

Calling Students

The University of London Marxist Society has been granted recognition by the University authorities.

The society seeks 'to promote interest and discussion in the theory of Marxism, with special attention to the contributions of Lenin and Trotsky.'

In line with this, study groups on 'The Young Marx' and 'The Roots of Bureaucracy' have recently been started. On Friday, November 13 at 5.30 p.m. in the University of London Union Building, Alasdair

MacIntyre will speak on 'The theory and practice of Marxism.'

London students interested in the society should contact me at my home address.

The provisional committee of the society has decided to send delegates to the National Assembly of Labour. We will seek endorsement of this policy at the inaugural meeting of the society.

12 Terrapin Road,
Balham, S.W.17.

BILL PARRY

Constant Reader Never Again?

FAR be it from me, who am no economist, to prophesy in such matters, and farther still to seem to wish for a repetition of the terrible depression of the early 1930s, with its train of misery and suffering. Nevertheless, I have never been convinced by those who argue that such a slump is totally out of the question nowadays, and was therefore very interested in Professor J. K. Galbraith's article in the Observer of October 25 on the thirtieth anniversary of the Wall Street crash.

As author of 'The Affluent Society' Galbraith is very much an OK-name among New Thinkers. I trust they have noted his warning that 'there is a considerable chance that our past experience with boom and collapse will be repeated—sooner or later. I am myself keeping a small list of those who say that 1929 is unimportant and irrelevant because nothing like it could ever happen in the stock market again.'

With the Tory election slogans about our never having had it so good still ringing in our ears, Galbraith's concluding sentence falls with quite a sinister sound: 'The time to worry will be when important people begin to explain that conditions are fundamentally sound.'

Stale slanders from Khrushchev

Presumably in order to frighten Mao with a possible charge of the gravest of heresies, Khrushchev managed to bring a crack about Trotsky into his speech to the Supreme Soviet on Soviet foreign policy. 'Lenin and the party', it appears, 'had to fight hard against Trotsky' at the time of the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations in 1918. That wicked man 'raised leftist objections' and 'put forward his notorious slogan of "Neither peace or war", thus playing into the hands of the German imperialists.' 'Considerable difficulties' resulted: 'such were the fruits of adventurism'.

It is surprising that Stalin's successor should risk serving up this stuff in present-day conditions, when access to archives is said to be much easier in Russia than it used to be. The minutes of the meetings of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party for the relevant period were published in the historical journal Proletarskaya Revolyutsia, No. 2 of 1928 (No. 73 of the whole series). From them the student may learn that it was not Trotsky at all but a group which included Dzerzhinsky, later one of the saints of the Stalinist pantheon, that opposed on 'leftist' grounds signing peace with Germany and wanted a revolutionary war; and that among Trotsky's supporters against Lenin at one stage was none other than Stalin himself. So late as February 23, when the German army had resumed its advance, Stalin was still arguing that 'we need not sign'!

Khrushchev's illiterate (or disingenuous) references to the Brest-Litovsk episode conceal the real point at issue in that crisis. Lenin was most keenly conscious of Russia's inability to fight Germany in the circumstances of February 1918. Trotsky realized that too, but attributed very great importance to another factor as well. The Bolsheviks were then still

generally regarded among the workers in France, Britain and the Allied countries as a whole as a set of 'German agents'. It was necessary so to behave at Brest-Litovsk as to destroy that particular slander. The whole world must see that Soviet Russia was yielding to German imperialism only at the very point of the bayonet.

Whether or not one considers Trotsky went too far in his anxiety to clear up the misconceptions of the Western workers, it can be argued (as Trotsky himself did in his introduction to the official Soviet edition of the peace-negotiation documents) that he thereby created great difficulties for the interventionists in France and Britain, making it much harder for them than otherwise it would have been to justify their allegation that Lenin and Trotsky were stooging for the Kaiser. This was the positive outcome of Trotsky's 'socialist brinkmanship' at Brest-Litovsk.

A unique document

Among the bravest and best of the volunteers who fought in the International Brigade in Spain were the men of the Polish contingent. They came to Spain from a country where the Communist Party was illegal, to fight against the establishment of Fascism at the other end of Europe. Better than many others they knew what they were fighting against.

In 1938 the leaders of the Polish units were called to Moscow. There they 'disappeared', along with the entire leadership resident in Russia of the Polish Communist Party, including the Polish representative on the Comintern executive. It became known that Stalin had decreed the dissolution of the party in Poland, on the grounds that it had become thoroughly penetrated by police agents, fascists, Trotskyists, etc.

