

THE NEWSLETTER

180 Clapham High Street, London, S.W. 4.

Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper

Vol. 2, No. 56

Sixpence

June 7, 1958

SETTLERS NOT SATISFIED WITH DE GAULLE

From Our Paris Correspondent, SEYMOUR PAPERT

THERE are two current interpretations of the installation of the de Gaulle Government: a further capitulation to the Algerian settlers OR the attempt of French capitalism to break free of the blackmail of Algiers.

If, as I believe, the second analysis is true, the settlers who clamoured for de Gaulle are likely to get a rude shock when the General gets going. Indeed, the Committees of Public Safety are already showing signs of apprehension about de Gaulle's first policy statements.

The de Gaulle Government looks as if it will be stable for some time. Big capital is solidly behind it. Mollet, and with him a sizable section of the trade union bureaucracy, sees it as the least of all possible evils.

The brass hats' loyalty

The police and other agents of State power are delighted to have a government that will be firmer and more decisive than the parade of wobbly coalitions which preceded it.

Finally, even if de Gaulle antagonizes the settlers he is likely to be able to keep the loyalty of the brass hats, to whom he holds out the offer of integration into a strong and bureaucratized French State.

Can the Communist Party act against this Holy Alliance? And does it really want to?

Every week makes it increasingly clear that the party cannot move the workers, at any rate on its present slogans, and has difficulty in rallying even its own members.

The strike call of last Tuesday week was, frankly, a flop, and on Sunday the party could not mobilize more than 20,000 despite its paper membership in the hundreds of thousands.

Is the Kremlin friendly?

A point for thought is whether the Kremlin is not favourably disposed to de Gaulle, who is inclined to be 'neutralist' and anti-American.

The Russian Press does not echo Humanité's identification of de Gaulle with fascism, and Moscow very quickly denied the report that Voroshilov had stated at a Press conference in Finland that de Gaulle would 'do more harm than good'.

The most interesting aspect of the mass march last Wednesday week was the ready spread of slogans not at all to the liking of the organizers (a mixed bunch of parliamentary groups) or even of the Communist Party activists who tried to suppress slogans such as 'Peace in Algeria'.

On the other hand it must be emphasized that the demonstration gave no reason to suppose that the workers are ready to act militantly and massively.

My article in The Newsletter of May 24 risked giving the impression that the workers were ready to act against de Gaulle but for the lack of leadership.

This oversimplification was the unfortunate result of the condensation of the last paragraph.

(Continued on back page)

Development Fund

THE success of the The Newsletter's Strike Bulletin, which now has a circulation of over 20,000 copies a week, has led many readers, new and old, to ask: 'Is it possible, when the present struggle is over, to continue the publication of some form of workers' weekly newspaper?'

And it is clear that a rank-and-file weekly paper IS needed, in which militants can exchange views and experiences, in which the problems and struggles of the different sections can be reported—and related to the overall working-class fight.

Such a paper would help to build a united and effective rank-and-file movement. Such a paper would help the workers to meet and beat back the employers' offensive.

The editorial board of The Newsletter wants very much to produce a bigger and better paper. It wants to make The Newsletter a real workers' weekly which, while maintaining all the familiar features that have become an established part of this paper, would pay particular attention to the industrial scene.



THE BIG OBSTACLE. One big obstacle stands in the way—lack of money. The production of the Strike Bulletin supplement since May 1, with its more varied types and more ambitious format, has been a tremendous strain on our resources.

To produce a four-page weekly paper with the same format as the Strike Bulletin would be beyond our present means. Therefore, as is traditional in the British Labour movement, we are asking our readers for help.

In the past year we have avoided doing this as far as possible. We have preferred to produce the paper in an economical form, even at the cost of attractiveness. But a small-sized paper cannot match up to our new tasks.

So we are now launching a Newsletter Development Fund, with the aim of improving the appearance and circulation of the paper.



NEED TO EXPAND. We earnestly appeal to all our friends and supporters: to those who have been regular subscribers since the first issue; to those who have only recently begun to read our paper.

