen to carry on co-operating with the BTC to improve efficiency.

I should like to ask: where did the money come from to pay the increased salaries of Sir John Elliot and the members of the London Transport Executive?

Where else than from the double days' takings of bus conductors, who with bus cuts and increased headways have been forced to work harder and suffer the complaints of passengers who have waited a long time queueing?

Elliot and his mates get their reward for services rendered. We get nothing but a pat on the back from Sir Brian to help us meet the increased cost of living and the Tory Rent Act.

VISIT OUR GARAGE! If the Tories are expecting 'co-operation' let them come down to any bus garage or railway depot and hear what the lads are saying.

This is the time for busmen, railwaymen, dockers and road haulage men to unite and tell these people once

and for all: what you call 'co-operation' and 'efficiency' we call work, and we expect to be paid a decent wage.

Now along comes Lord Hinchinbrooke to denounce the busmen and the railwaymen. Let them strike, he says, and we will have a General Election and be put back again.

That other celebrity Randolph Churchill accuses the Labour Party of forcing a General Election.

ANOTHER THINK COMING. If the Tories think they can turn people away from the Labour Party by misrepresenting the just fight of the busmen and the railwaymen, then they have another think coming.

The responsibility for a transport stoppage lies squarely on the shoulders of the Tory Government itself, by its attack on working-class living standards.

The Tories are up to their old trick of trying to split the workers. They hope to split the railwaymen. They will fail—just as they failed to split the busmen by playing the central London busmen off against the London country men.

The result has been that London busmen are more united than ever before. This is a fine example to all transport workers.

Busmen, railwaymen, dockers, road haulage men, petrol tanker drivers—all must unite in one common cause to tell the Tories and the employers: 'You get no more "co-operation" until you cough up!'

decision.

He made the point that always in the past the railways have been the first to suffer when there has been a shortage of materials. The excuse has always been that there was no money in the kitty.

I questioned him about the £38 million compensation being paid annually to the stockholders, and he said: 'Of course this question has been a sore point. £38 million being paid out on watered down stock—this is something which the next Labour Government should review.'

70 BRICKLAYERS SACKED AT GARSTON

SEVENTY bricklayers were sacked last Friday and once again pickets are outside the gas-works building site at Garston, near Liverpool.

'Don't steal our jobs,' and 'AUBTW members: don't start for Jenkins,' say the placards they carry. W. J. Jenkins are the contractors on the site.

Two bricklayers were suspended for four hours on Friday morning because they had been a few minutes late twice in one week.

The firm declared they were imposing the penalties in accordance with a 'bad timekeeping' agreement made between themselves and union officials some time ago.

The agreement was never ratified by the men on the site. Moreover the workers say it is ambiguous in one of its clauses and in any case is outdated, the starting times having been changed since it was drawn up.

When the firm refused to lift the suspensions and discuss the agreement last Friday morning all the bricklayers on the site decided to stay off the job with the suspended men. They were given two hours' notice soon after they returned to work.

The workers believe that this action by the employers is

a follow-up to an agreement between the firm and union officials which could only be aimed at choking job organization.

'SELL-OUT' ANGERS BURY NUFTO MEMBERS

By Our Industrial Correspondent

'A SELL-OUT' was how angry men and women from the firm of E. Moorhouse (Apex) Ltd, Bury (Lancs.), described the strike settlement imposed upon them by national officials of the National Union of Furniture Trade Operatives.

The officials were given a thoroughly rough passage at a strikers' meeting where, after a discussion with the management, they instructed two-thirds of the strikers to return to work last Monday.

For sixty-one men and women—those who originally came out on strike six weeks ago—there was no return. They were sacked.

These workers, who were employed in the bedding department, came out on strike on March 3 when fifteen workers were dismissed.

Called out the rest

The strike was made official and the union called out the rest of the factory.

On March 24 the management met NUFTO officials. The officials agreed that eight of the workers should be dismissed but the management then made a declaration that they did not intend to take back any of the original strikers.

Said Mr Shanley (assistant general secretary of NUFTO) at that time: 'We have no intention of allowing the firm to pick and choose whom they will take back. Therefore we are giving our utmost support to the strike' (Bury Times, March 26).