Thus, Poland faced the Nazi onslaught in 1939 without a Communist Party, and the present 'United Workers' Party' had to be built up practically from scratch in the years following Hitler's invasion of Russia.

This episode in the history of Polish Communism was one of several which were discussed by Isaac Deutscher, himself a member of the Communist Party of Poland for some years, in an interview with a Polish journalist which appeared in Sartre's magazine 'Les Temps Modernes' last year. It had been arranged for the interview to be published in Gomulka's own paper, 'Polityka', but somebody changed his mind; the text was, however, circulated in the Internal Bulletin of the Polish United Workers' Party.

The Socialist Labour League has now made this important contribution to recent history available in English as an 18-page pamphlet, 'The Tragedy of Polish Communism Between the Wars', price one shilling.

Some of the points dealt with are: the Rosa Luxemburg tradition in Polish Communism, the role of the party at the time of Pilsudski's coup d'etat, and its consequences, the 'People's Front' phase in Polish politics, the role of the Left Opposition in Poland, and the relations between the Russian and the Polish movements.

BRIAN PEARCE

WELCOME TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF LABOUR!

THE NEWSLETTER

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UNITY IN ACTION BY LABOUR'S LEFT CAN DEFEAT THE RIGHT WING

SPEAKING at the Conway Hall on November 5, Michael Foot, editor of Tribune, declared that if the answer to whether the Labour Party was going to be a Socialist Party was no, 'then it would be split and the next election lost.'

There is more substance behind these words than meets the eye. It is now perfectly clear that the outspoken demand of Mr Douglas Jay that nationalization be dropped may well be the policy of Mr Gaitskell himself. His silence during the debates in the Parliamentary Labour Party can only mean that he has sympathies with the extreme Right. If the Labour Party's Right-wing does not carry a decision to get rid of nationalization in conference, there is little doubt that they will get rid of it in practice themselves, as they have been doing since 1948.



Such a state of affairs can only lead to a split and that in fact is the road which the Right-wing is travelling; just as their fellow Right-wingers in Italy and Japan have split the Social Democratic parties. So the warning of Michael Foot is very timely.

Labour's Leftwing have no time to lose if the Right is to be defeated. A socialist policy that will demonstrate the need

for nationalization is a vital necessity. But no less important, however, is for the ranks of the Left to be united. Closer working relations between the forces around Tribune and the Socialist Labour League are a necessity. A unified Left-wing movement embracing the Marxists will be a powerful barrier against the supporters of the Right.



The time to build that movement is now. The Socialist Labour League welcomes the discussion meetings organized by Tribune and the atmosphere in which the discussion is being carried out. The discussion in the ranks of Labour's Leftwing must above all be free from bans and proscriptions, so typical of the Communist Party and organizations dominated by Right-wing Labour. As Michael Foot has said more than once: let the best ideas win.

This is the challenge of the National Assembly of Labour. The keynote for the Assembly is the fullest discussion around policies already endorsed by tens of thousands of workers. Let us go from the Assembly into united action on the basis of demands which strike at the heart of Toryism.

Why We Support the National Assembly of Labour

DINING CAR WORKERS

I support the calling of the National Assembly of Labour because it pledges itself to fight against the policies of trade union leaders who don't want to defend the jobs of their members.

I believe our strike underlined the need for such a fight.

KEN WIGGETT, Chairman Manchester Dining Car Strike Committee.

MINERS

The unity required in the common struggle against the Tories will only be achieved by uniting under a common policy embracing the demands of countless thousands throughout the country.

The five-point policy statement, published by the Socialist Labour League and which is to be submitted for discussion at the National Assembly of Labour, is to be that common policy which will, when we struggle to implement it, create that unity.

The National Assembly of Labour organized by the Socialist Labour League is a big step forward in the right direction and I give it my fullest support.

JIM SWAN, Lancashire miner. Editor of THE MINER

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

No socialist student or university teacher can afford to miss the National Assembly of Labour which will strengthen a new alliance between intellectuals and militant workers.

ALASDAIR MACINTYRE, Lecturer in Philosophy, Leeds University.

HARBOUR WORKERS AND DOCKERS

Other sections of workers, just the same as harbour workers, are feeling the employers' offensive and the failure of the leaders of the Labour movement to face up to it.

That is why I welcome the National Assembly of Labour. I hope to find there the authentic voice of the most militant elements of the working class and the most militant industrial and political policies.

It is imperative for rank-and-file organizations to send delegates, as well as observers to the Assembly of Labour and thereby assist in the development of a national policy of resistance to the attack of the employers.

