

# THE NEWSLETTER

*Weekly Journal of the Socialist Labour League*

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## TORIES SQUIRM OVER CITY CRISIS

### SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE Says— ALL OUT FOR LABOUR ON OCTOBER 8th!

By CLIFF SLAUGHTER

**T**HE Tory Press is hard at work to put a blanket over the scandal caused by the Jasper exposures of last week. In an attempt to frighten the middle classes they screamed on Wednesday 'Election Strike Threat', suggesting in no uncertain terms that Labour is 'irresponsible' and 'wildcat'. But at the same time the system which the Tories stand for threatens the savings of thousands of professional and small business people in the Jasper affair.

The fact is that the private enterprise system is responsible both for the Stock Exchange rackets and the need for workers to strike for their just demands. Toryism is a conspiracy of big business against the people.

For the working class the Tories stress the reduction of the number of unemployed by 22,000 last month, implying that this means a step towards prosperity. This is a lie. The Tories fixed the election date early to get it over with before the bank rate goes up again. The 22,000 who have gone into jobs are in the main 15-year-old school leavers. Over 400,000 remain out of work, and the Tories know that an increase in US interest rates, aggravated by the steel strike, threatens immediate danger to the expansion they boast about.

Meanwhile they cynically prepare for enormous cuts in employment: in the aircraft, mining and railway industries over 250,000 will lose their jobs in the near future.

A vote against the Tories is a vote against the employing class. The Newsletter calls on all supporters of the Socialist Labour League to help to register a massive vote for Labour on October 8.

## The Oxygen Strike

Wembley

September 30

By BRIAN BEHAN

THE representatives of ten Transport and General Workers' Union branches met today in a public house just outside the British Oxygen Company factory at Wembley. Brother E. Green, chairman of the strike committee, said that he would answer five questions from the Press. The first was the amount of support they were receiving. Bro. Green said there were ten branches present and they had 100 per cent. support from all members.

He said that contrary to Press reports the claim for a 6d. an hour increase on the basic wage of £10 14s. for a 44-hour week had been made in October 1958. Bro. Green said that the men had reached the end of their patience because the claim was made so long ago and they were not prepared to wait any longer. They had gone through all the machinery for wage negotiations.

He went on to say that the dispute had nothing to do with the general election announcement and the men had handed in their strike notices on September 17.

One of the strikers, a mechanical worker at Wembley gave this interview to The Newsletter.

'First of all the strike is not a wildcat one. We gave in our strike notices 11 days before the strike began.

'The strike began in Wolverhampton where the men said  
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## T G W U Accepts Amendments to Dock Labour Scheme

By Bob Pennington

EMPLOYERS' proposals to drastically amend the Dock Labour Scheme have been accepted by the National Joint Industrial Council. The acceptance of the amendments by the trade union side of the NJIC has angered dockers. Portworkers want to know who gave Tim O'Leary, national docks secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, authority to accept an increase in the suspension period from the present maximum of 7 days to a new one of 28 days.

Mick Byrne, secretary of the Scottish TGWU, and Bill Lindley, the Lightermen's secretary, will also have to answer that question to their members.

The increase in the suspension period is made more serious by an amendment to clause 5 of the Scheme. This gives local Boards the authority to delegate their full powers to sub-committees or to the National Board Officers. Such committees and individuals will be empowered to administer discipline for alleged breaches of the Scheme. Although not able to impose the new maximum suspension period of 28 days, they can levy suspensions of up to 14 days.

### Employers call for unregistered labour

The employers are now pressing three further amendments. Submitted by the London Chamber of Commerce these call for: 'the use of unregistered labour in the event of an unofficial strike'; its use in 'sympathetic strikes of any kind' whether 'official or unofficial' where there is a 'danger of perishable goods going bad.'

The Ministry of Labour, through his secretary C. A. Larsen, has written to the docks' union confirming that he 'has been moved to consider the possibility of making such amendments.'

There is no doubt that if the Tories return to office, the Minister will rapidly submit these strike-breaking proposals to the House of Commons. (All amendments to the Dock Labour Scheme require parliamentary approval).

The National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers, 'blue' union, has circularized both the accepted proposals and the London Chamber of Commerce proposals to its branches. All the branches which have discussed them have voted for their rejection. A number of dockers' branches are now demanding action to resist any attempt by the employers and the NDLB to implement the amendments. To date, the members of the TGWU have not been officially informed of the proposed changes.  
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**THE NEWSLETTER**186 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4  
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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1959

**THE WORKING CLASS IS INTERNATIONAL**

**N**EWs has begun to trickle through from the Volkswagen motor works at Hanover that there has recently been a 24-hour unofficial strike in the plant. Almost 10,000 workers, nearly one-third of the complete labour force, were involved. The strike took place because of a threat by the management to revise rates and a rumour that talks on this matter had broken down. It is now reported that talks will be resumed on October 8.

Such information is like a news item from Birmingham or Coventry. Just as the production pace for the motor car workers in Britain is being increased so that the motor employers can compete more successfully on the world's markets, so the same thing is taking place in West Germany. Both groups of employers engage in the rat race for markets at the expense of working class conditions, both here and in West Germany. It is this which provides a great stimulus for the internationalism of the working class. A common enemy—a common front.

