

THE NEWSLETTER

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WORKERS' CHARTER CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

IN a New Year of lengthening dole queues, 'free £' trade wars and working-class struggles, The Newsletter is launching a campaign to win the widest possible support for the Charter of Workers' Demands adopted at the national industrial rank-and-file Conference last November.

- Meetings are being called during February, March and April in key industrial centres up and down the country.
- At these meetings the need will be discussed for a closer association of those who support the demands of the Charter and the policy statement published in The Newsletter on December 6. If, as The Newsletter believes, there is widespread support for an organization dedicated to bringing rank and file trade unionists into political activity under a socialist banner, these meetings will lay the basis for its launching.
- At the same time, to enable it to develop as a weekly newspaper serving the working class in struggle, The Newsletter is launching an appeal for a £1,000 fund.

These announcements are made in a statement issued by the Editorial Board of The Newsletter, which appears below. The statement stresses that it is not the paper's intention to foist any pre-conceived form of organization upon militants, but to give them an opportunity to discuss whether an organization is needed, and, if so, what its objects and constitution should be.

Here are the dates of the meetings arranged so far. Full details of these meetings, and of others to be arranged, will be announced later.

Sunday, Feb. 1	LIVERPOOL	Saturday, Mar. 7	MANSFIELD
Monday, Feb. 2	WIGAN	Sunday, Mar. 8	NOTTINGHAM
Friday, Feb. 6	SHEFFIELD	Sunday, Mar. 15	GLASGOW
Sunday, Feb. 8	LEEDS	Monday, Mar. 16	EDINBURGH
Monday, Feb. 9	BRIXTON	Sunday, Mar. 22	BIRMINGHAM
Sunday, Feb. 15	MANCHESTER	Sunday, Apr. 5	COVENTRY
Sunday, Feb. 22	HULL	Sunday, Apr. 12	CENTRAL LONDON

Readers and supporters are asked to give the fullest possible support to these meetings, to bring their friends and workmates, and so help this vital discussion on defeating the Tories' plans.

Rank and File Can Sweep the Tories Out

AS 1959 opens, the need for working-class unity in action is more urgent than ever. We face an employing class determined to maintain profits at all costs, create a reserve pool of unemployed, hire and fire as they please, victimize stewards and other militants and drive down our living standards.

'Freedom' for the pound goes hand in hand with a tougher attitude to the working class. It is our conditions and standards which will be sacrificed to 'free' the capitalist economy for cut-throat trade wars.

If the employers have their way, hundreds of thousands of miners, portworkers, railwaymen, building workers and engineers will join the queues at the Labour Exchanges.

And this at a time when new techniques of production could, if rationally used, end want and poverty for ever.

But these resources are being used in the service of

(Continued overleaf)

BIRMINGHAM TRADES COUNCIL WILL ASK: 'WHY WAS THIS ARTICLE SUPPRESSED?'

A HEATED discussion is expected at today's meeting of Birmingham Trades Council over its executive's decision to exclude from the current issue of its Journal an article by Coun. Harry Finch on the Newsletter Conference.

The decision to suppress the article was taken by a vote of five to five, the president giving his casting vote against publication.

Among the five who voted not to publish were three members of the Communist Party, Messrs Bulgin, Atkins and Baggeley.

Coun. Finch, a delegate to the Trades Council from the Amalgamated Engineering Union, is a member of the Editorial Board of The Newsletter.

This is understood to be the first time that action has been taken to exclude any article from the Birmingham Journal.

Members are disturbed by this interference with the editor's prerogative; the Birmingham Journal has hitherto been noted for giving all viewpoints a hearing.

COMMENTARY

FREE THE POLITICAL PRISONERS

FIFTEEN years' imprisonment. That is the savage sentence imposed on Miguel Nuñez Gonzalez for taking part in a strike. Other were sentenced to twelve, ten and six years in Franco's foul jails. This was the latest in a series of trials of socialists, communists, anarchists and militants. The Spanish workers are stirring; only by systematic repression can the blood-stained fascist régime cling on to power.

Trade unionists and Labour Party members must protest with all their strength. Let us condemn, too, the continuing repression in Hungary, where, according to an official spokesman, Professor Istvan Bibó, Minister of State in Nagy's Cabinet, has been sentenced to life imprisonment at a secret trial; and in Ireland, where hundreds of men are held in the Curragh internment camp. The Labour Party must demand the freeing of all these political prisoners.