There is a job to be done. We believe we can do the job, but to do it we urgently need to expand. To expand we need YOUR help, to the tune of £50 a month.

With this sum we shall be able to go forward, increase our circulation and influence, and serve the working-class struggle more adequately.

We need immediate donations, as much as you can possibly spare. Above all we need regular weekly or monthly guarantees. Please dig deep.

HOW RADIATION AFFECTS THE HUMAN BODY

By Our Medical Correspondent

I. Immediate Effects

THE immediate consequences of an atomic explosion were well illustrated, on a *small* scale, by what happened at Hiroshima and at Nagasaki.

Imagine the devastation increased many hundredfold and you will get some idea of the damage that would follow the detonation of a modern thermonuclear device.

Hundreds of thousands will be killed outright. Blast injury, flash blindness and severe radiation burns will affect the majority surviving in the immediate neighbourhood.

Over a considerably wider area thousands will develop radiation sickness. Their skin will begin to itch and to take on a darker hue. Blisters may form on it.

Their hair will begin to fall out. They will become increasingly weak and will vomit repeatedly. Some will become jaundiced or develop diarrhoea.

A number will recover but in others the disease will run a prolonged course. Many will die of it.

II. Long-term Effects

They are less dramatic than the immediate effects but none the less lethal. They are due to the slow, cumulative influence of radio-active fall-out.

These latter effects are likely to affect people thousands of miles away from the site of the explosion, as well as those surviving the explosion itself.

From a medical point of view, the most important fission products are radiocaesium (caesium 137) and radio-active strontium isotopes (mainly strontium 90 and strontium 89).

These substances had never been found on earth until after the first atomic explosions.

III. Radiocaesium

Radiocaesium, absorbed through milk and vegetable matter, easily enters the human body. It is found mainly in muscle. It emits both beta rays, of low penetrating power, and the far more penetrating gamma rays.

The former type of radiation may cause cancer of any organ. The proportion of cases in which this will occur is not known with any certainty and there is much controversy concerning 'permissible' doses.

The penetrating gamma rays can act at a greater distance. Thus if they are emitted anywhere in the body

This article continues our series designed to give workers as simply and clearly as possible the facts about the scientific, military, medical and political aspects of the hydrogen bomb.

there is a risk of the gonads (sex glands) being affected.

Irradiation of gonads, even in small doses, is known to cause mutations. It is not known how often this occurs in man. Larger doses cause sterility.

The overwhelming majority of mutations are harmful ones.

Feeble-mindedness, malformations of the fingers, palate, spine and of various internal organs, and various diseases of the blood and of the body chemistry may arise in this way.

Provided it is not a lethal one, a mutation may be transmitted for hundreds of generations.

(To be concluded)

LABOUR**MARXISTS MUST LEAD BREAK-THROUGH TO SOCIALISM**

By Peter Cadogan

It is most important that the Marxist 'Left' define its political policy clearly and determine its methods of translating that policy into action.

The Labour movement is floundering in political disunity and leaderlessness. The state of political organization is pathetic.

Yet at the same time the London busmen are demonstrating historic militancy and the whole trade union movement is nearing a show-down with a government that has a cold-blooded determination to 'make the workers pay'.

The work of rescuing Marxism from the Stalin débâcle, well and truly begun in Britain, must be intensified to the utmost.

Our policy must start from our attitude towards the main enemy: Anglo-American capitalism. We must distinguish the point of attack and make clear the alternative policy to be pursued.

NATO is the linchpin

NATO is the political linchpin. Withdraw and the flood-gates of change are open.

It is quite apparent from consideration of the internal conflicts of the Labour Party that Gaitskell-Bevan reformism rests upon NATO.

This should occasion no surprise. Gaitskell does not conceal it and Bevan in his book 'In Place of Fear', written years ago, explicitly stated his ultimate reliance not upon socialism but upon American Point Four policy.