Here we have a real opportunity for the shop stewards organized in the Big Five Motor Inter-combine Committee to demonstrate solidarity with their German brothers. A deputation to the Volkswagen works would be entirely in order. This deputation should have as its aim the building of a strong liaison between the German and British motor workers to stand together and say that they will not allow their standards of living to be reduced and that they will be prepared to take common action to see this through. Unity between German and British workers could have powerful implications for the future of the whole of Europe.

We urge all workers in the motor car industry to press their leaders to take steps in this direction.

**A CONSPIRACY OF RENEGADES**

**W**HY don't the Trades Union Congress shut up. It took them five days before they could make a clear-cut statement as to whether or not they would go all out to help Labour win the election. Throughout the City scandal, when the Tory Party has been quaking from one end of the country to the other, the TUC have remained as silent as church mice—though not as poor.

Now at last the Labour knights have spoken. Like pet dogs they follow the gutter Press and the lead of the Tory Central office. Suddenly the Tory gentlemen of Fleet Street have discovered that the British Oxygen strike menaces Labour's chances at the election. What hypocrisy! As if they give a damn about Labour's chances in the election.

Their real concern is that the sham election between the Right-wing leaders and the Tory politicians has been burst wide open by the class action of the BOC men. The parliamentary game of ins and outs is revealed as not a class fight between the working class and the employers but a word battle designed to sidetrack the working class in its fight.

Far from the BOC strikers menacing Labour's chances they have placed on the agenda of the election the whole future of the working class, because what they fight for is an improvement in their conditions at a time when the employers are on the offensive.

This is the reason for the united front between the TUC, the Tory Party and Fleet Street. They don't like their little election game being broken up. The Labour movement must understand quite clearly that nothing can come out of this election unless the working class are prepared to follow the lead of the BOC strikers and counter-attack the employers and their offensive. All that the TUC has done is to demonstrate once more that a new leadership is needed. Let's get rid of the lords and knights of labour and build strong rank-and-file committees of trade unionists to support the BOC men. The entire Labour movement must support this strike and serve notice to quit on the TUC.

**ECONOMICS****INTEREST RATES ARE NEWS AGAIN  
CRISIS AHEAD**

By Tom Kemp

**REMEMBER 7%?** It was an unlucky number for the Tories. It was the level which Bank Rate reached in the autumn of 1957 to cope with a rapidly worsening position of sterling. It was one of the Tories' most unpopular acts, even with their own supporters—though not with the City gents whose activities the subsequent tribunal did something to bring to a wider audience.

Anyhow, interest rates later came down, when the British economy was menaced in the autumn of last year by a slow decline into depression. Easier credit conditions brought about a big rise in hire purchase debt, bank advances and business borrowing, thus creating an additional 'artificial' market for goods of all kinds.

However, capitalism is international, none more than the British variety, and the revival—which was a political necessity with a General Election in prospect—would have been impossible without a favourable international climate. The end of the US recession and low raw material prices played a part. The balance of payments figures improved and sterling became 'strong': that is foreigners and our domestic speculators were prepared to hold more of it and for longer (yes, we know you would too, but that is not quite the same thing!—these people have the dough anyway, it's just the kind which is important for them). There was even some weakening of the dollar for the first time since the war.

**International factors threaten**

International factors are now swinging in a direction which threatens to raise uncomfortable problems for the new government. The general movement is towards higher interest rates: the lead is coming from New York.

In fact the question may be asked: can the US financial system any longer support a prolonged boom? The answer seems to be no. The mounting total of Federal, as well as private, debt—which provided the indispensable market for the industrial production of post-war prosperity is causing increasing concern.

If the Republicans are to make good their economy claims a brake has to be imposed. But this can only be, directly or indirectly, through raising interest rates. Indeed the movement in that direction has been going on this summer. But such a rise must cut short the new prosperity—and not only in the US. For, before long, these moneyed boys, good patriots all, will be out of sterling and into dollars as fast as you can send a

cable.

Result—funds will leave London, the current balance of payments will be affected, the reserves will fall and Bank Rate will have to go up to stop the rot.

Rising interest rates will bring back the credit squeeze and with it recession and stagnation under less propitious international conditions than those of a year ago.

Perhaps this is what Macmillan had in mind when he warned that expansion could not go on indefinitely. Incurable 'expansionists' like Andrew Shonfield and Hugh Gaitskell—who can think away the problems of international capitalism at will—will have to do some new thinking. And, if the latter happens to be Prime Minister it will be interesting to see how he copes with the Governors of the Bank of England and the other denizens of the City's square mile on both sides of that nebulous line which separates 'honesty' from its opposite.

## USA

### AN AMERICAN SOCIALIST LOOKS AT THE KRUSHCHEV VISIT

By Dan Roberts

By far the most important aspect of Soviet Premier Khrushchev's visit to the United States is the reaction of the American working people. What are they learning from the visit? How will this experience shape their political development? These are prime questions in the struggle for world peace. For, in the last analysis, the war danger will be removed only when the American working class abolishes big business rule and replaces it with a workers' and farmers' government.

