

SOCIALIST REVIEW

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW, BUT INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

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SIXPENCE

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THE CHOICE FOR LABOUR

FOR YEARS, the Labour Party leadership has passed on quickly to next business whenever anyone dared to remember that we stand for "the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange." But it has never—until now—felt it necessary to contradict, to reject explicitly, this clause in our program. Today they are doing so. *Industry and Society*, their latest policy statement, is a conscious retreat from nationalization. It is an attempt to substitute state participation in the capitalist free-for-all for a nationalized and planned economy.

This is not altogether a "new line." When Labour came to power in 1945 it did, it is true, nationalize coal, transport, electricity, gas and steel. But these—except for steel which was never fully taken over—were the distressed areas of the economy. They were deficit branches, and the rest of industry depended very heavily on them. In stepping in and revitalizing them the Labour Government was serving the interests of the capitalist economy.

This does not mean that a Tory government would have done the same—bitter medicine is not easy to swallow. But if we remember that these industries are often owned by the state even in the most unsocialist countries we can understand that in retrospect British capitalism has not been displeased at the result.

The choice

A Labour Government within the next couple of years is almost a dead certainty. But the conditions are different to what they were twelve years ago: the economy is booming with very very few distressed areas to be nursed to life. Whereas in 1945, Big

Business opposition to nationalization was tepid; today it is red-hot and organized. Then, the capitalists involved were glad to sell their ruined mines and dilapidated rails for fat prices; today their balances are better and profits assured. Then, the Labour Government could clear up pockets of opposition by means of the controls inherited from the war; today controls barely exist.

The Labour leadership know this. They know that if they started to nationalize they would be rushing headlong into a bitter struggle with British Capitalism. And they remember the last real fight they had, in 1951; when the Labour Government fell because of a balance of payments crisis; when the money that was needed to pay for imports was smuggled out of the country because the capitalists had "lost confidence."

The choice for labour is a simple one. If we are to nationalize further we shall have to prevent sabotage of the 1951 variety. To prevent sabotage, we shall have to nationalize and control the banks, insurance companies and the finance houses who would otherwise channel "hot money" abroad. We shall have to nationalize

the industries that do a lot of business outside the country—oil, chemicals, heavy manufactures, shipping, etc.—and who could expand overseas at the expense of contraction at home.

In other words, if we are going to nationalize at all, in a way that will weaken British capitalism, that is, despite them and in the teeth of their organized opposition, we would have to go all the way. There is nothing like going the whole hog to save our socialist bacon. It's a question of all or none. We cannot start and then leave them to bring ruination on the country.

This the present leadership knows. That is what frightens them into paralysis. **Unwilling to fight capitalism, they will have to rule—when they form the Government—by courtesy of the capitalist class and within the limits set by that class.** These limits, to quote Keynes, the great economist of the Establishment, are defined by the "nerves and stomach" of Big Business and the confidence in the safety of their property and the continuation of their profits is the barometer governing right-wing Labour's actions.

The very nearness of office has made the leadership define their policy in a way that would infuse confidence in Big Business circles. No matter that the retreat from nationalization is a slap in the face for the workers in industry who couldn't care less whether the state creams off part of the profits they create or not. No matter that it goes against the express wish of the engineering workers, the builders, transport workers, chemical workers and all the others who have gone on record for the nationalization of their industries. What matters to right-wing Labour is not the people who put and keep them in office, but the "nerves and stomach" of the capitalists. Their few middle class elements who might vote Labour if Labour's teeth were knocked out completely.

Socialists' task

The annual Labour Party Conference next month is crucial for the health of socialism in Britain. With a Labour Government in the offing we have to choose now whether we are going to take a stride forward by nationalizing the economy in spite of the capitalists' active opposition or sit back to patch up whatever that class allows us to patch up.

Management Committees, meeting to instruct their delegates must ask themselves: are we or are we not going to reaffirm the socialist aims of the Labour Party? Are we going to reiterate our demand for "the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange" and throw out the leadership's policy statement, *Industry and Society*; or are we going to accept the rejection of nationalization contained in it and therewith the betrayal of a basic socialist principle?

Delegates to Annual Conference must fight and fight again for the enlargement of nationalization, for the acceptance of all its implications—a fully nationalized and planned economy—for the exposure of a leadership that is willing to accept the capitalist system root and branch.

The right-wing will not give in without a struggle. They will put up old-time "left-wingers" to defend their new positions. Bevan, after all, sat on the committee that prepared their wretched document. Mikardo likewise. They will be persuasive, very persuasive.

We must not be bamboozled into accepting a line that counters the very principles for which we are in the Labour Party. "*Industry and Society*" must be rejected out of hand by Conference. Delegates must make it clear that for us socialists there is no substitute for nationalization and a planned economy.

DEMONSTRATE

against the testing, use
and manufacture of the

H-BOMB

together with the *H-Bomb Campaign Committee*—set up by the *Movement for Colonial Freedom, Victory for Socialism*, and supported by *Tribune* and over 30 Labour MPs — — at

TRAFALGAR SQUARE

on Sunday, September
22nd — at 3 p.m.

SPEAKERS:

Barbara Castle, M.P.
Anthony Greenwood, M.P.
Ian Mikardo, M.P.
Dr. Donald Soper
Konni Zilliacus, M.P.

How to fight the Rents Act

By Stan Newens • Agent, Epping CLP

NOW THAT the 1957 Rent Bill has become law and the notices of rent increases and notices to quit are beginning to be sent out, it is up to the tenants in general to wage the real battle against the Act's provisions. In Parliament, the passage of the Bill, once the Conservatives put their minds to it was a foregone conclusion. They had the majority and at the best Labour could only delay it. In the Country at large, however, the fate of the Act will be determined to a very large extent by the character of resistance it encounters. Rank and file socialists everywhere must organise this resistance.

This means that we must banish any mood of resignation from our midst. In 1915, before there was any control of rents, it was a mass movement on the Clyde which forced the Government

to introduce Rent restriction. If we approach the situation today with resolution, there is no reason why we

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INDUSTRIAL

GEOFF CARLSSON, shop steward, draws the

LESSONS of the MARKET STRIKE

THE EXISTENCE of a strong, organized trade-union movement in this country, especially since the end of the war, has been a nasty thorn in the side of the employing class and their agent, the Tory Government. In order for this government to carry out its functions in the interests of capitalism generally, it is necessary for it to put the organized working class movement "in its place." That is what the government has been and is trying to do.

Their favourite weapon for disciplining workers—mass unemployment—is not available, owing to the favourable economic situation since 1945. In the first place there has been a sellers' market which meant that every employer has been using as much labour as possible to meet orders. Secondly, the tremendous arms budget has swallowed a large chunk of the available manpower. These have prevented the mass unemployment which we knew before the war.

Thus, while the employers as a class would like to wield the whip of unemployment, they see no reason why they, as individuals, should be first to use this weapon. Whoever starts will simply lose orders to his competitors.

It is in the light of this background that the dispute at Covent Garden must be viewed. The Market Tenants (employers) hold, through their Association, a considerable monopoly over London's vegetable marketing, and they were determined that the Market workers would be taught a lesson. They succeeded, and have thus set the pattern for employers in other industries to try and settle the score with their workers and have also given the Government a much-needed shot in the arm to continue with its anti-working class policy.

Lock-out's history

This dispute, rightly called by the workers a lock-out, started when the employers presented each worker with an 18-page document which, if accepted, would map out the new working conditions in the Market. The documents were torn up and the dispute started. And no wonder! Its main clauses provided for (1) redundancy of some 300 workers, (2) the removal of militants, (3) compulsory overtime, (4) hiring of labour to be taken out of the hands of the Union and into those of the employers, (5) employers to decide who should, and who should not, join a trade union.

Any one of these conditions should be sufficient to make organized Labour fight. Together, they indicate quite clearly that a serious threat exists not only to the trade union structure in the Market, but also a potential threat to the whole of organized Labour.

The employers prepared well beforehand. Stocks were accumulated and fleets of scab-driven lorries were held in readiness to break the resistance of the Market workers. During the strike they managed to maintain supplies with the help of their clerical staff and the active help of the police. And this in spite of the hundred per cent. solid turn-out of the Market workers and the wonderful sympathy strike of the dockers who refused to handle "black" goods.

How to succeed

To be successful, the strike had to be extended. It had to be official. But no. Cousins who, with the strength of the Transport and General Workers' Union was able to make the employers

and their Government think again over the provincial bus strike was not willing to listen to the voice of the Market workers. Here he is just carrying on where Deakin left off. **On the one hand, the employers and their Government complain when Cousins threatens industrial action; on the other hand, Cousins complains when the workers take industrial action.** No wonder he was jeered at the final sell-out.

Reading the daily Press and listening to wireless commentators during the strike gave, as usual, a completely distorted picture of the dispute. Not one of them mentioned any of the clauses of the employers' proposed new working conditions. Nothing but "Foodstuffs Held Up," "Produce Rotting," "Hooliganism" and "Union Mobsters" who, allegedly, intimidated the 90 per cent. of workers whose one desire in the world was to go back to work.

