STAND BY THE STEWARDS

UNEMPLOYMENT is mounting. It is now 200,000 more than a year ago. The number of jobs on offer at the Labour Exchanges is falling—by 100,000 since that time. An employers' paradise seems within grasp: today, three men per job offered, soon—in January or February according to the Tory Chancellor—four or five men per job.

What a time for the employers! A time to pick and choose at the factory gates (or is it the dock gates these days?) like Brian Behan for no other reason than their defence of elementary trade-union principles; the CP controllers of the ETU and the London district AUBTW who sent their members—heart-broken—across a picket line; and they need therefore recognize because they see a Trotskyist threat in every picket's badge.

The employers need lose no sleep over such officials. It has no teeth except to bite the hands that feed it. They need fear one thing, and one thing only—a strong, firmly supported shop-stewards' movement. A working-class movement rooted in every shop and site, at every place of work, whose very existence means struggle.

Such a movement, linking branches with branches, could have beaten the Tories this summer. It could have bust McAlpine's by tying up all his sites. Where and when it exists it is a mighty force. It alone can fight the employers to a standstill.

Such a movement cannot be called from thin air. Declarations are not enough. Workers must be convinced that it is needed, convinced through their own struggles and through assimilating the experience of their fellows.

In this the militant socialist can play a part. He can bring the lessons of all workers to the single shop, bring the lessons of the shop to all workers. British history is alive with the tradition of shop-stewards' movements; it is our duty to help make them real today.

Building militant, Eric Heffer writes

in defence of the

Newsletter's right to meet

I AM WRITING this article in a blazing mood. It's bad enough having to fight continually the employers, but when our own "vaters" do the employers' job for them, that's even worse. I refer to the recent decision of the EC of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers to ban its members from attending or participating in the proposed conference of trade unionists to be called by our contemporary, the Newsletter.

One law for all

Although I often read the Newsletter, I do not support those who produce it. But I support their right, and anyone else's right to organize conferences of trade unionists if they so desire. Let me be frank, if one paper, or a group, is banned, then why doesn't the ban apply to all? Why, for instance, aren't the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists banned (Bill Carron and Sir Tom O'Brien know about this organization) or the Conservative Trade Unionists and many many others?

Surely all trade unionists have the right to sell what paper they like to their fellow trade unionists, and if they think the paper has good points, to attend any conferences arranged by it to explain their opinions.

I put this question to Harry Weaver, Bill Stuart and others on the AUBTW Executive Council. What would you have said if the conferences at which you were present, namely those organized by the New Builders' Leader, was banned? Do you not in fact owe your jobs to your "unofficial" activities? What about all the caucus meetings you attended where policy was carried out, and nominations put forward?

I am not suggesting that the Newsletter conference is similar to the beginnings of the old Minority Movement, but the facts are that hundreds of recent leading trade union officials were involved in that movement; one of these being the late George Hicks, a rather prominent figure in the AUBTW. It is also an record that when the Minority Movement was formed, one union, the
**Industrial Fight the Sack!**

Surely the most outstanding feature of society today is its blatant hypocrisy. Throughout the length and breadth of the land this attitude is evidenced in all sections of the Press, whilst the general public is either unwilling or too weak to express itself, with the result that the present Government has almost every body ending out of its hand, despite the fact that its policies are designed solely to hand the initiative in all matters, industrial or otherwise, to the privileged few.

**The labels stick**

Look at the celebrations in relation to the Hungarian uprising of two years ago. Every newspaper carried the story, emphasizing most pointedly, that this revolt was an endeavour, on the part of the workers, to obtain political freedom, which among other things included the right to strike, and they were most emphatic in their support of the action, expressing a very deep sorrow that the attempt was unsuccessful. Of course, we exactly the attitude that any right-thinking person should have adopted, but just look at the situation at the present time.

Here, the newspapers go into reverse. When the busmen stopped work because of the pro-stratification and dilatoriness of the LTE, they were holding the country to ransom, whilst the Press immediately denounced them as lazy; they’re Communists, they said, just trying to disrupt the traffic system. Unfortunately, these labels stick, despite the fact that one national newspaper was forced to retract such a statement through the medium of its own columns.

**Official indifference**

When Senator McCarthy was riding the crest of the wave in America, the despicable and disgusting witch-hunts that he raised were condemned out of hand by every newspaper in this country, but today things are different. The militant trade unionist, conscious of the need to be ever watchful of the snare of Government-sponsored employers and tired of feeling complete indifference on the part of most of his officials, is pushed into action. The strike becomes, not only to become the target of the newspapers in their histrionic outbursts, the result is that he finds himself cautioned or even expelled by the trade union leaders he pays to look after his interests.