J. HANCOCK, editor of HARBOUR WORKERS' VOICE a printed rank-and-file paper supported by Liverpool dockers, tugmen, dock-gatemen and dredgermen.

MOTOR CAR WORKERS

As motor workers from Nuffields, Tractor and Transmissions and Fishers, Birmingham, going to the Assembly, may we appeal to other motor workers to attend this important conference.

At this Assembly, motor workers can unite with other workers for a fighting policy in defence of jobs and militants.

F. BANFIELD, Fishers; G. RABONE, Fishers; W. FROST, Fishers; K. WILLETT, Morris (Tractor and Transmissions); M. FRANKLIN, Nuffield Metal Products; T. EVANS, Nuffield Metal Products.

BUILDING WORKERS

As a building worker I send my best personal wishes for a successful National Assembly.

All building workers should support this Assembly with its militant policy for a reduction in hours and an increase in wages. In the near future building workers will again

be in the forefront of the struggle. Now is the time to unite all workers around a common policy to fight capitalism and all its evils.

JOHN ROY, Federation Steward at John Laing's site, Great Queen Street, London.

ENGINEERS

'I think the main task facing the working class is the fight for shorter hours. The introduction of new techniques makes it essential that a fight be put up against sackings. The forty-hour week is official union policy but the rank and file must see to it that a real fight is put up. That is why I welcome the National Assembly of Labour. Out of this must arise a united movement linking up trade unionists in different industries. Engineers with miners, building workers, dockers etc. We must not fight in isolation.'

EDDIE HOUGH, AEU Convenor and member of the Manchester District Committee of the AEU and a Salford City Labour Party member.

TRIBUNE OPENS DISCUSSION ON LABOUR DEFEAT

by BRIAN BEHAN

THE first post mortem by the Left on why Labour lost the election revealed two separate trends. First we had aspiring young opportunists, such as Gordon Richards, anxious to avoid any serious discussion by calling on the Left to prepare to get power at the next election. Their view is very much that of Douglas Jay. It is to the effect that capitalism is going to provide a rising standard of living and that the thing to do is to unite on a programme of wishy washy reformism and not to worry about outworn doctrines like the extension of nationalization.

In the centre we had people like Michael Foot, who basically repudiate Right-wing reformism and Stalinism, but who are not yet prepared to fight around a concrete programme of demands in association with the Socialist Labour League.

It became clear in the course of the meeting that the formation of the Socialist Labour League, in anticipation of this discussion was absolutely justified. It became clear also from the attendance at the meeting that there is the possibility of developing a very big Left movement in the Labour Party.

Discussion without decision dangers

What is also obvious is that reformists of the open variety, like Richards, and concealed types like the Stalinist, Monty Johnstone, will try to unite to prevent the Marxist movement from securing the leadership of the Left. Their strategy is to avoid as far as possible any discussion on a programme which involves action by the working class.

The Stalinist discussion conference in January is being so organized that no decisions can be taken and those who attend are not tied to anything. This type of conference is the dream of every Left faker. Coupled with mild criticisms of the Right, he can speak vaguely about the need for more socialism. He can ignore the real struggles that are going on and avoid any responsibility for waging a struggle with the working class now. At the same time he can head off the Left-wing movement and prevent it from laying a basis for a mass working-class party that will take power.

Rank-and-file delegates from trade unions must be brought into the discussions

Last Thursday's Tribune meeting provided a demonstration of the power of attraction of the programme of the Socialist Labour League. In the course of the discussion, the League

was able to make its position as a political organization quite clear, and this was warmly applauded by at least 75 per cent. of the audience.

There is, however, a considerable amount of work to do if Marxists are to influence the leadership of this Left movement. In the course of our struggle we need to bring into the discussion, delegates from trade union branches, and jobs, armed with our programme for struggle.

One of the biggest weaknesses in the Tribune meeting was the absence of rank-and-file delegates from trade union branches and industry. This meant that the real issues facing the working class; the sack, wages, etc. were absent from many of the contributions.

It also revealed the tragic weakness of this type of Left movement which does not consciously work to bring the working class and left intellectuals together to fight the Right. Such unity can destroy the Right. Only the Socialist Labour League by uniting its work in industry with the struggle in the Labour Party can cement this unity.

Michael Foot sums up

All Marxists will welcome the statement of Hugh Jenkins that Victory for Socialism felt that 'the Left in the Labour Party must unite to fight the efficient and brutal machine of the Right'.

Michael Foot, in his summing up, said that the Labour Party is undemocratic and that one of the tasks of the Left is to change that. He defended the right of the working class to take strike action. He stated that VFS is ready to work with all other Left organizations. He said that there were going to be battles on the industrial front.

