

# THE NEWSLETTER

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## OUR MAN IN KERALA SENDS FIRST FULL REPORT OF PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE

### Mass upsurge challenged Stalinism and capitalism

From Our Own Correspondent, P. R. DHARMABANDU

TRIVANDRUM (KERALA)

**K**ERALA'S so-called 'communist' government, deposed by the Indian president on July 31, had in fact been anxious for central government intervention in order to escape a mass insurrection, planned for August 9-10, which would have been an anti-capitalist as well as an anti-Stalinist movement.

This is my conclusion after a study of recent events in the problem State of Kerala, a true picture of which has not hitherto been given to newspaper readers outside India.

Constitutional lawyers and politicians are now arguing hotly about whether the central government ought to have dismissed the Communist Party and dissolved the Kerala legislature. Whatever the constitutional rights or wrongs may be, there is no doubt that progressive people, whatever their party or ideology, ought to protest against the president's intervention.

One thing above all must be made clear. It is said that the struggle against the Communist Party administration—which lasted 27 months and 27 days—was conducted by reactionary forces alone.

But when one sees how vigorous was the fifty-day struggle which shook Kerala it is impossible to accept that.

#### Fifteen killed, 1,500 wounded

The police fired on demonstrators at seven places, and killed fifteen people, including a pregnant woman. There were about 150 lathi\* and cane charges, in which over 1,500 persons were wounded.

And the total number arrested was 177,850—of whom 42,745 were women.

If the movement was created solely by reactionaries, how is one to explain this sort of mass upsurge in a tiny State whose population is about 15 million? This is a question the Communist Party cannot answer.

**BEFORE** prime minister Nehru went to Kerala he said at his monthly Press conference in New Delhi: 'At the present moment the group that is making a lot of noise is a combination of the Nayar Service Society [a reactionary communal organization] and a Catholic organization.'

**AFTER** his three-day visit to Kerala (June 22-25) he told a Press conference: 'When I went to Kerala the overwhelming impression I got was of people, meaning not individuals only but large masses of people, in a state of very high excitement bordering on hysteria . . . Clearly in Kerala, whatever the reasons, there is tremendous mass upsurge.'

#### More progressive than 'communists'

No doubt the mass agitation had begun around the controversial Education Act; no doubt the Catholics began it.

But it grew to mass proportions, and assumed the aim of  
(Continued overleaf)

\* A lathi is a long heavy iron-bound stick used as a weapon by Indian police.

#### DE HAVILLAND MEN DEFY TGWU OFFICIALS

By Our Industrial Correspondent

Comet production workers at the De Havilland factory, Broughton, Chester, have smashed the attempt by Transport and General Workers' Union officials to sell out their strike against the management's refusal to discuss redundancy problems.

Only eighty workers went through the gates on Monday—and the majority of those came out again when the workers voted solidly to continue the struggle, in which 2,300 men are involved.

Amalgamated Engineering Union members stood solidly with their TGWU brothers.

Union officials ran the gauntlet at a meeting where works convener Bro. Charles Smith described the TGWU 'go-back' order as 'a betrayal'. The decision had been taken without consultation with any of the other unions concerned.

The National Society of Metal Mechanics and the National Union of Vehicle Builders are calling for an emergency meeting of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions to make the strike official.

#### YOUNG NOTTINGHAM WORKER TELLS WHY HE TOOK A POLICEMAN TO COURT

By M. Shaw

A CHARGE of assault was dismissed at Nottingham magistrates' court last week. But 19-year-old Kenneth Barnaby, who brought the case against P.C. Colin Westwood, does not regard the decision as a defeat.

Ten days before, Barnaby had been charged with being drunk and disorderly. He accused the police of assaulting him and was told he would have to take out a summons.

When I saw him at his home off St Ann's Well Road the day after he lost his case, Kenneth told me:

'I think I've won, and so do lots of other people, because I've made public the things the police do.'

During the whole of the court proceedings it was obviously a case of Barnaby's word against the police—although a  
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**THE MINERS AND THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**L**AST week Ernest Jones, president of the National Union of Mineworkers, reported to his national executive on the latest cuts proposed by the National Coal Board. Miners' leaders listened mournfully as Jones told them that by 1965 between 205 and 240 pits are due to close. From Ernest Jones on the Right to the 'communist' Will Paynter, not one member of the executive produced one solitary idea on how to fight the cuts. 'The remarkable feature of the three-hour discussion', wrote the Daily Express, 'was the absence of any suggestion of reprisals against the drastic streamlining.' The Coal Board's decision virtually to end opencast mining by 1965 has apparently left Paynter and his fellow 'communists' bereft of any ideas on how to fight pit closures. What did Jones suggest? Only that fuel oil should be taxed to make competition with coal fairer. With his eyes cast hopefully in the direction of heaven and the Tory government, he said: 'We remain absolutely convinced of the need for a national fuel policy and will continue to press for one.'