Where's our paper?

What a tragic indictment of the Labour Movement that we have not one mass-circulation daily paper which puts the viewpoint of the workers engaged in such important disputes.

THE CONFERENCE SEASON

By S. J. Bidwell • Organizer, North London NCLC
• Prospective Labour Candidate, E. Herts.

THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS takes place at the beginning of September and the Labour Party Conference on September 30th. This is the time of the year when hope rises in the breasts of millions in the British working-class movement for some sign that our leadership industrially and politically will shape a policy and fighting call to heave the Tories out of power and commence to build Socialism and workers' power in these islands. To what extent can we, who constitute the rank and file, look forward to more hopeful signs of this in 1957 than we got in 1956?

You may always be sure that the bulk of officials will never be found two strides ahead of the rank and file demands. It is much more likely to be a story of lagging behind or simply responding to the gathering pressure which events are forcing the workers to exert upon TU leaders.

The Rent Act, inflationary crisis, Hydrogen bomb testing, all combine to give the workers anxiety neurosis if not the material conditions right now from which violent upheavals are made.

The magnificent fight of the Road transport workers; the solidarity of the market workers and the dockers; and the firm front against wage-restraint—these skirmishes between capital and labour remind of us of the existence of the class-struggle.

The TUC has on the Agenda a proposal from the Boilermakers to support a token strike of 24 hours against the Rent Act. We can be sure this will be turned down. The Executive of the NUR made a similar call earlier this year and when the AGM of the Union took place in July, an appeal against the decision was narrowly carried by the governing body. This is hardly a case of rank and filers being more

Our trade union movement is nine million strong and without one effective printed voice. The *Daily Herald* expresses the opinions and policies of the right-wing trade union and Labour Party leaders. To the overwhelming majority of rank-and-filers it is no different to the Tory or Liberal Press. If it weren't for old loyalties, its circulation would drop much more rapidly than it is at the moment.

The news of this dispute (like so many others), its class nature, its importance—all these were left to duplicated hand-bills, issued by the Lock-out Committee and circulated to trade union branches, Trades Councils etc. Only a very small section of the Labour Movement got to know the issues involved. Where was the voice of the nine million trade unionists? What had the Labour Party to say?—From the top levels, nothing but a disgusting silence.

How to tackle the future

Had the dispute received official recognition, had it thereby received the support of the organized lorry drivers, railwaymen, dockers and cold-storage-men who would have refused to handle "black" goods, had there been a call for mass picketing by London's millions of trade unionists and Labour Party members—had all these been done, victory would have been assured and the Labour Movement in general

backward than the leadership since each delegate represents a large slice of the membership, and would not have tested the opinion of even a fraction of the workers represented.

Industrial and Political struggles

Debates at both the TUC and the Labour Party Conferences will underscore this foolish notion that the struggles of the workers against exploitation and for the overturn of capitalism, can be confined to two narrow grooves of industrial and political activity. The TUC naturally reflects in its deliberations the more detailed economic day-to-day problems confronting the working-class; but when it starts to study problems more deeply it cannot refrain from discussing the entire nature of the capitalist-state. When doing so, as this year's assembly will show, the thesis of the TUC and its leading members is to see how British Capitalism can be better expanded so that labour can have a bigger bite at the apple. Very little will be heard of the need to establish a workers' state and place power in the hands of those who are a thousand times more capable than the capitalists, i.e., the workers. Indeed one will not hear this language at all, because there are very few TU leaders who believe it to be so.

Notwithstanding justifiable scepticism over the TUC, the five motions submitted from the CEU, the Draughtsmen, the Building Workers and others to extend outright nationalisation and the attitude which must be taken for Unions catering already for workers in nationalised industry, cuts into the vitals of the recent miserable policy discussion statements issued by the NEC of the Labour Party.

At the Labour Party Conference, perhaps the most interesting will be

taken a great step forward.

It was not done this time. We must be sure that it is the next time. Whenever an attempt is made to introduce compulsory overtime, to sack a militant for trade union activity, the dispute must receive official recognition at once. How many defeats can be chalked up to trade union leaders who sit silent for weeks while their members are out on the stones.

Finally, the Covent Garden dispute has underlined the need for a socialist daily paper, worthy of respect from the working class. Facing, as we are, a period of increasing industrial and political upheavals it would be madness for us to fight with one arm tied behind our backs. We must have an industrial and political organizer in the shape of a fighting daily paper.

READERS' ROUND-UP

And now Japan. Readers of the *Socialist Review* are, probably, quite accustomed to read about the support and approval we receive from abroad. In fact, we are getting used to letters of praise from Europe, America, Africa and even such unlikely places as Fiji.

And now Japan. A group of militant socialists who publish a monthly paper called *Pioneer* have written a very warm letter asking us to keep permanent contact with them. They have already published extracts from Cliff's article "The Future of the Russian Empire; Reform or Revolution" (*Socialist Review*, December, 1956) and from his book, *Stalinist Russia, A Marxist Analysis*, in their paper.

This Japanese group is also an independent socialist group. We are proud to hear from them and glad to see that these ideas—militant socialism independent of both right-wing Labour and Stalinism—are a true reflexion of experience in the world at large, not only here in Britain.

the position of Nye Bevan on Public Ownership and the antics of his following MP's. *Tribune* (or Michael Foot) has been slow to react but it is now taking on a more challenging note. There is an enormous difference between the militant sounding Nye Bevan of yesterday hailed by the rank and file, and the writer of Nye's *News of the World* article which acknowledges the NEC Public Ownership statement and challenges its critics to produce something better. Perhaps not many readers of *Tribune* read also the Sunday sexual with the record circulation. **To produce something better than a proposition to extend state, i.e. capitalist-state investment in private industry, should not be too difficult.**

Industrial groups needed

The political and industrial interests of the workers are intertwined. An end must be put to the attitude that the workers' struggle can be departmentalised. The aim must surely be to organise the working-class on an industrial level for political action. It is ludicrous that so many active trade unionists, shop-stewards and others are not active members of the Labour Party and many are proud to boast of it. **As well as Ward organisation, factory branches should be encouraged and directly linked with Management Committees.** This one sure way of winning the coming generation of workers for the Movement and its inspirations.

At the moment, as the TUC and Labour Conference will reveal, there is a grave danger that the Party will ride high into power before long without any firm resolve to deal with capitalism, and what is worse, a disappointed working-class and middle-class, with the grave reactionary wake that it can bring. There is plenty to be done at the Annual Conferences by those who believe in Socialism in the Labour Party.

FORUM

Mary Klopper, Secretary, Scottish MCF, Prospective Labour Candidate, Edinburgh West, writes on

THE NATIONAL QUESTION

THIS QUESTION is right in the forefront of international affairs: The people of Algeria are fighting and dying to free themselves from domination and exploitation by French imperialism and France is ruining her economy, sending young conscripts to their death and committing acts of repression that horrify us to maintain control in Algeria. Hungarian workers and peasants rose against the totalitarian bureaucracy imposed upon them and fought desperately against the Russian forces which intervened to reimpose it. Both Algerians and Hungarians invoke the right of nations to self-determination in justification of their struggle.

Most non-Stalinist socialists instinctively feel that both peoples are justified in their struggles and in the invocation of the right of self-determination. This is not good enough. If we believe that socialism is a scientific approach to human society we must examine the theoretical basis of the right claimed and the concrete situation upon which it rests.

I cannot attempt to do this adequately in a short article but I promise to summarise a few of the major ideas on this subject put forward by socialist thinkers of the past and raise some of the main topics and questions which seem to me to require examination and assessment in the present situation. I hope this will stimulate thought and discussion amongst readers and lead to further contributions.

Right of self-determination

The first and most important lesson to be learnt from the writings of Marx, Lenin and Bakunin on this subject is that rights like any other ideological abstraction have no meaning except in so far as they reflect a concrete historical reality. One of the concrete realities of our day is the rise and persistence of capitalist imperialism.

This arose only at an advanced stage in the development of capitalism and was described by Hobson as differing from the older form of imperialism 'in substituting for a single growing empire the theory and the practice of competing empires, each motivated by similar lusts of political aggrandisement and commercial gain, secondly, in the dominance of financial or investing over mercantile interests.'

Lenin summarised this development as monopoly capitalism or the highest stage of capitalism, monopoly being a complete contradiction of the original nature of capitalism and characteristic of the transition to a higher system (i.e. socialism). He also regarded the complete territorial division of the world among the greatest capitalist powers as essential feature of imperialism. He saw the concrete foundation of the right of nations to self-determination in the proposition that even bourgeois capitalism could for a period expand the productive forces held back and distorted in the territories exploited by imperialism once these had been freed by national self-determination. This period of expansion would lead to the development of a working class and the growth of a struggle for socialism by that class.

Lenin and later Bakunin made it very clear that the right of nations to self-determination implied the right to secede from any new or existing political unit, empire or state, and that the revolutionary socialist movement should recognise this right and support

peoples struggling for it without succumbing to nationalism.

