

# THE NEWSLETTER

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## GARSTON SCANDAL: TGWU'S PRIVATE WAR ON BLUES

By Our Industrial Correspondent

**A** DOCUMENT has come into the possession of The Newsletter which exposes the whole dirty scandal of the recent Garston strike. It shows that this strike, which deprived five coal trimmers of their livelihood, was deliberately engineered by Transport and General Workers' Union officials in order to smash the 'blue' union in the port.

It establishes that the TGWU paid the men grants equal to dispute benefit after the 'unofficial' stoppage was over. And it reveals the private belief of TGWU bosses that the strike 'has done an immense amount of good'.

This document is the report of the TGWU local officer responsible for Garston to his regional secretary, and the record of the decision taken on the report.

We are publishing it in full because it proves that the TGWU leaders are more interested in prosecuting their

### KING STREET ADOPTS 'GET TOUGH' LINE

News from Kent, Leeds and London makes it clear that the leaders of the Communist Party have decided to get tough with the opposition inside the party and to put into effect the proscription against party members' associating with the Socialist Forum movement.

In BROMLEY (Kent) three members have been expelled and two suspended; two members of the Kent district committee have resigned in protest.

In LEEDS the area committee has recommended to the Yorkshire district committee (which meets on November 24) the expulsion of three members.

In LONDON the district secretary John Mahon has asked Brian Pearce for a statement about his activity in the Forum movement. Pearce has announced that he does not intend to re-register at the end of the year.

### EX-FBU OFFICIAL EXPELLED IN KENT

By a Communist Party Member

SEVERAL months ago Bromley (Kent) branch of the Communist Party sent to the Kent district committee a resolution deploring the decisions on inner-party democracy at the Easter Congress.

The district committee defeated the resolution, so the branch authorized Cynthia Taylor to send out notices calling a meeting of members interested in a democratic Communist Party.

The district secretary, Gil Bradbury, put a notice in the Daily Worker cancelling the meeting.

The branch decided to ask Brian Behan and Pat Dooley to attend a branch meeting and answer questions on why they left the party. The district committee said that if this decision was carried out it would recommend the dissolution of the branch.

On November 3 eight members were interviewed at the district office in ones and twos. John Taylor, Ivor Felton and Mark Bass were expelled, and May Bass and Solly Blomberg were suspended.

Felton has been a member of the Communist Party for 25 years. Bass was a full-time official of the Fire Brigades Union, a position he was forced to resign after he had sent a lengthy memorandum to Harry Pollitt on the affairs of the party group in that union—Pollitt's reaction being that it was 'wrong to put these things in writing'.

No coherent explanation for the disciplinary action has been obtained from any member of the district committee, two of whom resigned in protest on the spot.

### THE WITCH-HUNT SPREADS IN LEEDS

By a Correspondent

FOLLOWING disciplinary action against four Leeds communists who invited Brian Behan to speak on the TUC, the area committee has extended the witch-hunt to five more.

One is a member of the Yorkshire district committee, two of the Leeds area committee. Their 'crime' was to sign  
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### STRANGE CHARGES—STRANGE JUDGE

The indictment against the four accused [Tibor Dery, Zoltan Zelk, Tibor Tardas and Gyula Hay] contains five charges:

(1) Since 1954 leading the resistance to the decisions of the central leadership of the Hungarian Workers' Party and of the first secretary of the party.

(2) Inspiring subversive activity in the Petöfi circle after the Moscow 20th Congress.

(3) In 1956 transforming the Writers' Association from a socialist body into a multi-party opposition group.

(4) After October 23 last year (the date of the first risings) making contributions to 'counter-revolutionary' Press and radio.

(5) After November 4 last year (when the Russians attacked Budapest) inciting workers' councils to resist the Kadar Government.

It is learnt that the presiding judge, Mr Ferenc Vida, who is trying defendants who have been party members for decades, joined the Communist Party only last August . . .

(The Times, November 7)

private war against the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers than they are in resisting the employers' offensive.

The downgrading of the five Garston coal trimmers, which means substantial loss of pay for them, has been endorsed by the Appeals Tribunal, on which sit representatives of the employers and of the TGWU. The 'blue' union and its members can expect no justice or fair play on the docks.