St. Olave's wharf

The employer too, is not to be undone in this situation, for if it is not possible to get rid of the militant by expulsion from his Union, he tries another way, the sack. And nowhere is this more apparent than in the dock strikes, evoked by the position at St. Olave's Wharf, London.

At this wharf, one of the Hays Wharf Circuit a gang of nineteen men are engaged on a regular basis for work in one particular section, and being hardworking industrious men have managed to effect reasonable rates of payment for the companies they have to service. But the men are also good trade unionists capable of taking resolute action on the occasion arising. Militant though they are, they are also completely orthodox in their conduct of disputes, which is a rather embarrassing to an employer who wishes to score off them.

Accordingly, he looks around for some excuse, and hearing that the men in the Wharf have not yet been paid a cut in payment for certain work, endeavours to try the same thing himself. He calls the men in and tells them that they are to be returned to the pool, but upon hearing that by so doing he will never get another regular force in their place, tries to compromise, by suggesting that he keeps nine and sacks ten. This also proves unacceptable to the men concerned, for as we have already explained, these nineteen men have principals.

**Cut the farthing**

Now the employer comes into the open. He tells the men that they cashed in when cheese was being worked, now he intends to cash in whilst the labour position is unfavourable to the worker. These men are getting a farthing a move on certain commodities than elsewhere and it has got to be cut back. The men, however, refuse to accept this position, and the official has been called in to deal with it. The latest information is that the matter has been held over, the poor employer’s statements were “mis-construed.”

**Watch out on**

To be that as it may, the “watch out in the Dock’s on.” The union officials, conscious of the necessity to perpetuate the present system if they want to continue to enjoy their present inviolable position, are determined to seek out and crucify all men of militant men, and as explained in the last issue of the Socialist Review, may take the opportunity offered by a reduction in the National Dock Labour Board’s register as the means to rid themselves of the more ardent trade unionists.

In the light of this, it is essential for every man engaged in the Dock industry, to resist to the utmost any attempt by either the Union, the National Dock Labour Board or the employer to get rid of any man, irrespective of whom it may be.

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21 Aubert Park, London, N5
London Transport
Apprentice, PERCY GARRETT
exposes the modern RAW DEAL

Little is known of the conditions that prevail today for the apprentice. It is generally thought that we "never had it so good" since the indenture fee was lowered from £50 to £5 in the past 20 years, and with that the question is dismissed and given little or no publicity. However, if the question is examined a little more thoroughly, it will be found that the apprentice's job is no bed of roses.

There are three hundred or more apprentices employed by London Transport Underground. They are split up in groups of two or three and work in various signal stations, power stations and railway sheds. Their continual travelling from department to department causes certain difficulties.

Unlike any other staff, the apprentice has no training allowance when his work involves extra hours travelling. This is not the only financial loss he sustains. He works on a bonus system, but receives no bonus for the days he spends at school (all London Transport apprentices spend one day a week at a training centre) and therefore loses approximately 7½ d. a week.

As many as 2½ million house-holds in this country (17 per cent of the total) have no piped water, well over three million no water closet (23 per cent), and 6½ million no fixed bath (45 per cent).

The wage for an apprentice in one department may be less than that of another apprentice doing the same job in a different department, a variation of perhaps as much as 25s. The wage is so low as to deter many parents from indenturing their sons to the trade, and even should they wish to do so, it is likely that they would encounter some difficulty, unless Uncle Charlie works on the Board.

In some departments the work these apprentices are given is that of a mate, but where a mate would earn about £9 15s. on the job, the apprentice earns £5 10s. This use of the apprentice not only exploits him financially but also hinders him in his training. As it is, the London Transport apprentice is given very little training with tools before he is sent round with a fitter, and what training he is given is concerned, not with the wider aspects of electrical work, but with the specialized equipment of London Transport. Nor is he stationed in a job where he will learn most, but in the job in which he will be most useful. Finishing an apprenticeship with London Transport, he usually has no choice but to take a job with London Transport.

No ropes

All the departments for which the apprentice works are reluctant to take the responsibility for his personal conditions: little attempt is made to show him the ropes—sometimes he is not even made aware of the dangers and safety regulations of a department (a serious default in railway work). Often there is no fixed arrangement for supplying overalls (staff are provided with two pairs of overalls a year) and he has difficulty in obtaining them because he doesn't know which department is supposed to supply him.

Organize the lads

The apprentice is aware of these things, but alone he is unable to do anything about them, and he rarely has a chance to talk to his companions. Clearly an organization for apprentices is needed if his conditions are to be improved. They should meet often to discuss their conditions and what they can do about them.