A TEST CASE

NEXT week we shall examine the economic lessons of 1958, including the new currency measures, which mean a stepping up of the employers' offensive. Meanwhile, for an example of the employers' strategy at factory level, look at the Harland and Wolff dispute. First came redundancies, coupled with a refusal to share the work. Secondly came an attack on the shop stewards' organization, with the dismissal of the sub-convener. And then, in the midst of the dispute, the management arrogantly tried to slash job prices. If these attacks are not defeated the Clyde employers as a whole will follow suit. This is a test case. The Harland and Wolff workers must not be left to fight alone.

SOUTH WALES BATTLE

A DEMONSTRATION and a possible one-day strike will not stop the sacking of 2,500 South Wales miners, however valuable these protests may be in bringing the miners' case to the attention of other workers. What is needed is a fight for the seven-hour day and an extra week's holiday. These proposals should be put to the Board as an alternative to sackings, and a ballot taken in the coalfield for strike action to win them. The rank and file must be given the chance to decide on what to do to save 2,500 jobs. Tuesday's conference of South Wales miners can give a lead to the whole working class.

STEWARDS AND SAFETY

FOR ten weeks the building workers at the Belvedere power station have been making a real contribution, not only to the struggle against sackings and victimization, but also to the fight for proper safety precautions. About fifty types of constructional engineering work are not covered by the regulations, and since 1948 the 11,000 members of the Constructional Engineering Union on outside construction have suffered 10,226 accidents, of which 279 were fatal. On the Belvedere job alone, though it is only half done, there have been four deaths already. At this rate one in every twenty erectors will be dead before the job is completed.

The fight for safety and the fight for strong shop stewards' committees go hand in hand. To support the Belvedere men is the duty of every trade unionist.

CHARTER CAMPAIGN (Continued from front page)

capitalists, not in the service of the working people.

THE WORKERS want peace and full employment.

THE TORIES are spending huge sums on war preparations while the number of men, women and children affected by unemployment and short-time working is in the region of two million.

Nineteen fifty-nine will be a year of great struggles. The workers will have to move into action against the employers and their government—or go under.



BUT the Right-wing trade union leaders are not prepared to fight. They have retreated before the employers' offensive. They have abandoned the fight against sackings.

They are more concerned with firing on their own troops—by witch-hunting militants—than with organizing and mobilizing the workers to resist the employers.

The policy demands of Labour's leaders are completely inadequate to solve the present crisis. These leaders have lamentably failed to fight the Tories either inside or outside parliament.

But the workers are prepared to fight. In 1958 the busmen, dockers and building workers showed their mettle. They displayed magnificent solidarity and fighting capacity.

Given a socialist leadership, the whole working class can fight in the same way—and win.

The working class has the power, not merely to rout a single employer, but to defeat the Tories and their system, and bring to power a socialist government.

The central aim of The Newsletter is to prepare the workers to use that power. But this can only be done if a stubborn fight is waged for socialist policies and socialist leadership within the Labour movement.

Let 1959 be the year when the rank and file of the trade unions are brought into political activity under a socialist banner.

Let 1959 see the Tories and the employers routed by a great upsurge of militancy, of determination to avoid the hardships of the dole queue by using our industrial strength.



AT the national industrial rank-and-file Conference we called last November, over 500 socialist militants adopted a Charter of Workers' Demands.

We firmly believe that in the struggle to implement that Charter a new, socialist leadership can be built within the trade unions.

We believe that the tasks facing the working class in 1959 are of such a magnitude—and the price of failure so heavy—that socialist militants who support the Charter should now be associated more closely.

We are therefore launching a national campaign around the Charter. In February, March and April we are holding a series of meetings in key industrial centres up and down the country.

These meetings will discuss the problems facing the working class, and the need for some kind of organization, based on the trade union rank and file, of those who support the Charter of Workers' Demands and the policy set forth in the article by Gerry Healy in our issue of December 6.

It is not the intention of The Newsletter to foist any pre-determined form of organization upon militant trade unionists. That is why we are not launching an organization at this stage, but are giving militants an opportunity to discuss whether one is needed and, if so, what its objects, constitution and methods should be.

For our part, we are convinced that the time is rapidly

approaching when some form of rank-and-file organization, corresponding to the needs and problems of militants and helping forward their fight inside and outside the unions, will become imperative.

As well as calling these meetings and initiating this discussion, we are launching an appeal for £1,000 to develop The Newsletter as a weekly newspaper, so that it may adequately serve the working class in struggle.

We ask all readers and supporters of our paper to give the fullest possible support to the meetings which are being called, and so help to defeat the Tories' plans.