What a wretched figure these so-called leaders of a one-time militant union are cutting! In less than twelve months thirty pits have closed. In the same period the industry's manpower has declined by over 20,000. Yet all Jones can do is express the hope that the Tories will start taxing their millionaire friends in the oil refinery business. It is obvious that these leaders are completely incapable of defending their members' jobs. They are pathetic errand-boys who are summoned by the National Coal Board from time to time and told to inform so many more miners that they are going to get their cards.

Among the rank and file however there is a determination to fight back. Now is the time for that determination to be translated into action. Every NUM branch should go on record in the next few weeks demanding a special recall conference of the union. Paynter's promise at this year's annual conference that there would be a special conference to 'consider the implications of the revised Coal Board plan for the industry' seems to have been conveniently forgotten. It is up to the rank and file to jog the leaders' memories. Campaign committees should be set up linking one pit with another, one area with another, and eventually uniting all miners on a national scale. These committees can put teeth into the demand for the shorter working week without loss of pay. By mobilizing the working miners and preparing them for struggle they can bring into action the only force capable of defeating the Coal Board's plans. But the miners cannot win this struggle on their own. They need the active backing of the entire Labour movement, and they have the task of campaigning for support, of convincing other sections that if the miners go down in disarray then these other sections will find it harder to beat back the employers' offensive. Participation by rank-and-file miners in the National Assembly of Labour on November 15 will enable them to forge strong links with workers in other industries.

**KERALA (Continued from front page)**

overthrowing the government. All the political parties in the State, except for the Communist Party, were participating in one way or another. All trade unions and students' organizations, except for those controlled by the Stalinists, were participating.

Do all these people oppose the Education and Agrarian Bills, opposed by the Catholics? No, they do not.

The fact of the matter is that certain political parties in Kerala are more progressive in their outlook than is the Communist Party.

**Food prices rose enormously**

For instance, the Revolutionary Socialist Party and the Lohia group of the Socialist Party agitate for more progressive legislation on education and agrarian problems.

The Praja Socialist Party, during its short term of office in Travancore-Cochin State, had tried to pass a similar land legislation Bill to the one passed by the Communist Party government in Kerala.

Chandrika, the daily paper of the Moslem League, wrote an editorial welcoming the present form of the Education Act. And the Moslem masses stand to gain from the Agrarian Act.

Fundamentally, Congress is not opposed to this legislation either.

In short, the mass agitation here against the Stalinist government had very little to do with the Education and Agrarian Bills. Why then the 'terrible excitement' in Kerala?

The answer is simple. From April 15, 1957, when the Communist Party formed its government, that government failed in all respects to administer in the interests of the working people.

The two main problems of Kerala are lack of food grain and unemployment. There has been no marked change in food production. The prices of food grain and other essentials have risen enormously. And the unemployment problem has got worse and worse.

**Favouritism a common feature**

The communists failed to introduce any progressive measures to improve the conditions of the labourers and poor peasants, although this was one of their promises to the electorate in their election manifesto.

They also promised to eradicate corruption and nepotism from the administrative machinery of the State. They did nothing of the kind.

Favouritism in appointments, promotions, transfers, committee selections and grants of loans—such favouritism was a common feature of the Stalinist régime.

And there were many complaints of the government's frequent interference in judicial matters in favour of Stalinists and fellow-travellers.

Apart from all this, before its first year of office was out, the Communist Party government brutally suppressed the strike movement of the workers at the Sitharam mills, Trichur.

It brutally evicted some backward community families from Kattampilly and destroyed their huts.

About a dozen poor peasant families were brutally driven out by the State police at Kizhipilly, in north Malabar, and their homes were smashed up—in order to placate a landlord of the area.

**They shot down strikers**

Stalinist-controlled police opened fire on strikers, led by a Revolutionary Socialist Party union, at Chandnathope, and killed two. Two plantation workers, one a young woman, were killed in similar circumstances in the Munnar area last October: they were members of the Communist Party-controlled All-India Trades Union Congress.