We have to change the Labour Party and 'make a frontal challenge to the society in which we live.'

PETER FRYER explains the programme and organization of the Socialist Labour League. Read:

THE BATTLE FOR SOCIALISM

Peter Fryer

192 pages, 3s. 6d.

order from: The Socialist Labour League,
186 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4.

Khrushchev's Speech and the Policy of the Communist Party

by G. HEALY

Mr Khrushchev's speech on November 1 may well mark the beginning of a new turn to the Right by the British Communist Party. 'Peaceful co-existence of states with different social orders' said Khrushchev, 'pre-supposes elements of mutual concession, mutual consideration of interests, since otherwise normal relations cannot be established.'

Turning to France, he declared that the proposals of dictator de Gaulle on Algeria 'may play an important role in the settlement of the Algerian question.' To the delight of the extreme Right-wing pro-fascists of France, he went on to say: 'It is known that historically formed close bands exist between Algeria and France.'

Thus did Mr Khrushchev explain what he means by 'concessions' and mutual consideration of interests'.

A few hours later, the Central Committee of the French Communist Party met and unanimously agreed to support General de Gaulle's proposals for Algeria. In the best Stalin manner Khrushchev cracks the whip and in the best tradition of a Stalinist poodle-dog, Thorez jumps to it.

Algerian workers betrayed

For five weary years the Algerian working class have waged a heroic struggle for national independence. Thousands have died, thousands have been tortured and thousands more are imprisoned in the concentration camps of French imperialism. Mr Khrushchev does not speak for these people, but for the ear of the most reactionary sections of the French ruling class.

Khrushchev's turn towards collaboration with the French imperialists over Algeria is typical of the Soviet bureaucracy's policy in the Middle East. For some time now the Iraqi and Syrian Communist Parties have been in a state of crisis because Moscow does not want to disturb the balance of forces in the Middle East. The Kremlin is frightened lest the Arab revolution should interfere with peaceful co-existence between themselves and Wall Street imperialism.

Gollan gets his orders

Having made his views clear to Thorez, Khrushchev then proceeded to say something of interest to Gollan.

He claimed that the exchange of views with the British prime minister Macmillan played a vital role for the improvement of both British-Soviet relations and the general international situation.

Following the experience of Algeria, we might well ask what concessions the British Communist Party is going to give to Macmillan. Since he, like de Gaulle, is now looked upon favourably by Khrushchev, is it likely that a large-scale strike movement in Britain which would go badly for the Tory government would enjoy the support of the Communist Party?

During the second world war when Stalin had an alliance with Churchill, the Communist Party broke strikes and scabbed on fellow workers. Before Russia entered the war, Churchill was condemned as a warmonger; thereafter he became a great war leader.

The British Communist Party as a Stalinist party must now follow the Khrushchev line and see to it that nothing interferes with Macmillan's crusade for the summit and 'peace' Khrushchev calls for 'mutual consideration of interests' as a price for 'peaceful co-existence' with Macmillan, so Gollan and company must comply like Thorez.

The strange silence of the Daily Worker over China

Of course the British Communist Party leaders do not always follow the Kremlin in the early stages of a change of line with the alacrity of Thorez and Duclos. There have even been times when such people as Pollitt and Campbell could not stomach policies, for example in September 1939. Generally speaking, however, if the British Stalinists are slow to react it is not because they are unwilling, but because they are rather more unenlightened than Stalinists elsewhere.

Turning to China, Mr Khrushchev regretted the incidents which took place on the frontier of India, between 'our two friends.'

Thus he brackets capitalist India and Soviet China together knowing full well what is involved on the borders of India is a conflict between two fundamentally different social systems. As a result the Indian Communist Party is split in two on the question of the 'border incidents' with a large section of the members supporting the capitalists' representative, Mr Nehru.

On all these matters the Daily Worker is strangely silent. There is no editorial comment whatsoever about the Soviet Union's attitude to China. Perhaps editor George Matthews is following the example of Mr Aristov, a secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, who, at the Moscow celebrations, managed to make a speech on the Russian Revolution without once mentioning China.

CP joins the witch-hunt against the Marxist Left

The British working class are moving forward to a period of industrial strife which requires a relentless struggle against Toryism. The Stalinist leaders are now thinking in terms of how best they can implement Khrushchev's policy of 'mutual concessions' to Macmillan. Gollan and company will however avoid open collaboration with the Tories. They talk left while at the same time they join the witch-hunt against the Socialist Labour League and all militants who oppose them.