Both he and Stalin, writing with his approval, pointed out that secession and the fragmentation of states is not always a correct objective. Socialists in the imperialist nations must fight unconditionally for the recognition of this right but the peoples of the oppressed nations must themselves decide whether secession from any given state is a correct policy and socialists in these nations must do so in terms of the prospects of the development and success of socialist objectives. In his detailed debate with Rosa Luxemburg Lenin dealt only with the Polish question and none of these writers makes a detailed examination of the position the colonial territories controlled by the European imperialist powers although their references make it clear that they consider the right to self-determination to apply to such countries.

National independence vs. Russia

Changes, some of them profound, have taken place in the world situation since these fundamental ideas were set down and, if we are scientific in our approach, we must examine them in the light of these changes.

The most important change derives from the Russian revolution of 1917 which took the USSR out of the capitalist imperialist world both by establishing state ownership of the means of production and by isolating her from the world market for a long period. The right of self-determination was recognised by the Bolsheviks and Finland exercised it by secession.

But the war of intervention and the attempt by capitalist powers to exploit the national feelings of some of the component peoples of the USSR soon bedevilled the subject even in the early years. The development of the Stalinist totalitarian bureaucracy and the imposition of economic and social change on the "people's democracies" by Soviet military power after the second world war have further complicated the question. Tito's resistance to Stalinist dictation, Polish developments and the Hungarian rising all seem to express a drive for national self-determination within the existing economic system.

A great deal of data on the economic relations between the parts of the USSR and that country and the "satellites" would need to be assembled and analysed for a proper discussion of this topic but I will venture to set up a tentative proposition for discussion: After the Russian revolution of 1917 and the failure of revolutionary movements in the advanced capitalist countries the USSR was isolated in conditions of poverty and backwardness further exacerbated by the devastation of the civil war and the intervention of foreign powers. The Stalinist dictatorship arose out of these conditions.

To say that it has now accomplished a great task and created an entirely new economic situation in the USSR is not to justify the methods used but to record a fact. The "people's democracies" are not isolated as the USSR was in the years after 1917, and so the imposition upon them of the Stalinist totalitarian bureaucracy was bound to act as a brake upon their development and distort it just when conditions in the USSR itself was setting the scene for an ending of that system. In their case, the right to national self-deter-

mination may well, therefore, be correctly based upon the need to press forward towards full socialism and workers democracies, and Russian control of these countries is an obstacle to such developments. This is tentative proposition which may be worth detailed discussion.

Western Imperialism

Turning to the capitalist part of the world the old patterns of imperialism are still clearly to be seen in many territories. Political control over subject peoples is still exercised by most of the major capitalist powers. The system produces various distortions in the development of the economies of colonial countries, the limitation of their production to one or very few cash crops dependent on the world market, the prevention of the development of manufacturing industries, their use as military bases, the exploitation of their peoples as cheap labour in mining and agriculture and the re-export of profits to the metropolitan countries.

This system is maintained by the traditional apparatus of repression and undemocratic rule. Here the classical thesis that national self-determination can lead to an expansion of productive forces under bourgeois democracy and from there to the growth of a working class and the opening of the struggle for socialism remains entirely correct. The progress made by the economy of India since 1945 supports this view but her present economic difficulties and the growing class-conflict illustrated by the recent strike threat and the draconian legislation adopted by Nehru to avert it suggest that history is telescoping the stages and the period of development resulting from self-determination may be very short.

Socialism in one country—out

Another topic for discussion follows naturally from this. If the rapid development of the frictions inherent in capitalism in the former colonies leads to an early attempt to establish socialism in one or more of the colonies or recent colonies, what are the possibilities of this attempt being successful if capitalism is not eliminated in one of the advanced capitalist countries? There can be no short answer, but the history of the USSR and the knowledge we possess of the conditions in which any such attempts would have to be made indicate that the road would be almost intolerably steep without a parallel development of socialism in at least one of the advanced capitalist countries.

The new, disguised Imperialisms

A new form of imperialism has arisen or greatly developed since the first world war: indirect or economic imperialism.

The classical model here is the relationship between the USA and some of the Middle East states, in which the capitalist power exercises its economic dominion without direct political control by supporting and financing autocratic feudal rulers in exchange for exclusive control of some valuable raw material such as oil. This model has been followed by Britain in the Middle East and in a slightly less overt form by the USA in South America.

The intervention of British troops in Oman is no less an imperialist action because it has been "requested" by the

nominally sovereign Sultan. In such territories it will be claimed that political self-determination is not the question and the support of socialists for the struggle of new classes against their feudal rulers and capitalist imperialism must be based upon the backward and restrictive nature of this alliance. It may well be that the enterprises introduced into such territories are already creating a working class and we must study the question of the situation which is thus created and draw our conclusions from it. National self-determination in such countries appears to be directly linked with a class struggle against the old feudal order.

Another form of indirect imperialism arises from the persistence of unequal economic relationships between the former metropolitan powers and politically independent bourgeois states buttressed by an alliance between the indigenous bourgeoisie and foreign capitalism. A great deal of data is needed for the proper analysis of this phenomenon and its collection and exposition would be of value for the education of colonial national movements.

Settler rule

Another pattern which requires investigation and definition is that of the "white" dominions (South Africa, Central African Federation in the near future and possibly Kenya). Here political self-determination has been permitted where an immigrant minority holds the monopoly of economic and political power. South Africa, the most advanced of these countries, has begun to play an independent imperialist role with the export of capital to other parts of Africa and expansionist aims with regard to other territories. The question of the emancipation of the peoples in these territories is a vital one. I do not think we have given it sufficient attention to be able to say whether it is a national question or is now entirely one of the emancipation of a working class which happens to be of one race whilst the ruling class is of another. A correct analysis of this question could be of greater service to the peoples concerned than any amount of righteous indignation about the excesses of the colour bar.

Finally socialists should consider the national aspirations which still remain in countries such as Wales and Scotland which were incorporated with England before the modern capitalist form of imperialism had developed. We need a clear answer as to whether the right of nations to self-determination still has a concrete basis in the relations between England and these other parts of Britain.

The problems of imperialism have become more complex, there is a large area of the world where new questions must be posed and answered but the classical analysis still applies to the greater part of the imperialist world. Socialists must give militant support to the struggle of subject peoples for self-determination because in so doing they hold open the door for the new working class of nations exploited by imperialism to come into the international socialist movement which, alone, can solve their problems and ours.

Seymour Papert's promised second article on *Strikes* has been postponed through illness

POLICY

“What has this to do with Socialism?” asks Lawrie Kershaw, Labour Candidate for Wimbledon, when looking at

LABOUR'S “PLAN” FOR INDUSTRY

THE LABOUR PARTY'S new policy statement on future public ownership entitled *Industry and Society*, opens with a fine flourish of Socialist trumpeting.

It quotes in full Clause 4 of the Constitution of the Labour Party, which was adopted in 1918 and ratified as recently as 1956. This clause reads:

“To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.”

After this moment of elation the opening words of the second paragraph bring one down to earth with a jar:

“Why have Socialists attached so much importance to public ownership”—note the past tense. You may well ask: do we not attach importance to public ownership?

These two contrasts set the pattern for the whole statement of policy. Time and again we read a reasoned case showing the evils and inequalities of the present system and pointing to a need for furthering the socialisation of industry; and then the wrong conclusions are drawn by the writers of the pamphlet. It is no use writers in “Tribune” or elsewhere telling the Party that the popular interpretation of the policy by the Press and rank and file is wrong—our worst fears have been confirmed by the public utterances of the leadership of the party, particularly those dealing with economic affairs—Gaitskell, Wilson and Jay.

Finance controls business

The basis of the pamphlet's case against furtherance of public ownership is that control in the large public companies has been divorced from ownership. (The sections dealing with the fragmentation of shareholding and the directors' lack of financial control could well be quotations from the popular ICI advertisement which sets out to prove that it is a democratic institution owned and controlled by tens of thousands of small shareholders.)

The *Financial Times*' Share Index is used to prove the wide distribution of ordinary shareholdings which are seen to be as follows:

Small holdings, 1-500—30 per cent;
Medium holdings, 500-10,000—40 per cent.;

Large holdings, 10,000 up to 15,000—30 per cent of capital.

The pamphlet goes on to quote as an example BSA in which the largest shareholder is the Prudential Assurance Company with 5 per cent of the equity shares and in which over 80 per cent of the shares are held by 10,000 shareholders with holdings of less than £5,000 each.

From these facts the conclusion is drawn in the policy statement that large financial interests—the classical capitalists—no longer control these large important industries.

This conclusion bears no relation to the practical working of such organisations. In practice the only control exerted by the shareholders is at the Annual General Meeting at which few shareholders attend—we read of 10,000 shareholders in these Companies but an attendance of 100 at an average public company meeting calls for comment in the financial press as an outstanding event.