His support for NATO is therefore inevitable, although he is always capable of a tactical move to the left.

It is for us to reject NATO explicitly and unconditionally and to call upon the Labour movement to do likewise. And with the rejection of NATO-Labourism must go the rejection of the leadership of those who support it. We must be quite clear. Gaitskell, Bevan and Co. must go.

To those who say that this is to preach disunity in the face of an impending general election we must reply that unity without a policy is not unity at all.

If we were to win a general election in our present state the movement would not be advanced but set back by the inevitable failure of a pointless Labour government.

A militant socialist policy

We must see beyond short-term victories and vote-catching to what is really going on. We need not be worried about the reaction of the electorate. They saw through reformism years ago and in consequence today they are quite cynical about the Labour Party.

That cynicism will only be changed by a militant socialist policy and a whole new generation of leaders who are true to principle and who are seen not to be climbing on the band-wagon. Marxism has to provide the nucleus of that generation.

But to come back to NATO. Breaking with it will let all hell loose. We must know what to do next.

American capitalism will undoubtedly turn vicious and attempt to bring Britain to heel by any and every method. We cannot even rule out force although world opinion, and our own strong arm, are pretty good insurances against that.

Certainly every financial and economic dirty trick will be exploited to the utmost and the war of nerves will be acute.

Breaking with NATO and setting Britain on her own independent road will require internal action as drastic as the 'about turn' in foreign policy. In fact drastic internal action will be necessary to make the external action possible.

A Labour government must take a firm and unbreakable hold on all the major resources and reserves of British capitalism.

Socialist control must be immediately established over the banks, insurance companies, finance corporations, foreign investments, major industries, gold reserves and foreign trade. No flight of capital must be permitted, and no panic.

All barriers to East-West trade must go down immediately and we must invite an immediate increase in East-West trade.

Level heads must be kept in Britain in face of hysterics from the old ruling class and the period of transition borne with the minimum of disorganization.

Nationalization in new light

The fact that we may have to tighten our belts temporarily will be gladly accepted once people realize that we mean business and know where we are going. Nationalization will appeal in a new light and with a new urgency.

The break with NATO is the key to socialism in Britain, but it is only the key. The whole edifice requires to be built.

Throughout the world now the revolt against American capitalist domination is rising rapidly.

Britain can and must start the next great new wave of socialism. This will initiate a new phase of world history in which socialism is decisively in the ascendant and capitalism and war finally on the way out.

The Labour movement must call upon the American people to try to understand what we are doing and to help us.

The central question of NATO comes as the point of departure is reached in the campaign against nuclear weapons. The campaign has made it clear that the parting of the ways is not over the weapons themselves but over the alliance equipped with them.

For thirty years British capitalism has laboured protestingly under the almighty dollar. But British capitalists have done little more than protest!

They have utterly failed

Only socialism can attack and replace yet for those thirty years socialism in Britain has been led, as it still is, by men who would sooner put their trust in the dollar than in the British people. They must go, and their rotten system with them.

Twice in recent times British capitalists have acted against the advice of their United States rivals and masters, first in producing the atom bombs and second on the disgrace of Suez.

On both counts the British people have been made to pay and to suffer. Big business in Britain and their political puppets in the Tory Party have utterly failed the British people. They will not abdicate. They must be given the push.

To secure the break with American capitalism, save world peace and build a great creative socialist future for ourselves we need a major reorganization of the Labour movement.

The utterly artificial division between the political and industrial wings has to go. Yet at the same time the trade unions must maintain their complete independence.

The change can best be secured by fundamentally reforming the organization of the Labour Party. To base a working-class political party mainly on wards and constituencies is absurd.

Branches in every factory

The strength of the working class, as the Tories well know, is in the factories and places of work. These are the natural and necessary bases of political organization.

Every place of work of any size or social significance should have its own Labour Party branch and the constitution of the party either amended or interpreted to make this possible.