The question that must have priority, of course, is that of training and experience in tools. The apprentices should write a letter to the Joint Stewards Committee, asking them to approach the union to do something about the position; either confine the apprentices to work which will be of use to them, or give him the wage the mate would earn— or both!

STEEL PRODUCTION SAGS
(Per cent change on year earlier)

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* m. metric tons


COAL PILES UP by Martin Jones

Coal consumption in Britain in 1956 was 218 million tons; in 1957 it was five million tons less; and in 1958 it is expected to be further eight million tons lower than in 1957 (Economist, October 4, 1958). At the same time the demand for British coal abroad has also declined—from some 10 million tons in 1956 to probably less than five million tons at present. Altogether over two years, therefore, the total demand for British coal has declined by about 18 million tons.

As a result, unsold stocks have increased, to a present level of about 15 million tons. This is expected to increase to 20-25 million tons next year, even taking into account eight months with no Saturday working this year, the whole of next year also without it, and the accelerated closing down of unprofitable mines.

Cut mining force

As against the decline in the demand for coal, the National Coal Board is committed to an investment programme aimed at producing 240 million tons in 1965.

"This program provided for the closing of some 250-300 mines between 1955 and 1970, and the Board has already accelerated the planned rate of closing (from 19 small pits this year to 34). It has also reckoned on a decline in the labour force to a (national) 652,000 miners, and the Board has already brought its numbers on colliery books down to only 105,000 above that." (Ibid.)

Thus the trend towards cutting down the mining force continues apace. From 1,267,000 miners in 1923, the numbers have declined to 858,000 in 1938 and to 692,000 at present.

There are two main causes for the decline in the demand for coal: one, the stagnation and now decline of industrial production generally; two, the competition from oil.

How long the general economic decline is to continue is not clear. Probably the upward turn in the US economy, brought about largely by Government spending on defence and housing, as well as a cheap credit policy, will affect Britain after some months.

Full nationalization

However, one lesson the piles of unsold coal has taught: if a small economic recession can cause such a disturbance to the mining industry, what havoc would be brought about by a really deep and prolonged slump?

Without co-ordination of all fuel resources—coal, oil, etc.—there can be no stability in mining, and no security for the miners.

Consolidation of the mining industry—like the nationalization of the mines in 1947—does not protect the economy as a whole, not even its nationalized sectors— from overproduction, slump, unemployment. No. What is necessary is a generally rationalized economy based on the socialization of the major portion of industry.

Finally, without workers' control of the nationalized industries, the workers will continue to be subordinated to the profit motive and have to suffer the hardships of capitalism. State ownership without workers' control is nothing but state capitalism. Only workers' control can guarantee that industrial work is for the benefit of the people engaged in it.

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Socialists and the Labour Movement—a discussion opened by Robert Emmett

A CHARACTERISTIC FEATURE of the various Left-wing movements and groups that have, during the past thirty years, sprouted on the fringe of the Labour Party, is their constantly shifting character and composition, and their consequent isolation from the decisive sections of industry and politics. Their base has been and remains the trade unions throughout the country.

From the emergence of a group of “dis-affected” conference parties in 1924, through to the “Socialist League” of the ’30’s, to the late-lamented “Beverlites” movement, right up to the latest fad, “faction” for Socialism and “Nuclear Disarmament” groupings, this characteristic has held good.

The theoretical bases of these movements have been non-existent, or, at best, half-baked. Their leaders have sprung from “intellectual” circles—layers like Cripps and Pritt, lesser legal fry like Platts-Mills, astute businessmen like Gollancz, and professionals like Zilliacus, have all played their little parts and departed from the stage.

Occasionally a holy man from the Church has intoned a benediction on the Left. Now and then, even a real live MP would appear on the scene, but, alas, the “Hon. Member” would usually represent some hot-bed of class warfare—like West Thurrock—or North Riding of Yorkshire—and the fabric of capitalism would remain undisturbed.

A somewhat ironical—if logical—fruit of this type of “socialist” activity is that, until this day, there are more “Left-wingers” to the acre in places like Hampstead Garden Suburb, Welwyn Garden City, and Bromley than are ever to be found in Poplar, Bermondsey, or Holloway.

**National minority**

ONLY THE COMMUNISTS among the political groupings succeeded to some extent in penetrating certain sections of the trade union movement. The organization of the “National Minority Movement” in 1924 gave a surface appearance of some considerable strength, but this was merely a front for King Street and was subject to all the political winds that blew down the corridors of the Kremlin. In fact, the so-called “movement” consisted largely of an annual propaganda conference, which got progressively smaller and finally petered out in 1929, as did the two “revolutionary” unions thrown up among Scottish miners and London clothing workers.

