

THE NEWSLETTER

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'LIFT BANS' LOBBY AT TRANSPORT HOUSE NEC to Hear Demand for Democracy on May 27

THE Socialist Labour League is calling on all Labour Party members and trade unionists who value democratic rights and free speech in the Labour movement, and who want a serious campaign against bans, proscriptions and expulsions, to lobby the next meeting of the Labour Party's national executive.

The lobby will take place at Transport House, Smith Square, Westminster, S.W.1, on Wednesday, May 27, at 9.15 a.m.

Members of the NEC will be asked to withdraw the proscription of The Newsletter and the ban on the Socialist Labour League. This lobbying will be part of the great campaign, now getting under way, to restore the right of socialists to speak up for a fighting socialist policy inside the Labour Party.

Already a great number of trade unionists and Labour Party members are rallying in the fight to have the circular proscribing the Socialist Labour League and banning its weekly paper withdrawn.

As well as a growing number of local Labour Parties and trade union branches, Tribune has declared quite categorically against this attempt to gag the Labour Left.

And the way the Tories have been using the proscription and expulsions and attempted expulsions in the municipal election campaign has added fuel to the flames of resentment against the Transport House vendetta.

The Labour leaders' efforts to stifle the Marxists have not met with the success they hoped for.

People are discussing the Morgan Phillips circular, and the reply circulated by Gerry Healy, provisional national secretary of the Socialist Labour League, and Peter Fryer, Editor of The Newsletter, in terms of the policy questions involved—not, as the witch-hunters hoped, in terms of the slanders put out by Morgan Phillips.

Against full-time officialdom

There is every chance that this kind of discussion will create an atmosphere in the party favourable for policy changes in a socialist direction.

Active Labour Party members in the localities are seeing the need to struggle against full-time officialdom, who are a law unto themselves when it comes to expelling socialists.

It has not gone unnoticed that despite the fact that the NEC has never declared for the expulsion of a single member of The Newsletter's Editorial Board, leaving the matter entirely to the judgment of the local parties concerned, officials such as Len Williams, the national agent, are trying to interpret the proscription decision as meaning the immediate expulsion of Editorial Board members.

There is absolutely no constitutional basis for this, nor any precedent whatever to justify it.

On the contrary, many organizations have been proscribed in the past without any of their supporters being expelled automatically.

The Norwood and Streatham parties have recently refused to allow active and loyal members to be expelled by decree.

An appeal is being made to Labour Party members who have political differences with the Socialist Labour League and The Newsletter to join in the May 27 lobby nevertheless, with the aim of halting the witch-hunt.

POWER WORKERS CONDEMN BAN ON SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

Liverpool South Branch of the Power Workers' Group of the Transport and General Workers' Union has condemned 'in the strongest terms' the proscription of the Socialist Labour League and The Newsletter by the Labour Party's national executive.

'We condemn the attempt of the national executive to introduce into the Labour Party the odious and anti-democratic McCarthyite practice of guilt by association,' the Liverpool power workers declare.

'We demand that the proscription of the Socialist Labour League be lifted forthwith and that the principle of—and the attempt to practise—guilt by association be disavowed and abandoned immediately.'

The resolution has been sent to Liverpool Trades Council and to Liverpool Borough Labour Party.

GROOOCK GETS THE BIRD

HOSIERY WORKERS SAY: 'WE'LL FIGHT A WAGE CUT

By Robert Shaw

OFFICIALS of the National Union of Hosiery Workers are trying to put across another wage cut—this time for the seamless hose section of the trade.

Last Sunday 150 seamless knitters from eight firms in the Mansfield and Ilkeston district met in Langley Mill and were harangued for two and a half hours by the general secretary of the union, C. G. Groocock, and Ashton, the district secretary. These officials had a rough time.

Groocock attacked 'outside political influences' who were busy stirring up trouble in the Mansfield area. They were 'worse than the communists'—but he refused to identify them by name.

Had to be 'realistic'

What he seemed to be referring to was the article in The Newsletter of April 25 giving the views of the fully fashioned hose knitters whose wages were cut, with Groocock's blessing, a month ago.

Groocock said the seamless hose section of the trade was heading for boom conditions. But there was competition from abroad, and the employers wanted the workers to take a wage cut and also work a greater number of machines.

They had to be realistic. They had to negotiate from a

(Continued overleaf, col. 2)

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HOW TO FIGHT CARRON

WHY has Carron won? And why has Birch's vote gone down? Is there a swing to the Right in the Amalgamated Engineering Union? No, for at the national committee meeting Carron was defeated when he tried to hold back a resolution pressing for both the 40-hour week and a 15 per cent. wage increase. And recent disputes have shown a very high degree of solidarity and awareness among engineering workers. What the election result does show is a bankruptcy of policy on the Left. It is no good seeking to capture positions as a means of changing the unions and defeating the Right wing. If the Communist Party was carrying out a communist policy in the AEU it would be increasing its vote at a time when the employers are openly declaring war on trade unionism. Capitalist Press campaigns cannot explain away the poor vote for Birch; such campaigns have always been with us. The fault lies in the failure of the Communist Party to present a clear revolutionary alternative that would rally the engineering workers against the Right wing.