The Insurance companies and finance houses with their large blocks of shares always attend however, and with their votes can usually control the decision of the meeting. The much quoted small shareholder does not usually attend or at best gives a proxy to the Directors enabling them to use their vote. It is obvious that even apart from this open power the financial institutions with a block vote can wield immense power behind the scenes by influence on the Board of Directors and if necessary by placing their nominees on them.

Remember also that when raising fresh capital—particularly by means of Loan Stock—it is principally to these institutions that the Board must look.

I think the influence which these institutes wield was made very obvious by the authority shown by the Prudential Assurance Co. representative at the notorious BSA General Meeting last year when Sir Bernard Docker was removed from the Board of Directors of that Company.

I think the conclusion to draw from these facts is not that drawn by the policy statement; that the capitalists structure has changed and that industry is no longer controlled by the capitalist owner.

Admittedly through death duties, taxation, rises in the standard of living of the workers and other economic factors the private capitalist owner is disappearing but representatives of the same class have taken advantage of the structure of the large public companies to retain control over the country's economic power and wealth. The whole investment policy of the insurance companies and financial institutions has

been changed for this purpose—before the war these investments were made almost exclusively in loan and fixed interest preference stocks. Today they invest in equity stocks which give voting control—the Stock Exchange estimates that 15 per cent of all equity holdings in quoted companies are now held by insurance companies and finance houses.

Same old faces

The persons who are the directors of these companies are almost exclusively of the old capitalist owner class, and the policies of these investors is the continuation of the classic policy of that class.

Further evidence of the fact that the real control of these insurance companies and finance houses is in the hands of this class may be seen from the almost automatic appointment of retired senior Service Officers and Tory Cabinet Ministers to their Boards.

It is also interesting to note that when the Labour Party's Superannuation Policy was published the Tory press were concerned almost exclusively with the fact that large sums formerly in the hands of the Private Insurance Companies for investment would now be under the control of the State.

What service!

Another conclusion of the policy statement with which I must join issue is that many of the large public companies “are as a whole serving the nation well.” I would think that after some six years of almost unbridled capitalism in this country no one could accept that fact. As a result of allow-

ing the country's economy, which is largely controlled by these large companies, a free run, the Tories have produced a diminution in the Gold Reserves of this country, a drop in value of the Pound of some 20 per cent and a rise in unemployment figures to over 300,000 by May, 1957.

As for the theory advanced that the control of industry could be obtained by investment in equity holdings, surely the bubble was exploded once and for all last month when the British Oil Companies, in which the Government are substantial investors and represented on the Board, withdrew from Israel. The Government spokesman in the House of Commons said he had “no prior knowledge of this decision”—so much for control by investment!

Let us not forget also that industry, with the development of automation, atomic power and new synthetic materials, is on the brink of a new era and as the policy statement so rightly points out only the large concerns have the capital and technical capacity to cope with these developments. Is it right that these developments which affect the future of everyone in this country should be left uncontrolled in the hands of persons whose sole aim in life is the pursuance of profit?

A job for Conference

I feel it is essential that at the Annual Conference of the Labour Party this month it is made abundantly clear that the party has not retracted in any way from its declared aims of the past set out in clause 4 of the constitution. We

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT “REFORM”

By Cllr. Peggy Duff ● St. Pancras Borough Council

THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS for the “reform of Local Government” are so bedevilled by the financial changes that it is difficult to spare time to look at the other alterations put forward.

The proposals to substitute “block grants” for “percentage grants,” has rightly been accepted by both local authorities, and by trade unions and professional organisations representing workers in local authority employ, as a threat to standards, particularly in education. The progressive authority—and this is usually the Labour authority—will be penalised. It will only be able to maintain its present standards (far less improve them) if it places an extra burden on its ratepayers.

This, of course, is nothing new. It has already been done successfully with housing, where the burden has been switched from the Exchequer either on the local rates, or on to the Council tenant. In addition, the increase of revenue expected from the re-rating of commercial premises has faded away, through the 20 per cent rebate allowed on them, and the promised help through a reduction in the de-rating of industry is to benefit, not the local rates, but the Exchequer.

The Government, in fact, intends to cut the most important social services, such as education and housing, by placing local councils in such a position that they are forced to do it for them, and take the blame. Conservative authorities will no doubt, meekly do as they are told. Labour authorities that resist, that try to maintain their standards, and their building, will have to take the can back for increased rates.

What should Labour Councils do? It is no coincidence that many of the most progressive and the hardest hit

will be those in the big cities, in the conurbations, where educational standards are usually high, or higher than elsewhere, and where housing needs are still tremendous.

No Labour policy

It is a great pity that so far as housing is concerned, where the battle has been on already for some years, there has been no consistent Labour policy.

Some Councils have stopped building. There is a temptation to do this, to say to the Government: “O.K., if you won't co-operate, neither will we.” But who suffers most? The people still waiting for a decent home. Such Councils are, in fact, doing just what the Government wants them to do.

Some Councils have met the burden by putting in differential rent schemes. They say to this family and to that family: “You are earning more than £12 or £15 a week, so you must pay, not only the full cost of building your flat, plus the interest, but part of the cost of the man's next door.” This is particularly unfair in the conurbations where the majority of the people being housed are decants, families whose homes have been pulled down to make way for new flats. Unlike those on the housing list, many of them have not asked to be re-housed.

My own Council has continued to build as fast as it can, and has continued to keep rents at a reasonably low level, by giving an additional subsidy from the rates. We believe that

so long as the Government refuses to provide us with the money required to continue building at reasonable rents, the burden should be shared as fairly as is possible in the circumstances, among all the ratepayers in the Borough (and this, after all, includes council tenants).

So far as other services are concerned local authorities will be faced with the terrible alternatives of cutting services or raising rates. I hope that Labour Councils will maintain and continue to improve the most important services, such as education, health and housing, cut rigorously everything which is not essential, and accept the fact that to do this rates will have to rise.

This will not be a happy decision, for the main burden will fall on the residential ratepayer, and he is already hard-pressed. He has had to bear the effects of the 20 per cent cut in commercial industry. In 1960 his rateable value is to be re-assessed on a current value. The majority of them who live in rented accommodation are having to pay considerable increases in rent. On top of all this if he wants decent education for his children, proper welfare services for his wife and babies, a decent home to live in, he must pay extra for that too.

Nevertheless I believe that all Labour authorities ought to take this decision and I think it is very important that they should stand together and be united and forthright about it. Nationally and locally the blame must be laid where it is due. Labour Councilors must go out of their way to explain to their ratepayers what is happening. Tory councillors must be made to accept responsibility for their Government's policy, both by majority and minority Labour Groups. A consistent

(continued next page)

LABOUR'S "PLAN"—contd.

must not accept as our statement of future policy on **Industry and Society** a vague document which is open to misinterpretation by individuals who may be leading the Party at any particular time.

I think I can do no better than end this rather rambling article with a quotation from the Party's Policy statement which could be accepted as a yardstick for our future policy:

"As vast disparities in individual wealth begin to disappear we do not wish to see a new order of privilege based upon the control as distinct from the ownership of corporate wealth taking its place. Nor do we wish to see the sharp distinctions of opportunity and status which in the past have been based largely on personal wealth, replaced by new and equally sharp distinctions delineated by the social policies of corporate managers."

I feel that if we are to achieve the five aims set out in the pamphlet, namely

(1) **The removal of inequalities of wealth and the division of society into privileged and under privileged classes,**

(2) **To achieve a new spirit of co-operation and fellowship in industry,**

(3) **To make the exercise of economic power responsible to the nation,**

(4) **to achieve effective control of industry and remove the danger of slump and unemployment, and**

(5) **To achieve higher productivity, we must reaffirm and work for a policy of common ownership of the basic industries of this country not forgetting the great industry so far overlooked—that of finance, including not only the banks but also the insurance companies.** On this final note it might be well to remember an utterance of Sir Hartley Shawcross when speaking of the industrial Life Insurance industry in the House of Commons on February 2, 1948:

"We have by no means shut our eyes to the possibility of making industrial insurance a national service." How far can a man's views change?

REFORM—contd.

policy of attack on the Government is essential. We have learnt in St. Pancras that a progressive and forthright Council, ready to defy the Government, can get the support of people supposed not to be interested in local Council affairs, and can get the headlines in local and national newspapers.

If this is to be done successfully, however, a clear lead must be given by the Parliamentary and the National Labour Party and it is also up to the unions to play their part, not merely in backing their local Councils, but in winning for their people wage increases to compensate for the increased rents and rates.

So far as the other proposals for reform are concerned, they were very adequately described in the House of Commons by Mr. Michael Stewart in this way:

"The proposals on structure and functions have been characterised by a timidity and lack of clear purpose throughout. The Minister has called it 'a bold overhaul.' It is not an overhaul. It is a fidget... Local authorities are to have only partial re-rating, no new source of revenue, and block rather than percentage grants. The effect will be that although the Government are claiming to give the authorities greater freedom and greater responsibility, they are making it almost impossible for the authorities to get the resources with which to discharge these responsibilities."