Indeed, in noting the relative success of the Communists on the industrial field com-
pared with the more amorphous Left-wing groupings, it must be said that the “Communist threat” to industry, which has served the Press so well over the past thirty years, exists largely in the fevered imagination of Fleet Street scribes to whom a good “red plot” was always worth a by-line.

In point of fact, the membership of the Communist Party, up to the outbreak of war, never exceeded 7,000. At a London District Communist Congress held in 1933, more than 60 per cent of the actual delegates were not even members of trade unions. At the National Congress held at Manchester in 1935, “fraternal” delegates from the Comintern poured scorn on the social composition of the Party—the bulk of whom were black-coated non-unionists.

It is true that, during the immediate post-war years, the CP marked up its membership to the 50,000 mark—but this was a pure fiddle. Eighty per cent of such “membership” consisted of names on a list of persons who paid a shilling a month to door-to-door collectors and never partici-
pated in Party branch meetings or any form of political activity. Such members believed in communism about as much as the person who buys a bottle of milk in the co-op store believes in the co-operative commonwealth.

**Top hat posts**

Of more apparent significance than paper membership was the degree to which the CP succeeded in winning a whole series of top posts within a number of trade unions—particularly the miners, engineers, and electricians. Here again it is necessary to under-
stand the precise conditions under which this was achieved—and the political price that was paid for the trade union posts.

As a result of the war, which, among other political changes, brought about the liquida-
tion of the Comintern, the CP found itself largely freed from the rigid control from Moscow that had hitherto been exercised. The immediate effect was to bring the latent opportunist leaders of the Street leadership into full flower. The Party “line” was toned down and rendered flexible enough to be adapted to meet the needs of any given indi-
vidual or organization that was being “wooed.”

Neither the inmates of Transport House, the Tory M.P.s, or even the big capitalists were to feel threatened by the very peculiar “British” Road to Socialism produced by King Street, without reference to the mem-
bership, as a “Party Program.”

Just how flagrantly opportunist the CP leaders became at this period may be gauged from a document compiled and circulated by Ted Brambley, then Secretary of the London CP, which proposed that, in the event of the Labour Party winning the 1945 election, Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden should be invited to serve in the Cabinet. Precisely what was meant by this opening up to “socialism” was underlined by CP support for conscription, the arms pro-
gram, and a guarantee of “fair compensa-
tion” to the owners of any capitalist industry that might be nationalized. It is interesting to reflect that most of the new “revolutionary” socialists, of whom I shall speak later, were at that time members of the CP and, appa-
rently, quite willing to swallow this choice brand of “socialism.”

Another bunch of officials

In the immediate post-war years, as the realities of the “Welfare State” began to express themselves concretely in terms of rising prices, wage-restraint, and systematic overtime, the opportunism of the CP leaders, particularly in their newly-won trade union posts, reached even new heights.

It became a common spectacle for Arthur Horner, secretary of the Miners’ Union and Executive Member of the CP, to trundle around the country urging miners to accept systematic overtime as a permanent feature of their work, and harangue strikers, urging them to return to work. Claude Bertridge and Joe Scott, both AEU officials and top CP-ers, did the same job at Fords, Briggs, and other engineering strikes.

Just how far this opportunism went was well expressed by a member of the CP Executive, who, after a particularly flagrant decision to call off a strike, plaintively re-
marked: “I thought it was the job of the Party to lay down policy for the Executive of the AEU, but I find the AEU Executive laying down policy for the Party.”

In this field, however, the King Street leaders over-reached themselves. As the CP members at factory and job level began to find that their CP comrades in the top jobs of their unions, were just another bunch of trade union officials, differing hardly at all from the official Transport House variety, disillusion spread rapidly and the CP began to lose the only real base it ever had—in the factories, and particularly among the shop stewards.

This process of break-up below was the inevitable outcome of the rampant opportun-
ism at the top. The CP was already far gone in decline at factory level before the Hungarian events virtually liquidated it as a political force.
SINCE THE HUNGARIAN EVENTS some thousands of CP-ers have streamed out, fiery and the period has been marked by the reappearance of some of the most extraordinary splinter groupings. Anti-Stalinists, Pro-Trotskyists, Internationals, Federalists, Lefts, all by their brand new colours. Now the London Newsletters, Socialist Reviews, Left Reviews—all rushed to print to assure the long-suffering proletariat that there's the only virgin pure brand of socialism, the theme song being "when other 'uns have been forgot—ours is the one true way."