The general attitude of the American public this far seemed to be one of curiosity, restraint, scepticism, wrote the New York Times about the Khrushchev visit in its September 20 summary of the news of the week. The Times did not try to distinguish between working-class opinion and that of the 'general public.' By and large, however, working-class opinion tended to conform with the Times' description. Thus when Khrushchev drove through the New York garment district, with garment workers packed on both sides of the street, he elicited no different response than he had got from government employees in Washington, D.C.

'Curiosity, restraint, scepticism' plus a few cheers and a few boos to indicate more clear-cut reactions. It is evident that the American workers do not look on Khrushchev as their spokesman in the struggle for peace. On the contrary, since President Eisenhower was the one who urged that Khrushchev be received with restrained courtesy and since this was the manner in which the public received him, it would rather seem as if the bulk of the American people follow Eisenhower's lead at present.

#### Cold warriors isolated

To the great majority of the American people, Khrushchev is the negotiator for the other side—the adversary. Just the same, the American people do want the negotiations to take place. (This was indicated for instance in the increase in Eisenhower's popularity after he and Khrushchev announced they would exchange visits.) The American people hope for an end to the cold war no less ardently than working people in Europe. They want the negotiations to be given a good try and that nothing should disrupt them.

That is why the overwhelming majority of the crowds had no use for the combination of East European émigrés, followers of the late Senator McCarthy and a sprinkling of social democrats who tried to organize 'mourning' demonstrations against the Khrushchev visit.

In Washington the 'mourners' tried to pass out black arm-bands marked with skull and crossbones to the crowd of 200,000 that lined the streets for Khrushchev's arrival, but they found few takers. In New York, onlookers told members of

the East European groups and the McCarthyites who were heckling behind them to shut up. Finally, in San Francisco, a crowd of 10,000 cheered Khrushchev to make up for the needling he had received at official hands in Los Angeles.

The great majority of the American people are not running ahead of Eisenhower yet in their political actions. But they are not lagging behind him either in the expression of anti-war sentiments. There is moreover an all-important difference between Eisenhower and the American people. Eisenhower is manoeuvring in the cold war. American imperialism needs a relaxation of cold-war tensions for a while in order to mask its long-range preparations for war better. But the American people aren't manoeuvring. While deep-seated antipathy for the Soviet Union and 'communism' remains (it was bred by Stalin's crimes and exploited by big business for imperialist propaganda), their longing for peace is genuine and their hopes of attaining it are now being aroused by the exchange of visits.

#### Americans and socialism

The American people are duly impressed with the rocket power of the USSR and fear it. They have been officially encouraged to drop some of their animosity towards the Soviet Union and to look for a more favourable side to the USSR. Many have already proceeded quietly to make the re-examination, which in fact began with the first Soviet sputnik.

It is, of course, too early to tell what impressions the American people have formed of Khrushchev by watching him on TV or reading his speeches in which he constantly reiterates the feasibility of the United States living in peace with the USSR. What really will count in the long run is whether curiosity for the man will be translated into curiosity about the Soviet Union—its social system, its achievements as well as the causes of its bureaucratic régime.

What all this points to is that the American socialist movement, though small, has a remarkably good opportunity for advancing its ideas. Revolutionary socialists will explain the imperialist character of big business foreign policy; the limited nature of the 'thaw' and the ever-present danger of war so long as big business continues to rule the country; and the necessity for the working people to develop their own independent struggle in opposition to the Republican and Democratic Parties.

#### DOCKS (Continued from page 277)

During last year's Tooley Street strikes the employers wanted to change the Scheme to permit them to use 'black' labour to shift perishable cargo. Although this proposal received the blessing of O'Leary, TGWU branches voted overwhelmingly for its rejection. Neither on the use of unregistered labour nor on the increase of suspension periods can the TGWU leaders claim to be unaware of its members' feelings. Their failure to take these amendments back to the membership can only mean they are determined to co-operate with the employers.

**The rank and file must now act. Committees must be set up in every control, dock and port. The 'blue' union should collaborate, as it did in the 1954 'overtime' strike, with the rank and file of the TGWU.**

**Dock gate meetings must be held and leaflets produced explaining the intentions of the employers and the Tories.**

**In this way a united front can be built up of 'blue' and 'white' dockers which can resist this flagrant attempt to smash the Dock Labour Scheme.**

## MEETING

DAGENHAM

The Central Hall, (Methodist Church Hall)

Heathway, Dagenham

8 p.m., Friday October 9

## INDUSTRY

### UNOFFICIAL STRIKES

#### Part II: The Sharpening Struggle

By Brian Behan

THIS is a period in which the small unofficial strike is doomed to failure. It will neither smash the employer nor break the grip of the Right-wing. We also part company with the Communist Party and others who say that all that is necessary is to work within the trade union machine, capture the top positions, and ignore the building of a rank-and-file movement completely independent of the union machine.

The living example of the bankruptcy of this thinking is the Amalgamated Engineering Union. Here is a union once led by Tom Mann and renowned for the militancy of its rank and file. Today in this union Catholic Action allied to rotten Right-wing elements chase the Stalinists all over the place.