These are just a few examples of the atrocities committed by a government of a so-called working-class party, which has



He asked for the same 'protection' that the central government had given to other State governments when they had to face 'law and order problems'. He said that even if 5 per cent. of the acts of violence committed in Kerala had been committed in other States the central government would have intervened.

This shows how grave was the situation in the State. And it shows how anxious the Stalinists were for central government intervention.

Nehru as well as Namboodiripad knew which way things were going. On August 5 he called it 'a state of civil war'. And on August 7 he said:

'The conditions in Kerala were progressively getting bad, and were very bad. I think it was likely to deteriorate still further in a very bad way with regard to internal security and all that.'

Few outside Kerala knew that the Stalinist government was completely paralysed in the closing fortnight of the mass struggle. The communists knew very well that their government would be swept out of power if the struggle went on for two weeks more.

They wanted intervention to prevent this. They clung to the Indian capitalist State and its constitution.

It may be asked why the central government intervened on July 31 instead of waiting till August 9-10, when the mass movement would have thrown out the communist government.

This is a very pertinent question indeed.

### Could not allow insurrection

The bourgeois government, after waiting about fifty days, finally decided to intervene for two reasons.

First, the Congress organization would have lost all support in Kerala in the event of non-intervention.

Secondly, and more important, is this: the central government could not allow the masses of the people to be galvanized into action in any sort of mass insurrection.

For a mass insurrection against State authority would have meant, in the last analysis, an insurrection against the Indian constitution and the Indian capitalist State.

## SOLIDARITY WINS AT PETROCHEMICALS

From Our Merseyside Correspondent

THE 1,500 workers on the Petrochemicals site at Carrington, Cheshire, having won their strike. They returned to work after Kellogs International had reinstated two riggers and their steward.

The full reinstatement came immediately after a meeting had flatly rejected a management offer to lift the sackings and 'suspend' the men on full pay pending negotiations.

There is no doubt that victory was achieved only by the workers' prompt solidarity action.

Kellogs clearly intended to 'take on' the union organization on their contract. Instructions were given to the convener and stewards to work on jobs to be allocated, though on this large site convener and stewards are customarily full time.

Men were told that because they had complained about buses these would be withdrawn, and they would have to find their own transport. This has now been cancelled, and better coaches are being provided.

## BUILT THE UNION, SOLD 'BUILDERS' VOICE' —NOW HE IS SACKED

By Edward Knight

SACKING of George Moffatt from the Clyde Tunnel site, Linthouse, Glasgow, is a clear case of victimization.

Bro. Moffatt, the Transport and General Workers' Union shop steward, had only been on the job for three months. (Before then he was convener of shop stewards at the Good-year tire factory, but had been victimized for his trade union activities.)

In those three short months on the tunnel site all but a small section of the surface labour force had been brought into the union. The provision of protective clothing and the reinstatement of a sacked worker had been won.

The prospect of a 100 per cent. trade union job, with a link between the skilled and unskilled unions, was too much for Charles Brand and Co. Moffatt was sacked.

### Could not tolerate it

Two weeks before his dismissal the management told the area office of the TGWU that he was to be sacked. They maintained that there was no criticism of his work, but he had been seen selling the Builders' Voice, a rank-and-file building workers' paper, on the site. This they could not tolerate.

The matter was apparently resolved, however, when Moffatt gave an undertaking not to sell the paper during working hours.

Nevertheless he was sacked the following week on the pretext of his 'unsuitability for the work'. There were allegations that he had been standing around the job when he should have been working.

Union officials have been negotiating for his reinstatement. Meetings of the men on the site have revealed support for Moffatt; this has no doubt influenced the management in their decision to pay his wages while waiting for discussions with the union's group secretary.

This is a big test for the workers on the site, the overwhelming majority of whom have never before held a union card. The electricians' and joiners' stewards have indicated support.

## IS IT REALLY A BOOM?

The next issue of the Builders' Voice, out next week, discusses the present phony boom in the building trade and contains reports of building workers' struggles. It can be obtained, price threepence, from Brian Behan, 10 Woodquest Avenue, London, S.E.24.

## CLYDE EMPLOYERS ARE GETTING TOUGH WITH RIVETERS

By Our Scottish Correspondent

ONLY 240 riveters remain on the Clyde. Before the last war they numbered 18,000, but advances in welding techniques have drastically limited the work available to them.

Their skill is nevertheless in demand—but only as the employers feel fit to use it. For the majority this has meant employment for eight months or less a year.

The riveters are brought on to a job, then dismissed immediately that stage has been completed. They must wait on the Labour Exchange until the next job comes along.