There is in Britain a vast reserve of Left-wing leadership. About a quarter of a million men and women, many still young, have been in the Left wing of the Labour Party or

in the Communist Party and have given up the struggle as a bad job.

It was a bad job! But the situation has changed. The American empire is toppling and the Labour Right is compromised at the very time when by virtue of the cleansing socialist crisis of 1956-57 it is now possible for socialists to rediscover Marxism and work out an entirely new line in policy and action.

We cannot afford to fail, but we can afford the enthusiasm of great convictions.

PORTUGAL

THEY DEFY SALAZAR'S MACHINE-GUNS

From a Special Correspondent

VOTING will take place tomorrow in Portugal's first contested presidential election since fascism came to power thirty-two years ago.

General Humberto Delgado, former representative of Portugal at NATO and a one-time supporter of Prime Minister Salazar, is opposing the government nominee, Rear-Admiral Americo Tomaz. Delgado, a Catholic who as a young officer took part in the military putsch of May 28, 1926, has now broken completely with Salazar.

His platform of political amnesty, restoration to their posts of persons victimized by Salazar, and preparation for free general elections, has aroused tremendous enthusiasm throughout the country. The second Opposition candidate, Dr Arlindo Vicente, has stood down.

The entire Opposition, previously a disunited and disorganized force functioning in conditions of fierce repression, is now supporting Delgado.

Those who recognize Delgado's conservative social outlook, friendship for NATO and the American alliance, are nevertheless willing to give him their support for the presidency in order to restore to the country basic bourgeois-democratic rights which have been bitterly suppressed for decades.

Half population disfranchised

There are no illusions, however, among any of the Opposition as to the outcome of the elections. Complicated and class-based restrictions on the right to vote, including education and property qualifications, already disfranchise half the adult population.

Those who are qualified in law to vote have the greatest difficulty in getting on to the electoral lists. Delgado's supporters have already complained to the retiring President that they have been prohibited from even reading the lists in the majority of places.

Picked fascists and strong-arm men will man the polling-booths and the Opposition is to have no scrutineers present.

Portugal, acclaimed by the Tories as England's oldest ally, is also the oldest fascist régime in Europe. Workers are totally without rights; strikes are illegal and any form of organization other than the fascist corporative syndicates is banned.

The highest infant mortality rate in Europe, disease and poverty contrast sharply with an ostentation and luxury for the rich seen nowhere else in Europe.

Sixth greatest fortune

With one of the lowest rates of productivity in Europe, the exploitation of the Portuguese workers and peasants can be measured by the fact that when one of the directors of the country's biggest monopoly, the CUF, died recently, he left the sixth greatest fortune in the world.

These riches of course do not come only from European Portugal. The first empire of modern times, whose merchant capitalists paved the way for the development of capitalism and imperialism throughout the world, still hangs on grimly to its over-sea colonies.

Oppression of the colonial people under Salazar surpasses even the brutality practised at home.

Every year thousands of Negro workers are sold at a head tax to the Government of South Africa to work in the mines. These indentured labourers die like flies and few if any return home.

Oppression may follow

The overwhelming majority of Africans in the Portuguese colonies, namely those who do not qualify by education, European dress and the adoption of the Catholic religion to be classed as 'assimilated', have virtually no civil or human rights. Flogging and the utmost degradation are the order of the day on the great sugar, coffee and cocoa plantations which send home to Europe the wealth from Portuguese Africa.

General Delgado does not appear to have committed himself in any of his anti-Salazar speeches to any new policy

for the colonies. Nor has he gone beyond the most minimal demands for reforms in Portugal.

Nevertheless news from Portugal makes it clear that a change has taken place in the mood of the country.

Fear of the brutal government apparatus has disappeared and it is doubtful, whatever the measures taken after June 8, that the country will return to the state of apathy and intimidation that has been prevalent since the end of the war.

If these farcical elections return the government candidate the Opposition believes, however, that a massive wave of repression will follow. The Government has already demonstrated its attitude by machine-gunning Delgado supporters in several towns throughout the country.