We take no pleasure in the return of Carron, one of whose earlier attacks on industrial militants provided the Economic League with the opening text for its anti-shop-steward pamphlet 'Subversion in Industry' (1958). Against the reactionary policies of Carron and those like him the Socialist Labour League will conduct a persistent struggle. But we shall struggle in a different way from the Communist Party. Our aim will be the building of strong rank-and-file committees in every factory, to defend shop stewards and develop a resolute fight for higher wages and shorter hours. Any trade union official who happens to belong to the Socialist Labour League will be a revolutionary in deeds as well as words. The League will see to that.

QUALITY OF MERCY

THE newspapers which opposed a reprieve for Ronald Marwood, aged 25, oppose mercy killing by doctors. No mercy for a young man found guilty of killing a policeman in a brawl. No mercy for an old person dying of an incurable and agonizing disease. No mercy for a 23-year-old Negro, dragged screaming from jail to his death. No mercy for the countless victims of strontium-90. Capitalism is pitiless, cruel, rotten—and doomed.

BUILD YOUR PAPER

CONGRATULATIONS to the Leeds branch of the Socialist Labour League, whose members sold an extra 500 copies of the May Day issue of The Newsletter. Efforts like this bring closer the day when our paper can shed its modest format for good. The Newsletter has developed further and faster than we dared hope when the first issue came off the press two years ago tomorrow. Hard work in extending the sales, coupled with a drive to gather money for the Development Fund, will ensure that this tempo of development is still further accelerated and a full-sized fighting working-class newspaper hammers out its weekly challenge to capitalism and reformism.

HOSIERY WORKERS (Continued from front page)

position of strength. They had to be statesmanlike and get control of the position. They had to face up to an increase in the work load.

This speech was received in silence. Then a brother from Mansfield told Grocock they were not satisfied with his assurances.

The fully fashioned men had been slaughtered; now it was the seamless hose section's turn. Far from considering a cut in earnings they should be considering an increase.

If the workers were to take a wage cut they would immediately be faced with difficulties in meeting payments for houses, cars and television. If the employers could have these things, then why not the workers too?

The meeting's instructions to the union leaders should be that under no circumstances were they to negotiate for a wage cut, but that they should retain the present prices.

Grocock had recommended that the meeting elect delegates for a national negotiating committee. The Mansfield brother was opposed to such a delegate meeting after the experience with the fully fashioned negotiations, where a delegate meeting had reversed the instructions of the rank and file.

To enforce their demands they were prepared to face up to any measures, including strike action.

Demands from the floor

The speech was enthusiastically received, and from this point the meeting became a series of demands from the floor, overwhelmingly in favour of scrapping the idea of a delegate meeting and demanding that no wage cut be entertained.

Grocock's appeal for a 'statesmanlike' attitude were continually interrupted, like this:

Grocock: What are we to put in place of the employers' price lists?

A Voice: A rise.

Grocock: I do not want a cut in wages.

A Voice: You're not getting one.

Grocock: I might have thought differently if I had been working in the factory.

Grocock: What about the competition from abroad?

Shouts: You're trying to intimidate us.

Grocock: There are subversive outside political influences at work.

Shouts: What influences?...Come to the point...Out of order.

Finally Grocock could no longer be heard. Restraining his general secretary with one hand and appealing to the meeting with the other, Ashton asked them to allow their leaders to negotiate for them.

Members declared that once delegates were got to head office they would have their 'brains washed', the wishes of the rank and file would be ignored, and the final decision would be taken by the leaders.

Grocock had suggested two delegates, but the meeting demanded four. They also demanded that the delegates should carry out the meeting's instructions.

Grocock jumped in to accept the four delegates, but stated flatly that there could be no question of their being 'tied to the wishes of the members'.

'We will strike first'

After the meeting I asked the men if they thought that a cut in wages could be prevented. They were confident that they could stop it. 'We will go on strike first,' they said.

They told me some of the results of earlier negotiations on their behalf. In the case of the 'donkey', used to transport stockings to the knitting machines, this job had been done at one time by girls at a price of 3d. per dozen; now, after official negotiations, it was done by the knitters for ½d. per dozen.

After the experiences of workers in other sections of the trade, where wage reductions of up to £5 now operate, the seamless workers are especially wary of their officials. The need for links between factories is being discussed.

WAGES AND HOURS: WE MUST NOT LET CARRON AND CO. BURY THESE DECISIONS

By Harry Ratner

'THE employers are not going to concede a wage increase and a shorter working week simultaneously.' So said Amalgamated Engineering Union President Carron at the recent meeting of the union's national committee.