It is true that the variety of policies, programs, publications and theories are an indication of political health, yet socialism is certainly looking up.

Most vociferous of these groupings in recent months have been the adherents of the Newsletter—or, what is becoming somewhat cynically known as the "Clapham Contingent." This group is mainly composed of ex-CP-ers and ex-Daily Worker scribes who have shown a most remarkable facility in changing, chameleon-like, from Stalin worshippers to Stalin-haters, almost overnight.

Yet, old habits die hard, and, while the Newsletter each week breathes fire and slaughter against King Street, its adherents, in principle at least, still drum and bell the cardinal errors of the CP since 1928.

On the broad political issues, the CP was famed for its habit of overnight somersaulting. In recent months we have witnessed the Newsletter carrying articles by the Editor and editors calling for and AGAINST summit talks in almost consecutive editions.

Slogans galore

But, I am concerned here mainly with the question of socialist activities in the factories and trade unions, and, in particular, in respect of industrial disputes. It is in this field that the Newsletter adherents have been conducting campaigns which, in my view, are dangerously harmful to the working-class and a positive disservice to socialism.

In a series of strikes in London we have witnessed this group attempt to gatecrash into the strike leadership with a degree of crudity and irresponsibility that is appalling. Always the battle-cry has been the same: "new policy, new leadership—and a rank and file movement—to hell with the trade union officials." To hear these people talk one would imagine that no one had ever before thought of a "rank and file movement!"—and that new policies grew on the trees in the local parks.

Like most of these slogans and not much else, the Newsletter have descended in turn upon the London busmen, dockers, meat porters, and building workers. Alleged "strike videog" have been churned out that expose clearly to any student that their architects know nothing of the industry and union problems, and, in the rarest, have the faintest idea what they are talking about. Just how unbalanced their views are, and how much reliance may be placed upon their political judgment, is clearly shown in their estimates of the results of two of these recent disputes.

In the case of the London bus strike, where the Newsletter was not able to impose any impact at all upon the strikers, the estimate of the strike was that the busmen suffered a "complete victory." This declaration arose because the strike was official—and therefore conducted under the control of union officials. From the Newsletter's logical deduction, that all official strikes will be defeated, and that unofficial strikes will always have a better chance of success.

This judgment ignores the fact that the strike was successful to an important degree in preventing the LITE and the Tory Government from splitting the ranks of the busmen and forcing payment of a 5½% increase to country busmen whom the Government and every intention of leaving out altogether.

Even more important, it ignores the political effect of the strike upon the whole Labour Movement. It ignores, indeed, the great worth of solidarity evoked by the truly remarkable stand of the busmen. It ignores the fact that the General Council of the TUC was forced on the defensive and that the hard right-wing core on the General Council have been discredited.

Presumably, had the London bus strike been fought as an "unofficial" action the Newsletter would have been much better satisfied. Had the leadership, a number of things would have been quite certain. Instead of a magnificently solid action for seven weeks, during which not a bus moved on the roads, only a portion of the men would have been on strike. Its duration would have been measured in days instead of weeks, and the men would have returned, frustrated, defeated, and fed up to the teeth with trades unionism.

SR BOOK SERVICE

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Is this the sort of action that the Newsletter wants? From their attitude to the South Bank building strike it would appear that is so. Here again the Newsletter gate-crashed the strike and, on this occasion, were able to exert very considerable influence over the course of the dispute.

The result—due in some measure to this influence—was a complete shambles. The strike—or lock-out—as it became, was broken in the worst possible way, by masses of trade unionists crossing the picket line. Every responsible shop steward is out on the picket line and expulsions from the union are under way.

The Newsletter cannot have it both ways—it cannot claim some credit for the strike—and deny any responsibility for the outcome. They must accept a share of the blame alongside of the union officials. Their very presence—as an outside body seeking to influence the conduct of a dispute—was a standing invitation for every tin-pot union official to alibi himself with talk about "outside interference." In short, the Newsletter helped to put a body of strikers in precisely the same untenable position that King Street itself had done many earlier occasions. Again I repeat: the song has ended—but the melody lingers on. The "new" tactics of Clapham turn out to be merely the old tactics of King Street.

So much for the tactical application of the Newsletter to the task of industrial disputes. What have they to offer in the larger field? They speak grandly of calling a "National Industrial and File Conference," and (shades of King Street) the formation of "A National Minority Movement."