The TGWU has a long record of opposition to 'unofficial' strikes. Its leader Frank Cousins called for official procedure after the recent London stoppage.

Yet here is an 'unofficial' strike which the TGWU functionaries gloat over, because it suits their book to try to squeeze a militant union off the waterfront. The interests of the rank and file are not taken into account.

From one end of the Liverpool docks to the other there are thousands of unorganized men. If the TGWU bosses were really interested in ending non-unionism they would accept

(Continued overleaf)

## COMMENTARY

### THE EMPLOYERS' CHALLENGE

IT is not often that a book about a strike is reviewed on the day it is published in leading articles in both *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*. This in itself would be enough to draw the attention of serious workers to *The Employers' Challenge* by H. A. Clegg and Rex Adams (Basil Blackwell, 21s.). It is a study of the shipbuilding and engineering strikes last March, and it makes clear what the real motive of the employers was. Despite their cries about the 'plight of the economy' their main concern, according to Clegg and Adams, was neither resistance to the workers' wage claims nor the desire to keep down shipyard costs. Their main concern was power. They wanted to weaken the power of the trade unions and increase their own power. The authors hold that the employers thought they had an ally in the Government, but it let them down.

It is useful to have confirmation from an impartial source of the belief of many militants that the employers are hell-bent on 'disciplining' the unions. But there is a big difference between March 1957 and November 1957. The role and attitude of the Government have changed. It no longer hesitates to come out openly on the side of the class it represents. It no longer hesitates to wage an offensive against the workers and their organization. War has been declared. 'The employers lost a battle, but they have not yet lost the war,' threatens *The Times*. The defence of wages, conditions and trade union rights is now a burning question for every militant. Next week's issue of THE NEWSLETTER will be largely devoted to the economic situation and the prospects facing the workers in various industries.

### BETWEEN TWO FIRES

HOW much confidence have the leaders of the Communist Party in their ideas? Very little, to judge by the fear they are showing of their members' discussing with ex-members and other socialists in the Forum movement. The witch-hunt is now on inside the Communist Party, and bell, book and candle are being wielded against Demon Dissent. (Meanwhile the *Daily Worker* reports 'one of our deadliest deficits' as the Fighting Fund result for October). Who is 'anti-party'—the rank-and-file member who wants unfettered discussion with other socialists or the King Street bureaucrat who wants a party of rigid conformists, no matter how small or how impotent it may be, and who, rightly so critical of the Transport House list of 'proscribed organizations', now apparently has a list of his own?

At the same time as King Street anathematizes the Forum movement it is regrettable that some of the leaders of that movement in London are assailing it for its determination to remain a *forum* movement and not become the instrument of any one point of view. The secretary and chairman of the London Liaison Committee have announced their intention of resigning their duties because they do not agree with the decisions of the recent conference. The majority of Forum participants, however, as Beatrix Tudor-Hart's letter on another page shows, understand by 'forum' a place of discussion; this is something that neither the Stalinists nor the 'Left-wing Fabians' seem able to grasp.

### GARSTON (Continued from front page)

NASD proposals for a joint recruitment campaign. But they have rejected these proposals.

Arthur Deakin is dead, but Deakinism certainly lives on. At Millwall and West India docks, London, there is currently an overtime ban, which springs from the same conditions which gave rise to the 1954 strike. TGWU officials are opposing this ban. It's labelled 'unofficial'.

Militant portworkers in London are launching a protest against these officials' attitude, and this protest is bound to gain widespread support.

More and more dockers are sick of these officials' weakening the unity of portworkers and playing into the employers' hands.

Here is the text of the TGWU document:

#### 12. Garston. British Transport Commission (Docks Group)

A dispute took place recently at the Garston Docks, extending over a period of four-and-a-half days, involving the Members of the Union employed as coal trimmers and tippers.

Briefly, the circumstances surrounding the stoppage (as contained in a report submitted by the Local Officer concerned to the Regional Secretary) are as follows:

'On Monday, 23rd Sept. 1957, I gave notice to Mr Whatling, Manager for the B.T.C. at Garston Docks, that as and from Monday, 30th September, our members in the coal trimming and tipping grades would no longer work with men who were not members of the Transport and General Workers' Union. Clause 12 of the Coaltrimming Agreement of the 11th January, 1927, states quite definitely that all coaltrimmers are to be members of the Transport and General Workers' Union, so that our members were merely asking for their agreement to be carried out.