He was opposing the demand that the AEU press for a wage increase, and arguing that the 40-hour week should have precedence.

But any shop steward could have told Bro. Carron that the employers will not concede anything—either higher wages or the 40-hour week—unless they are forced to do so.

The argument that the 40 hours must have priority is a phony one. The executive has no intention of fighting for the 40-hour week, and merely used the issue as an attempt to get out of fighting for wages.

Employers show new toughness

Here was the AEU national committee meeting against a background of increasing attacks on conditions, jobs and trade union organization.

Two weeks previously Handley Page had provoked a strike of 4,000 workers by sacking a militant convener.

Before that, Aircraft Steel Structures had been forced only by the workers' militant action to retreat in their attack on agreed union conditions.

In the disputes over non-unionists at Fords and in Birmingham the employers have shown a new toughness—a determination to break down 100 per cent. trade unionism as a prelude to a general attack on wages and conditions.

In every case the rank and file have shown their ability to stick together and fight back. And in some cases, as at Harland and Wolffs and Aircraft Steel Structures, they have been able to defeat the employers despite the AEU executive.

In his opening address to the national committee the president might have had a word of encouragement for the shop stewards and rank and file who are putting up a fight to defend trade unionism.

Workers pay his salary

But no! To Carron, whose salary is paid out of these workers' contributions, these are 'unnecessary and completely unauthorized strikes . . . wilful rejection of instructions issued by the executive council' and so forth.

NOT A WORD of criticism of the employers' actions.

NOT A WHISPER against the victimization of Bro. Knight.

The attempts of Fords and Morris's to break down trade unionism might never have taken place.

NOT A SENTENCE to prepare engineering workers for the inevitable struggles to defend jobs and conditions against an employers' federation which has openly boasted that it wants to take on and smash the unions.

NOT A WORD to inspire the near-million members of the AEU with confidence in their ability to defeat all attacks and go on to win the 40 hours and higher wages.

Militants welcome the fact that the national committee rejected Carron's advice and decided to press for both the 40-hour week and a 15 per cent. wage increase.

Decisions remain dead letters

Whether we get these or not now depends on one thing: are we prepared to take action—if necessary national strike action—to back these demands?

Past experience has shown that many good decisions taken by the national committee remain dead letters and are ignored by the executive.

Again the executive will do its best to bury the decisions

on the 40-hour week and wages in a web of procedure and procrastination.

But the rank and file can prevent this. If district committees and shop stewards in every area take the initiative and begin a campaign based on the national committee decisions, such a powerful rank-and-file upsurge can be created as will make it impossible for anyone to side-step these decisions.

District committees should be urged to convene mass meetings of shop stewards to plan a campaign of factory meetings.

The issue must be put fairly and squarely to every engineering worker in every factory:

'Do you want the 40-hour week? Do you want to prevent sackings? Do you need higher wages to make up for lost overtime? If you do, are you prepared to fight for these

'TIMMO' NEVER FLINCHED

By Harry Constable

FIGHTING docker Albert Timothy will lead no more unofficial strikes. This 65-year-old veteran of countless struggles died at his Beckton home on Monday.

The death of this thickset and quickwitted cockney leaves a big gap in the ranks of dockland's unofficial leaders.

A crane-driver in the Royal group and for a number of years a member of the main council of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers, 'Timmo' was one of the seven men arrested in 1951 under the emergency strike-breaking regulation 1305.

During his trial Timothy caused a gust of laughter to sweep round the Old Bailey when he addressed the judge and court as 'brother chairman and brothers'.

WHY HE LEFT. A member of the Communist Party for a year, Albert Timothy left its ranks because of its opposition to the entry of the northern dockers into the NASD.

Like Wally Jones, a close friend of his who was killed on the dock two months ago, Timothy could proudly claim that he had never scabbed in a strike.

His death will be felt not only in London but also in the provincial ports, where he was well known as a leader in the Canadian seamen's strike and the 1954 overtime strike.

He leaves a wife and eleven children and step-children, and The Newsletter extends heartfelt sympathy to his family in their loss.

things? For that is the only way you will get them.'

In some areas, as in Salford, shop stewards have already come together to organize a campaign.

Campaign committees linking factories

A flood of decisions should go from factory meetings and branches urging the executive to implement the national committee decisions.

But without waiting to see whether the executive moves or not, campaign committees of shop stewards, linking factories on an area basis, could begin to campaign at once.

Those who still bemoan the 'apathy of the workers' should ask themselves: 'Were the 4,000 workers at Handley Page apathetic? Or the Harland and Wolff workers who stuck it out for fifteen weeks without strike pay and repeatedly refused

to go back until they finally won?"

Are these workers so different from the rest of the three million engineers? The 'apathy' is only at the top—and 'apathy' is not the exact word for it, either.