I believe myself that very considerable reforms in local government are long overdue. I favour a two-tiered system consisting of a top tier of large authorities with wide powers over a few services such as roads and lighting, with

OUR FUTURE

By Michael Segal • Co-Editor, *Forum*, Journal of the Socialist Forum Movement

ON SUNDAY, October 20th, the London Socialist Forum will be holding a discussion-conference at the Holborn Assembly Rooms to consider its future policy and structure. By then a year will have passed since the events which gave rise to the Forum movement and it is, indeed, time to take a long cool look at its prospects.

Initially, the need for discussion groups sprang out of the controversy within the Communist Party as a direct result of the Krushchev report and the subsequent bursting of the self-imposed strait-jacket of stalinism, whipped to a climax by the events in Poland and Hungary. Once it became obvious that the leadership of the British Communist Party were determined to resist any fundamental analysis of its shortcomings, its structural sclerosis and its pathetic lack of independent theoretical equipment, together with the continuation of its subservient attitude to the Soviet leadership, many communists left the Party and began to organise in discussions groups to maintain contact and also to begin the long-neglected job of re-assessing socialism in the light of contemporary society.

Many of us who had spent several years already in the political wilderness, repelled equally by the sterility of the Communist Party, the shrill self-righteousness of the various Marxist sects, and the ponderous emptiness of the Labour Party, joined in. The wilderness became fantastically over-populated by hordes of people wandering around in every direction. The first thing the forums catered for was the need to wander around **together.**

This period—the 'spontaneous' period, if you like—is now over. If the Forum movement is to grow into a

a lower tier consisting of medium-sized authorities with much wider powers than the present district or metropolitan borough councils, more on a line with those of County Boroughs.

Opposition to such reforms, however, exists both among Tory and Labour Councils where there are vested interests on both sides. County Councils are reluctant to part with powers to smaller authorities. Tiny authorities are reluctant to be absorbed in larger ones. Chairmen of Committees and leaders and whips too often prefer to remain big fellows in their own little pool. I hope that some future Labour Minister will be more progressive and more ruthless with diehards, even if they are Labour Councillors.

I am inclined to agree with suggestions that while administrative wherever possible should rest with the local council, finance should be a national responsibility. This would mean, of course, an end to rates. I can see no reason why one should have to pay rates AND taxes, anyway. One payment should cover the lot.

One last point. One of the most vicious and reactionary proposals put forward is that the New Towns should be handed over, not to the Local Councils, but a new agency. This will mean that these New Towns, planned and started by a Labour Government, will be administered not by the elected representatives of the people who live in them, but by a Conservative planned and manned board. It may well involve the sale of valuable land and freehold rights, where factories are now tenants of the New Town Corporations, to private enterprise. I hope the Labour Party will make it clear that as soon as it gets back to power it will give these towns to the people who live there.

representative current of left socialist opinion, agreement must be reached on its objectives and on how to achieve them.

A certain start

A basis for this discussion lies in the statement of aims provisionally accepted by the London Socialist Forum, to be presented for ratification to the conference in October. It declares that:

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 rivals or alternatives to existing political 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 and to formulate the more detailed current policies required and to seek to influence opinion in favour of them.*

Is this enough?

All well and good. Several questions, however, immediately spring from this and it is the solution of these that will determine whether the Forums have any justification for continued existence or whether they will recede with the diminution of the tide of stimulating events.

The urge to discuss the whole range of socialist theory and practice comes not only from the recognition by ex-communists—and some communists—of the appalling lack of coherent and relevant marxist theory, but also from the recognition by marxists and left socialists in the Labour Party and other groups that there is no commonly accepted framework of ideas among us by which to analyse national and international developments and to act in unison in the political and industrial arena.

Although verbal agreement is easily reached in grandiose general terms—we are all in favour, for example, of workers' control of industry—in detail we have little to go on. What does Workers' control mean in reality? How will specific factories be operated and managed? What relationship will there be between overall national planning and individual and local industrial needs? Who will decide on the volume of output, the size of the labour force, the direction and amount of investment?

Once we break down the slogans into problems, the amount of discussion and study to do before clarity and unity are achieved is colossal. The twin explosions within the Communist Party and the left of the Labour movement has forced discussion to the fore. **The job of the Forum movement is to channel and develop the discussion until it bears fruit and spills over into concerted action.**

The terms of the discussion are defined by the ends we wish to obtain. If we are concerned with socialism we are necessarily concerned with the analysis of the modern world in social economic and political terms, with the techniques of achieving a free society based on common ownership and control, and with the construction of that society.

SOCIALIST FORUMS

What is the strength of modern capitalism? What implications does this hold for radical opinion and action—nationally and internationally—politically and industrially? Does modern imperialism differ in degree or kind from earlier forms? Does peaceful co-existence imply the continuation of capitalism in the West? How do we achieve socialism? Can parliamentary methods be used? What specific forms of industrial and political organisations are needed? What do we mean by socialist democracy—how does it differ from parliamentary democracy and "peoples' democracy?" etc., etc.

The list is endless but the discussion, however good, however well-planned and developed, will be useless if it takes place in a vacuum, outside the movement of events. The conclusions which are reached must be applicable and applied. As far as I am concerned, the main object of our work and activity must be toward the development of a self-conscious, confident, vigorous and coherent left-wing in the Labour movement. Within a policy of continuous controversy, we must extract the major issues of agreement and act upon them in a united and effective manner.

Build the Labour Party Left

This is, of course, where the wrangling begins. Where do we act? Leaving aside the discredited Communist party (although not the remaining dissident element), two main trends of thought exist in the forums and I think it is high time to look at them openly and without fear of offending this group or the other.

There are a number of groups who want to create a new Marxist party. On the other hand there are several groups plugging at creating a left-wing within the Labour party. At some point a choice must be made.

Those who are forming new Parties, Leagues and Federations have my sympathy but little else, especially when they are so virulently and stridently manning non-existent barricades. My hesitation about the feasibility of constructing a cohesive left-wing in the Labour party lies mainly in the timidity and rather vacillating attitudes that these left-wingers display in the shadow of Transport House. It surprises me that those who are so brave in the face of the directives and dictatorship of the Communist party bosses should be suddenly convulsed with apprehension at the possibility of "proscription" and fearful over the "respectability" of such and such a group or individual, so that they dare not associate with them except on dubious and clandestine terms, and are unable to speak out clearly when it is vitally necessary to do so. This spells death to any fresh realignment of the Left and repeats the dismal history of weakness and disunity of previous years.

My personal view is quite clear. We must openly develop within the Labour party a "new Left," united on common aims, based on a broadly accepted theoretical background and an agreed programme.

The future of the Forum movement lies in its ability, together with such bodies as Universities and Left Review, Victory for Socialism, the ISSS and the Movement for Colonial Freedom, to create, spearhead, and expand such a movement.

This article is designed as a contribution to discussion and reflects no more than a purely personal expression of opinion.

INTERNATIONAL

The backbone of the fight for national independence in French North Africa is

THE ALGERIAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

By Andre Giacometti

A GREAT DEAL of recent discussion in the international labour movement has revolved around the Algerian question.

At its Fifth Congress in Tunis the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) demanded that the French Government open negotiations with the "legitimate representatives" of the Algerian people on the basis of the recognition of Algerian independence.

At the Congress of the Socialist International in Vienna the British and Scandinavian delegates sharply attacked the policy of the French Socialist Party and of the French government. Several delegates demanded independence for Algeria; the Congress decided to send an investigation mission to that country.

It is all the more remarkable that the first Congress ever held by an Algerian trade union organization—the First Congress of the Algerian Workers' Trade Union Federation in France (USTA), held in Paris from June 28 to June 30, received very little attention in the labour press. Some of the reasons for this silence, and the exceptional importance of the event, become clear in the historical and present political context of this Congress.

Start and repression

The "Union des Syndicats des Travailleurs Algériens" (USTA) was founded in February 1956 in Algiers by trade unionists close to the Algerian National Movement (MNA), the nationalist party led by Messali Hadj. A month later, the rival National Liberation Front (FLN) followed suit and set up the "Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens" (UGTA). Both unions made rapid headway, the UGTA largely thanks to the support of the CGT (CP-controlled trade unions) and the CPA (Communist Party of Algeria).

Their development was cut short by repression. The leadership of the USTA soon disappeared in the concentration camp of St. Leu; the building was shut down, the records confiscated, and membership of the USTA became sufficient ground for internment. The UGTA continued to function for a few weeks in the building of the reformist nationalist party UDMA which had rallied to the FLN under the leadership of Ferhat Abbas. Then it too was suppressed, and its leaders were imprisoned in concentration camps. For over a year now, it has been impossible to assess the relative strengths of these organizations in Algeria.

In France, the USTA remained in existence under the general laws applying to trade union organizations, and set out to organize the 400,000 Algerians working in France, who had been either unorganized or members of the CGT. The UGTA did not appear in France as a separate union. Instead, Algerians of the CP and of the FLN organized a "friendly society" for Algerian workers within the CGT, called AGTA, which never found much support and in no way represents a serious competition for the USTA.