Bold words! And they coincided with the feelings of the strikers. Only one vote was cast for a return to work.

But while men and women shivered on picket and met with a ready response from local trade union organizations in Manchester and Bury, they looked in vain for that 'utmost support' from the union leadership.

I was informed that, right up to the present time, no national appeal has gone out to branches from the union's head office.

At the final meeting strikers condemned the union's failure officially to 'black' the delivery of raw materials to the firm.

New Dockers' Charter Would Unite Portworkers

By PETER KERRIGAN

A LITTLE over ten years after the introduction of the Dock Labour Scheme most dockers have regular work only as an exception.

The employers want what they call 'normal employer-employee relationships'. This means they want the docker to be less independent, to be bound by a more vicious 'discipline'.

It seems that the employers are hoping to create this 'normal employer-employee relationship' by the way they are using permanent gangs—weekly workers under regular contract to one firm.

The amalgamation of Smith Coggins and other smaller stevedoring firms in Liverpool has meant that when there has been a shortage of work in one area weekly workers have been sent to another sector where a firm in the amalgamation had a ship.

Dockers in that sector, who were 'daily' or 'casual' workers, have thus been left to sign on. On Merseyside deckhands are particular victims of this way of using weekly workers.

Like sea-gulls, grabbing crumbs

At present, Liverpool's dock labour force is approximately 15,000. It was the boast of a Liverpool employer that, given 5,000 to 6,000 weekly workers and mechanization, he would run the port more efficiently.

He was not, of course, concerned with the problem that would confront the 'casual' workers. These pool men would be like sea-gulls, grabbing a crumb here and there.

The solidarity we have hitherto known in dockland would be threatened. Weekly workers, having committed themselves by contract, would be forced to do any type of job for which they were required.

The casual worker seeking to become a weekly worker, plus the out-of-work fringe produced by redundancy, would be a constant threat which the employers would use against the permanent men.

Obviously the militant trade unionists would be isolated and made victims of economic strangulation.

Here let me ask a question. How many members of the 'blue union', the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers, and how many militant Transport and General Workers' Union members, would ever be offered permanency?

'Perms' and pool men together

The answer is obvious. It is obvious also that the position of the old men would become hopeless and the prospect of pensions for them would recede right into the background.

Of course most dockers would not oppose permanency if everyone on the register were made a weekly worker. But in the meantime militant dockers will fight to end those agreements which allow the employer to use his weekly workers at the expense of pool men's jobs.

Woodworkers and polishers who were instructed to return to work were united with bedding workers in criticizing the officials.

The only division was when two of the strikers declared they were tearing up their union cards. I was told that the majority were vehemently against this action and were for 'hammering the people who were responsible for this sell-out'.

'We're fighting mad' said one of the women. 'We'll try to make certain that other workers don't have the same experience as us.'

Permanent and pool men must fight together against the employers' attempts to undermine the conditions of all.

In 1945 a national delegate conference of docks unions adopted the 'Dockers Charter', which demanded a higher

This is the third and concluding article by Peter Kerrigan, Liverpool portworker and member of the editorial board of The Newsletter, in his series on the problems of the docks industry. Previous articles appeared on March 29 (pp. 96-7) and April 5 (pp. 103-4).

daily rate, the forty-hour week and pensions for the aged and infirm.

Arthur Deakin later denounced this charter as 'impracticable'. Yet in struggles since then these demands have been raised by dockers, together with the demand for one call a day.

We are still fighting for pensions to enable the old docker to retire. One call a day is a greater need than ever.

Miles from the docks

Today thousands of portworkers live in the new housing estates miles away from the docks. There is an expensive burden of fares on men who have to sign on twice a day.

Modern planning facilities could quite easily be used by the employers to place hiring requisitions on a daily basis.

An average of over 10,000 dockers are 'proving attendance' every week. With the shortage of jobs it is all the more necessary for us to fight for an increase in our fall-back guarantee, which is totally inadequate in view of today's living costs.

We need an increase in attendance money. At present a docker failing to get hired for a full week—thus signing on eleven times—will receive £6 1s. fall-back guarantee.