MICHAEL BANDA
BRIAN BEHAN
HARRY CONSTABLE
HARRY FINCH
PETER FRYER

GERRY HEALY
TOM KEMP
PETER KERRIGAN
BRIAN PEARCE
CLIFF SLAUGHTER

ODE TO SANITATION

This poem by Pierre Berton is reprinted from the Toronto Star.

As scientists, we must admit, the Russians have us beat

But there's one branch of research in which they can't compete;

Our plumbing is the envy of every western nation:

We may not put up sputniks—but we're tops in sanitation.

Oh, we invented Lifebuoy, when Stalin was a tot

And we developed Listerine before the tsar was shot.

Now we've come up with Mum and Ban and Duz and Tide and Vel.

We only need one other thing to give those Russians hell:

So every American, from Ike to Gravel Gertie, Is praying that we'll soon perfect

A bomb that isn't dirty . . .

We got to have a clean bomb—

An absolutely antiseptic, socially acceptable, pristine bomb.

Now war's a filthy business;

We don't want it to recur.

So we've got to have a clean bomb to

Detergently deter.

We want a right bomb,

Whiter than white bomb,

A bomb to knock the spots off of that dirty Muscovite bomb.

And if we have to drop it

You'll see our victims grin

For we'll have the only H-bomb

That's made with lanolin.

We got to have a clean bomb—

A tested-and-approved-by-Good-Housekeeping-magazine bomb.

So when the mushroom cloud goes up

And folks die by the acre

They won't be plagued by strontium-90

When they meet their Maker.

We want a demure bomb,

Safe and sure bomb,

Ninety-nine-and-forty-four-one-hundredths per cent. pure bomb

And though our victims call out

Every time our bombs go past 'em

We can promise that there won't be any

Fall-out when we blast 'em.

As scientists, we must admit, the Russians have the edge,

But as leaders of the western world, we make

this solemn pledge:

We'll keep sending chromium bath tubs to the Sikhs and Japanese;

We'll keep putting Cannon towels in every box of Breeze;

We'll ship Kleenex to the Eskimoes, although it may not suit 'em.

And if we're forced to bomb 'em, those bombs will not pollute 'em.

We got to have a clean bomb—

An undefiled, untarnished and untainted sweet-sixteen bomb.

Our enemies will thank us

For our faith in sanitation:

We may blow them all to pieces

But there'll be no radiation.

We want an okay bomb,

British fair play bomb,

With more active dirt remover than any other A-bomb

Now Sani-Sealed in Pliofilm

To answer our demands,

When it finally explodes it won't

Be touched by human hands.

We got to have a clean bomb—

The kind of bomb it's safe to give your kids on Hallowe'en bomb.

Now that bomb may kill ten thousand

Little children in the night,

But when they lay those corpses out

They'll all be Rinso-white.

We want a chaste bomb,

In good taste bomb,

An altogether ethical, high-principled, strait-laced bomb.

Our heritage is Puritan—

That's why we're dedicated;

Our high explosives, like our books

Are better expurgated.

As scientists, we must admit, the Russians are one-up.

But we invented Sani-Flush when Khrushchev was a pup.

They may have sputniks in the air,

(We wince to hear them coming)

But we couldn't raise a satellite

Without the proper plumbing.

We can't stand contamination!

We consider it obscene!

And we'll never fight a dirty war

Without a bomb that's clean.

INDUSTRY

HARLAND AND WOLFF STRIKERS FIGHT ON AGAINST SACKINGS AND VICTIMIZATIONS

From Our Industrial Correspondent

'We continue the strike. That was the unanimous decision of our members,' said David Forfar, convener of shop stewards at Harland and Wolff, Scotstoun (Glasgow), where the fitting section has been out since December 8.

The strike is due to continual redundancies at the factory—despite the workers' efforts to force the employers to share the work—and the victimization of the sub-convener.

The vote to carry on the fight was taken at a meeting of strikers called by Glasgow district committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union three days before the Christmas holiday.

The meeting also endorsed the three objects of the strike:

- 1) The prevention of all future redundancies by sharing the available work;
- 2) The reinstatement of the sub-convener; and
- 3) The reinstatement of all the workers previously declared redundant who are still on the Labour Exchange.

Clyde stewards' emergency conference

To rally support for their fight against redundancy the strike committee called an emergency conference of Clyde shop stewards, attended by over 100 stewards from about twenty factories.

Support and financial help was promised, and the stewards recognized that the principles involved in this dispute affect every worker, irrespective of his union, and that the strikers are struggling not only against the Harland combine but against the Clyde Employers' Federation as a whole.