A guarantee of employment and an increase in the wage rate has long been these men's demand.

At the end of May, owing to a stoppage of work by the rivet heaters, the squads of riveters at Denny's shipyard, Dumbarton, were paid off.

### Exercising right to choose

When the dispute was over and the employers again needed riveters, the men told them they would only accept employment on a rate of 8s. 6d. per hour (£18 14s. for a 44-hour week) and a guarantee of six months' work.

Denny's refused to grant these conditions and so has remained without riveters for twelve weeks. Barclay Curle's shipyard, Glasgow, has also been unable to get additional squads because it has refused to give the rate asked for and a guarantee of employment.

The riveters are not on strike but are exercising their right to choose the conditions under which they will work.

Denny's have now begun to suspend other sections of workers on the grounds that work is not available because of

the action of the riveters. This of course means that they will receive no unemployment benefit.

The employers' federation has announced its intention to support its member firms to the hilt. It warns that any concession to the riveters will open the way to an all-round claim on the part of the shipbuilding workers.

It threatens action unless the riveters accept employment at the yards where there is trouble.

This is interpreted as the threat of a total lock-out of all riveters on the river. That of course means a threat to close down the whole of the industry.

The employers' determination to break the riveters and to maintain their policy of driving down the conditions of the shipbuilding workers is a challenge that they cannot be allowed to get away with.

The district committee of the Boilermakers' Society has endorsed the riveters' demands, but that is not enough. Now is the time to cut across all the sectional barriers among the shipyard workers.

A real campaign should be conducted throughout the yards explaining that the riveters' demands for guaranteed employment and a wage increase are in line with the needs of every worker, and that the employers' threats are aimed at every worker on the Clyde.

In this way a campaign uniting every section of the industry would be under way. The possibilities of such united action are considerable.

### FIRST WALK-OUT SINCE '42—AND THEY WON

From Our Merseyside Correspondent

Prompt action has won a victory for electricians at the Cammell Laird shipyard, Birkenhead.

The management sacked fifteen 'sparks' and immediately took on six others. At this blatant attempt to sort out labour, 300 electricians—the total in the yard—walked out for an afternoon. This is said to be the first time the electricians have walked out since 1942.

Union officials told the management that if the fifteen sacked men were not taken back their workmates would refuse to do piece-work. The fifteen men were taken back last Monday.

### PRINTERS 'DEPLORE' SETTLEMENT TERMS

Three hundred members of the Typographical Association, meeting in Liverpool last week, deplored the terms on which the printing dispute was ended and reaffirmed a previous decision calling on members to vote against the proposed hours and wages agreement.

Only a handful of members voted against the resolution.

### OPPOSE TRANSFER OF NEW STEWARD

By Our Industrial Correspondent

Carpenters on the Gee Walker and Slater site in central London took strike action when Bro. Terry Scott, newly elected steward, was sacked for refusing to accept a transfer.

The men have decided to resume work and work to rule pending a disputes panel, though some militants opposed this.

The practice of transferring militants and stewards from organized sites where they receive support from their fellow-workers to tiny back-street contracts is a growing one in the building trade.

### RENT FIGHT LOOMING IN ST PANCRAS

Rent increases, many of them going beyond the provisions of the last Tory Rent Act, threaten council tenants in the London borough of St Pancras.

The newly-elected Tory borough council says it is introducing a differential rent scheme under which working-class occupants of four-bedroomed flats will in some cases have to pay £5 5s. a week.

Local tenants' committees, supported by local Labour Parties, are meeting at the town hall on Tuesday to discuss fighting the increases.

## ECONOMICS

### DESPITE PRESS BALLYHOO, 'RECOVERY' IS PRECARIOUS

By Cyril Smith

As election day draws nearer the Press talks more and more of Britain's economic prosperity. Unemployment is falling, gold reserves are rising and the sun is shining. You've never had it so good.

But another page of your morning paper will tell you of the plans to close one-quarter of Britain's coal-mines, and of compensation for textile manufacturers who are scrapping five million spindles and thousands of looms. What sort of recovery is this?

The post-war boom, which 'new thinkers' in the Labour movement told us was a permanent fixture, had three main bases.

**First** was the need to replace wealth destroyed in the war and to satisfy the demand for goods which had not been produced for six years.

**Secondly**, after 1949, the boom was sustained by the rearmament programme, which took labour, raw materials and machinery away from civilian production.