What is this "new policy" which the Newsletter has for the struggling trades unionists? So far it would appear that the speedy appointment of union officials is the only concrete proposition to the Newsletter. Above all, what are these "rank and file movements" that are advocated as a guaranteed "pax peeb" to cure all trade union ills? I say no, indeed. If there is a domination, busmen, meat porters, and building workers can be persuaded to get together, the new revolutionary politics can be well on its way and the walls of Transport House will begin to crumble.

What pitiful balderdash! Are these the actions of "Socialists" or "Socialists"? Does anyone imagine that experienced and responsible shop stewards, whose whole life is one continuous battle against imperialist policies and employers, can for such a little? These are the actions, not of responsible socialists, but of political adolescents who see the class struggle as an infantile game of cowboys and Indians.

FACTORY ROOTS

NO TRULY SOCIALIST movement will ever be built in this country that is not rooted in the great industries, factories and trade unions. That is why this question of how the socialist movement must be rooted is of such paramount importance—and that is why, as one who has spent his entire life working as a socialist among trade unionists, I find it difficult to speak with restraint about such antics as those of the Newsletter.

Every industrial dispute that takes place, large or small, brings to the surface a group of devoted trade union shop stewards whose courage, integrity and influence are plain for all to see.

These men hold the love and devotion of millions of trade unionists. These are the men of influence. These men are deep-rooted in the lives of the people. These are men who are our incorruptible sons who, when they are won for socialism, will change the whole face of the British Labour Movement.

But these men will never be won by a mouthful of slogans and a bunch of bulletins, not even when they are penned by professional journalists and bear the authentic imprint of the classics.

Within—not without

The rank and file movements that must be built to unite the forces, clarify the ideas, and develop the socialist understanding of trade unionists must be built WITHIN—not OUTSIDE the trade union movement.

The rank and file movement is, in fact, nothing more nor less than the trade union branches, factory and shop stewards organizations IN ACTION, both against employers and government on the one hand, and against the class-collective policies of the top union leaders on the other.

The job of the convinced socialist is, therefore, to work INSIDE—not OUTSIDE—the trade union branches. Absolutely NO-THING that cannot be done within the trade union branches will ever be achieved OUTSIDE. That is the great fundamental lesson to be learned from thirty years of history and thirty years of mistakes.

This is a hard road—maybe a long one—most certainly a difficult one. Had the socialists, during the past thirty years, been taking that road—we would be much nearer the goal by now. If all the socialists of the Newsletter prevail—we shall get no nearer during the next thirty years.

In the words of a South Bank shop steward—"I say no, indeed. If Christ sake turn it up, cookey!"
It is nearly two years since the Communist Party were voted into power and formed the Government in the Indian State of Kerala. Socialists all over the world have closely followed the progress of the CP administration with interest: will it or won't it mean an end to the savage exploitation of workers and peasants in the State? The CP has definitely noted that the police have been used as brutally as before to break strikes, that imprisonment, injustice, and state-deaths have been used by the CP administration against workers struggling for elementary rights (see "Class Struggle in Kerala," SR, March 1, 1958).

Now a document has come to our hands which settles the matter once and for all in the minds of those socialists who still doubt. It is an agreement signed on May 3, this year, between the Kerala Government and the Rayon Manufacturing Company owned by the Birla brothers, the biggest of India's big monopoly industrialists.

There is no need to elucidate the anti-trade union nature of the Agreement's main clauses which we reproduce below. All that needs be said is that it is a contradiction to our usual practice in documents of this nature in being essentially an agreement on labour-management relations and not a business agreement.

Finally, why make the agreement? Surely the CP knew that it would arouse a storm of protest among its own members and set alone working-class sympathizers throughout the country. Possibly they did, but they had to convince Indian big business of their pro-capitalist bona-fides. As the Indian Statesman's special correspondent in Kerala wrote recently, the CP government agreed to these conditions because, "without them no industrialist would venture his capital in a state where his interests are so traditionally suspect. Such is the cost of industrialization in a single, backward country. And, of course, it is the workers who pay the bill."

There is another reason for the Communist-Capitalist Pact. The Agreement makes the Central Government (rightly termed on other occasions a 'capitalist land-lord government' by the CP) responsible for arbitration between Kerala and the Birla brothers. And since what's good for one is good for all in Indian capitalism generally, the Kerala government hope, no doubt, that Birla's valuable testimony will serve to prove better than the pariah treatment they are receiving at the moment at the hands of the Central Government. The cost is worse treatment for Kerala's worker-pesant population, that is merely by the way.

The Communist Premier of Kerala could not have more been to the point when he asked the Statesman correspondent: "What has our Ministry done that a Congress or Praja Socialist Party could or should not have done?"