It was decided to hold a recall conference soon after the New Year holiday.

This support strengthened the men's determination to continue their action at such a difficult time of the year. So did the report that since the strike began the management had launched an attack on the prices of jobs in the plating section of the factory.

The cuts were so big that the platers also have taken strike action.

LEICESTER BUSMEN'S LIGHTNING STRIKE

From a Correspondent

Lightning strike by busmen brought Leicester city transport to a standstill last Saturday afternoon. This was a protest against a driver's being placed on the spare list for refusing to work overtime.

The strike was preceded by a week-long work to rule in protest at the threatened sacking of thirty busmen in the week before Christmas.

The Transport Committee has agreed to hold an inquiry into disciplinary procedure, but at the same time gave a vote of confidence to an inspector who, the men allege, has been unnecessarily severe in enforcing discipline.

TWELVE WEEKS OUT, AND BELVEDERE MEN STRUGGLE ON

From Our Industrial Correspondent

'KEEP your organization intact. The unions are prepared to fight on this issue,' Constructional Engineering Union official Fred Copeman told a mass meeting of locked-out Belvedere workers.

The meeting heard a report from Mr Copeman of the negotiations that took place between the employers and the unions on December 23.

Browns had announced their intention of reopening the job with any labour they desired. The unions opposed this and threatened to 'black' them nationally.

Finally Browns submitted a list of eighty-six names of men who had originally worked on the site, and said they were prepared to re-employ them.

Not one steward, deputy steward, or former steward was included in this list.

None of the seven unions represented at the talks accepted this.

A leaflet issued by the liaison committee denounces the employer's proposals under the heading: 'No militants are wanted.' 'The gloves are off,' it declares.

Hugh Barr, former chief steward at Sir William Arrol's told me: 'We have stood firm here for twelve weeks and we intend to stick out until we have won our fight for the reinstatement of all available labour.'

Charter Campaign

MANCHESTER FIGHT ON SACKINGS SHOWS NEED FOR RANK-AND-FILE MOVEMENT

By Harry Ratner (who was a delegate from Broughton and Manchester no. 6 branches of the Amalgamated Engineering Union)

To me and to the other delegates from Manchester the main theme running through the discussions at the Newsletter rank-and-file Conference was the need to develop a virile and conscious rank-and-file movement.

The need for this has been confirmed by the latest developments locally in the engineering industry.

The Manchester district committee of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions recently adopted a policy on sackings. The core of this was that the shop stewards should demand a shorter working week as an alternative, and that if the employers refused this the workers should then impose the shorter week on the management.

Though there are some weaknesses in the policy, this was a welcome advance from the passing of pious resolutions, particularly since the issue was taken right down into the factories with the stewards holding factory meetings and a mass meeting of shop stewards.

Action along the lines of this policy could be the beginning of a successful and mounting resistance to sackings in the area.

Yet although this is merely applying already agreed policy of the Confed. to oppose sackings, the Confed. executive has come down heavily on the Manchester district committee for daring to take policy resolutions seriously and for trying to apply them.

To block effective defence

The same Bro. Barrett, general secretary of the Confederation, who attacked the Newsletter Conference and the Marxists in the Sunday Times now writes to the Manchester district committee and, under cover of a constitutional quibble, tries to prevent a united struggle against sackings.

Here is one more instance of what Behan warned against at the rank-and-file Conference—the official trade union machinery being used to block an effective defence of working-class interests.

Despite all the attacks from the Right and from the so-called 'Left', the rank-and-file Conference and its call for rank-and-file inter-union unity was extremely timely.

My experience so far in reporting back to union branches, and in discussions with workers, is that while many have not until now seen The Newsletter, and some who had did not agree with it entirely, there is a readiness among ordinary workers to judge the Conference on the merits of the policies put forward and to ignore the witch-hunt and the label-sticking.

Kenfig Hill: A Village Condemned to Death

By BOB PENNINGTON

SOUTH of the Cardiff to Swansea road, just beyond Bridgend, lies the Cnfygail valley. There, sprawling along the valley's bleak, scarred sides, is the grey stone village of Kenfig Hill.

Out from Kenfig, along the narrow switchback road, are two collieries, Aberbaiden and Pentre. Neither is a big or very important pit. Their total output is hardly more than 3,000 tons, and between them they employ only about 760 men.

Suddenly last November, these two pits acquired national fame, along with thirty-four others, when they were included in the list of closures announced by the National Coal Board.

THEIR BITTER MEMORIES. Looming over Kenfig Hill again is the threat of poverty, recalling to its people's minds all the misery and sufferings of the years between the wars.