The need for independent organization

The need for an independent trade union of Algerian workers has long been a recognized fact. In all fields (housing, wages, working conditions, social security, etc.) the Algerian workers are suffering from discrimination in its most brutal form. They received little support, if any, from French working-class organizations. In the post-war years, almost all organized

Algerian workers were members of the CGT. Nonetheless, the leadership of that union paid little attention to their specific needs, and instead exploited them for its own political purposes. In its report to the Congress, the Bureau of the USTA writes:

"We became aware that many of our demands were published in *Le Peuple* or in other papers of the CGT, but that no action was ever organized to obtain satisfaction for these demands by a common struggle of Algerian and French workers.

"On the other hand, as soon as a 'political' strike had to be organized, the leadership of the French Communist Party (PCF) would come begging for our help. In fact, for the leaders of the CP-CGT, as much as for colonialism, the Algerian workers represent a passive mass which both manipulated according to their interests.

"For the employers, we are a cheap labour force.

"For the CGT leadership, we are a political 'labour force' whose militancy can be very useful."

It is not surprising, under these circumstances, that the first independent Algerian union to appear in France made rapid progress. The first Congress of the French Federation of the USTA reflected this development.

Congress issues

The Congress was attended by 324 delegates, representing over 70,000 Algerian workers who had joined the USTA in France within a year of its existence.

It dealt, first of all, with various aspects of discrimination against Algerian workers: the miserable barracks and huts furnished by many companies as a pretext for housing; the wage differentials for equal work and the inferior working conditions; the violation of elementary rights of union members and organizers by employers and police (firings, searchings, arbitrary arrests); the restrictions on travel (Algerian workers have to apply for a visa to return to Algeria).

It made a special point to assert its independence from all parties, and to open its organization to workers of all political commitments and ethnic origins. It is clear, however, that an Algerian trade union cannot evade the political issues arising from the colonial status of the country and from the present state of war. Consequently, the Congress adopted a resolution calling for a "round-table conference," including representatives of the French government and of all Algerian nationalist parties, trade unions and other groups, to negotiate a cease-fire agreement.

Other important political issues were raised: a delegate from the Saharan territories raised strong protest against the plan of the French government to dissociate administratively the Sahara from Algeria. It is important to remember that oil has recently been found in the Sahara, and that the MNA has stated that it would not recognize any contracts or commitments of the French government to French or other foreign companies.

The relations between French and Algerian workers also received special attention. The Congress addressed a special message to the French minority in Algeria, appealing to it to overcome

its chauvinist and racist reflexes and asking it to collaborate with the USTA in the reconstruction of a free Algeria. A message from Messali Hadj was read which stated in part:

"Even now, you will have to seek by every means to establish ties of co-operation with the non-Moslem Algerians who are our fellow-countrymen and with whom we shall build a new Algeria tomorrow, on the basis of equality, of fraternity and of social justice. This great work, which makes demands on our whole intelligence and human spirit, requires a firm determination to create a situation where the other ethnic groups living in Algeria will find on our part the friendship, the understanding and the security they need in this period of great changes. I say to you: although the most terrible poverty grips our people . . . we must come to our brothers of the ethnic minorities as liberators, not only of a part of the Algerian people, but of all people living in Algeria."

Ayes and nays

In France itself, the USTA has also sought the co-operation of French workers, and has found some response among ordinary workers, in spite of widespread racist infection through the press and the radio. Cases are known in the North—they still remain exceptional—where French workers voted in union elections for the USTA as a protest against the inertia of the French unions. Although the official leadership of the latter boycotted the Congress of the USTA, leaders of the minorities were present: Tharreau of the Metal Workers' Federation of Force Ouvriere (Socialist Party T.U. organization) Paul Ruff, Secretary-General of the Teachers' Union of the Paris Region, Maraval of CFTC (Catholic T.U. organization), Hébert, Secretary of FO in Loire-Maritime (St. Nazaire), Charles Lemoine of the Miners' Union of the CGT, all of whom spoke to the Congress or sent greetings.

The official attitude of the French trade unions has been, not unexpectedly, much different. The leadership of FO has supported all phases of Guy Mollet's policy and has opposed any independent Algerian trade unions on the grounds that "Algeria is France" and that Algerian workers should join FO. The leadership of CFTC did not commit itself very strongly one way or another; torn between its governmental inclinations and the new policy of the Catholic Church favouring colonial emancipation, it has sought refuge in abstention.

Stalinists' opposition

The policy of the Stalinist leadership of the CGT constitutes one of the most interesting aspects of the Algerian question, and deserves to be exposed in detail.

Just like the Tunisian and Moroccan trade union bodies, the USTA met with strong opposition from the CGT. At first, this opposition expressed itself in the support given by the CGT to the rival FLN-controlled organization, the UGTA. This policy parallels the support given by the CP to the FLN which it hopes, not without reason, to capture at least in part. Contrary to the MNA, the FLN is politically, as well as socially, a patchwork of conflicting interests, without inner cohesion or positive programme. Consequently, the leadership of the UGTA was dependent from the beginning on the Stalinist cadres for questions of organization as well as political guidance.

In France, the CGT at first proceeded along the same lines, by setting up the AGTA—an FLN front under CP tutelage. But, in the face of continued progress

of the USTA, the Stalinist leadership fell back on the only methods it can use when it has no political answer. At first, it started a slander campaign, accusing the USTA of being splitters, diversionists, racists, chauvinists, police spies and enemies of the people in general. It denounced USTA organizers by name in publicly distributed leaflets, pointing them out to the employers and to the police. Finally, it put its whole whole apparatus at the disposal of the FLN "extermination campaigns"—since the end of 1956—supplying the terrorist cells of the FLN with arms from the Stalinist countries (Eastern Germany in particular). In Lyon, the police recently discovered a large arms cache in a building owned by functionaries of the AGTA-CGT; also in Lyon, the assassination of the local secretary of the USTA a few weeks ago seems to have been organized by French members of the CGT. This is the first case of this nature; it probably will not be the last.

In the plants, the Stalinist delegates of the CGT work with the employers in keeping the USTA out of union elections. In many cities, the Stalinist mayors prohibit the use of city facilities for USTA meetings and rallies.

By this double policy of attempting to smash the MNA and the USTA, while attempting to take over as much of the FLN as it can, the CP is setting itself once more against the revolution of the Algerian people, trying to repeat its "achievements" of the Spanish Civil War. But the Algerian workers are forewarned. It is too late for police methods and political manipulation. By now, the Algerian revolution is too massive, too conscious and too well-organized a movement for the Stalinist leadership to handle.

An independent body

From a trade union point of view, and from a political point of view, the USTA is in a position to play an exceptional role in North Africa. It disposes of an experience which none of the other nationalist trade union movements had at the outset; the Algerian workers know what bourgeois nationalism is, and how it can paralyze popular mass-struggles; they know what "liberal colonialism" is; they know what Stalinism is; they know that the only guarantee for progress and freedom is in their own, independent, democratically controlled organization.

In other words, their own experience has emancipated them from both bourgeois nationalism and from Stalinism. In this sense, the conflict between MNA and FLN is not completely detrimental to the cause of the Algerian people. It has clarified the social and political issues from the beginning of the fight for national liberation, and has differentiated a conscious and well-organized proletarian current from the foreign influences that have set it back in Tunisia and in Morocco.

Unfriendly ICFTU

The problems of the USTA lie less within the movement than outside of it. Because it stands firmly on the ground of working-class independence, and will not subordinate itself in any way to interests foreign to the working-class it has been able to create a particularly conscious and militant movement

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What has happened to the IRISH REVOLUTION?

asks Senator Owen Sheehy Skeffington from Dublin

WHEN I LOOK at the condition of Ireland to-day, what concerns me is not whether we occasionally wobble on the road, but whether we are on the right road at all. My profound conviction is that we are not, and that we never have been since 1922. The basic reason for this is that the vast majority of Irish Republicans, past and present, had never, and have never, given a thought to what precisely the social and economic content of their Republic would be. For them the Republic is a bright symbol entirely devoid of significant content.

"Cut down on expenditure," you say, "let's have cheaper Embassies abroad." That is simply to scratch the surface of the problem. As well might you try to make a tubercular cow 'economic' by moving her into a less costly stable. This is mere evasion. The real fact is that the Irish people are terrified, I repeat terrified, of facing the facts of social and economic life, which lie behind, and inevitably produce, our scandalous unemployment in the midst of work crying out to be done, and our emigration in hundreds of thousands from this splendid country which we have so far lamentably failed to make.

All our efforts—or almost all—since we gained our present measure of self-government, have been directed towards setting up and maintaining a tuppenny-ha'penny, third-rate capitalist statelet, in which our new ascendancy can feather its nests and buy its big American cars, while poor Paddy and Bridget are free to continue as under-educated labourers and maids for the home—and export—markets. That our new Irish-Ireland aristocrats of trade and politics have, indeed, far less social conscience than many of their "big-house" predecessors makes the exploitation process, of Irishmen by Irishmen, all the smoother.