**Third** was the expansion of markets in the primary producing countries in Asia and Africa, as their incomes from the sale of raw materials went up.

Eventually the tendencies inherent in capitalist production caught up with the system and the 'new thinkers'. 'Defence' expenditure could not go on expanding indefinitely. Over-production appeared in one sector after another. The 1957 drop in commodity prices and in the demand for raw materials drastically reduced the incomes of the primary producers.

#### Government prepared the way

Unlike the other post-war dips in the U.S. economy, this one coincided with a sag in the expansion in western Europe. Capitalism saw its biggest post-war slump.

In Britain the recession arrived to reinforce the Tories' efforts to create a pool of unemployment. This policy began in 1955 with the raising of Bank Rate.

By credit restrictions and high interest rates, the government prepared the way for the employers' offensive against union organization. This was vital for them to reduce costs so as to meet increasing competition in the world market.

The bottom of the U.S. recession was passed about a year ago. Since then production has reached record levels, at first mainly by means of increased production per man, without an increase in the labour force. Now unemployment has fallen too.

But even in the USA the new boom is by no means a solidly based affair. Despite the rise in production and retail sales, the market for capital goods—machinery and new factories—is only just recovering.

U.S. exports, which were badly hit last year, have still not picked up. As William F. Butler, vice-president of the Chase Manhattan Bank, said recently:

'It's too early to foresee the timing of the next recession. All that can be said is that there will be one some time in the next two or three years.'

Hardly the note of confidence in the future of the profit system which we used to hear three or four years ago!

#### Working substantially below capacity

The British 'recovery', for all the Press ballyhoo, is an even more precarious business.

While the demand for some raw materials has risen, the prices of most of them are hardly above the levels of a year ago. There is no tendency for firms to hold large stocks as there used to be in the good old days of inflation.

The result is that while the prices of British imports are

still very low, the markets for exports to some of the countries producing raw materials have hardly recovered.

The fall in unemployment is largely due to an increase in the production of consumer goods—cars and television sets especially—which is related to the pre-election policy of hire purchase and credit relaxation.

There is also an artificial building boom, helped by low interest rates and the road-building rush.

When it comes to investment the picture is quite different. Discussing the rise in steel production, the Financial Times says:

'Steel companies have benefited both from the boom in consumer durables and from the increased activity in the building industry, but the mills are still in many cases working substantially below capacity because of the lack of orders from the capital goods manufacturers.'

Production of machine tools has only just stopped declining.

### Drive against organized Labour

Meanwhile three of Britain's oldest basic industries, coal, cotton and shipbuilding, are 'planning' their future decline.

The same applies to the aircraft industry, whose expansion has been largely financed by State aid over two decades.

The effect is shown in the records of registered unemployment—which grossly distort the numbers out of work. Although the Great Britain figure is down to 1.8 per cent. Scotland stands at 4 per cent., Wales at 3.3 per cent. and Ulster at 7.3 per cent. More than half of the registered unemployed have been on the dole for eight weeks or more.

The post-war boom prevented the full effects of Britain's decline as a world power from being felt in this country.

The colonial revolution, the world dominion of the USA, the return of Germany and Japan as competitors: these factors result in changes in every aspect of life in Britain, but changes which are yet to be fully developed.

Even the recession, while it brought the relations between Capital and Labour more into the open, also aided the Tories by reducing import prices.

After the election, whoever wins, the employers' offensive will open up in earnest. The drive to 'cut costs', which means a drive against organized Labour, will become even more imperative in the new competitive conditions.

More than ever will the outcome of the future struggles depend on the building of a Marxist leadership which can organize the resistance to the attacks of the ruling class.

### NATIONALIZATION OF BANKS IS LOGIC OF RADCLIFFE REPORT

By Tom Mercer

THE Radcliffe report is merely the latest of many attempts by both governments and individuals to find a way to iron out the trade cycle.

In all fairness it must be said that the members of the Radcliffe committee are under no illusion that this will be done easily—or even that it can be done at all.

In fact they visualize the possibility of a catastrophic slump, and admit that in such an event monetary measures would be ineffective. In such circumstances 'a government must place its main reliance on other measures'.

The report does not, however, specify what these other measures should be, nor how effective they would be.

The main emphasis is on monetary measures and what is the best way to use them in achieving stability and the growth of the economy.

No plan is laid down, no blue print given, but amid the welter of minor pieces of advice there is one major piece of advice given to the government.

That is to take the operational control of Bank Rate into its own hands and, using also its powers over the National Debt, to regulate the economy by putting pressure on the whole liquidity ratio, or by easing that pressure.