We recognize that unofficial strikes reflect the desire of the rank and file for alternative leadership. We are for the establishment of connecting links between industries so that unofficial strikes can be supported and extended and given a chance of victory.

#### Right-wing treachery

As the class struggle sharpens the Right-wing will become even more treacherous. Because they will bend more to the employers there will be more unofficial strikes.

Issues like the sack are now common problems to mining, aircraft and rails. There can be no serious struggle against these employers, who will be aided by the Right-wing and the government, without a powerful rank-and-file movement.

This struggle in industry is decisive for the future of the working class. Parliament is designed to distract the attention of the working class while the real throat-cutting is done backstage.

The National Assembly of Labour later this year is the extension of last year's national industrial conference to the rank-and-file members of the Labour Party and other organizations anxious to have a united front of struggle.

The rejection by both the Stalinists and the Right-wing of the class struggle as a means of solving problems explains how they find common ground in their condemnation and sabotage of unofficial disputes.

The condemnation of unofficial disputes is only one side of the coin. Inherent in this is their rejection of a rank-and-file movement essentially based on the class struggle.

#### Communist role

A sinister aspect of a number of recent unofficial disputes has been the strike-breaking activities of leading members of the Communist Party. Take for example the role of Etheridge in the Minicar strike.

This strike ended after the intervention of a team of motor car stewards led by Communist Party member Dick Etheridge. Up to then, the men had stood firm, despite the howls of the Press about 'blackmail' and 'damage to the nation's economy', and official instructions to return.

Etheridge, justifying his intervention, said: 'I have settled more strikes than I have led.'

Twenty-four hours after going back to work the men were forced to introduce an overtime ban because the discussions with the employers gained them nothing.

The conduct of Etheridge is not just a mistake. It flows directly from the whole policy of the Communist Party in industry.

The actions of these people flow from long years of the British Communist Party bending this way and that to suit the

Soviet bureaucrats. Such a Party is unable to prepare the working class to fight anti-strike legislation. On the contrary their actions directly assist the employers and the Right-wing

The abandonment of the class struggle by Khrushchev of the international field has as its logical corollary the development of peaceful co-existence in industry by the native Communist Parties. If you can solve international problems by 'getting together' then it must also be possible to solve national ones, without a struggle.

So we get the development of peaceful co-existence not only between the Soviet Union and the capitalist nations, but between the Communist Party and the employing class.

This suits the Right-wing, who more than ever want peaceful relations. The Communist Party finds common ground with them and expresses it in its wooing of people like Willis and Cousins.

It is more and more important as part of the raising of working-class consciousness to show that the so-called 'left' trade union leaders are really agents of the Right-wing and that in the coming difficult situation for the Right-wing they will use such 'left' people in an attempt to solve their problems.

(To be concluded)

### THE NEWSLETTER ANNOUNCES NEW EDUCATIONAL VENTURE

The general election will soon be over. We feel sure that there will be many readers of *The Newsletter* taking a well-deserved rest from practical activity. We are about to embark on a new period of struggle in Britain. This period will require more than ever a knowledge of Marxist theory. Even more important is a knowledge of how Marxist theory can be used to improve our work inside the Labour movement.

To assist our readers with this task we are publishing a series of four articles in *The Newsletter* commencing on October 10. These have been written specially for *The Newsletter* by Alasdair McIntyre, Lecturer in Philosophy at Leeds University, and are as follows:

1. Theory and activity.
2. Class and History. This will stress the difference between the struggle of the proletariat and all earlier class struggles.
3. Intellectuals and Workers. This will show what happens when you get theory without action or vice versa.
4. Good and Bad Theory. This will stress what Stalinism and social democracy have in common.

Alasdair McIntyre belongs to the young generation of Marxists. He is aged 30, was born in Glasgow and studied at London and Manchester Universities.

A member of the Socialist Labour League, he is also on the editorial board of the *Universities and Left Review*.

#### BOC STRIKE (Continued from page 277)

that they were prepared to withdraw their labour and sent out a feeler to see whether they would get the support of Wembley. Wembley decided to give them support.'

This striker started working for British Oxygen five and a half years ago when the value of the company's shares was 29s. now they are worth 66s. Then their profit was £2 million. This year it is £11,358,000. 'I want to know why I am not entitled to a share in this.'

Pickets outside the factory say that they remain out until they get what they want. The publicity that the dispute has gained in the Press has shown them the extent of their power in taking strike action.

Campaign Notebook

Lancs Miners Support National Assembly of Labour

By E. WOOLLEY

THE Newsletter of September 19 deals with the question of Tory plans for mass unemployment, mentioning that some 85,000 miners amongst others are due for the road. For once this underestimates the scope of the Tory-led employers' plans. Readers may find the following figures derived from the National Coal Board's latest plan for the coal industry of interest.

National production of coal in 1958 was 215.8 million tons, manpower 699,000, already down by 23,000 over 1957, output per man year 291.88 tons. On completion of the new plan, that is before 1965, output will be down to some 200 million tons, manpower down to 587,000, that is by no less than 112,000 men, whilst productivity per man year will be around 340.88 tons, an increase of 16.79 per cent.