I remember, in the early 1940s, I think, giving a talk to a -Sinn Fein

group in Parnell Square. Mrs. Buckley was in the chair. My theme was one which had been succinctly formulated by James Connolly in 1897, a dozen years before I was born:

"If you could remove the English army to-morrow, and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the Socialist Republic, your efforts would be in vain."

The Irish parable

In the general discussion that followed, one speaker whose name I did not catch, made a simple and moving speech which I have never forgotten. He said that he had been a soldier of the Republic in Munster in 1918-22, when part of his duty had been to see to the carrying out of the decisions of the Republican Courts. He told us of one case which was seared into his memory.

A Republican landowner and a Republican tenant farmer had appeared voluntarily before the court. The small farmer owed a lot of rent and the landlord wanted his money. The latter clearly showed that he needed money, and submitted that he could not be expected to keep the other on charity, though admitting that he was a hard-working farmer. The tenant pleaded

that times had been very bad for him, that he had a wife and young family to feed, and that, short of selling his one cow, he had no way of raising immediate cash.

The court deliberated and decided, reluctantly, that the landlord had proved his case, that the money was due, and should be paid. And not long afterwards, in accordance with this verdict, an I.R.A. detachment had to be sent to seize the wretched cow and sell it.

The man telling the story had been one of this party and he said that as he helped to carry out this Republican Court Order, it was brought home to him directly for the first time that it was not enough to fight for a Republic based on all the old ideas of private ownership and rents and profits. The experience led him to read Connolly—and in particular his **Socialism Made Easy**—and to a clear realisation that what Ireland really needed was a planned socialist economy, whose first concern would be for the needs of the people and not the greeds of the profit-seekers, be they Irish or English.

This tale, simply told, contained in my opinion the whole kernel of the Irish Republican problem; and it shows, for those who want to see, just what it was that "went wrong" with our national revolution.

No solution short of socialism

To-day, of course, Ireland is terrified of Socialism, and has been, ever since Connolly was murdered (with the approval of a whole section of Ireland's ruling class).

And so down the years it has gone like this: "Let's try everything except changing the capitalist system. Let's try Cumann na nGael with an enormous Dail majority." Ten years of that. It didn't work. "Let's try Dev, with a real Republican Party in the Dail." Sixteen years of that. It didn't work. "Let's put Dev out and try a government of the best brains in all the other parties." Three years of that. It

didn't work. "Let's give Dev another chance. Three years of that. It didn't work. "Let's try the coalition again." Three years of that. It hasn't worked. "Now, let's try Dev again." And by this time thousands are saying: "No, let's try not going into the Dail at all." And others say: "What about having cheaper Embassies, and abolishing the Senate?" Can anyone in his heart really think that therein lies the solution? I for one do not.

Just so long as we fail to plan our whole economy in order to apply all our available labour-power to all our resources, for the satisfaction, first, of our people's needs, all our problems of unemployment, under-production, emigration, poverty and under-education will remain unsolved.

Connolly's nightmare true?

Away back in 1909, Connolly imagined the "patriot who won't touch Socialism" haranguing the Irish worker:—

"Let us all join together and cr-r-r-ush the br-r-r-utal Saxon. Let us all join together," said he, "all classes and creeds."

"And," says the town worker, "after we have crushed the Saxon and freed Ireland, what will we do?"

"Oh, then you can go back to your slums, same as before."

"After Ireland is free," says the patriot who won't touch Socialism, "we will protect all classes, and if you won't pay your rent you will be evicted, same as now, but the evicting party, under command of the sheriff, will wear green uniforms and the Harp without the Crown, and the warrant turning you out on the roadside will be stamped with the Irish Republic. Now, isn't that worth fighting for?"

Such was Connolly's picture of the fate of the meek and docile Irish worker—rural or urban—in the Capitalist, money-grabbing Irish Republic of the future.

When, then, will Ireland dare to awake and shake off her fears? Have we yet, indeed, reached the point where an Irish newspaper will even allow a such a question to be put to its readers?

ALGERIA - contd.

among the Algerian workers, but it has also made many enemies.*

The hostility of the GCT leadership is a case in point. Nor did the USTA get much support from other sources. As is known, both USTA and UGTA applied for membership in the ICFTU. A year ago, at its meeting in Brussels, the Executive Committee of the ICFTU decided to accept the application of the UGTA and to reject the USTA. The decision was taken on the basis of the UGTA being more "representative," but the only criterion used was the union elections to the Algiers Streetcar Department—which the UGTA won hands down since the management had prohibited the USTA from putting up candidates.

In reality, the decision was largely due to the pressure of the Moroccan and especially of the Tunisian delegates, who had deliberately chosen the FLN and the UGTA as opposed to the MNA and the USTA, regardless of "representativity." This is proved by the circumstances of the decision.

At first Ahmed Ben Salah of the Tunisian trade union organization proposed that the USTA and the UGTA merge, and that the united organization become a member of the ICFTU. The representative of the USTA asked to refer to the Bureau of his organization before committing himself, while the representative of the UGTA accepted on the spot, declaring that whoever was

against unity was an enemy of the people, etc. At the following meeting, the USTA representative accepted the proposal, having received the agreement of the Bureau, but the delegate of the UGTA had changed his position: he now declared that his organization could merge with the USTA only if the MNA first dissolved and directed its members to enter the FLN as individuals. At this point, Ben Salah withdrew his original proposal and supported the new position of the UGTA. The delegate of the USTA naturally could not accept this kind of political condition, and the application of the USTA was rejected by a majority of one vote.

There are indications to show that the ICFTU is reconsidering its ill-advised and hasty decision of excluding the USTA. As the USTA has proved itself to be a going concern, while the UGTA is developing into a Stalinist front, relations between the USTA and the ICFTU have markedly improved.

Support USTA

We can only welcome any such reappraisal by the ICFTU, however agonizing it may be for its EC to admit that it has made a mistake. **By the traditional standards of the international labour movement, the USTA offers guarantees as to soundness, democracy and independence which no other Algerian union can duplicate. The positive consequences of its action will be considerable, not only in North Africa, but also in France, where it may indirectly contribute to the development of a better trade union movement. The USTA deserves the support of all those who believe in independent trade unionism and in socialist democracy.**

* Its situation parallels that of the MNA, which fights a single-handed battle against colonialism, Stalinist and bourgeois nationalism, while the FLN enjoys support from an unbelievable variety of sources, getting arms both from the Stalinists and the American oil companies, getting political support at the same time from Nasser and from the French liberals, from the Stalinists and from the Catholic Church.

Oh! What we could do with the money wasted on arms!

By Dona Papert

BRITISH capitalism has been spending £1,600,000 a year on arms. Let us look at what this figure means in concrete terms.

If we went shopping with £1,600,000 a year, what could we buy? First of all think of the things that would provide us with a comfortable standard of living. A large part of the difference between ours and the much vaunted (although partly mythical) American standard of living, is the comparatively larger number of washing-machines, refrigerators, motor cars, etc., owned by the American people. How much would it cost to provide every family in England with a washing-machine, a refrigerator, and a vacuum-cleaner?

As a rough estimate, suppose that the price of each of these gadgets is £40 (what we want is the cost price, without purchase tax). There are 14,000,000 families in England, and perhaps 2,000,000 already have electrical equipment of this kind. So the figure that we want is about £120 x 12,000,000 = £1,440,000,000.

This is less than the amount spent on arms in ONE year. So with what we waste on arms in the course of a year, every family in England could be given a washing-machine, a refrigerator, and a vacuum-cleaner. Every housewife knows how this would revolutionise her daily life.

Now consider motor cars. The cost price of a small car is about £250. If we suppose that there are 13,000,000 families without cars it would cost about £3,250,000,000 to give every

family in England a motorcar. This amount is spent on arms in two years.

What about housing? As a very rough basis of calculation, suppose that 2,000,000 houses would have to be built to provide us with fairly adequate housing, and that the cost of each would be £2,000. This gives a figure of £4,000,000,000—the sum spent on arms in two and a half years.

So we see that if the money spent on guns during the last five and a half years, had been spent on "butter" instead, we could all have spacious and comfortable living conditions. This very crude calculation gives an idea of how the arms-budget cramps our lives and robs us of comfort.

And then think of the schools, universities, and hospitals that could be built with the money spent on arms. The amount spent by the government each year on hospitals and education is only a fraction of the arms-budget.

A capitalist society is forced, by its very nature, to destroy a large part of the wealth that it creates. Only a socialist Britain could use the wealth created by the British workers for its right purpose—the welfare of the people. The rough calculations made here, on the very simple basis of abolishing the arms-budget, without even touching the much more important questions of rationalizing the whole economy, indicate how our lives could be enriched by socialism.

COLONIAL MALAYA?