In other words the government is advised to put itself in

a position where it can influence the total of investment up or down by controlling interest rates over the whole field—i.e., both short-term and long-term rates.

To supplement this power, the report advises that somehow or other the government must be able to control bank advances effectively as well; otherwise the banks could disrupt all its efforts to direct the economy.

In this section the logical conclusion that to control most effectively would be by nationalizing the banks is so obvious that the report contradicts itself.

### Designed to curb excesses

First it stresses the importance of such control; then it insists that this power could be effectively enforced without legislation.

All that is required, it argues, is the right to alter the amount of cash (8 per cent.) that must be held in the till, or the 30 per cent. overall ratio of liquid resources to deposits.

The committee implicitly recognizes the anarchy in the economic system. Its suggestions are designed to curb the worst excesses.

Being a committee appointed to inquire into and advise on ways and means of making the capitalist economy work more efficiently, it was unable to look over the 'iron curtain' and learn how an economy could be regulated.

It nowhere discusses a system of planned proportional investment over the whole field.

## IRELAND

### A PARADISE FOR TOURISTS—BUT IT'S GRIM FOR UNEMPLOYED AND OLD FOLK

This article and a subsequent one are travel notes, together with some reflections on Irish working-class history, made by Brian Behan during a recent journey to Ireland.

To the tourist Ireland is a paradise. Here petrol, beer and fags are cheap. Hotel workers, conditioned by fear of the sack, dance attendance on the lucky traveller.

In the week that I was in Dublin a bevy of English debs—both male and female—descended on the place for their annual shindy. The scenes that followed seem unbelievable, but Press and television reporters solemnly recorded the high-spirited junketings.

The debs began by clearing the tables with their feet, kicking every scrap of delf into a heap of smashed china.

They proceeded to organize a war between the blues and the whites, each side armed with soda siphons and bags of rolls dipped in wine, and began a ferocious onslaught to see who was to carry off the prize—the head waiter's trousers.

Waiter after waiter was captured, debagged and dunked. To be debagged is to have your trousers torn off, and to be dunked is to be thrown into a pool of water.

### Champagne through the keyhole

One newspaper reported that a team of bright young sparks, unable to get at one of their mates because he had locked his bedroom door, poured champagne through the keyhole to flood him out.

When interviewed on television the young things admitted that they had come over 'to let off a bit of steam'. Neither the management nor the police thought it worth while to do anything to protect the waiters from assault.

\* \* \*

One hundred yards from the hotel in which the affair went on are some of the worst slums in Europe. Despite a very big drive on new housing since the end of the war there are still thousands of Dubliners jam-packed into houses built 300 years ago.

I walked through some of the worst of the slums. In some

of the poorest houses there are no curtains at the windows, the occupants making do with newspapers.

If you were unemployed, as my father was for six months last year, you would receive for yourself and your wife the sum of £2 a week while your stamps lasted.

When your stamps ran out you would have to go to the assistance board—which is renowned for its ability to belie its title.

### No room for bed

For the old people the position is truly horrifying. A typical case is that of my aunt, whose husband fought with Connolly, suffered imprisonment and went on hunger-strike.

This man, who fought like a lion for the Republic, died in the 'spike', the paupers' home. My aunt is now trying to eke out a miserable existence on a pension of 27s. 6d. a week.

The cost of living is in many respects higher than in Britain. For example butter is 4s. a pound—the same as Britain despite the fact that Ireland is an agricultural country.

Rents in the towns are just as high as in Britain. Under a new differential scheme, rents can go as high as £2 a week, and drop to 6s. if the tenant is unemployed.

\* \* \*

In the north of Ireland, except for higher social benefits because of its direct control by Britain, the position is no better. Housing if anything is worse.

The slums in Belfast were described in a report published in the Sunday Press of a man and woman who had not slept in a bed for six years. They were packed with their family into one room, and there simply wasn't the space to erect a bed.

### Population cut by half

As in the south unemployment is chronic. Emigration keeps pace with the south, though the direction may vary a little. Many of the northern emigrants make for Canada instead of Britain.

Emigration from both north and south has reduced the population, despite a very high birth-rate, to half what it was a hundred years ago.

\* \* \*

While I was in Dublin the Press reported that new elections were being held for the executive committee of a new union, and that the ballot was being conducted under the auspices of the 'Labour Court'.