'On Friday, 27th September, Mr Whatling agreed to instruct his foremen not to engage any men for coal that were not members of the T.&G.W.U., but on Saturday, 28th September, he cancelled this arrangement. On Monday, 30th September, 3 men were engaged on the 8 a.m. stand and 6 men on the 6 p.m. stand and so our members proceeded to their jobs, stood by, and informed the manager that they would start work immediately he withdrew the Blue Union or non-Union labour.

'However it was not until 11.15 a.m. on Friday morning, 4th October, that an agreement was arrived at to give all the men who were not members of this organization a week's notice, to commence on Monday, 7th October, to get into the Union or get off the coaltrimming pool. Three men came back, but 6 did not and so they were taken out of the pool and sent to work on the quay.

'There is no doubt that although this was an unofficial strike it has done an immense amount of good, and we can now report that the coal trimmers, coal tippers, crane-drivers and shore gang are now 100% members of the Union, and we are also gaining members from other grades on the dock.'

Having regard to the whole of the circumstances and the view expressed by the Regional Secretary that there is no doubt that this and other action, recently taken on the Garston Docks, has been of material assistance insofar as the position on the Liverpool Docks is concerned, sanction has been given for the payment to the Members of the Union involved of grants equal to dispute benefit, covering the period of the stoppage.

### NHS CLERKS' PAY FREEZE A TEST CASE

By a National Health Service Clerk

By long established practice Whitley Councils have regulated the wages and salaries of Government employees. Their recommendations have invariably been accepted by the Government or Ministry concerned.

Now the Minister of Health has made it quite clear that he regards the five Government representatives on the Whitley Council, who opposed the three per cent. increase to National Health Service clerks, as the only official body.

He regards the other thirteen members, who represent the

Hospital Boards and NHS Executive Council, as an unofficial point of view.

Mr Walker-Smith 'sympathizes with the natural disappointment of those concerned'—as though all that was involved was the withdrawal of a complimentary ticket to the annual dance of hospital staffs.

But so confident were Hospital Management Committees that the award would be accepted that recent advertisements of clerical vacancies for hospital staffs have announced the three per cent. increase, subject to Ministry endorsement.

The hospital clerks are very weakly organized. But the challenge they have to meet—the Government's determination to prevent a new round of wage increases—confronts the entire working class. Their overtime ban deserves the support of all other workers.

## FORUMS

### THESE ARE THE LONDON FORUMS' AIMS

We print below the revised Statement of Aims of the London Socialist Forums, as adopted at the London Conference on October 20.

To facilitate comparison with the draft statement drawn up by the London Liaison Committee (see The Newsletter, September 21, pp. 141-2) amended passages are given in bold type.

An amendment submitted by Hornsey Forum in favour of regional assemblies being held every quarter and national conferences every year was not called, and another from the same source urging that Forums should charge a basic membership fee and should contribute to a central Forums' fund was referred to the Liaison Committee.

Articles by prominent members of the Forum movement (Pauline Harrison, Richard Goss and Joe Young) appeared in The Newsletter of October 19, and a report of the London conference on October 26.

1) The London Liaison Committee of Socialist Forums considers that the Forums should continue to be independent discussion centres bringing together as many shades of socialist opinion as possible.

They should not aim to become, as such, rivals or alternatives to existing political parties or fractions within these parties. Their aims should be:

- To discuss problems of socialist theory.
- To maintain regular appraisal and criticism of the current policies and actions of socialist parties at home and abroad.
- To help to evolve a clearer perspective for the achievement of socialism in Britain by **improving the knowledge and understanding of individual Forum members so as to strengthen their work as socialists.**

2) For the furtherance of these aims the following methods are strongly recommended:

a) The London Liaison Committee should establish as soon as possible a Speakers' Panel to assist local groups. **Local Forums may suggest additions to this panel.**

b) **The Committee should also draw up lists of topics for discussion and study which should be available to local Forums on request.**

c) Forums should endeavour, within the fields of chief interest to their members, to carry on discussions in as systematic a manner as possible and to publish and circulate to other Forums any agreed conclusions **and also any interesting differences of opinion.**

d) Forums should, where possible, set up study groups on particular questions, aiming at the production of written conclusions.