THEY LOST THEIR CARDS FOR BEING MILITANT

By Our Industrial Correspondent

THIRTEEN Manchester paperworkers who fought a case of victimization have lost their union cards, and nine others have been fined £5 each by the union branch.

The dispute was at W. H. Smith's, where a small fire had led to a ban on smoking. The workers replied with a work-to-rule and, later, a ban on overtime.

The father of the chapel (equivalent to shop steward) and his deputy were sacked and escorted off the premises.

Eighteen men walked out in sympathy, and pickets were posted. The branch secretary of the paperworkers' and bookbinders' union, a full-time official, told a number of the men: 'You know what the consequences are.'

The chapel at John Heywood's, another big newspaper distributors, carried a resolution by 35 votes to nil saying that if the men were not reinstated and a conciliation committee called, as provided for in the agreement, they would stop work the next night.

The Heywood's men were persuaded to return to work on the understanding that the case of the two Smith's men who were sacked would go to a conciliation court, and that those who walked out would be reinstated.

But what really happened was this:

Thirteen men had their union cards taken away from them, which in a closed shop industry means driving them out completely.

Nine others were fined £5, to be paid before they started work.

And these were the conditions under which the men went back to Smith's: to forfeit all seniority and start as completely new men; to forfeit all pension rights; the time of their supper break to be movable; no hostile action to be taken against blacklegs; to accept that they can be sent anywhere in the Smith's organization.

The fight on behalf of the victimized men goes on.

BOILERMAKERS ANSWER PRESS LIES

By William Hunter

By the middle of this week over a third of the labour force was idle at Cammell Laird's Birkenhead shipyard.

Answering Press attacks that this strike of 1,700 boiler-makers was about who should pull a string to chalk a line, the Merseyside delegate of the Boilermakers' Society, W. Kerr, declared:

'The issue is simply over the victimization of two men. That is overlooked by the gimmick writers of the popular Press.'

By suspending other workers the management evidently hopes that the hardships will be blamed on the boilermakers. But at plumbers' and joiners' meetings some of the men have demanded that all the suspensions should be resisted.

Labour Must Blast the Blimps

MILITARISM has exacted full toll for the 'riot' that took place at Shepton Mallet military prison on March 10.

Last week a military court staffed by members of the officer caste handed out sentences totalling thirty-five years to nine of the thirteen alleged mutineers.

After sentencing the prisoners the president of the court, Brigadier C. T. W. Gough, went out of his way to commend the prison commandant, Lt-Col. J. C. M. Morton-Clarke, and his staff for their 'handling of the mutiny'.



ANCIENT SLUM. The War Office brass hats and the ruling-class politicians hope that Shepton Mallet will now return to normal, undisturbed business. They hope to restore the shroud of secrecy hiding what takes place in this ancient slum where men are made to polish floors with boot polish, to shine buckets that are never used.

Despite a number of official inquiries into allegations of physical brutality against prisoners, secrecy has been rigidly maintained.

Last year civil police were called in to investigate the case of one prisoner who had his skull fractured.

Despite the inquiries, not one official report has ever been made available to the public.

Shepton Mallet was built 348 years ago. In 1930 the civil authorities condemned it as unfit for use as a prison.

Preparing for the war for democracy by increasing the number of jails at their disposal, the army took it over as a military detention barracks in 1939.

Since then this hell-hole, described by one of its former padres as degrading and needing to be 'utterly destroyed', has seen inflicted on its unfortunate inmates all the humiliations that only the militarized mind could conceive.

Living within the confines of the damp-soaked walls, compelled to perform the most inane tasks at the behest of the guards, denied any real medium for the settlement of their

grievances, the prisoners were undoubtedly goaded to a point beyond human endurance.

Men whose only channel of complaint is an orderly officer who is one of the staff responsible for running the prison have no alternative but strike action if they want to bring attention to their grievances.

The whole responsibility for what took place at Shepton Mallet rests upon the military. Yet this same military is prosecutor, judge and jury—and hands out savage sentences of five years to four of the men and three years to the others.

These sentences are designed not only to punish the so-called mutineers, but also to serve notice on all other prisoners—and all other soldiers—not to get out of line.

The Labour movement has a responsibility both to the convicted men and to all other working-class lads who are serving in the Forces.

Under no circumstances can we permit the Blimps to continue with their brutalization and inhuman treatment of young workers, of which Shepton Mallet is only one example that has happened to come to public notice.

Labour should demand an independent inquiry into Shepton Mallet—an inquiry conducted by representatives of the trade unions, not by people whose main concern would be to hush up the whole affair.



WORKERS IN UNIFORM. Labour should demand that soldiers have the right of trade union representation at all levels.

Let Morgan Phillips and other Labour Party leaders who profess such concern over young people take up the fight for the young people in the army.

Let us ensure that young workers in uniform receive from Labour the help and protection against Tory officers that they are entitled to.