And they are bitter memories. Years out of work. Whole families idle. Fathers and brothers forced to leave home to look for work elsewhere.

'I remember families here having a diet of flour and water fried,' said the landlord at the Butcher's Arms.

At the Butcher's you meet the men savouring their pint and their last piece of daylight before they go on the back shift for a third of their day.

Here, too, you find the compensation cases. Men hurt in the pit, now killing a few hours of the long months of enforced idleness, until they are fit and ready for work once more.

FALL OF ROCK. Only now, there may not be any work again for them to return to.

'What can I look forward to?' asked Tommy Jones. 'I got a present last Christmas. A fall of rock on me in the headings. Since then I have had four spells in hospital and had two discs removed.'

'Now I would start work if I had a light job to go to. But there aren't any. Once the pits close that's the end. How can I move? Fit for only light work and then I have a wife and three kids.'

The dark-haired, squat man in the corner nodded.

'He is right. I am 53. The only job that I know is mining. The only place I have ever lived is here.'

LIGHT JOBS ONLY. 'You know there are nearly 80 per cent. of the men at these two pits who are either fit for light jobs only, or are over 50. To them and me this could mean the end.'

Austin Dunstar left the pits five years ago. Since then he has worked in the quarries. Three weeks ago he was laid off.

'The quarries supply the Carbide factory. For months at Carbide now they have been working only two of their three furnaces. So it's sackings at the quarries and lay-offs at Carbide.'

He told how he had tried to get a job at the Abbey steelworks: 'Nothing doing, they told me.'

At the Labour Exchange the manager apologized for not giving me the local unemployment figures: 'You must have permission.'

A CONSTANT STREAM. But in the ten minutes or so I was there a constant stream of men called for their benefit.

One of them was Jim Morgan. Injured in the Duffyn Rhondda pit last February, he has recently been declared fit for light work.

'Only trouble is, there is no light work.'

'No pit will start me. So I have tried elsewhere. The quarries are closing down. Lovatts have shut down the opencast. Abbey don't need men. I believe they are sacking some.'

'No, there is no work here now. What chance have the 760 men got when they finish in March?'

Like so many Welsh mining villages Kenfig Hill has its local Labour Club. Here, sipping a pint at the bar was a grey-haired man. The blue scars above his right eye showed he had been a miner. Jack Taylor, 75, retired five years ago.

HAVE TO FIGHT. 'What do I think of the closures? The men have to fight them, of course. First job is to stop paying compensation.'

'These pits here used to belong to the Baldwins. Really they still own them. After all, they are getting a nice steady income out of them.'

'Damm sight more compensation than the men will be paid when they are sacked.'

At the Aberbaiden colliery I spoke with Trevor Wilkin, lodge chairman.

'We must have a fight. If need be there should be a national strike. Our only demand must be to keep the pits working,' he declared emphatically.

WILL NOT STOP. 'You know, if the Tories succeed in closing this first batch down they will not stop until they have driven us right back to pre-war conditions.'

He was echoed by Edward Raikes, an electrician who has worked at Aberbaiden for thirty years.

'We need a firm national policy against all sackings. If the Tories can't give us jobs then let's get them out and put in a Labour government that is pledged to keep the pits open.'

The day-shift men in their canteen all had the same to say: 'We have to fight, otherwise it's all over for us here.'

When you leave Kenfig Hill you go out from the small square, near the post-office and the bus stop for Porthcawl.

CONDEMNED TO DEATH. There in the centre of the square is a stone cenotaph. Inscribed on it in black lettering are the words: 'Live ye for Britain, as we for Britain died.'

How difficult it will be for these people to live like 'patriotic Britons' in a village that a 'patriotic government' has just condemned to death.

THE MINERS' FIGHT

The meeting called by The Newsletter to discuss support for the miners' fight will be held in the Holborn Hall, London, on Sunday, January 11, at 7 p.m. (not 11 a.m. as previously announced).

Speakers will include Jimmy Swan, of Bradford Colliery, Manchester, editor of the rank-and-file paper The Miner and Brian Behan, a member of the Editorial Board of The Newsletter.

Unemployment: Twenty Questions and Answers

By BRIAN BEHAN

- (1) **Is unemployment really so serious if only 2.4 per cent. of the working population is said to be unemployed, and welfare benefits are so high?**

Unemployment is more serious than this figure suggests. In addition to the figure of 536,000 registered unemployed there are 11,000 dockers out of work each week. Hundreds of thousands are on short time.