The figures for the Lancashire coalfield are no less significant. Output in 1958 was 14.7 million tons, manpower 54,800, productivity 286.25 tons per man year. The new proposals would cut overall production by 2.2 million tons to just over 12½ million tons, manpower goes down by 15,800 to 39,000 from 54,800, that is over 27 per cent, whilst output per man year is raised to 327.18 tons, an increase of 21.97 per cent. over 1958. Add to this the closure of almost all the collieries in the coalfield, perhaps 50 of the present 66, part of the national quota of over 250 pits.



The pattern of the plan is a striking confirmation of the correctness of the line taken by The Newsletter. It spells disaster and poverty for countless thousands of miners. Less employment, coupled with the prospects for those 'fortunate' enough to remain in a job of harder stints, tighter discipline of the 'do it or get out' variety, the cutting of real wages. Already working miners are feeling the pressure of the drive to cut price lists in each new negotiation. This, in turn, stimulates resistance to the Board's efforts to enforce poverty as the price for the tottering capitalist economy of Britain.

Contrast this rising determination of rank-and-file miners to resist with the attitude of our present leaders. These gentlemen, on salaries ranging up from the £30 a week mark, new car each five years or less, impressive expense accounts, seek constantly to dampen rising militancy, to keep areas apart to minimize discussion and therefore clarity as to the real meaning of the new plan and even fawningly accept as an unfortunate necessity the position of the Board.



In this light the National Assembly of Labour, sponsored by The Newsletter, takes on a vital importance for British miners. At the Assembly, which becomes an urgent necessity to us, we will be able to form the basis for a new rank-and-file movement, intimately linked with other sections of workers engaged in parallel struggles, without the unity of which miners cannot win their fight. We can learn to draw the conclusions of a movement based at the bottom, linking political and industrial action, forge a weapon which can lead to the destruction of the real cause of our troubles—capitalism. Every miner who attends the Assembly is a victory for the working class.

LONDON ASSEMBLY CAMPAIGN UNDER WAY

Sales of The Newsletter are steadily increasing as the drive for the National Assembly of Labour gets under way.

One hundred and ten copies were sold outside the Holloway bus garage on Friday. Newsletter sellers were also outside the Hendon, Camberwell, Peckham and Stockwell garages on Friday, and between them sold over 100 copies of the paper.

On Saturday morning, a speaker from the Socialist Labour League warned the dockers at London's Royal Group of Docks of the shipping employers' proposals to amend the Dock Labour Scheme.

During the course of the meeting 110 Newsletters were sold. On Thursday dinner-time a similar meeting was held at the London Dock where 45 copies were sold. Sales were also held at Surrey and Commercial Docks and the West India Dock.

A large meeting of building workers heard Brian Behan, chairman of the Socialist Labour League speak on the League's policy outside the Shell Mex Site, Waterloo last Friday. After the meeting 87 Newsletters were bought by building workers and over £2 was contributed towards the cost of the National Assembly.

Public meetings of the League were held this week in Lewisham, Paddington and South Oxhey (Harrow). These will be followed by 12 more public meetings in London before the National Assembly of Labour.

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF LABOUR meets in St Pancras Town Hall on Sunday, November 15.

It is open to all those who are fighting against capitalism: in industrial struggles; against rent increases; against the H-bomb; and in the Labour Party.

Visitors' tickets (price 2s.) may be applied for on the form below.

Name .....

Address .....

Organization .....

Postal orders should be made payable to the Socialist Labour League and sent with this form to its address at 186, Clapham High Street, London S.W.4.

# HIROSHIMA RE-VISITED

By BRIAN PEARCE

**T**HE article in the Spectator of September 18 by Charles Curran (of the Evening News) on the events leading up to the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, has rightly attracted much attention. Curran brings together and discusses critically much of the evidence which has been published since 1945 on how the decision to drop was arrived at, and the attendant circumstances.

The Communist Party will not thank him for recalling that on the morning after Hiroshima the Daily Worker called for 'the employment of the new weapon on a substantial scale' and that on the eve of Nagasaki it printed a cartoon that showed a bomber squadron labelled 'Surrender Or Die' dropping a swarm of missiles labelled 'Atomic Bombs' on a blazing target labelled 'Japan'.

But it is simply not true that, as Curran alleges, 'every London newspaper presented the news [of Hiroshima] with horror—except one', the Daily Worker. There was no horror till a good while later. The Daily Mail, not unconnected with the Evening News, wrote that 'the atomic bomb means the quick end of the Japanese war'. The News Chronicle, which is usually good for horror, had for its headlines: 'Force of Nature Harnessed . . . Allies Beat Germans in Power of Science'. (As a matter of historical fact, the first newspaper to protest against the use of the atomic bomb was the Vatican's Osservatore Romano). The newspaper headlines of that period which stand up best to what we have learnt in the fourteen years since are those of the American Trotskyist weekly The Militant: 'Atomic Bombs Imperil Existence of Humanity' (August 11), 'Only World Socialism Can Save Mankind From Atomic Destruction in Another Imperialist War. Workers of America! You Must Take Power Into Your Own Hands.' (August 18)

## Was it necessary

In general, though informative, Curran's article seems hardly unprejudiced in its search for truth. The key phrase is: 'Was it necessary to drop the bomb? The decision to do this flowed from two words: Unconditional Surrender'. Yet nowhere does the author mention that, after the dropping of the bomb, the Allies gave (on August 11) in effect the undertaking not to abolish the Imperial system in Japan which the Japanese leaders had been haggling for in their peace offers. (They said that 'the Emperor's authority to rule the State' would be subordinate to the Allied supreme commander, and that 'the ultimate form of government' would be 'established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people'. Experience has shown that the Japanese leaders understood these phrases all too well when they accepted them as equivalent to guarantees for the Imperial system.)