BOB PENNINGTON

Said one plumber: 'In letting the firm lay off men at will you weaken the boilermakers. Cammell Laird keep our unemployment cards. If we ask for them to seek employment elsewhere, we get no dole for six weeks.'

'The firm wants the right to lay us off but at the same time keep us for employment when it wishes. The suspension weapon is used to discipline workers and split other workers from those on strike.'

Militants are raising the demand that the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions call a mass meeting of all trades in the shipyard to discuss united action against suspensions.

SALFORD BUILDING WORKERS STRIKE FOR 4d. AN HOUR AND 40-HOUR WEEK

By Our Industrial Correspondent

BUILDING workers on the Agcroft power station site, Salford, downed tools on Monday in support of the fourpence an hour and 40-hour week claim.

One joiner told me 'There has been terrific delay over this claim. We feel the building employers are playing for time.'

Jim Abbott, the scaffolders' and labourers' steward, added:

'We need the 40-hour week to spread the work and stop unemployment.'

Though Monday's stoppage was limited to one contractor, the men I spoke with made it clear that unless there is progress at the national negotiations an all-site meeting will be called to discuss further action.

'We need a mass stoppage throughout the country,' said Federation steward John Gantley. 'Peaceful negotiations have got us nowhere over several months. We've got to demonstrate our strength to the employers and to our leaders.'

'The Tory government can afford money for H-bombs and rocket sites but not for the working class. We must protest strongly against all rocket sites.'

'The Stevenage lads made a gallant stand. We fully support them.'

WE COULD NOT SQUEEZE THEM IN

Owing to great pressure on space this week a number of articles and letters, including the conclusion of Tom Kemp's series on aspects of the seven-year economic plan in the USSR and the second half of Cliff Slaughter's article on 'Socialism and the Split in Arab Nationalism', have had to be held over to future issues.

Stopping the H-Tests Is Not Enough

By GERRY HEALY

THE Socialist Labour League opposes the manufacture and testing of the hydrogen-bomb, and all the other war preparations of the capitalist powers.

We do so because we adhere to the fundamental proposition of Marxism about imperialist war: that it is as much part of the capitalist system as profit-making and unemployment are.

We believe that it is impossible to separate the manufacture of the H-bomb from the capitalist system—and that those who try to do so are blinding themselves and others to the realities of capitalism.

The Soviet Union has now amassed large stocks of H-bombs. It has carried through a great many tests. Fall-out from Soviet and American tests is threatening the people of Japan.

Macmillan has announced that fall-out of strontium 90 over Britain has doubled in the past year.

DECIDING FACTOR

Socialists fully understand that in the face of a hostile capitalist world the Soviet Union cannot deprive itself of the military defence necessary to keep capitalist armies at bay.

But the defence of the Soviet Union is not just a military question. It is not simply a matter of large armies and hydrogen-bombs.

The fate of the Soviet Union can be finally decided only when the working class, particularly in western Europe and the USA, has overthrown capitalism and established working-class power.

To achieve this, the socialist movement must base itself on the ability of the working class to take power and reorganize society; it must base itself on the class struggle as the only means of achieving socialism.

But this is not view of the present leaders of the Soviet Union. Khrushchev and Mikoyan—and the leaders of the British Communist Party—speak of 'peaceful coexistence' between two social systems.

This conception throws overboard a fundamental socialist principle: that the prosecution of the class struggle is the only way in which capitalism can be ended and socialism introduced.

The Soviet leaders do not rely on the working class and do not seek to rouse it into action against world capitalism. And

so they are forced to engage in the hydrogen-bomb rat race with the imperialists.

The Soviet bureaucracy fears the working class because once the working class begins to attain political consciousness as a class and come into action as a class, then it will collide with the anti-democratic régime in the Soviet Union and the bureaucracy will be menaced, as it was in Hungary.

CROSS ROADS

As long as the working class is not brought into action against imperialism the stocks of hydrogen-bombs grow, test follows test, and the air we breathe is gradually being poisoned.

Mankind today is at the cross roads, because, though imperialism is in crisis, the Soviet bureaucracy is unable to lead a struggle of the international working class against imperialism.

Failure to face up to these facts is responsible for most of the confusion and mystification surrounding the question of how to fight the H-bomb menace.

Bevan wants to keep the bomb but stop the tests. The history of all past armaments drives shows that weapons are manufactured to be used.

If the imperialists invest large sums of money in the manufacture of H-bombs in order to help their economy, then the time will come when the driving forces of that economy determine, not merely the manufacture, but the use of these bombs.

BRANDS THEM

Gaitskell wants to keep the bomb but suspend the tests. He will not fight against Wall Street's war preparations. He wants a partial truce—but he has no intention of frustrating the imperialists' war plans by leading a resolute struggle for socialism.

Gaitskell and Bevan were in the Labour Cabinet which voted the appropriations for Aldermaston. If today they recoil from the horrors they have helped to bring about, this brands them as objects of contempt to all thinking people.