Favourite topic of discussion

Yet a man can work three and a half days, sign for the other four turns and still only draw a few shillings more than £6 1s. He only gets 6s. attendance money for the turns he signed on.

This anomaly is a favourite, though bitter, topic of discussion among dockers.

Now that 'bumping', or signing, is increasing there is general agreement that the 'attendance money' should be equal to the fall-back guarantee, so that dockers are not penalized for working.

A shorter working week with higher wages; an increase in fall-back guarantee; an increase in attendance money; one call a day; pensions for the aged and infirm: these are some of the demands for a new Dockers' Charter around which portworkers all over Britain could unite.

HUNDREDS MARCH FOR INDUSTRIAL ACTION

By MARTIN GRAINGER

OVER 10,000 people assembled in Trafalgar Square last Sunday to hear the leaders of the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress launch their campaign for stopping Britain's H-bomb tests.

A contingent of about 800 marched to the square from the South Bank under gold and scarlet Labour Party and trade union banners.

Another contingent that marched to the square had been assembled by the Action Committee of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and comprised many of the Aldermaston marchers. Their black and yellow posters proclaimed 'We go further' and 'No H-bombs for Britain'.

This group spread out, several deep, at the back of the square, a fringe of silent mistrust.

The Newsletter banner was the largest of the whole demonstration. It was raised in the middle of the square, opposite the plinth, in uncompromising manner.

It demanded industrial action, the blacking of both H-bomb and rocket sites. Its bold letters of scarlet and black were read by thousands.

There were some 50 posters carrying the same slogan. Their bearers took position on either side of the square, forming a gigantic letter V.



THE speakers trod gingerly, carefully avoiding all reference to loaded topics like unilateral disarmament and working class action against war.

Their 'fire' was like the patter of peashooters. What thunder they could have let loose if they had called on the millions of trade unionists to black all work on the bomb and the bases.

But the storm would have engulfed these men. No wonder The Times next day commended them for speaking 'responsibly, as leaders of an alternative Government should'!

Gaitskell spoke of ceasing the tests. He was preaching to the converted. His oratory was received with tepid politeness.

SHOULD WORKERS HELP THE OLD FOLK?

SOME delegates to a meeting of the Scottish Campaign Committee for Increasing Old Age Pensions in Glasgow last Sunday pressed for token stoppages in the factories in support of the old age pensioners' demands.

But they were opposed both by Communist Party delegates and by Right-wingers, who said this would create disunity.

Alex McLarty, from the Sterne's Shop Stewards' Committee, said petitions to the Government and appeals and deputations to Tory MPs had frittered away the movement's energies.

The Committee should start a referendum in the factories asking the workers if they would support a token stoppage, and speakers should be sent to address factory meetings.

It was agreed to hold a demonstration in Glasgow on June 7 as a send-off to delegates attending the Trafalgar Square demonstration on June 8 called by the National Federation of Old Age Pensions Associations.

MINERS BACK WEAVER'S RIGHT TO STAND

Lancashire militants who disagree with the politics of Mick Weaver, miners' union branch secretary and Communist Party candidate in the Wigan by-election, are nevertheless opposing threats by union leaders to invoke rule O against him.

This rule allows for expulsion from the National Union of Mineworkers if any other miner contests a seat against an NUM-sponsored candidate.

Bevan, more sensitive to the critical mood of a large part of the audience, sought easy applause where he could find it.

He made great play of summit talks. This delighted all those for whom this formula is the panacea to the threat of nuclear war.

It was, it would seem, only a question of the right kind of foreign secretary. All this of course committed the Labour rank and file to nothing. The 'rebel' concluded with his now customary calls for party unity.



THE meeting ended. The Labour leaders disappeared to their various preoccupations. Half the crowd remained in the square, restless and vaguely dissatisfied.

Several hundred drifted down Whitehall, Downing Street was cordoned off and heavily guarded. Police intimidation was massive . . . and proved successful.

A contingent formed up in the square behind The Newsletter's banners. We set forth, several hundred strong, for Hyde Park. Members of various Labour youth sections and of the Young Communist League joined our ranks, as did the supporters of Socialist Review and a number of young pacifists, abandoned by their leaders in the square.