e) Forum members should be encouraged to participate as fully as possible in the specialized study-groups being sponsored in London by the Universities and Left Review Club, whose functions are recognized as being similar to those of the Forums.

f) The Forums should strive to establish close relations with other organizations of the Labour movement and to secure the widest possible participation of their members in the Forums, **inviting speakers from all socialist parties to address them.**

g) The journal Forum should be supported as the main link between local Forums, which should contribute articles, reports and news to it. **Forums should also aim to stimulate the reading of all other types of socialist literature.**

h) Liaison between Forums at all levels should be maintained and developed, **particulars of neighbouring Forums being made available to Forums in each area.**

## LETTERS

### Our Special Issue

Owing to an underestimation of the weight of last week's special issue commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the October Revolution, and consequently of the postage that would be charged on it, subscribers received it for threepence plus postage.

The Newsletter likes to give good value to its readers, but not quite so liberally as that. This unexpected toll taken by the Post Office has caused serious financial difficulties, which means that this week's and next week's issues have to be smaller than usual.

Readers who found the special issue worth-while are asked to help put The Newsletter on a sound financial basis again by sending donations.

This is the first time The Newsletter has had to appeal to its readers for money; it does so with confidence because the response to the special issue was so good, as the selection below from a vast post-bag shows.

#### 'ENLIGHTENMENT'

Congratulations on your last issue. Carry on with the good work of enlightenment. All power to your elbow.

Liverpool 4

H. H. Jones

#### 'EXCELLENT'

Congratulations on the special issue. I think it is excellent and will be particularly useful for the special meeting of Tyneside Forum on the fortieth anniversary.

Ashington (Northumberland)

Jim Johnson

#### 'MAGNIFICENT'

Your wonderful fortieth anniversary number fills me with delight. Your editorial too is magnificent, though I disagree on some points of error in a publication of such value to so many of us in these days.

Bushey (Herts.)

Peter Roe

#### 'SPEAKS FOR THE WORKERS'

The pale pinks of Smith Square read sermons on socialism to the Russian workers. The paid hacks of King Street sing paeans to Khrushchev and his boys. Only The Newsletter speaks for the British workers to the Russian workers. Congratulations!

Stapleford (Notts.)

D. Tildsley

#### OVERSIGHT

In view of the contribution which Mr Isaac Deutscher has made to Soviet studies in this country over the past decade or so I feel that the omission of his major works from the list of books for further reading in the fortieth anniversary issue was a serious and ungenerous one.

May I therefore draw the attention of your readers to his two works 'Stalin: a Political Biography' and 'The Prophet Armed' which no one studying the Soviet past can afford to neglect.

I need hardly add that this commendation by no means

implies that I think that Deutscher's work is definitive, that I accept his conclusions or consider that such policy recommendations as may follow from them merit support. But I am sure that you will agree that the oversight—which it must have been—which led to these books' being omitted from your list needs to be rectified.

Hull

Tom Kemp

### 'STIMULATING'

Please accept my congratulations on a most creditable and useful publication. Inevitably, with such a range of articles, authors and interests, the quality was a bit uneven, but all the contributions are stimulating and instructive.

Will you convey my congratulations to your printers on a thoroughly effective and craftsmanlike job?

London, S.W.17

D.K.

### WHY HORNSEY MOVED ITS AMENDMENTS

I WAS very surprised to read in THE NEWSLETTER of October 26, in the report on the London Forums' Conference, that in his reply for the Liaison Committee John St John said the Hornsey amendments 'were an extreme form of sectarianism of the sort that was afraid in case some other trend gained at its expense'.

As a member of the Hornsey Forum, who belongs to no 'group', and who has recently left the Communist Party for, among other things, its sectarianism, may I say something about these amendments?

First of all, the amendments themselves:

1) To substitute in our Statement of Aims 'by improving the knowledge and understanding of individual Forum members so as to strengthen their work as socialists' for 'to formulate the more detailed current policies required, and to seek to influence public opinion in favour of them'.

2) Delete 'policy proposals etc.' at the end of the paragraph on the setting up of study groups.

3) Add 'inviting speakers from all socialist parties to address them' to what we wish to do.

