

NOTES

ness of the 400,000-plus EETPU membership's contribution to the present day to day struggles.

For too long the position in the EETPU has been out of step with developments in the movement as a whole. The pamphlet, *End the Ban*, contains a wealth of argument and fact that is vital information, for all trade unionists who have come to the movement in the years since the 'ETU trial'.

The authors make the point that the ban in fact discriminates against *all* members of the union, who are denied the right of free choice of representative. The ban is sometimes justified because of the trial, but they show how there has been a systematic weakening of democracy in the union: 'Prior to 1962 all full time officials were elected. All branch officers were elected . . . An appeals machinery existed which could overturn unpopular EC decisions . . . The EC was a rank and file one. There was no political discrimination.'

All this has changed. And union members who were not even born at the time of the trial are banned from office.

The authors call for a change, emphasising that Communists do not conceal their views or membership in order to evade the ban. They end a most excellent and valuable pamphlet with a threefold appeal.

First, we urge all Communist Party members to take this pamphlet and the

DEUTSCHER PRIZE

Tamara Deutscher writes: the Isaac Deutscher Memorial prize for 1979 has been awarded to Dr G A Cohen, Reader in Philosophy at the University College, London, for his book *Karl Marx's Theory of History. A Defence*, published by the Oxford University Press.

The Prize was founded in 1968 by British, American, and European scholars to further the aims to which Isaac Deutscher, a prominent Marxist teacher and scholar was dedicated. The following are the Sponsors: Wolfgang Abendroth, Perry Anderson, Lelio Basso, E H Carr, Tamara Deutscher, Andre Gorz, Christopher Hill, Eric Hobsbawm, David Horowitz, Monty Johnstone, Marcel Liebman, Ralph Miliband, Paul M Sweezy, Istvan Meszaros, John Saville, G Stedman Jones.

The Prize, to the value of £100, is awarded annually in recognition and as encouragement of outstanding research and writing in the tradition of Isaac Deutscher.

The Prize for 1978 was awarded to Rudolf Bahro for his book *The Alternative in Eastern Europe* (New Left Books). Rudolf Bahro will deliver The Isaac Deutscher Memorial Lecture at the New Theatre, London School of Economics, on 3 March, at 7.15 pm.

The Prize for 1980 will be awarded in the autumn and a Jury drawn from among the Sponsors, will consider work published or in

typescript. Any such work should be submitted by 1 May to The Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize, c/o Lloyds Bank, 68 Warwick Sq., London SW 1.

END THE BAN

Gerry Pocock writes: For progressives the antics and utterances of Frank Chappie, General Secretary of the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunication Plumbing Union, must often appear as stupid irrelevancies, so isolated, so reflected by the rest of the TU movement as not to require serious examination.

What can easily be overlooked is that Chappie is the General Secretary of a Union of 400,000 members. And in this union the democratic rights of the members are severely curtailed, the most flagrant example of this curtailment being the ban on Communists holding office.

A pamphlet produced by a group of Communist EETPU members makes the points: the EETPU's attitude towards political and industrial affairs generally is dictated by an intense anti-Communist approach, which, if it was equalled throughout the movement in Britain, would put McCarthyism (which blighted the American political scene for so many years) in the shade. The same vendetta style of leadership means a constant nullifying of the effective-

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NOTES

arguments in it, in a sustained effort to win support for ending political discrimination in the EETPU.

Secondly, we ask all our close friends of the left to join us in this campaigning, for without the goodwill and conviction of our left colleagues an effective campaign is very difficult.

Thirdly, we appeal to all trade unionists, particularly our fellow EETPU members who recognise the dangers of the continued existence of such an undemocratic feature in British political life, to add their voices.'

The pamphlet, *End the Ban*, is available from Central Books Ltd, at 30p.

CP BOOKSALE

Betty Reid writes: The Communist Party announces one of its periodic book and pamphlet sales in the hall at 27 Bedford Street, London WC2 on Wednesday, March 26th from 5.15 to 7.30 for the CP National Fund. This promises to be an exceptionally interesting sale with rare pamphlets from many organisations and a varied collection of books donated from the personal libraries of our members. Two or three sales are held each year, and in preparation all donations of books, pamphlets and papers are carefully sorted, archives and library added to, and the surplus prepared for sale. Efforts are also made to supply titles in between sales. For more information write to Communist Party Booksales, 27 Bedford Street, WC2.01-836 2151.

SEMINAR IN HUNGARY

Reuben Falber writes:

A seminar organised by the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party at Tihany in December 1979 provided the opportunity for an interesting exchange of experiences on the policies and theories of social democratic parties and the relations of Communist Parties with them.

All the European Communist Parties, except Yugoslavia, plus the Communist Party of Cuba attended and participated in

the discussion. The contributions were on two distinct but inter-related levels. The position of the the Socialist International and its relations with the Communist Parties of the socialist countries and the expanding relations of some social democratic parties with the Communist Parties of the socialist countries were discussed mainly in terms of the more positive attitude being taken by the Socialist International and some of its European member parties towards detente and the ending of the arms race.

In recent years pressure of events and the aspirations of their supporters have led to some social democratic parties taking up a stronger position on important issues connected with the defence of peace. In recent months the stand of the parties of the Netherlands and Belgium on the NATO missile proposals has been of outstanding significance. During the 1970s the Swedish party took a very positive stand in support of the Vietnamese people. On the other hand the recent congress of the West German SDP, perhaps the strongest in Europe, un-animously voted in favour of the new and even more dangerous NATO plans. From the contributions made by representatives of Communist Parties from capitalist countries it did appear that on balance a more positive attitude towards detente was developing among social democratic parties.

There was however concern at the rightward shift in some European countries during 1979. In Britain and Portugal the right wing won general elections and in West Germany the danger of a Strauss-led right wing government is both real and menacing. Again there are exceptions. In the recent election in Sweden the Social Democratic Party regained some of the ground it had lost previously although even with the support of the Communist Party it is not able to form a government with a parliamentary majority.

In some of the contributions there was a tendency to suggest that the depth of the

capitalist crisis ruled out the possibility of further reforms or concessions to the working class and in one or two contributions this view was extended to the concept that in these circumstances capitalism no longer needed social democratic governments but preferred to rule directly.

It is not possible to judge the validity of these positions in the circumstances of other countries but it cannot be argued that they reflect British experience. The Thatcher government's onslaught on living conditions, the public sector and the concept of social responsibility is wider than what would seem to be required to place the main burden of the crisis on the shoulders of the working class. It is a political offensive aimed at changing the balance of forces in Britain, recapturing ground won by the working class and other democratic forces during three decades of postwar activity and struggle and in the process undermining the political viability of the labour movement in order to provide a basis for Tory rule throughout the decade.

Nor does British experience suggest that the ruling class can decide whether at a given time its needs are best met by a Conservative government or by a Labour government. Even if at some elections sections of the bourgeoisie believe a period of right wing Labour government might be more favourable to its interests the Conservative Party is unlikely to concur and be ready to cooperate by not using all its many weapons to win the election.

The seminar did not attempt to reach any definite conclusions, still less to suggest any kind of joint approach, but it did help the parties represented to realise a greater understanding of each others problems and viewpoints as well as the rich diversity of the situations confronting the labour movements in the various countries represented.

Contributions to *Notes* (brief please) are welcome. We need copy before the 1st of the month preceding publication.

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