And if you take into account the wives and children of the unemployed almost two million people are affected.

Unemployment benefit is 50s. for a single man and 80s. for a man and wife, provided the wife does not work. Assistance payments may be made in addition where there is special need, such as very high rent.

In no case do the combined payments amount to anything like the average wage earned in industry.

- (2) **But isn't this unemployment only temporary? Won't it soon be mopped up as more government help is given to the expansion of industry?**

No. The pool of unemployed is here to stay while capitalism remains.

- (3) **But surely unemployment is not due to capitalism but rather the inevitable result of changes in industry, with machines replacing men?**

These changes that are taking place should be a boon to the working man.

Socialist methods of planning would both allow for the introduction of new techniques and expand industry in other fields—by reducing hours and increasing wages and so absorbing surplus labour.

- (4) **But why doesn't the capitalist do this?**

Because the employer's aim is profit. He takes this profit from the surplus produced in the factory. To keep profits up he tries to hold wages down and maintain long working hours.

The workers are never able to buy back with their wages all that they produce. So, despite the fantastic waste and extravagance of the rich, a surplus of goods tends to accumulate, production is cut, and this throws workers out of jobs.

- (5) **Didn't the capitalist class introduce automation and all these technical advances? Is it not progressive therefore?**

As a class the capitalists are not progressive. They introduce changes only where it suits them, where it will help to maintain or increase profits.

The impetus for the development of atomic power, for instance, lay in the production of the atomic bomb, which was used by American capitalism to destroy its capitalist rival in war.

- (6) **Were there not seven years of full employment under the Tories? Surely it is in their own interest to re-create full employment, if only to preserve their grip on the country?**

There was full employment under the Tories, and if it were profitable to have full employment again the Tories would have no objection.

But because their main aim is profit they will try to preserve it at all costs, no matter how many are unemployed.

Under capitalism there has been full employment only during or immediately after wars.

- (7) **But if a Labour government were returned to power would it not use the ideas of men like Keynes and Strachey and compel the employers to invest on a larger scale? Would it not also supplement this by government investment and so bring back full employment?**

Labour's present programme makes no such provisions. To halt industrial stagnation two things are needed.

The first is to cut the expenditure on arms, which is now £1,700 million a year, or one-third of total budget expenditure. The money saved should be used for investment.

The second is to take over the employers' assets and use them in a socialist way to promote industrial development. This would mean taking over the main branches of industry on behalf of the people.

While the bulk of industry and financial resources remain in private hands it is impossible to compel the employers to invest unless they are guaranteed high profits in return.

In the past the employers were content to let whole industries close down and millions starve rather than sacrifice their profits.

The employers create a false scarcity of goods by stopping production in order to maintain profits and high prices.

Unfortunately the policy of the Labour Party leaders is to maintain the arms programme—one of the most lucrative fields for big business. Nor does it envisage nationalization of the main industries.

- (8) **What can be done to fight unemployment? Is it enough to leave it to the Labour Party to settle when it is returned to power?**

The Labour government of 1931 did not solve the problem of unemployment. This was because it lacked a socialist policy. It collapsed through trying to preserve capitalism.

The fight to change the Labour Party programme must begin now.

- (9) **What about those who are joining the dole queue because of the sackings in the mines, on the docks and on the building sites?**

The time to fight the dole queue is while the men are still at work. There should be united strike action against sackings.

- (10) **But would not strikes against sackings simply add to chaos and make matters worse. Would it not be as well to co-operate now and make the best of a bad job?**

The employers are anxious to get the present wave of sackings carried through with as little trouble as possible.

They want to cut down their costs and use the threat of unemployment to introduce speed-up and to slash wages in future.

After the 1926 General Strike the trade union leaders and the employers arrived at a series of agreements to keep peace in industry.

The working class gained nothing from this. Unemployment continued to rise and almost three million workers starved for ten years. Wages were cut and life in the factories and mines became a hell for those 'lucky' enough to have a job.

The workers are not beggars pleading for a pittance.

We are the ones who produce all wealth. If we are united we have the strength to throw these parasites off our backs and to ensure that we never again see long years of dole and degradation.

(11) What should the workers demand now?

They should demand that the trade unions and the Labour Party have a united policy of no sackings, a policy which should be backed up by the industrial and political strength of the working class.

They should demand full solidarity support for any section that resists the employers by strike action against sackings.

(12) Why should workers unite with others in different industries when the conditions may differ from one industry to another?

The government and the employers are united on a policy of creating a permanent pool of unemployed. To defeat this policy the workers too must unite.