Our procession marched down Piccadilly, shouting 'No work on H-bombs, no work on rocket bases', and attracting a very large crowd. Several thousand leaflets were distributed, criticizing the Labour leadership.

We turned up Park Lane, still several hundred strong. Mayfair is not used to Marxist marches. It must have been a late-afternoon nightmare to the 'top people' in the Dorchester and in Grosvenor House.

A final rally was held in Hyde Park, addressed among others by members of the Electrical Trades Union and by building worker Brian Behan.

Without exception all papers suppressed any mention of what had happened. A militant march went unrecorded. But thousands of Londoners saw us. Many will remember.

SCIENCE

ANOTHER WAY A WAR MIGHT START BY ACCIDENT

By Our Science Correspondent, J. H. Bradley

WE have heard a good deal about the dangers of atomic and hydrogen bombs exploding by accident. There is another way to start a war by mistake, and it is not unlikely either.

Every plane carries a radar identification set, to tell people which side it is on and not be shot at by mistake. Every time a radar pulse reaches the plane, it sends out an answering code signal.

Sometimes this identification-friend-or-foe (IFF) goes out of order. There have been reports of U.S. planes being shot down by automatic radar-controlled guns when this has happened.

In a political crisis there are plenty of trigger-happy radar sets waiting for such an event.

Now that the great defence is to consist of atomic-headed anti-aircraft missiles, the first mistake will be the last.

Even if the warhead has to be fired by signals from the ground, somebody has to act quickly once the automatic chain has started. And when there are no more interceptor planes,

anyone who sees a fast bomber going the wrong way will ask no questions.

Obviously both sides have done their utmost to copy the other's IFF; that is why radar operators have to check what they see against pre-arranged flight plans.

In a nuclear holocaust there are no pre-arranged flight plans.

FRANCE

THOREZ PUTS SOCIALISM IN COLD STORAGE

From Seymour Papert

PARIS

THE French communist Press is full of declarations that the party can be trusted not to embark on 'adventures'.

Several articles recall that it was Thorez who proclaimed in 1936 'it is necessary to know how to end a strike' and the Communist Party which in 1945 handed over arms and power to the 'national' government.

This is in line with the party leaders' view that the alternative is not reaction or socialism—but fascism or a 'national democratic policy'.

There are angry people in the country who are attracted by fascist ideas. But the 'fascist danger' is a fabrication. There is no sign that big capital feels itself in a crisis of sufficient magnitude to warrant the violent overthrow of the republic, or that it supports the fascist groups.

The Communist Party hopes to integrate itself into the government of France without overthrowing capitalism and to 'neutralize' France on the international scene.

It needs to find election slogans which will counteract the growing feeling that parliamentary proceedings are meaningless, without putting the existence of capitalism in question.

SOUTH AFRICA

APARTHEID WILL WIN IN THIS ELECTION

By Our Cape Town Correspondent

BASIC fact about last Wednesday's all-white election in South Africa is that both parties—the Nationalist Party and the United Party—are committed to a policy of segregation.

Only difference is that the United Party adds 'with justice' to the word.

There is little doubt that Strydom and his Nationalist Party will be returned to power—probably with an increased majority. The delimitation commission appointed by the Nationalist Government did its work so well that the Opposition would require 60 per cent. of the votes to obtain even a bare majority.

It is also likely that the Labour Party will lose its two remaining seats, thus reducing to nil the representation of a party which once held the balance of power in the House of Assembly.

This is the price the Labour Party pays for its political past. It considered itself the party of the white skilled workers, and in the twenties introduced the so-called 'civilized labour' policy, aimed at preserving the plum jobs in industry for the white workers.

Why did 'stay at home' fail?

This policy had its logical conclusion in the 'job apartheid' legislation introduced by the Nationalists last year.

Why has the three-day 'stay at home' by African workers, planned to coincide with the elections, been a flop?

Mainly because the leaders of the African National Congress, especially outside the Transvaal, are not resolute enough. The Africans themselves, given courageous leadership, are fully

prepared for militant action, and they showed this in the bus boycott two years ago.