The Communist Party leaders say the main thing is to convince the powers to get rid of the bomb. This assumes what it seeks to prove.

How can imperialist America be persuaded to stop being

imperialist—to renounce the weapon which imperialism in decay has fashioned to safeguard its plunder and its profits?

The Communist Party leaders might just as well try to persuade the tiger to turn vegetarian.

What none of these gentlemen will get into their skulls is that the only force which can do away with the bomb is the working class mobilized for socialism—for a socialist America and a socialist Britain.

There is no short cut around this fact.

NO CONFIDENCE

Bevan and Gaitskell want to keep the bomb because they have no confidence in the power of the working class. The Soviet leaders and the leaders of the British Communist Party are for the continued manufacture of the bomb, for the same reason.

What about the pacifists? They quite openly state that they have no confidence in the struggle of the working class against the employing class, either.

They make moral appeals to the best 'human' instincts of both sides. When it is suggested that the only way to get rid of the bomb is to stop its manufacture by means of a working-class struggle against the Tory government in this country, against the Eisenhower government in the USA, they hold up their hands in horror at the 'violence' this would entail!

These three schools of thought—the Labour Party leaders, the Communist Party leaders and the pacifists—have this in common: they direct their appeals to the leaders of States, who are the manufacturers of the bomb and would not be without it for the world.

They all refuse to base themselves on the struggle of the working class against these leaders, and they in fact impede the development of such a struggle.

The demand 'End the tests' means nothing unless it is backed by a determined struggle by the working class for the

overthrow of the capitalist system that is responsible for the bomb.

SOCIALIST PROGRAMME

The Socialist Labour League fully understands that the struggle for socialism is a process, and not something that can be achieved merely by putting forward correct demands.

We believe that the present Right-wing leaders of the Labour Party and trade unions, who stand for the continuation of capitalism, have no more intention of abolishing the H-bomb than have Eisenhower and Herter and Macmillan.

The struggle to abolish the H-bomb is a struggle for a socialist programme—a struggle to take out of the hands of the capitalist class the means of making the bomb.

Nationalization of all the basic industries under workers' control is a central demand in this struggle.

The Socialist Labour League believes that every trade unionist who today participates in the class struggle on wages, hours, jobs and against victimization, is thereby weakening imperialism and its ability to make war.

Every immediate struggle on these questions is to that extent a struggle against the H-bomb, even though only advanced workers at first see the connexion.

EFFECTIVE STRUGGLE

The biggest factor preventing the imperialists from going to war is the working class and the colonial peoples. At 'peace', the imperialists make and test these terrible weapons to the point where they threaten the extermination of the entire human race, themselves included.

A way out of this deadlock must be found if mankind is to survive. The policy of the Socialist Labour League shows the way out. We think this policy is the only effective answer to the H-bomb, and the only effective way to struggle against it.

Constant Reader Class-War-Minded Bosses

ONE valuable service rendered by the engineering employers' pamphlet on industrial relations is that it provides evidence from the horse's mouth that sections of the employing class consciously plan in terms of the class war.

This is something which many of the younger generation of workers find it hard to believe.

The careful preparations made by the capitalists and their Tory government in the months between Red Friday and the General Strike provide one example from the past.

Another is the sustained offensive 'by all arms' waged in the 1890s, and culminating in the Taff Vale judgment of 1901, carried on by the ruling class with a view to smashing the militant spirit of 'new unionism' which had arisen among the workers in the late 1880s.

It was as part of this offensive that the Engineering Employers' Federation was formed and the lock-out of 1897-98 enforced.

This was ended by those 'terms of settlement'—known after a revision in 1914 as the York memorandum—which have been a millstone round engineering workers' necks ever since.

I understand that a fresh study of this period of Britain's industrial history, focused on the aspect mentioned, will be included in the forthcoming volume of essays in memory of G. D. H. Cole, edited by John Saville and Professor Asa Briggs.

Allen Hutt made a contribution on this important episode with an article called 'A Forgotten Campaign of The Times against Trade Unionism' which appeared in the Modern Quarterly before the war.

For some reason this article is omitted from the useful 'Bibliography of Historical Writing in the Light of Marxism'

recently issued by the Historians' Group of the Communist Party.

More about 'misery'

Further to the matter of 'increasing misery', which bulks so big in 'new thinkers' attempts to discredit Marxism and traditional socialist thought generally. The method employed is sometimes that of erecting an Aunt Sally.

Even Lassalle, who was no Marxist and who was criticized by Marx for his idea of an 'iron law of wages', did not hold such stupid views as are often attributed to him.

'All that human beings suffer and miss,' he pointed out in 1863, 'depends on the relation between the means of satisfaction and the customary necessities of life already recognized at the time.'

'All human suffering and privation, and all human satisfaction—consequently, every condition—is measured only by comparing one's situation with that in which other men of the same time find themselves, in reference to what the custom of the time deems necessary for existence.'