For example, in its efforts to woo the Left and Centre of the Labour Party, the British Communist Party talks about a fight against the Tories, but at the same time they support the Right-wing trade union leaders who have joined hands with the capitalist Press to witch-hunt Trotskyists on the docks.

All sincere Left-wing socialists in the Labour Party must beware of the pitfalls presented by the Communist Party with its fake-unity campaigns, such as the Popular Front before the war. These campaigns, whilst couched in left phrases will be so designed as to immobilize any real movement against the Tories.

The Socialist Labour League fights for unity

The Socialist Labour League stands for a united struggle on the basis of the five-point programme of the National Assembly of Labour. The Communist Party rejects this proposition because it would bring them into conflict with Macmillan. The Socialist Labour League therefore represents the only real socialist alternative around which all opposition to Toryism can be mobilized.

The Socialist Labour League is already becoming the focal point of the attacks from the capitalists and their Right-wing Labour and Stalinist allies. As a result the Socialist Labour League is growing and will continue to grow. All sincere rank-and-file members of the Communist Party must decide to make a complete break with Stalinism by joining the Socialist Labour League, thereby following in the steps of the Bolsheviks who made possible the Soviet Union and the revolution of 1917.

The Soviet Union and Revolutionary Violence

by JOHN ARCHER

The Socialist Labour League celebrates the 42nd anniversary of the October revolution in the USSR by outlining the Marxist attitude towards the use of force and violence.

We do this because the Stalinist bureaucrats, headed by Khrushchev, who at present wield power in the Soviet Union, are busy obscuring the significance of the struggle of the Bolshevik Party which made the Soviet Union possible. They do this because of their adherence to peaceful co-existence with the imperialists. They lecture the working-class movements of the world against the use of force; and at the same time they endeavour to obscure their own brutal methods and the brutal methods of imperialism today.

Mr Aristov, a secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU told a meeting celebrating the forty-second anniversary of the October Revolution that: 'The socialist system needs neither force nor violence.'

In the same issue of the Daily Worker which reported this speech was an article by Mr John Gollan, who introduced the following quotation from Lenin: 'The expropriation of the capitalists will result in an enormous development of the productive forces.'

But how are we to expropriate the capitalists? That's the big question, for Marxists. Engels answered the question in this way: '... force, however, plays yet another role (other than that of diabolical power) in history, a revolutionary role; in the words of Marx, it is the midwife of every old society which is pregnant with the new, it is the instrument by the aid of which the social movement forces its way through and shatters the dead fossilized political forms.'

As long as any remnants of imperialism survive, until the whole world enters the period of communism, so long will socialists need force and violence. There have been many important struggles between revolutionary and reactionary classes. History is on the side of the revolutionaries, but they win only when their organized armed force is stronger than the defenders of the old system.

Revolutionary groups such as the Socialist Labour League are always anxious to achieve their aims peacefully, for revolutions are much more than mere acts of violence. But the old ruling class refuses to disappear from the scene, long after it has ceased to serve human progress. In order to stay on top they will go to any length in the use of force and violence against the socialist movement.

The Bolsheviks would not have got the power in the 1917 Revolution if they had believed what Aristov is saying now. They did not at all wantonly choose force as the way to set up the Soviet State. They had no alternative. They knew that the old ruling classes would resist with violence. So they prepared a political leadership for revolution, the Bolshevik Party.

The Bolsheviks and force

Between February and October 1917, the Bolshevik Party was able to protect the workers of Petrograd and the soldiers of the garrison from the counter-revolutionary attacks of Kerensky's government, warning them against being provoked into premature outbreaks and organizing a strategic retreat. The same party mobilized defensive forces to repel the attacks of the Cossack General Kornilov. All through, the workers were arming themselves and building the Red Guards, the core of the Red Army.

When every possibility was exhausted of taking the power peacefully in agreement with the other Soviet Party leaders, and only then, Lenin wrote to the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks his letter 'Marxism and Insurrection': 'In order to be entirely victorious, insurrection must not depend on a conspiracy, or on a party, but on a revolutionary class. That is the first point. Insurrection must break out at the highest point of the rising revolution, that is, the moment when the activity of the vanguard of the people is greatest, when the fluctuations among the enemy and among the weak and indecisive friends of the revolution are strongest.'

Explaining thus the art of insurrection, Lenin outlined its programme: 'With the whole of our fraction concentrated in the factories and the barracks, we shall be able to judge the moment when the insurrection should be begun. In our

declaration we must formulate in a manner as brief as it is vigorous this conclusion: peace to the peoples, land to the peasants, confiscation of the scandalous profits of the capitalists, strong measures to curb these latter and prevent them from continuing to disorganize production.