This omission is all the more noticeable in that the fact had been recalled by G. F. Hudson in his important letter in the Observer of September 13. What the Allies did, Hudson pointed out, was 'to accept, after the dropping of the bomb, the Japanese condition which, if accepted in July, would almost certainly have brought about Japan's surrender without the bomb being dropped at all'.

Curran nowhere considers the view developed by Professor P. M. S. Blackett in his 'Military and Political Consequences of Atomic Energy' (1948), that the hurry to drop the bomb had nothing to do with Japan at all. 'If the saving of American lives had been the main objective, surely the bombs would have been held back until (a) it was certain that the Japanese peace proposals were not acceptable, and (b) the Russian offensive, which had for months been part of the Allied strategic plan, and which the Americans had previously demanded, had run its course.' The purpose of the bomb, Blackett deduced, was to demonstrate to Russia the Allies' possession of and readiness to use, a weapon overwhelmingly more powerful than any the Russians had. 'So we may conclude that the dropping of the atomic bombs was not so much the last military act of the second world war, as one of

the first major operations of the cold diplomatic war with Russia now in progress.'

The title Curran gives his article is: 'Stalin Merely Smiled.' This refers to Stalin's alleged reaction when told at Potsdam by Truman and Churchill that they had a 'new bomb'. The various spy trials and similar revelations of the cold war period have revealed, Curran points out, that Stalin must have known already, through his military intelligence service, all about the atomic bomb tests. This seems to Curran very caddish. Socialists, however, will hardly include the possession of an efficient military intelligence service among their criticisms of the Soviet bureaucracy. On the contrary, they point out that the efforts of this service, in the technical field, to strengthen the defence of the Soviet Union, are continually being frustrated by the false foreign policy of the bureaucracy and especially by the false direction it imposes on its satellite Communist Parties. For example, while devoted servants of the Soviet State, including foreign communists, were risking their lives and liberties to supply Stalin with information about the atomic bomb tests in America, he was setting the American Communist Party on the path of Browderism, openly liquidating the struggle against American finance-capital!

In relation to the actual Soviet intervention in the war against Japan (which smashed the mighty Kwantung Army in Manchuria, which could hardly have been dealt with by atomic bombing), Curran resorts to obvious nonsense. Stalin, he writes 'was ready to fight only when the way had been made clear for him by Hiroshima and Nagasaki.' In fact, the bomb was dropped on Nagasaki when the Soviet Army was already in action. And, in any case, the Soviet intervention had been agreed at Yalta to begin three months after the end of the war in Europe, as it did, to the very day, which Churchill himself was later to acknowledge.

The Evening News diplomatic correspondent wrote on August 7, 1945, that the decision to drop the bomb was taken because Russia could not be got to agree to go to war with Japan. The falsity of this statement had to be admitted only a few days later. Charles Curran appears to wish to revive this legend, or something like it, in an attempt to shift responsibility for the crimes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki from the shoulders of the Anglo-American imperialists.

## SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

### MEETINGS

#### BIRMINGHAM

The Arden Hotel, New Street,  
(Restaurant Room)

7.30 p.m., Sunday October 11,

Speaker: Bob Pennington

#### GLASGOW

St Andrews Hall,

7.30 p.m., Sunday October 11,

Speaker: Gerry Healy

#### COVENTRY

The Centre Ballroom, Holyhead Road,

7.30 p.m., Sunday, October 11

Speaker: Bob Pennington

#### ST MARY CRAY

St Mary's Village Hall, High Street,

7.30 p.m., Monday, October 12

Speaker: Brian Behan

#### BATTERSEA

Latchmere Baths, Latchmere Road,

8 p.m., Wednesday, October 14

Speaker: Michael Banda

## CEYLON

### BANDARANAIKE'S ASSASSINATION: END OF AN ERA

By Michael Banda

THERE is an unmistakable parallel between the assassination of Mr Bandaranaike and Mahatma Ghandi. Both were the victims of their own particular, albeit moderate, brands of communalism. Just as Partition predetermined the Mahatma's death so too the 'Sinhala Only' campaign of Banda and the MEP inexorably led to violence, murder, rioting and finally assassination.

Congress outlived the Mahatma. The MEP however will certainly die with its leader. This is as it should be. Having tried to be all things to all men the MEP has succeeded in alienating every section of Ceylonese society, not excluding its most articulate and vociferous supporters: the buddhist priests and the ayurvedic (native) doctors.

The fact that the PM's assassin was both a priest and a native doctor is sufficient testimony to the rapidly declining popularity of the regime.

The MEP as a matter of fact had already reached an absolute impasse early this year which resulted in the expulsion of the so-called 'Marxist wing' led by Phillip Gunawardene from the cabinet and government.