EDITOR

NOW IT IS HEREBY AGREED AND DECLARED AS FOLLOWS:

1. That it is the responsibility of the Company to maintain discipline and efficiency in the plant, and to hire labourers and to discharge them for any cause which to the Company is just, and to refer all disputes with workmen on duty on account of inefficiencv or lack of work or other valid reasons subject only to the provisions contained in the Standing Orders of the Company consistent with the statutes in force.

2. That the exact hours of work and time standards and selection, placing and distribution of personnel are the responsibilities of the Company, and that the right to plan, direct and control operations of the plant; to introduce new or improved production methods, to extend production facilities, and to establish production schedules and quality standards are solely and exclusively the rights and responsibilities of the Company. The right and responsibility of the Company to exercise these and other functions will, subject to statutes in force in the State, be as follows:

3. That it is the right of the Company to make such rules and regulations, from time to time, for the purpose of maintaining discipline, order, health and safety of the Company's work and to require compliance thereof by labourers.

4. That the Agreement shall:

(a) pay wages and dearness allowance in accordance with a wage schedule which will be approved by the Company and notified to employees;

(b) adopt hours of work and overtime wages may be stipulated in the Industrial Disputes Act, subject to Clause 6 (b) hereof;

(c) provide for termination benefits, leave, holidays and welfare amenities in accordance with rules to be framed by the Company and notified to employees;

(d) ensure the settlement of grievances expeditiously to the extent found necessary by the Company, and only that amount of additional time found necessary by the Company will only be related to and paid on efficiency and productivity, accounting for the same to be formulated by the Company from time to time.

5. That bonus will not be related to the Company's relations with the Government of India or with the Rayon Manufacturing Company, and shall be paid in accordance with the provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act.

6. (a) The Government guarantees that the Company observing and performing the several functions and stipulations indicated herein shall peaceably hold and enjoy the premiers, liberties and powers granted in pursuance of this Agreement or any other Agreement without any interregnum by the Government or any person rightfully claiming to act for them. Government shall at all times endeavor to bring about cordial relationship between the Government and labour and in the case of any dispute, harassment of the management and/or any other illegal action resulting from such disputes, to take timely and positive steps to prevent such occurrences.

(b) The Government agrees with the Company that it will be difficult for them to carry on their activities, if the conditions obtaining at the time of starting their work are materially altered, and new burdens imposed on them in subsequent years. They will, therefore, do their utmost to ensure that all laws, rules, regulations, relating to the Company's relations with labour, and taxes and levies on the Company, are so administered as not to materially alter the conditions under which the Company began its operations.

7. If any dispute, question or difference shall arise between the parties hereto touching this deed or any clause or thing herein contained or the construction hereof of any matter in any way arising out of the same, then and in every or any such case, the matter in difference shall be referred to the Secretary to the Ministry in the subject of "Labour" in the Ministry in which the subject of "Labour" is dealt with at the time of the reference to the Minister, and such reference shall be deemed to be a submission to arbitration within the meaning of the Arbitration Act, and all proceedings thereunder as provided in the Act, 1940, the Rules thereunder and any statutes or regulations or re-enactment thereof shall apply to such arbitration. The decision of the Arbitrator will be final and binding on the parties.
George VI and the Labour Party by N. SWEEN

The LONG-AWAITED publication of J W Wheeler Bennett’s biography of George VI has re-opened discussion on the part played by the Crown in the choice of the Labour ministers in 1945. At the time when the second installment of Hugh Dalton’s Memoirs The Fateful Years was published in 1957, Attlee sharply reminded that the King was responsible for his decision to make Bevin Foreign Minister in preference to Dalton himself out of his autobiography skated over the issue.

Now, however, we read the King’s own words, cited in: “I asked him (i.e. Attlee) whom he would make Foreign Secretary and he suggested Hugh Dalton. I disagreed with him and said that foreign affairs was the most important subject at the moment and I hoped that he would make Bevin take it. He said he would.”

If the King’s account is correct, and it is difficult to argue that it is not, it means that even in 1945, the Labour Prime Minister was susceptible to an influence which a few would argue was democratic. The fault, of course, could not be said to be with the King for making the suggestion, but with Attlee for accepting it. It certainly spotlights the calibre of Labour Party leadership in 1945. Furthermore, the incident clearly illustrates the completely outdated position of a hereditary ruler in modern society.

If (or she) has any influence by virtue of her or his hereditary position, it is just as undemocratic as the privileges of the House of Lords or those who have been to public schools. If, on the other hand, the ruler has no power, what is the point of having him or her anyway—particularly when the saving would be sufficient to convert every food-stuff housing estate each year.