The precautions taken by the Government, which has alerted police and troops, shows how effective such extra-parliamentary activity can be.

In all four constituencies where the 'Coloured' people voted last week, the United Party candidates were returned with large majorities.

This is a blow at the Congress of Democrats, a body which is strongly influenced by the former members of the outlawed Communist Party, who opposed the movement to boycott these segregationist elections, and who insisted on running 'progressive' candidates.

On the whole the supporters of the boycott movement can claim some success. Not only did nearly half the 'Coloured' people who were entitled to go on the election register refuse to do so, but of those who did only 44 per cent. went to the poll.

FOOTNOTE: A letter in the Cape Times said: 'The word "African" is communistically inspired and is intended to make the black man think he is the equal of the white man in the Union: a thing which is impossible for sound biological reasons.'

INDIA

THE 'SERIOUS REVISIONISTS' GET RID OF A HINDRANCE

ACCORDING to the Amritsar correspondent of The Times, the Indian Communist Party, at its special congress, has decided that socialism can be achieved in India by peaceful means and without resort to armed revolution.

'It would be easy to dismiss this decision as a tactical or propaganda exercise,' the correspondent wrote (April 14), 'but members insist that it represents a serious revision of Marxist-Leninist theory, "in keeping with the realities of the Indian scene," which will become an integral element of political education in the party.'

Officials had explained to him:

1) That India was the only Asian country where the Communist Party had been given the opportunity of free parliamentary expression; and

2) That 'the attachment of the Indian population to non-violence has made the party's revolutionary ideology more of a hindrance than a help'.

HOLLAND

4 MPs QUIT DUTCH COMMUNIST PARTY

The Communist Party group in the Dutch Parliament split this week when four of the seven communist MPs broke away to form a separate group.

The leader of the dissidents, Gortzak, said that they had been criticizing the authoritarian attitude of the party's general secretary, de Groot, for a long time.

De Groot was responsible for the refusal of the party Press to discuss his policy, and a stream of calumny and insinuations had been poured on the critics. They would continue the struggle for socialism as an independent parliamentary group.

LETTERS

LONDON FORUM COMMITTEE CLOSURES DOWN

THE affairs of the 'London Liaison Committee of Socialist Forums' have now been finally and satisfactorily wound up.

Some forum groups still function, either independently or in association with other political bodies, but with the closing down of the London Liaison Committee it may be said that the 'Forum Movement' has served its purpose and ceased to exist.

I wish personally to thank those groups and ex-committee members who have sent in donations to clear the debt incurred in running the conference in October, and all those who have helped me while I have been secretary.

I am sure we are all continuing, in our various ways, to work for the cause we believe in, refreshed and strengthened by our discussions in the Socialist Forums.

Richard Goss

BEHAN'S DIRECT LABOUR DEMAND IS GOOD

The article by Brian Behan [March 22, pp. 89-90] and the letter from Paul Simon [April 5, p. 105] deserve the maximum possible support.

The issue of the extension of direct labour has recently been raised both at the Lancashire and Cheshire regional annual conference of the Labour Party, and the annual conference of the Lancashire Federation of Trades Councils.

Resolutions moved on behalf of the Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party at both conferences were successful.

The next part of the campaign is to get them implemented. The resolutions propose not only direct labour schemes where none exist, and the extension of existing schemes, but also a regional building corporation.

The point being that in order to develop large housing projects, build schools, libraries and other public buildings, the larger authorities should co-operate and amalgamate resources with the smaller authorities. This can be done now, especially where Labour has control.

However, let there be no illusions about the proposals. They will be implemented only if backed by solid demands by the workers, especially those in the building industry.

By Tory-minded officials

There are too many in the local authorities, supposedly representing Labour, who accept the ideas passed down by Tory-minded officials, and who recoil from direct labour schemes with horror.

Some people who should know better make attacks on the workers instead of supporting demands for bringing the workers in by giving them genuine control of the scheme.

To combat active sabotage of direct labour departments there should be established workers' committees, which will exercise the actual control. All officials should be responsible to the workers' committees, which in turn should meet jointly with the actual members of the local authority.