The dilemma confronting the MEP has been succinctly

summarised by the Lanka Sama Samajist Party in the political resolution submitted to its annual conference in the middle of this year.

**It is manifest that a major social and political crisis is maturing in the context of a deepening economic crisis. The questions posed thereby are not questions of mere concessions to the masses within the prevailing capitalist relations.'**

**They are questions pertaining to the continuance of the capitalist system itself. Within the framework of a relatively declining economy the limits of concessions may well have been reached already. Certainly the real and credit reserves available for further tapping appears to be strictly limited and the prospects of foreign aid are not comparable to minimum need. Further concessions must therefore pull down the rate of profit below that which is required locally for stimulating capitalist enterprises and thus endanger the very functioning of the existing economy . . . In short, whatever be the desire of the government, no further important concessions to the masses are possible.**

So the era of spurious 'socialism' has come to an end. The country is now preparing for a general election. Judging from all reports the prevailing wind is blowing strongly in favour of the Marxist opposition—the LSSP, the only party that has stood by its principles and policy and fought uncompromisingly for the emancipation of the Ceylonese workers.

In the event of its victory British socialists and trade unionists must extend every assistance to their brothers in Ceylon in their anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle.

## Constant Reader Who Are the Tories?

THE Universities and Left Review and New Reasoner group deserve thanks for the excellent piece of election propaganda they have produced under the title 'Who Are The Tories?' This pamphlet (1s. 3d. post free from 7 Carlisle Street, London, W.1.) does on a small scale, but up-to-date, what the book 'Tory MP' did twenty years ago.

It shows in detail the link-ups between Tory politicians and big business, and how we are in fact ruled, economically and politically, by a small, closely-integrated clique of rich families. Besides details of business interests, such facts are shown as that one-third of the cabinet were at Eton and the same proportion of Etonians is found among the directors of the biggest banks and insurance companies; and that over half of the members of the government and the same proportion of banking and insurance magnates are members of either the Carlton, Brook's or White's Clubs. ('Thus the likelihood that a member of the Government will eat his lunch in very select company—with a leading financier or industrialist—is very great.')

The authors pay a generous tribute to the publications of the Labour Research Department, a Stalinist-controlled organization. I doubt, however, whether this pamphlet will be given any publicity by the Daily Worker, invaluable anti-Tory weapon though it is.

The fact that the Labour Party itself has not produced anything similar is doubtless connected with the circumstance, mentioned by Gerry Healy last week, that a lot of Labour candidates are themselves company directors.

### Mene mene, tekeli upharsin

In my neighbourhood some young adherents of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament have recently painted slogans on walls at strategic points, after the manner of 'mindless militants'. This produced a pained protest from one of the local papers.

Alec Grant, of Finchley Labour Party, has replied to this criticism in a letter to the paper in question, puncturing the pompous humbug. 'The first recorded instance of the defacing

of a wall with slogans written by an "unknown group" is in Chapter 5 of the book of Daniel. No doubt if the Finchley Press had been present at Belshazzar's Feast you would have had an appropriate editorial on "anti-social behaviour". ('Civic Dinner Marred by Incident').

The local paper had expressed particular indignation at the 'defacing' of a cemetery wall. Alec Grant points out that the slogan on that wall is flanked by hoardings advertising Kellogg's Corn Flakes and Player's Bachelor Cigarettes—and the Finchley Press has never complained about them.

### This practice must cease—and why

From the letter from Cardinal Pizzardo, secretary of the Holy Office, to Cardinal Feltrin, Archbishop of Paris, explaining why priests must no longer be allowed to work in factories as a means of carrying out apostolic duties among the workers:

'The worker-priest is not only plunged into a materialistic atmosphere deleterious to spiritual life and often even dangerous to his chastity, but is even led, in spite of himself, to think like his worker comrades on trade union and social matters and to take part in their struggles, which gravely involve him so that he is led to participate in the class struggle, which is inadmissible for a priest.'

What a confession of the truth of Marx's materialist doctrine that 'social existence determines social consciousness'! Doubtless the conditions of factory life do not themselves generate socialist ideas but only trade-unionist ones—but, as His Eminence here admits, they tend to generate those in the most unlikely brains, and that's bad enough from the standpoint of the ruling class. Priests are not there to take part in the class struggle, on the workers' side, but to turn the workers' thoughts away from that struggle. 'Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?' (Matt. v, 13).

### Those special powers

A correspondent has asked me for a reference which he can use to convince some Communist Party friends that the French Communist MPs voted for the 'special powers' which were used to establish the military terror in Algeria. Probably

other readers may have a use for such a reference. The vote took place in the Chamber of Deputies on March 12, 1956, and the government won by 445 to 76, the Communists voting with the government.

These facts (preceded by a brief report of the debate) can be checked in a publication to be found in most public libraries, Keesings Contemporary Archives, in the volume for 1955-1956, on page 14,916.

**BRIAN PEARCE**

## LETTERS

### A UNITED PROTEST

It would be useless to complain about the phrases in Peter Kerrigan's article intended to create animosity towards United (phrases like 'they believe in freedom to scab it' and the accusation that we 'do not denounce TGWU officialdom with the aim of building a militant instrument of struggle') because what we mean by 'militant trade unionist' and what you mean are entirely different things.