'The position of any man is always measured solely by its relation to that of other classes at the same time.'

No Chinese walls

Kautsky, then still a Marxist, made a similar observation in his pamphlet 'The Social Revolution'—which used to be well known here in the edition printed by the Twentieth Century Press.

'To the same extent as profits rise so does the mode of living of the bourgeoisie improve. But the classes are not divided by

Chinese walls.

'The increasing luxury of the upper classes trickles gradually through to the lower, and awakens in them new needs and new demands, to the satisfaction of which, however, the slow rise in wages is inadequate.'

It was Kautsky, too, who made what is perhaps the most vital point in this connexion, in a speech at the German Social-Democratic Party's 1901 congress.

After stating that "increasing misery" is to be understood only as a tendency and not as an unconditional truth', and reminding his listeners that Marx himself had, so early as 1847, pointed to the counter-tendency constituted by the growth of trade unionism, he went on to say:

'But we must distinguish ourselves from bourgeois reformers, in that the latter think that the tendency itself can be overcome, and social peace established, a state of affairs in which Capital does not tend to force the workers down.

'Capital must so tend; and that is the basis of the class war, which must go on till we wrench from Capital the instruments of its political and economic power.'

BRIAN PEARCE

LETTERS

STRUGGLE, NOT DECREES, WILL DECIDE THE TIME FOR NEW MARXIST PARTY

WE have no disagreement with Philip Crick on the need to form an independent party of the working class. Where there is disagreement is on the method by which such a party should be built.

We are not among those who think that an independent working-class party can be created by decree.

Such a party can only be built, can only win the support of the decisive mass of the working class, in the course of a long struggle against capitalism and against those elements hostile to the activity of the working class: reformists of the Right-wing variety and of the Stalinist variety.

In Britain there is a long-established capitalist class backed up by an experienced reformist leadership. The Labour Party enjoys mass support because of the deep reformist illusions among the workers. This Labour Party is based directly on the unions.

The timing of the formation of an independent party is directly related to the stage that the struggle against Right-wing reformism and Stalinism has reached.

The launching of the Socialist Labour League strengthens that struggle. Its Marxist programme can help the fight for socialist policies in the trade unions and Labour Party.

More active, more impact

At the present stage we are fighting for our right to have such an organization at all. We are combating a witch-hunt. And we are taking the opportunity to expose the Right wing and win more Left-wingers for Marxism.

There are sectarians who demand that we break with the Labour Party. We reply: 'Which Labour Party?'

From our programme and activities it is clear that we have broken with Morgan Phillips and Gaitskell. But we have not the slightest intention of giving up our right to be affiliated to the Labour Party of the rank-and-file trade unionist and the hard-working ward member.

The rejection by many local parties of the demand that our supporters be expelled (where these parties have been given the chance to debate it) shows how much we have in common with these comrades.

At the same time, our determination to work within the mass organizations of the working class in no way impedes our independent activity. We are much more active than many who hold any connexion with the Labour Party to be impure.

And we have much more impact on the working class, and

deal reformism much harder blows, than many of these political virgins!

The more workers join the Socialist Labour League and fight for our policy, the sooner will reformism be defeated and a mass working-class party emerge able to lead its class in the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism.

London, S.E.24

Brian Behan

LET'S STUDY, LEARN—AND APPLY OUR KNOWLEDGE IN THE BATTLE

ONE of the most important parts of the draft political resolution to be submitted to the Whitsun conference of the Socialist Labour League is section x: 'What It Means to be a Marxist.'

For too long the British Labour movement has been permeated by a contempt for theory, an attitude of 'muddle through', 'let's get on with the job', 'suck it and see'.

This 'empirical' way of thinking, as it is called, springs from the economic position of Britain. Until recently, imperialist exploitation enabled the British ruling class to give concessions to some sections of the workers.

Thus the Labour leaders were helped to avoid going to the root of the problems facing the working class—the capitalist system itself.

Going to the root

Marxists can go to the root of the problems. They carry arguments to their conclusion precisely because their aim in life is to get rid of capitalism through the achievement of workers' power.

From cradle to grave every one of us is subjected to the pressure of capitalist ideas. Press, radio, television, films, schools and universities pour out a stream of words every day.

Their aim is to persuade us to accept society as it is. They try to convince us that the ruling class is far too strong for its rule to be challenged.

Far easier to forget the whole business. If you must meddle in politics, limit yourself to helping the system to work smoothly with the minimum of hardship and trouble all round.

To be a socialist is to combat these lies by word and deed, to show the real nature of this social set-up and to demonstrate how it can be smashed by the power of the working class.

The scientific study of the way society develops enables us to see the general, long-term interests of the working class.

On the other hand reformers and do-gooders, not to mention genuine Right-wingers, get no further than sectional and short-term solutions.