(13) What if the government cannot solve the problem?

Then the government must be forced to resign and must be replaced by a Labour government that has a socialist policy and is pledged to maintain full employment.

(14) What about those who are unemployed now?

They should receive unemployment benefit equal to the amount they would earn in a full week's work at their jobs.

(15) Is not such a demand uneconomical and impractical?

The employers can find millions to squander on arms that are out of date the day after they are made.

They are able to find millions to compensate the sons of rich men who have to leave the army before their time is up.

When Bernard Dixon, one of the directors of Flowers Brewery in Luton, left the board he received £40,000 in compensation.

When Sir Frank Spriggs left the job of managing director of the Hawker Siddeley group he received £75,000 in compensation.

Profits are very high. Rank, the flour millers, showed a profit last year of £4,250,000. This year the figure increased to £7,200,000.

No one has a right to make profits like these while hundreds of thousands are compelled to exist on the dole.

(16) Are the unemployed all lazy men who would not work anyway?

This is a very old slander put about by the employers to hide their responsibility. Of course there are spivs on the dole. They are only imitating—at far less cost to the working class—the antics of the capitalist spivs at the top of the tree.

Most unemployed men are decent human beings anxious to get work and provide for their wives and families. The millions of 'lazy' men who were on the dole before the war all went to work at the first opportunity.

(17) Is there any truth in the suggestion that the coloured people are responsible for unemployment?

No. The total number of coloured people in Britain is 200,000, of whom 70,000 are fully employed. If every coloured man left this country there would still be 300,000 on the dole here.

The employers use this argument to divide the working class and prevent united action by all workers, coloured and white, to get their common enemy off their backs.

(18) What can trade unionists do to help the unemployed?

In addition to the demand for work or maintenance, they can begin to set up committees within the trade union movement, whose aim will be to popularize, organize and fight for the demands of the unemployed.

(19) How can the policy of the Labour Party be changed to ensure a socialist programme?

Every trade unionist can help to achieve this by seeing to it that his union branch is fully represented in the local Labour Party; by campaigning for the adoption of socialist resolutions at his union's annual conferences, by seeing that his executive carries them out.

(20) How would socialism end unemployment?

By taking over all the major industries a socialist government would be able to plan production, not for profit, but for the well-being of the producers.

By eliminating private profit goods could be sold in abundance to the peoples that are crying out for them.

A socialist government would give the parasites freedom to work or starve, while the working people, with the control of their life firmly in their hands, would have a future free from the want and uncertainty of capitalism.

A socialist government would speed the introduction of new techniques and atomic power, ending the drudgery of underground mining, replacing men with machines—but in such a way that no one would be thrown on the scrap-heap, and the extra wealth produced would be used to shorten hours, raise wages, increase old age pensions and not enrich the few.

CEYLON**BASIC ARITHMETIC OF CEYLON'S SOCIAL CRISIS**

By Michael Banda (a member of the Editorial Board of The Newsletter, who recently returned from a visit to Ceylon)

A RAPIDLY expanding population and a stagnant economy. These are mainly responsible for the chronic unemployment, general destitution, high rate of crime and spread of communalism in Ceylon.

Like the rate of crime, the rate of population increase in Ceylon is about the highest in the world.

Between the years 1947 and 1957 the annual natural increase in population jumped from 172,647 to 237,500—i.e., a jump from 25 to 26.6 per 1,000. As a result the population in 1956 stood at 8,929,000—an increase of over two million in one decade!

Such a rapid growth in population in an advanced and industrialized capitalist country could easily have been assimilated without very great stress on the economy.

But Ceylon's economic development, particularly during the last half-century, has been distorted to suit the needs of Britain's financial and commercial interests.

The economy is predominantly agricultural. The island's major agricultural crops—tea, rubber and coconuts—are all for export. Despite the presence of cheap and easily obtainable hydroelectric power there is very little industry.

Legacy of British imperialism

The plight of Ceylon's economy, which might be termed the legacy of British imperialism, is best illustrated by the following figures:

	ACRES UNDER	
	Tea	Rubber
1938	556,452	604,111
1957	570,573	660,725

Thus in nineteen years the tea acreage rose by about 15,000 acres and that of rubber by about 56,000. Yet in these same thirteen years the population of Ceylon rose by more than three million.

During the same period the acreage under coconut remained the same—while the acreage under paddy cultivation increased between 1946 and 1954 by about one-eighth.

Such a situation creates a chronic under-employment of manpower which is hard to appreciate. Between 1921 and 1938 the population has more than doubled, but the economic-ally active population has increased by less than one million.