'Our cadres must be ready to sacrifice themselves to the last man rather than allow the enemy to penetrate into the centre of the town. We must mobilize the armed workers, summon them to the greatest fight of all, occupy simultaneously the central telegraph office and the telephone exchange, get telephone connections with all the factories, all the regiments, all the points at which the attacking army displays itself.'

Workers' dictatorship relied on force

Lenin wasted no time appealing to the imperialist tigers to cut off their claws.

The imperialists deployed their armies against the Soviet state so fiercely because they knew, as Lenin knew, that the Russian Revolution is the first stage of the international socialist revolution. Workers' power puts an end for ever to all forms of private property in the means of production, permanently abolishes the whole basis of the old ruling classes. War against the Soviet Union is simply the continuation by violent means of the imperialist struggle to keep on top. Who defeats whom? This will be decided not only in peaceful competition but by all forms of struggle.

The revolutionary dictatorship of the Soviet workers relied on force and violence. But in the German revolution of 1918 the great capitalists and generals consciously used armed counter-revolutionary violence against unprepared workers and soldiers. The people lacked a political leadership to warn them against provocations and prepare them to defend their councils. The victorious reaction reached its climax in the victory of Hitler, the price which the German people paid for failing to take and hold the power in 1918.

Would the Chinese People's Republic exist today if the peasants had not systematically waged war on Chiang Kai-shek, with weapons got by politically undermining their opponent's troops?

But Aristov does not square even with his own friends. When Communist Party speakers want to justify Stalin's murders, they tell us that . . . the nearer the Soviet Union gets to catching up the imperialists, the more desperate, not more co-operative the imperialists become!

Soviet bureaucracy rests on force and violence

Could there have been something unique about the Russian revolution? If Russian socialism alone needed violence, why did Lenin write in 'Left-wing Communism': 'All fundamental and many secondary features of our revolution are of international significance.' Despite Russian peculiarities, the Marxist ideas of the Bolsheviks were based on the previous experience of class-war in Western Europe, of German and French revolutions.

And does not the Soviet state itself rest on force and

violence? Are there not still prisons, and a legal system for exerting force, no less than in capitalist countries? Every state rests on force, and will do so until the world-wide triumph of communism.

If Soviet industry outstrips that of the USA, will the capitalists of the world then become unnecessary? But they are unnecessary already, and their removal by the working-class is already overdue by several decades. The programme of the Communist International said back in 1928: 'The epoch of imperialism is the epoch of moribund capitalism . . . the material pre-requisites for socialism have already ripened in the womb of capitalist society, the shell of capitalism has become an intolerable hindrance to the further development of mankind and history has brought to the forefront the task of the revolutionary overthrow of the yoke of capitalism.'

Soviet bureaucracy yields to imperialist powers

Nor is it true that if the Soviet lands outstrip the USA the people of America will all join together to bring in socialism by agreement regardless of class interests. Does Aristov expect anyone seriously to picture the Wall Street bankers politely vacating their offices and handing over their factories and their H-bombs?

As Palme Dutt wrote as long ago as 1923, 'the present European situation is a deadlock from which there is no way out save the proletarian revolution' . . . before Stalinist conceptions of national socialism and peaceful co-existence had politically undermined the Communist Parties.

Suppose Aristov is right and Marx and Lenin were wrong? Then all the revolutionary struggles would have been misunderstandings. If there is a peaceful road to overthrow capitalism, history does not speak of it.

Aristov clearly means that there are to be no more 1917s. The only good revolution is the one that happened 42 years ago. He appeals from the highest committees of the Soviet bureaucracy to the leaders of US imperialism. He tells the Wall Street magnates that they need not fear that the Soviet chiefs will defend themselves by helping revolutionary movements in any other country.

Aristov does not speak as a revolutionary fighter, but as a leader of a parasitic bureaucracy who are today usurping the best fruits of the struggles of the Bolshevik Party.

Their opportunist policies will not buy off the imperialists. On the contrary, they will spur them on towards the organization of more violence against both the USSR and the international working class.

The De Gaulle War Memoirs

by MARTIN GRAINGER

THE third volume of the De Gaulle War Memoirs, now being serialized in the Daily Telegraph, should be essential reading for all serious Marxists.