He is entirely right when he says that 'what these Liberals call the tyranny in the trade unions includes not only some of the worst acts of the TGWU bureaucrats but also the "tyranny" of shop stewards and the traditional methods by which workers protect themselves' such as ostracism.

When he goes on to say that 'United . . . wants to create the illusion that there is a chance for every worker to rise to the top in the present system,' however, he is talking through the back of his neck. There is, surely, nobody who believes that (and, although we work under disadvantages like your own, we try to say what we believe). On the contrary, we believe that it is only under co-ownership (or something very like it) that the ordinary worker will ever have any chance to get to the top in his own firm or industry without having either to play down his religious beliefs (if he has any) or pretend to beliefs he does not have, as under communism and laissez-faire capitalism.

Crediting us with calling Deakin, Geddes and Yates as being 'among the best trade unionists of all ages' comes under the heading of 'all's fair in love and war', presumably. We did no more than say they were among the best trade unionists of their own age. Which, after all, is a matter of opinion in a non-communist society.

The fundamental difference between Liberals and Socialists is that Liberals are content to leave it to portworkers, and others, to decide for themselves who can be relied on, in the long run, to fight against tyranny.

Croydon, Surrey

**RICHARD ROWE,**  
Editor, United

### A reply by Peter Kerrigan

MR ROWE should read his own paper a little more carefully. In the June 1959 United, on page 2, plain for everybody to see are the words: 'Like the best trade unionists of all ages (Arthur Deakin, Lord Geddes, Sir Tom Yates) . . . ' (my emphasis—P.K.)

However, whether 'United' thinks Arthur Deakin and the others are the best of 'all ages' or of 'their own ages', my point is made.

It's a matter of opinion, says Mr Rowe. But it's by their opinion on these leaders that dockers can judge just what are the ideas of the Liberals on trade unionism.

In the second paragraph of his letter Mr Rowe in effect admits that United stands for 'freedom to scab it'.

And certainly I would repeat that United believes there is a chance for every worker to rise to the top in the present system.

That is what their proposal of 'co-ownership' is all about. The Liberals don't want to abolish capitalist ownership or exploitation. They declare they want to spread it around and

give every worker his piece of property.

Mr Rowe knows this. He wrote an editorial reviewing Grimond's book in the May 1959 issue of United.

He told his readers then that the Liberal proposals did not seek to 'abolish the shareholder, but to make workers joint owners with the shareholders . . .'

He quoted Grimond as stating: 'The simple idea of industry being a matter of workers on the one side and bosses on the other has long ceased to correspond to the facts of life.'

Perhaps, however, on second thoughts I was guilty of an injustice to the Liberals.

The really don't believe that the workers can rise right to the top. Grimond does tell us:

'We do not suffer from the delusion that the workers can, themselves, direct the business.'

### IRISH WORKERS AND THE POLICE LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

RECENT articles in The Newsletter about the history of the Irish Labour movement recall some interesting incidents from the early days of the Irish Citizen Army.

Like many other workers, the Irish workers started out with illusions about the impartiality of the police'. But early in the Dublin lock-out of 1913 there were several cases of pickets being attacked by policemen. When protests were made, the police explained that they couldn't tell pickets from hooligans.

So the union had armbands made with the word 'Picket' on, and armed their pickets with leaflets containing the clause of the Trade Disputes Act granting the right to picket.

R. M. Fox in his 'History of the Irish Citizen Army' recounts what happened when the pickets relied on this 'protection':

"The policeman looked at him (the picket) with baleful eye. 'What do you think you're doing?' he demanded.

'Picketing' said the little man brightly. 'See my armband!' he pointed to the official badge. The policeman gave him a sour look. He pulled out the leaflet and read it with eager confidence. The policeman listened grimly, fingering his club.

'Have you finished?' he asked, as the little man paused, breathless.

'Yes, that's all' was the response.

"Well, take that!"—the club whistled through the air and fell with a thud, raising a lump on the picket's head. The policeman was certainly not going to stand any legal talk from a Larkinite."

It was such treatment that led the Irish workers to arm themselves more effectively. Later in the same book, Fox describes a march of strikers. They had often been interfered with by police, and so now had armed themselves with formidable hurley sticks. The police usually pushed marching workers over into the side of the road. But, Fox says:

"This time the order was given as usual but nothing happened. The policemen looked at the hurley sticks, each with a broad, club-like end and each held in a firm grip and they measured the length of their batons against these with their eyes. The Citizen Army men looked determined, and the police batons were shorter. The fact had a decisive influence on social ethics as practised in the conduct of public processions.'

Leeds

G. Gale

### THE NEWSLETTER—FIRST WITH THE NEWS

The Newsletter last week was the only political weekly in Britain to pinpoint the Tory election crisis sparked off by the Jasper affair. It was the only political weekly, and in fact the only newspaper, to publish the effects of the new amendments to the Dock Labour Scheme on the conditions of portworkers.

Sales of The Newsletter are increasing every week. take a few copies for your workmates and friends.