4) Substitute 'draw up a list of topics for discussion and study which should be available to local Forums on request' for 'also circulate to local Forums suggested topics for discussion and study'.

Each one of these amendments is calculated to broaden the basis of the Forums, and prevent them from becoming a platform for any single sect.

Secondly a few words on how these amendments came to be proposed.

The Hornsey Forum includes socialists of varying outlook: some are Labour Party members; some are uncommitted ex-communists; some are still members of the Communist Party; others are 'Trotskyists' (these are in a minority).

At the meeting at which the 'Draft Statement of Aims' was discussed almost everyone spoke and we all discussed it very lengthily. The amendments were unanimously accepted as ones which would give the Forum movement the greatest freedom for action.

All of us thought that the essential character of the Forums should be 'common ground' for discussion free of any platform such as those to which political parties are committed.

It was to safeguard this that the amendments were put forward quite spontaneously.

London, N.2.

Beatrice Tudor-Hart

### WHY DON'T TROTSKYITES COME CLEAN?

Why haven't the Trotskyites the guts to come out from behind themselves and admit what everybody else can see?

The Russian space satellites finally prove that Trotsky was talking rubbish when he argued that Russia was doomed to remain backward in relation to 'the advanced capitalist countries', that she hadn't the 'level of productive forces' needed for socialism, and so on.

The space satellites prove the Communist Party leaders' basic case against Trotskyism.

London, W.

V. Frank

### COMMUNIST PARTY (Continued from front page)

a circular inviting Communist Party members to attend a Forum meeting to hear a report on the Labour Party conference by a delegate.

The five were 'instructed' to withdraw their support from the Forum meeting in line with the district committee's decision, but they refused.

The area committee has recommended to the district committee that three of them be expelled.

One of the five, Mick Dean, a member of the area committee, has resigned from the party. The others include Gertie Roche, Miriam Stone and Peter Thompson.

### FORUM BAN DRIVES HISTORIAN FROM CP

By a Correspondent

AMONG the Communist Party members who will not be re-registering in the party for 1958 is Brian Pearce, of North London, who is being threatened with disciplinary action for his participation in the Socialist Forum movement.

A member since 1934, he was until the end of last year a regular Daily Worker seller and an industrious back-room boy in several spheres of the party's work.

He served for some years on the staff of the Daily Worker and with the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR.

Like a number of others, Pearce re-registered for 1957 in the hope that the Easter Congress would bring about important changes in the Communist Party.

He is now convinced that this party has irreparably ceased to be a Marxist party capable of leading Britain to socialism, and that no useful purpose is served by continuing his membership.

In particular, his experiences as a member of the Commission allegedly preparing a history of the party have completed his disillusionment with King Street.

The exodus from the party in considerable numbers during the last two years of experienced 'cadres' like Pearce is probably even more important for its future than the loss—or the retention—of certain more famous names.

Pearce has played an active part in the Socialist Forum movement which began to develop towards the end of 1956. Some readers will recall his talk at the Wortley Hall Forum conference on 'Some Lessons of the Stalin Era' and his successful moving at the recent London conference of the Hornsey amendments aimed at preventing the 'capture' of the Forums by any of the so-called 'tendencies'.

On November 5 Pearce received the following letter from John Mahon, London district secretary of the Communist Party:

'We understand that you are taking an active part in the Socialist Forum activity, and took a prominent part in the recent conference.

'I should be glad if you would be kind enough to let me know whether it is correct that you are taking part in the Forum movement and whether you wish to make any statement in relation to it.

'The matter will be considered by the next district committee meeting. As such activity is not compatible with party membership, the district committee will have to consider what action should be taken. Any statement you make will be placed before them.

'I have sent a copy of this letter to your party branch secretary.'

Asked to comment, Brian Pearce said: 'Whoever else may be trying to "capture" the Forums, nobody can say the Communist Party is. So far as I know, none of the other socialist groups has seen fit to forbid its members to take part in Forum discussions.

'King Street's obscurantist anxiety to keep its rank-and-file in a mental ghetto suggests a certain lack of confidence somewhere, in spite of Sputniks.'

Discussions Pearce has had with Labour Party members, within the framework of the Forum movement, have convinced him, like many others, that the proper line for Marxists to take in the present situation is to join the Labour Party.