Despite its title this body hasn't the slightest connexion with organized Labour. It is a government-sponsored body on

which serve employers and hack trade union officials, equipped with degrees in social science obtained after a complete repudiation of socialist ideas.

It was brought into being to try and soften the unions up and break the long tradition of militant action which stemmed from the great struggles led by Connolly and Larkin.

It was aimed in particular at destroying the legacy of Larkinism, which stood for the sympathetic strike by other sections of Labour not directly involved in a dispute.

### Unions have spiritual advisers

Most of the other unions have their spiritual advisers, who keep a discreet check on possible 'Red' elements.

One local rag has the happy knack of taking pictures of militant workers, and printing them over the caption: 'Should a Christian employer succour the Anti-Christ?'

Earnings are low. For example, while the rate for skilled workers in the towns is as high as in Britain without overtime or bonus, the actual difference would be as much as £5 a week.

The trade union movement in the south is now reuniting after being split into two congresses for the last ten years. The basis of the reunification is very much a pedlar's deal from the top; it is not aimed at uniting workers for struggle.

\* \* \*

Northern Ireland is the heart of the Irish industrial working class. Based on the shipyards, linen and aircraft, they are potentially the most revolutionary force.

In fact, despite the industrial militancy displayed in the recent strikes against redundancy, this great working class is under the leadership of the most reactionary Tory organization—the Orange Lodge.

It is a safe bet that nine out of ten shipyard workers in Belfast will vote Tory in the next general election.

### These men were fighters

All of this is a very big change from the days of Connolly and Larkin. In their day they united the working class, both north and south, into the Transport Union.

They fought and held their own with an employing class whose hatred of trade unionism, as exemplified by Larkin, knew no bounds. In 1913 this employing class locked out every man and woman who held a card in the Transport Union.

(To be concluded)

## Constant Reader | Battles Long Ago

HOLIDAYING in north Dorset, I visited Hambledon Hill, between Shaftesbury and Blandford, the scene of a tragic episode of England's great civil war.

Here two or three thousand peasants from this area and the neighbouring parts of Wiltshire and Somerset, banded together under the name of 'clubmen' to keep the war out of their vicinity, clashed with and were bloodily crushed by Cromwell's victorious army.

This was in August 1645, after the decisive defeat of the royalists at Naseby; by their militant neutralism the 'clubmen' were objectively helping to cover the royalist retreat.

Also, the lists of those captured at Hambledon Hill leave no doubt that this peasant movement had been well penetrated by royalist agents.

### Fire and sword

But the question remains, why did a substantial body of the peasantry in this region take up at that time an embittered 'plague-on-both-your-houses' attitude in so historic a conflict?

A Soviet historian of that period, Arkhangelsky, has suggested that the key may be found in what had happened in

this self-same corner of England, where Dorset, Wiltshire and Somerset meet, only two years previously.

Many of the local peasants, encouraged by the first parliamentary victories, had risen in revolt in the spring of 1643, levelled the enclosures put up by the gentry, and attacked their manor-houses—only to be put down with fire and sword on behalf of the Parliament by Edmund Ludlow, who had taken over as captain of Wardour Castle, one of the local strongholds.

Ringleaders to the number of twenty-eight were sent to London for punishment, and the peasants were taught very thoroughly that the parliamentary cause was not what they had thought it to be.

That experience may well have contributed to creating the mood that led to the sad business at Hambledon Hill.

More broadly, the disappointment of the masses of the people in both town and country with the revolutionary régime of Cromwell, as it dealt with their elementary interests, certainly did much to make possible the restoration of the Stuarts; just as Robespierre and the Jacobins were later, in France, by antagonizing their plebeian supporters, to prepare their own path to the guillotine at Thermidor. P.T.O.

### Recruiting 'Friends of the Soviet Union'

A case has just been argued without success in a Moscow court on behalf of the heir of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who hoped to get at last a cut from the fat profits that Soviet publishers have for years been making from Russian editions of his father's stories about Sherlock Holmes.

This and the recent to-do about a possible pirated version of 'My Fair Lady' being produced in Moscow, have for their background the fact that Russia is not a party to the international copyright convention.

This means that the Soviet authorities are not obliged to pay royalties for foreign books they translate and publish in Russia: also, of course, that foreigners may freely translate and publish abroad any Russian book they choose, without royalties being payable to anyone in Russia.

This situation enables the Soviet authorities to single out certain foreign authors for payment of royalties on a 'grace and favour' basis, by way of exception.

Lian O'Flaherty, in his book 'I Went to Russia' (1931), gives a glimpse of how this method is used to win friends and influence people in the literary world.