It is up to the Labour movement in Britain to make its voice heard in protest and to expose the Tory Government's support for Salazar.

Constant Reader | Dictatorship and Class Forces

At the Newsletter meeting in Hyde Park on Sunday there were two specially active hecklers. One would shout: 'Up de Gaulle! Algeria is French!'. The other's line was 'Up de Gaulle! He's no fascist—he's for a free Algeria.'

The legend that de Gaulle stands for justice for the Algerians reminds one of the experience Poland went through with Pilsudski.

Before he took power in May 1926, Marshal Pilsudski cultivated the reputation of being, among other things, the friend of the national minorities of Poland, with a plan for a federal constitution and so forth.

The extreme Right took it quite seriously: so much so that when a political associate of the Marshal was elected President, owing his majority to the votes of Ukrainians and suchlike, they shot him.

A harsher master

Nevertheless, once the Marshal had seized power (with the backing, be it mentioned, of both the Socialist and Communist Parties) all that went by the board.

Not only the workers and peasants but also the national minorities found themselves under a harsher master than ever before, and Polish jingoism flourished.

World-wide horror was caused by the savage 'pacification' of western Ukraine in 1930.

It is not a question of the sincerity of General de Gaulle, any more than it was of Marshal Pilsudski's. What decides these cases is the class forces involved.

Dictators are admitted to power in order to rule on behalf of the biggest landed, banking and industrial interests; and to these they must subordinate any personal whims where important property questions are involved.

A different view of the likely developments regarding Algeria under de Gaulle is given by Seymour Papert elsewhere in this issue.



Sympathetic strikes

I RECENTLY attended a meeting where an elderly trade union official and councillor who should have known better assured us that sympathetic strikes were 'still illegal'.

The 1927 Trade Disputes Act had been repealed only in part, he said, and the section prohibiting sympathetic strikes remained on the statute-book.

As this may not be an isolated case of misinformation, perhaps it will be worth while to recall what the facts are.

Even the 1927 Act illegalized sympathetic strikes only if, at the same time, they were designed to 'coerce the Govern-

ment'. And that Act was repealed lock, stock and barrel in 1946.

Let me quote the words of Hartley Shawcross, moving the second reading of the repeal Bill:

'The first section of the 1927 Act, which prohibited certain kinds of strikes, was so much dead wood on the statute-book, and the sooner they got rid of it the clearer the law would be, and the more certain to deal with such strike situations as might arise.

'Certainly the 1927 Act would be powerless to prevent a general strike that was supported by the trade unions and a large part of the public, and respect for the law might be undermined by keeping on the statute-book a law which was manifestly unenforceable and which might cause resentment in a large section of the population.'



Anti-nuclear clerics

There has been much comment of different kinds about the active participation of a number of clergymen in the anti-H-bomb campaign.

In this connexion it is interesting to recall what Trotsky wrote in an article of 1935 entitled 'If America Should Go Communist':

'Even the intensity and devotion of religious sentiment in America will not prove an obstacle to the revolution . . . Besides, it should not be forgotten that the Gospels themselves contain some pretty explosive aphorisms.'

BRIAN PEARCE

SEYMOUR PAPERT (Continued from front page)

In fact the relative passivity of the workers has deeper causes. French workers have more than once taken action without any more leadership than they have at present—for example, the spontaneous movements against conscription for the Algerian war.

Confusion, demoralization and bitterness

But in the situation of the last few weeks no action would have been meaningful unless it went beyond an anti-Gaullist struggle—for no one was ready to fight seriously to defend the Pflimlin régime.

Thus opposition to de Gaulle was not enough to produce a movement of the workers (with or without leadership).

And the situation is not mature enough to permit a conscious revolutionary outlook in the face of the confusion, demoralization and bitterness produced by the treachery of the traditional parties.

Printed by Plough Press Ltd. (T.U.), r.o. 180 Clapham High St., London.
Published by Peter Fryer, 180, Clapham High St., London, S.W.4.