The major set-back suffered by the French working class in May 1958 (when the Fourth Republic was overthrown by extra-parliamentary pressure from the extreme right) is clearly shown in these memoirs to have been facilitated by the actions of the French Communist Party in 1944 and 1945 . . . in particular by its acquiescence in the dissolution of the various militias, liberation committees, factory committees and other organs of 'dual power' thrown up by the Resistance struggle.

De Gaulle writes in his memoirs: 'Disregarding the objections of several Ministers and the representations of a number of committees, I persuaded the Government to order formally the dissolution of the militias. On October 29 (1944) this was done and made public. On the 31st detailed instructions were drawn up in the Council of Ministers. All forces which were not part of the Army or of the Police must be dissolved at once, if necessary by the authorities. On pain of severe penalties, the keeping of arms without authority from the prefects was forbidden.'

The French Communist Party changes its policy

It is of great interest to compare the immediate reactions of the French Communist Party with the line advocated a few weeks later (following the return of Thorez from Moscow).

On October 31 Duclos wrote in L'Humanite: 'What they want is to disarm the people. During that time the cagoularis and the traitors of the fifth column will remain armed. They will continue to arm and prepare for civil war. We are told that the police force is sufficient to maintain order. We doubt it, because the 'purge (the punishment of collaborators) has not been undertaken.'

On November 3, L'Humanite published a resolution of the Political Bureau of the PCF which stated: 'The Communist Party will not be associated in any manner with decisions tending to disarm the people in the presence of a hitlerite fifth column left untouched and powerfully armed by the slackness of official measures.'

De Gaulle approves of Thorez

Later in the month however the De Gaulle government was to extend an amnesty to Maurice Thorez, who had spent 'he war years in Moscow. As de Gaulle cynically remarks in his

memoirs: 'I considered that the return of Thorez as head of the Communist Party would in fact bring more advantages than disadvantages.'

From the point of view of the French ruling class de Gaulle was to prove quite right on this point. In December, 1944, de Gaulle himself went to Moscow. The attitude of the French CP changed almost overnight.

At the famous meeting of the Central Committee of the PCF at Ivry, on January 22-24, 1945, Thorez was to reverse the line of the Party.

'Is it not necessary' he asked demagogically in his report, 'to smoke out the saboteurs, the traitors, the spies and the agents of the enemy and to send them before the courts?' But he then went on: 'It is obvious that this task devolves solely to the qualified representatives of the public power. The people have the right and the duty to make their voice heard but it must fall to the legally constituted authorities to conduct searches, to proceed to arrests, to pronounce judgments and to implement them.'

And in order that there should be no ambiguity, he was to state on February 2 in an interview with the catholic weekly 'Temps Present' (reprinted in L'Humanite on February 3, 1945):

'There is one government. There must be a single army, a single police force, one only. The Liberation Committees must not substitute themselves for the (legally appointed) administrations.'

De Gaulle's road to power

The years 1945 to 1947 were to witness the consolidation of the bourgeois power in France, the liquidation of the People's Committees, the beginning of imperialist wars against the workers of Algeria (the Setif and Guelma massacres) and of Indochina, the repeated voting of war credits by the Stalinist deputies, the gradual demoralization of the cadres of the Resistance, the gearing of the trades unions to the production drive, the vicious Stalinist strike-breaking campaigns and the eventual loss of strength and influence of the Communist Party itself. But this is another story.

The roots of May 1958 should now clearly be seen in the policies of the French CP early in 1945. And these in turn should now be recognized as having been imposed from without. They were policies dictated by the short term interests of the Russian bureaucracy which was then, as now, seeking a modus vivendi with Anglo-American imperialism.

St Pancras Tenants Threaten Rent Strike

by BOB PENNINGTON

Delegates representing 35 St. Pancras tenants' associations voted last Sunday to withhold all rent increases due on January 4.

The resolution, carried with 154 votes for, with nine against and two abstentions, reaffirms the tenants' complete rejection of the Tory Council's means test. Council tenants are faced with increases averaging 25s. a week. In some cases rents will be actually doubled.

The tenants' decision to fight the increases is a serious one. They can expect a tough and determined resistance from the Tories.

The new rents policy if implemented will mean a saving on rates for owners of office-blocks, factories and multiple stores of around four pounds a week.

The real reason for the high rents is of course the interest rates plundered by the money-lenders. In the last eight years the St Pancras Borough Council has paid out over £1,750,000 in interest on housing loans.

Naturally, the financiers, property owners and their Tory Council will fight tooth-and-nail to defeat the tenants. High rents for tenants is a profitable business for them.

The Tory government, as the agency for big business, aims to protect profits, interest charges and ground rents at the expense of working class living standards. Ever since November 1956 when they ended all subsidies to local authorities—except for slum clearance and one-bedroomed flats—their strategy has been to force up rents.