Not a finished product

An example of this is the Communist Party's position on the cessation of opencast working as an answer to pit closures.

By dividing the working class this proposal weakens the miners. Only through the united action of the workers as a class can the miners defend their conditions.

For us, the principles of Marxism are not dogma. Nor are they the bright ideas of clever men.

They are the collective experience of the working class, generalized and formulated in decades of discussion and argument.

In them is contained the product of years of defeats and victories, splits and fusions, betrayals and self-sacrifice.

That is why we have to study, not only the history of the working class as a whole, but especially the history of the Marxist movement itself.

Nor is Marxist theory a finished product. Marx and Engels

took the ideas of the Utopian socialists and fused them with the work of German idealist philosophy and English bourgeois political economy.

Lenin added to these theories the experience of the Paris Commune, the development of capitalism in its imperialist stage, the degeneration of social democracy and the need for new forms of Marxist organization.

Discussions, schools and lectures

Trotsky had the task of analysing the changes in Russia after the revolution and the effect of the growth of bureaucracy on the international struggles of the working class.

We have to apply these ideas to the new problems which arise from the further decline of capitalism, if we are to guide the working class and prepare it for its present-day tasks.

The building of a Marxist movement therefore implies the organization of discussions, schools and lectures, and the publication of books and pamphlets.

These must help members and supporters to study the Marxist works on economics, politics and philosophy and to get to know the history of the workers' struggle.

By discussing the problems facing the movement we can learn to apply these ideas to our particular sector of the battle for socialism.

The coming struggles in British society are going to aid the Socialist Labour League in its fight against the old ways of thinking in the Labour movement.

In turn, the equipping of workers with the Marxist method will enable them to bring these struggles to a victorious conclusion.

Wembley (Middx.)

Cyril Smith

THE PLACE OF STUDENTS IN THE CLASS STRUGGLE

I WOULD agree with the substance of Peter Cadogan's short analysis of the responsibility of the Marxist student. But it seems to me that his argument is couched in terms of such uncompromising dogmatism that it will alienate many students who might be attracted by Marxist ideas and eventually take an active and constructive part in the class struggle.

Young people with inquiring minds are not seeking after that outdated nineteenth century chimera a 'synthesis of all knowledge in a coherent world outlook'.

What they do want is a method of analysis which will cut through the lies and subterfuges with which capitalist propagandists seek to conceal the real nature of the unprecedented issues, such as the H-bomb, which confront us all.

I believe Marxism provides such a method. But it will find acceptance among students if it is presented, not as an ersatz religion, but as a genuinely scientific approach.

Dialectical materialism is a rewarding method of historical and sociological analysis. But no useful purpose is served by making extravagant claims on its behalf.

For instance, a Marxist can make it clear to a student scientist how his work should be related to society and emphasize the danger of his efforts being perverted to wasteful and destructive ends.

Powerful state of unrest

But it would be most arrogant and absurd to tell him he did not understand his own subject until he had read Engels's somewhat unfortunate attempts to relate the dialectic to the physical and biological sciences.

Like every truly scientific method Marxism has limitations and must be constantly revised in the light of developing circumstances—as Marx and Engels always readily acknowledged—and a failure to realize this reduces it to a constricting scholasticism.

In the Soviet Union the result of this barren outlook was,

of course, 'socialist realism' in the arts and the posturing of charlatans like Lysenko in the sciences—in short, the stultification, not only of Marxist science, but of all categories of original thought. Surely the first task of Marxist rethinking must be to avoid the pitfalls of dogmatism.

There is a powerful but confused state of unrest among many students, as can be seen from the Aldermaston march, the vigorous protests against repression in Nyasaland, and even from the current vogue of the Liberal Party, which is thriving among young people by adopting a specious radicalism.

But only a small minority of students regard themselves as Marxists, and the main reason is that they take on trust the academic dismissal of Marxism as mere 'metaphysics masquerading as science'.

I am afraid that the dominant trend of Peter Cadogan's letter will only serve to confirm the erroneous impression of Marx as a Hegelian in materialist disguise.

If they are to succeed in the universities Marxists must show that their ideas are really an invigorating theoretical approach and a flexible guide to action.

St. John's College, Oxford

J. Hicks

Why I Support the Socialist Labour League



I am a Leeds housewife and a factory worker. I'm not an expert on politics, but it seems to me that The Newsletter's policies on unemployment and the H-bomb make sense.

Working people have had a taste of the dole in the past, and there's a real danger of it coming back unless something is done.

As for the H-bomb, my husband was in the army in the last war, and all that was supposed to be over. But now

we're faced with something worse.

It's about time the workers made themselves felt. Nobody else will do it for us.

MRS FREDA PHELAN

To the Socialist Labour League, 180 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4.

I wish to join the Socialist Labour League. Please send me details.

Name (Block Letters Please).....

Address (Block Letters Please).....

Occupation

Trade Union

Labour Party.....