The Labour bureaucracy by Peter N. Sharpe

ANYONE who is interested in the seat of power within the Labour Party will do well to get hold of the current edition of the New Reasoner and read the article on Labour The Bureaucracy by John Rex.

A short article in the Socialist Review a month ago cited figures to pin-point the way in which Labour Party Conferences are dominated by the block-votes of the largest trade unions.

Effective power

John Rex has taken the question of power back one stage further and asks where the power of the leaders of these trade unions resides. The answer he gives is that “effective power within many unions (including some of the largest) is in the hands of the career trade union official who approaches political issues with an eye to his own sectional interests.”

Unknown newcomer

A little reflection by all those with experience within the organisation or working-class movements will make clear that the Labour Party will reinforce this conclusion. We all know that trade union leaders—or organizers—and middle rank office holders exert immense influence in the rise of delegates, executive members and others from the ranks. For after all, a newcomer will only be known to a limited extent in normal circumstances outside his own branch or area and most voters or persons having influence over voters in an election will rely upon the advice of the leaders of the local party; the ordinary people who know such candidates—the existing office holders and officials. That is, of course, unless he is the nominee of some other organization which cuts across the branches of the local party.

Self-appointed

In effect, therefore, the existing trade union bureaucracy constitutes a degree of self-perpetuating power. In Labour Party affairs, the success of the existing powers has been marked for many years by the reliance which the Right has been able to place on the trade union block vote at Annual Conferences. In fact it would be a brave socialist or labour movement, if the Labour Party policy and leadership can be said to have been largely a reflection of the desires and aspirations of the trade union bureaucracy.

Scratch the surface

Are these socialist desires and aspirations? One only has to look at Labour Party policy and the statements of most trade union leaders in order to see that they are anything but.

The conclusion is obvious. Where there is no sociological or professional work done in the Constituency Parties, until something is done about the structure and exercise of power within the trade union movement, we are merely scratching the surface of the problem.
On November 17, one hundred years ago, Robert Owen, one of the pioneers of the international Labour Movement, died. He was born on May 14, 1771, the son of a Welsh saddlemaker, and received an elementary education before he started work as a journeyman of the saddlemaking trade.

In his he was more fortunate than the vast majority of his contemporaries, as he was, indeed, able to read and write. He was in partnership at the age of seventeen, his own spinning mill at nineteen and a manager of a factory employing 500 at twenty. He married the daughter of a cottage manufactory, whose mills in New Lanark he acquired for his partners at the age of twenty-eight.

Concerned about the poor

By this time, however, notwithstanding his business success Owen was already showing an interest in the condition of the poor. He created a model community at New Lanark, where a tradition of providing education and housing for his employees had already been established by his father-in-law, David Dale. He founded spinning schools, founded cleared streets, founded churches, founded libraries, founded hospitals, opened a savings bank, and set up communal kitchens. For the old he provided communal homes, for the young education.

When cotton supplies were cut off owing to an embargo in 1806, Owen found it necessary to sack his workers and paid them normal wages. When his partners objected to his largess, he concluded that he found others with a more benevolent outlook and bought out those who objected.

Owen's work was an attempt to practice his theory that "Man's character is the consequence of himself." This philosophy which he expressed in his New View of Society (published 1813) and in other works led him to insist on a better organization of the society in which men lived in order to improve their characters.

His ideas also led him to advocate the adoption of new educational concepts, one of which was the New Lanark Institute for the Formation of Character. Owen did not believe in the monastic system, whereby the teacher taught the pupil teachers who passed on his words parrot fashion to the children, insisting on physical exercise, dancing and singing and used chats, models and visions to an extent which was unthought of in the dreary religious establishments of his day.

Rule by despots

Yet all these ideas did not make Owen a democrat, let alone a socialist. He was extremely autocratic: throughout his life and as late as 1832, a deputation led by William Lovett, the Chartist leader, objecting to his disregard of a majority decision, that they were all ignorant of his plans and of the objects he had in view and must consent to be ruled by despots till they had acquired sufficient knowledge to govern themselves.*


In the period following the end of the wars with France in 1815, he ordered the army to return to barracks to liberate themselves, but tried to convince one of the most reactionary governments to carry out reforms from above. The fact that he secured the co-operation of Sir Robert Peel in the elder in supporting children's hours of work in cotton factories by Act of Parliament and the most revolutionary ideas for "Villages of Co-operation" based on the New Lanark model and the ideas of religious reformers were not considered by the most reactionary ministers that he was not considering the working class privileges at this time.

It was eventually his atheism which destroyed his popularity in U.S.