### The cash nexus

When he visited the 'Bureau of Revolutionary Literature' in Moscow he was asked to contribute to a questionnaire on writers' attitudes in the event of war.

"Why pick on me?" I thought. "My teeth are bad and my liver is diseased. But still . . . I have only eight roubles and I'm far from home."

"So I wrote, God forgive me, having no intention of ever again firing a shot at anybody but my creditors: "Should capitalist Europe declare war on the Soviet Union, I'll make war on capitalist Europe with every means in my power."

"This warlike statement was received with deafening applause and I grew rather sorry I was not of the stuff with which they make heroes.

"But in any case, my answer served its immediate purpose. The cashier at once paid me for a story which had been printed in the Bureau's magazine five years previously. I

was informed that on the following day the State Publishing House would pay me a thousand roubles on account of royalties due to me."

BRIAN PEARCE

## LETTER

### 'HE IS MISLEADING THE DERBYSHIRE MINERS'

BERT WYNN, Derbyshire secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, has been touring our coal-field and giving us his policy on pit closures.

On August 20 he came to Kilburn to speak. He said the NUM leaders considered that even if 'bad times' came we had only to stop Saturday working, cease opencast and the importation of foreign coal, and all would be well.

All this would provide a 'cushion' for us, and so they were not worried—hence the lack of preparation.

When I pointed out that this policy called for fellow-workers on opencast to be thrown out of work, and that a planned fuel policy is impossible under capitalism, and suggested a recall NUM conference to thrash out a new militant policy, he accused me of wanting a 'head-on collision with capitalism and workers behind the barricades'.

Three days later he spoke at Ripley. This time he did appeal for socialism. But he still said closing opencast, calling for planned fuel and returning a Labour government were the practical solutions.

I accuse Bro. Wynn of misleading the Derbyshire miners. He says: 'Close opencast'—as if that will alter the pit closing scheme. He said 'Slow down the atomic power stations.' That reminds me of the Luddites.

Miners should beware of this kind of talk. They should demand a recall conference as a start to a struggle for a shorter working day, three weeks' holiday, a 40-hour week for surfacemen and the nationalization under workers' control of coal distribution.

Belper, Derbyshire

Granville Stone

### NOTTINGHAM WORKER (Continued from front page)

doctor's evidence confirmed that marks on his leg were consistent with his having been bitten by a dog.

He conducted his own case, since he could not afford a lawyer.

P.C. Westwood admitted in court that he struck Barnaby, but said that this was because Barnaby was violent.

Barnaby claims that he had no chance to be violent. He says he was put with his back to a wall with his hands raised, and was guarded by a policeman with a dog while the police van came.

Then, he alleges, his arms were pinned behind his back, he was pushed forward into the van, and the policeman followed with the dog. He adds that when he objected to the presence of the dog in such a confined space, he was struck.

### Why was van needed?

All this, of course, is only Barnaby's story, and the magistrates found for the police. Yet two questions arise.

Since when has it been necessary to use police dogs to run in someone who is drunk and disorderly?

Since this man was picked up in the street where the police station stands, why was a van needed to take him only a hundred yards or so?

Replying to an appeal for costs in favour of P.C. Westwood, the chairman of the magistrates made a statement that some might think revealing:

'We feel that in the circumstances it was proper that the

case should be brought. We do not award costs.'

I asked Kenneth Barnaby what he thought about the attitude of the police to young people in general.

'Some policemen are all right,' he said. 'They'll talk to you in a reasonable way. But others shove you around and try to get you to be cheeky so they've got something on you.'

### A bit high-spirited

He said a young man might be accosted by the police for being a bit noisy and high-spirited around the town and would be asked for his name.

A day or so later he might be walking quietly through the town when the same policeman would spot him, go up to him, and ask his name again, obviously trying to provoke him.

'Once they know you,' said Kenneth, 'they don't leave you alone, and if you've got a record—even if it's only for some little thing like climbing the Christmas tree in the Market Square—they won't believe you can ever reform.'

'Also,' he said, 'if there's a fellow in his working clothes walking along not quite straight, followed by a bloke with a dicky bow walking the same way, and a policeman sees them both, he only charges the man in working clothes.'

Kenneth Barnaby is not out for publicity. He does not want to become a public hero. He is not full of big talk or bravado. Neither does he wear his hair long as some sections of the Press implied.

But he does not think the police should have unlimited powers. And he believes that anything which can be done to expose police brutality should be done.