(To be continued)

This is the basic arithmetic of the deep social crisis which now has Ceylon in its grip.

Constant Reader

Convertibility and Class Struggle

Some people have been heard to say that we of The Newsletter are obsessed by parallels between developments in the nineteen twenties and at the present day. Be that as it may, I doubt whether even the most sophisticated of 'new thinkers' has failed to notice the disturbing similarity between the decision to restore convertibility and the return to the gold standard in 1925.

That measure, dictated by the same concern to restore the financial role of the City of London, necessitated attacks on the working class in order to 'strengthen the pound'. The return to the gold standard was followed inevitably by the attack on the miners in 1926 and the Trade Disputes Act in 1927, strat-jacketing the trade union movement.

The return to convertibility will drive the capitalists in the same direction now. Whether they will get away with it this time as they did in 1925-27 will depend, of course, on how far the lessons of that period and subsequent periods have been learnt by the workers—especially as regards reliance on the trade union bureaucracy in a phase of conflict when the employers really mean business.

Once again it is the miners who are in the forefront of the battle. All sections need to see today, as they did then, the key significance of the miners' struggle—but also to see many things that were not seen then, or not acted upon if seen.

CND and suffragettes

Many of the earnest people active in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament are now pondering on the future of their movement.

Those among them who consider themselves socialists but who, in despair or irritation, have turned away from work in the Labour movement, should consider the story of the suffragette struggle.

The militant leaders of that campaign were socialists who laid aside their socialism to get the reform they had set their hearts upon accomplished, and their activities withdrew from the socialist movement certain forces which never returned, wrote Joseph Clayton in 'The Rise and Decline of Socialism in Great Britain' (1926).

Certainly, in estimating the reason why there was no workers' revolution here in the years on the eve of the first world war, one cannot leave out of account the part played by the suffragette agitation in diverting energies from the decisive front.

Must not the test for the true progressiveness of any social or political movement in our century be whether or not it feeds the struggle for socialism, the only solution to our problems?

The delegates were particularly interested—I quote—in the conception of the second world war as set out in the new textbook. The war began as an imperialist war both on the part of Germany and on the part of Britain and France. On its outbreak the Communist Parties and the Communist International rightly defined its character and

accordingly formulated their practical slogans (against the imperialist governments of their countries and for an end to the war). In contrast to the first world war, the second, from the very outset, was a just war of liberation on the part of those countries which were victims of aggression by the fascist powers, whose aim was to destroy these national States and enslave their peoples. In the measure that fascist aggression expanded, the resistance of the peoples grew. Parallel with this, the character of the war as a whole also gradually changed, for the provisional government of France [de Gaulle?] and the government of Britain, under the direct threat of Nazi invasion, were compelled (while not abandoning in the long run their imperialist designs) to join forces with the people's war of liberation. The process of changing its character was completed when the Soviet Union entered the war.

Well, there is certainly something to please every school of thought in that formula; indeed, it looks as though it has been drawn up by some bureaucrat with just that aim in mind. It's like the result of the 'caucus race' in 'Alice in Wonderland': 'Everybody has won and everybody must have a prize.' Whether it makes sense and whether it squares with the facts of history are, of course, quite different matters.

Labour books

Visiting the bookshop at Transport House recently I was intrigued to notice what is stocked and what is not. Universities and Left Review is well in evidence, but not the New Reasoner or Labour Review.

Ben Levy's pamphlet putting the case for unilateral nuclear disarmament is there, also Dutt's 'Crisis of Britain and the British Empire' and Gluckstein's 'Mao's China', but nothing that could by any stretch of the term be called 'Trotskyist'. Thus Cannon's recently-published 'Notebook of an Agitator', though favourably reviewed by Tribune, is not there. Nevertheless such thought-provoking books as Julian Symons's 'The General Strike' and V. L. Allen's 'Power in Trade Unions' are displayed.

Then and now

A new type of leadership is essential, if future struggles are to succeed. Revolutionary struggles demand the service of men untrammelled by capitalist law or bureaucratic etiquette. These methods the present bureaucratic leadership refused to adopt, so that the miners have fought this struggle with their hands tied behind their backs by legal tape, and their eyes bandaged by union constitutions.

—Arthur Horner, not then general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, in 'Coal: The Next Round' (1926).

BRIAN PEARCE

WHERE WE CAME IN

'Khrushchev possessed exceptionally great merit in defeating the pitiful, misguided anti-party group and is linked, like none other, with life and the people.' —Polynsky, Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, at the recent session of the Supreme Soviet.