The National Federation of Building Trades Operatives proposes the nationalization and public ownership of the industry (unfortunately conceived in a bureaucratic fashion). The slogan correctly is 'Building as a public service'.

I am convinced that even now active steps can be taken to take profit out of building and achieve greater security for the building operative by the establishment of regional building corporations.

Such corporations would be simple to integrate into national public ownership, and in the meantime go part of the way to combat Tory policy.

Government causing difficulties

However, do not let the demand for regional corporations be used to offset the extension of existing direct labour schemes; this is a priority and should be fought for in all localities.

The Government will do everything possible to stop such corporations being set up.

Already, through their policy of ending the negotiated tender for direct labour departments, they are causing serious difficulties. (They have never been known to oppose negotiated tender for private firms.)

Such corporations may require legislation, and this also will present a difficulty. All such difficulties can be overcome provided the demand is backed by militant action, and the maximum pressure is applied on the Labour authorities in particular in the localities.

Yes, let us support Behan's demand. It's a good one. Now let us carry the fight forward.

Liverpool, 15.

Eric S. Heffer

NUM'S OPEN-CAST PROPOSAL IS AN ERROR

I THINK Price Jones should reconsider his approval of the National Union of Mineworkers proposal to close open-cast coal workings. So should the NUM leaders. I suggest that the proposal is an error because:

1) It will alienate 10,000 open-cast workers and their families and thereby weaken working-class unity.

2) It would, if adopted, enlarge the pool of unemployment which the Tories are seeking to create and strengthen the hands of the employers in other industries.

3) The National Coal Board could choose to use these workers against the miners whenever it wanted.

4) These men are just as much entitled to a job as the rest of us and the suggestion, therefore, is wrong from the standpoint of trade union principle.

The NUM should tell the NCB that it will permit neither speed-up in the closing of the so-called uneconomic pits nor closing of open-cast working, to meet a crisis of the Tories' own making.

We should tell them to get rid of the surplus coal by the simple method of cutting the price, and not by the method of throwing coal-getters on the dole. If they refuse, the NUM leaders should take steps to ensure that the miners get rid of it for them.

Ballingry (Fife)

Lawrence Daly

PRICE JONES'S SUPPORT AMAZED ME

I WAS amazed to read Price Jones supporting the National Union of Mineworkers executive's retrograde proposals about the coal stocks situation.

The leaders of the NUM act as managers for capitalism, suggesting economies prior to the National Coal Board. Worst of all, they propose that workers on open-cast coal should be deprived of their jobs at a time when the recession is growing.

Of course open-cast coal is profitable (both for the NCB and the civil engineering firms on contract). This is because it is the twentieth century method of mining.

Millions of tons of large coal is produced, not just 'inferior coal' as Price Jones asserts. Open-cast compares favourably with the record of the pits in accidents, disease and working conditions.

What NUM should do

When the Board demand economies, claiming 'over-production', the union should offer to cut working hours when satisfactory guaranteed fixed wages are agreed for the miners involved.

The NUM should also demand that the NCB work open-cast as a nationalized unit, i.e., by 'direct labour', with the NUM as the open-cast workers' union.

Remembering that the employers always try to divide the working class, then our proposals must always resist this and lead towards uniting the workers.

Ashington (Northumberland)

Jim Johnson

Constant Reader | Our 'Public' Schools

GEORGE DARLING'S remarks about the public schools at the Co-operative Party conference seem to have got under Tory skins—especially his statement that 'many of them dishonestly use the endowments given to them in the past for purposes of public education'.

How some of the public schools, originally founded to provide free education for poor boys of their neighbourhoods, got rid of their responsibilities and became exclusive caste institutions without local roots (but retaining local endowments) is quite a story.

Take Harrow, for instance. The founder's statutes said nothing about the age of entry.

So the lower forms were gradually done away with, until the Fourth came to be the form which a boy entered on joining the school.

Boys were not admitted before the age of thirteen, whereas formerly the age had been seven—and an entrance examination had to be passed which assumed previous instruction in the classics at a preparatory school.