INDEPENDENCE WITH STRINGS

By Peggy Rushton • Secretary, MCF

ON AUGUST 31ST this year Malaya obtained self government and Independence and so another colonial territory is technically free from British political domination. But although politically free Malaya has yet far to go before she can truly call herself 'independent,' for even in the instrument of independence—the London Agreement—the economic and military interests of Britain are still seen to bind Malaya.

Malaya is an excellent example of that colonial paradox: a country so poor that the average income of the rice farmer is approximately £15 a year (last available figure 1954) of which more than one-third will be paid in rent; so poor that the average per capita income from 1947 to 1953 (Benham's **National Income of Malaya 1956**) was £82 a year. Yet a country so rich that in the same years (1949 to 1953) it paid abroad profits and dividends of over £204 millions—almost £41 million a year.

Most of this money went to British investors, and many foreign owned firms have paid dividends in the last ten years totalling two, three, and even more times their paid up capital.

Nationalize foreign property

If Malaya is to achieve economic independence, as distinct from political independence, she will have to take steps to keep these profits within Malaya. This would entail nationalisation of foreign-owned enterprises. The alternative is to see £41 million a year in profits leave Malaya and to borrow from foreign sources at high rates of interest the money needed for Malaya development.

In addition to the profits annually leaving Malaya Britain holds at present over £250 million of Malayan money in the sterling fund—money Malaya needs to develop her own economy. Yet, according to the London Agreement, Malaya has agreed (Par 30) "to remain within the Sterling Area" and (Par. 31) "to exercise restraint in its dollar expenditure." In other words in return for political freedom Malaya has agreed not to embarrass Britain by asking for too quick a return of the money which Britain holds which belongs to her.

RENTS ACT — continued from page one

should not organize the profound indignation of hundreds of thousands into a mighty force. The question is: Will we take the necessary steps?

Learn the facts

The first step that must be taken everywhere is to see that every tenant who is faced with a rent increase knows his rights under the Act and is given every encouragement and assistance to avail himself of them. The Rent Act itself is an extremely obscure and difficult piece of legislation for the man in the street to follow and the majority of active Labour Party workers will have to study its provisions very care-

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Withdraw British troops

In the military field we find the London Agreement has also a lot to say. Malaya is independent . . . but Britain will continue to hold bases on her soil. Two big permanent bases are to be built at Sungei Patani, in Kedah (near the Thai border) and near Malacca (South Malaya). These will include jet airfields, radar stations, etc. In addition Britain will maintain forces in the Federation (Par 26) "necessary for the fulfilment of Commonwealth and International obligations" and also (Par. 36) "to assist in bringing the Emergency to an end." In addition Britain will (Par. 37) "Maintain an undertaking to finance certain capital costs of expansion of the Federation armed forces in an agreed programme."

Once political independence is an established fact in Malaya the mass of the people will rapidly demand a better way of life. This will be the testing time for the new Government. They will have to balance the legitimate demands of the people for a higher standard of living, better education, better social services, against the promises to which they have committed themselves in the London Agreement. Independence will mean little to the people of Malaya unless it opens the way for them to enjoy the wealth they produce. To this end political independence is only one step . . . economic independence is equally necessary and must also be achieved.

For the people of Malaya to benefit from independence, there must be a fundamental change in their country: the withdrawal of British troops which serve to defend foreign and local capital against the Malayan workers' demands; the nationalization of the big, foreign-owned, firms which suck the economy dry. Their demands are ours; withdrawal of troops, nationalization of the major industries.

fully before they master all of them.

For them the Labour Party's Rent Act Guide (July, 1957, price 1/6d.) is indispensable: it gives guidance on practically all issues and every Constituency Party should have a supply available.

For more general distribution, however, every Labour Party covering considerable areas of rented domestic property would do well to follow the excellent example set by the Stoke-on-Trent City Party. Here the Party has prepared a first class leaflet which conveys the gist of the Act's provisions in a simple, concise and direct form, easily understandable by anyone. It includes a table similar to the one contained on Page 48 of the Labour Party Rent Guide, which enables anyone to work out what his maximum rent is under the Act with a minimum of easily accessible information. Salford Trades Council has also done this.

Briefly, in houses which remain controlled (those whose Rateable or Net Annual Value is £40 or less in the Metropolitan, and £30 or less elsewhere) the maximum permitted rent depends firstly on the **Gross Value** of any house. This is a figure fixed for rating purposes, obtainable from the Rating de-

WHAT WE STAND FOR

The **Socialist Review** stands for international Socialist democracy. Only the mass mobilisation of the working class in the industrial and political arena can lead to the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of Socialism.

The **Socialist Review** believes that a really consistent Labour Government must be brought to power on the basis of the following programme:

- [1] The complete nationalisation of heavy industry, the banks, insurance and the land, with compensation payments based on a means test. Renationalisation of all denationalised industries without compensation. The nationalised industries to form an integral part of an overall economic plan and not to be used in the interests of private profit.
- [2] Workers' control in all nationalised industries, i.e., a majority of workers' representatives on all national and area boards, subject to frequent election, immediate recall and receiving the average skilled wage ruling in the industry.
- [3] The inclusion of workers' representatives on the boards of all private firms employing more than 20 people. These representatives to have free access to all documents.
- [4] The establishment of workers' committees in all concerns to control hiring, firing and working conditions.
- [5] The establishment of the principle of work or full maintenance.
- [6] The extension of the social services by the payment of adequate pensions, linked to a realistic cost-of-living index, the abolition of all payments for the National Health Service and the development of an industrial health service.
- [7] The expansion of the housing programme by granting interest free loans to local authorities and the right to requisition privately held land.
- [8] Free State education up to 18. Abolition of fee paying schools. For comprehensive schools and adequate maintenance grants—without a means test—for all university students.
- [9] Opposition to all forms of racial discrimination. Equal rights and trade union protection to all workers whatever their country of origin. Freedom of migration for all workers to and from Britain.
- [10] Freedom from political and economic oppression to all colonies. The offer of technical and economic assistance to the people of the underdeveloped countries.
- [11] The reunification of an independent Ireland.
- [12] The abolition of conscription and the withdrawal of all British troops from overseas. The abolition of all weapons of mass destruction.
- [13] A Socialist foreign policy independent of both Washington and Moscow.

partment of the local authority in whose area the house is situated. The maximum yearly rent is 2½ times this figure if the landlord is responsible for all repairs, including internal decoration, twice this figure if he does not do internal decoration, and 1½ times if the tenant is responsible for both inside and outside repairs.

However, the landlord must give three months' notice of an intended increase—on the correct form A—and he may not put the whole increase into effect if it exceeds 7/6d. for a further six months.

Even then the tenant has the right to send in a notice on the special form G to the landlord, keeping a dated copy himself, listing any faults or defects in need of repair and may apply to his local authority for a certificate of disrepair on Form 1 if the landlord fails to undertake to remedy these after six weeks.

If the local authority issues a certificate of disrepair, the tenant need only pay his original rent (or after the 6th January, 1958, a rent of 1½ times the gross value) until the repairs are done. Furthermore, he may deduct from his rent at the reduced level, the total amount paid above this original rent prior to the issue of the certificate of disrepair.

According to a social worker quoted by the **Times** (9th August, 1957):—"It has been impossible for many working people and elderly people to understand either the documents they receive or the Government's pamphlet." Unless these people are informed of their rights, many of them will not use them. This is one of the main problems.

Armed with a leaflet such as that produced in Stoke-on-Trent, and a supply of the most important form G, determined opponents of this Bill will find an enthusiastic reception at many doors in rented property areas and will be able to bring an increasing amount of resistance into play against the Bill.

Form Tenants' Associations

Wherever feasible, an attempt should be made to form a tenants' association which is unconnected with any poli-

tical party, though, of course, many active political workers will play an important part in such associations. Many people who for one reason or another would refuse to join in a political campaign will participate wholeheartedly in a tenants' movement.

Furthermore, Tenant Associations can affiliate to the **National Association of Tenants and Residents** which is able to provide expert advice and to provide direct contact between tenants facing similar problems throughout the country.

However, where tenants' associations are not possible and owing to the scattered and variegated nature of private rents, this will often be the case, the Labour Parties must fill the breach. In addition to their work on the streets, they must set up local advice bureaux served by local councillors and other representatives who will be in a position to answer every query brought in or to secure the answer if it is obscure.

The result of a widespread campaign of this character will be striking. Tenants will realise their own strength and their consciousness of the connection between the exactions of their landlords and the policy of the Tories will be heightened. Many of the tenants of houses which have been decontrolled (i.e., those whose Net Annual Value is £40 or more in the Metropolitan, and £30 or more elsewhere) will be in the thick of the struggle and in many places there will be tenaciously fought rent strikes.

By supporting the struggle to the full, by emphasising the fact that the policy of the Government has been to raise the cost of houses to all sections—not only rented property tenants but also council tenants and owner occupiers by means of increasing interest rates—it will be possible to develop a movement with wide support. Such a movement will gravely impede the implementation of this unjust Act of 1957, will strike fear into those responsible at the thought of decontrolling more rented property, and will help to prepare the way for ridding the working people of Britain of rule by the rich for all time.