Then a rule was introduced forbidding boys to ride to school, either on horseback or in any kind of vehicle. Harrow parish is widespread and the school stands on top of a steepish hill.

Restricting the radius

This rule was followed by another requiring all boys to attend a roll-call immediately after the midday meal.

These two rules together in effect restricted the radius within which boys could live while attending the school to about half a mile, and were described by the Headmaster on one occasion as 'our great security'.

Shortly after the Second Reform Act (1867), which created a substantial working-class electorate, a Public School Act formally abolished all surviving local popular rights in connexion with these schools.

Like the 'reform' of the civil service undertaken in the same period, this was a conscious reaction of the ruling class to the new political circumstances.

As Lord Houghton put it, arguing the vital necessity of special ruling-class schools: 'It is not only a question of the moral and intellectual character of the higher classes: it is a question, I may say, of their political supremacy'.

In praise of Rothstein

'The Nationalization of Women: Natural History of a Lie' was the title of a pamphlet which Andrew Rothstein wrote in 1920 under the pseudonym 'C. M. Roebuck'.

A splendid piece of debunking of anti-Bolshevik propa-

ganda, it was recalled to my mind by Rothstein's excellent reply, in World News of April 5, to an attempt in the Sunday Times to revive the old slander about Lenin having been a German agent in 1917.

Alas, this also makes one remember that during the slander campaign on similar lines waged in 1937-40 against Lenin's greatest colleague, a campaign which ended in his murder, Rothstein omitted to bring out from his store of learning something which Lenin wrote in Pravda of April 16, 1917:

'Can one even for a moment believe the trustworthiness of the statement that Trotsky, the chairman of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies in St Petersburg in 1905—a revolutionary who has sacrificed years to disinterested service to the revolution—that this man has anything to do with a scheme subsidized by the German Government? This is a patent, unheard-of and malicious slander of a revolutionary'.

New Chiangs for old

According to a letter in the same issue of World News 'the immediate issue in most "colonial countries" is the development of capitalism' and 'the main enemy of this development is monopoly finance-capitalism, imperialism'.

So what the colonial workers and peasants are fighting for is freedom of capitalist development, and what mainly threatens this is not their fight but imperialism!

How this takes one back to 1927 and the derailing of the Chinese revolution. How different the last thirty years might have been but for the dominance of this idea of the colonial revolution.

What the next thirty years will be like depends very much on whether it is shaken off in time.

Labour and public opinion

Do recent Gallup polls show that Labour is already 'ahead of public opinion' in calling for suspension of H-bomb tests (less than half are said to favour this), and would be 'miles ahead' if it were to advocate unilateral nuclear disarmament (which only a quarter are said to be for)? And if so, so what?

Even if the figures are sound, isn't there a fallacy here? Public opinion is made, and nowadays one of the biggest agencies making it is—the Labour Party.

Many a citizen is influenced in deciding what he thinks about public questions, not only by what the Archbishop of Canterbury says, or Lord Beaverbrook, or Gilbert Harding, but also by Nye Bevan.

There is danger in these matters of trying 'realistically' to follow one's own shadow.

BRIAN PEARCE

BUDGET (Continued from front page)

wages and higher unemployment was derived from.

The amending Bill to the Distribution of Industry Act, authorized by the Treasury to help deal with the pockets of high unemployment in Northern Ireland and parts of Wales and Scotland, is just so much window dressing.

So are the few minor concessions made to other sections than big business.

Reliefs to big business

In a full year tax reliefs amounting to £108,250,000 have been given, largely to big business—either in initial allowances on plant and machinery or in the profits tax amendment.

Plus concessions on estate duty, stamp duty, entertainments duty, wines etc.

Only concession to the rest of the community is in purchase tax, and it is shared by all.

But the thing to hammer home in the workshops about this Budget is the continued drive against wages, the deliberate fostering of unemployment. These are the things that matter, and the Labour movement must expose them clearly to everyone.

The busmen and the railwaymen are up against the Tory Government. Constituency Labour Parties should now see plainly that it is the Government that is using political means to achieve industrial aims.

Amory's budget brings politics into the heart of the coming strike struggles.