How to defeat the Tories

The St Pancras Tories know full well that they have the full support and backing of the government.

But the Tories can be defeated. First of all the St Pancras tenants have shown that they want to fight. Don Cook, secretary of the Tenants' Central Committee says that 4,350 tenants have not returned the means test forms sent out by the council.

Of the 2819 which were returned, 1300 were spoiled and 552 were from old age pensioners. The call made in September by the Central Committee to tenants not to co-operate with

the council by filling in the forms, obviously has the support of the great majority of tenants.

The urgent task now is to ensure that the St Pancras tenants are not left to fight alone. The Central Committee should take every step to mobilize the support of the entire London Labour movement behind the St Pancras tenants.

What the Tories want to do is to fight the tenants in different boroughs one at a time. Labour must make sure this does not happen.

Without delay the St Pancras Tenants' Central Committee should convene an all-London Conference to which they should invite all tenants' organizations, shop stewards' committees, trade union branches and local Labour Parties.

Crawley New Town too

Tenants in Crawley New Town are faced with rent increases on November 30 averaging 6s. 6d. a week. A special invitation should be sent to the Crawley tenants asking them to participate in the Conference.

The Conference should aim at organizing mass pickets to resist evictions. It should also try and get jobs and factories etc to pledge industrial action if the Tories try evictions or insist on going ahead with their scheme to increase rents.

This weekend in the St Pancras Town Hall, delegates from union branches, factory committees, Labour Parties and tenants' associations will be meeting at the National Assembly of Labour organized by the Socialist Labour League and The Newsletter. One of the main items for discussion will be the fight against rent increases and we extend a special invitation to the St Pancras tenants and their associations to attend that conference.

Birmingham Labour Group Raises the Rents

by HARRY FINCH

The Right-wing dominated Birmingham Labour Council is raising rents of 73,000 municipal tenants by sums ranging from 5d. to 12s. a week. The Labour Group took this decision after a special delegate conference from trade union and Labour Party branches had refused to endorse their proposals. This conference demanded a month's postponement so that the accounts of the Housing Committee could be studied.

Eight Labour councillors, and one former Labour councillor, voted against the Labour Group at the meeting of the City Council. Councillor Sheila Wright, who tabled an amendment to the proposals told a representative of The Newsletter: 'We tabled a delaying amendment which called for a postponement of decision for one month to allow Tenants' Committees and other bodies to be consulted by the Housing Management Committee.'

When asked if the councillors who voted for her amendment were opposed to rent increases as such, she said: 'There are really mixed views among us on that—but all of us objected to the way it was forced through without allowing anybody to think up alternative schemes to alleviate the crisis in the housing revenue accounts.'

Birmingham Borough Labour Party at a special meeting passed by 51 votes to 45 a motion condemning the leaders of the Labour Group for forcing through this decision to raise the rents after the rents conference had specifically demanded postponement.

At the same time a motion which virtually cancelled the first motion out was carried by 66 votes to 27. This second motion said that whilst it disapproved of the Labour leaders' actions, nevertheless the Party assures the Labour Group that it will

carry out its policy publicly.

The interesting thing about this motion is that it is quite obvious that it is no longer the Labour Party which makes policy, but the Labour Group on the local Council. The Labour Party is becoming more and more an advisory body.

Whatever the antics of the Birmingham Borough Labour Party, thousands of poor tenants are bound to suffer hardship. The bulk of the increases will fall on pre-war and immediate post-war tenants. Many of the pre-war houses, unlike those built since the war, have no running hot water or similar amenities.

The Central Tenants' Association is calling a public meeting to oppose the increases and a conference has been arranged for Sunday, November 15, to which all organizations are invited to send delegates and observers to discuss the position.

Aston CLP has endorsed the action of their four Labour councillors who voted against the rent increase proposals in the chamber.

The rent increases can be defeated, but only if a big campaign is launched which will draw in shop stewards' committees, trade union and local Labour Party branches, linked with tenants' committees on all the municipal housing estates.

Some Lessons from the Sheffield Bus Strike

by G. GALE

Readers of Newsletter reports will know of the tremendous will to win shown by the Sheffield bus workers in their dispute over standing passengers on new large buses.

This was never more clearly demonstrated than last Wednesday morning, November 4, when the Sheffield Transport Manager sent a personal letter to each bus worker suggesting that in 'the quiet of their own homes' they might take a more reasonable view of things, and also including a ballot form and a stamped addressed envelope. This attempt to intimidate individual workers met a lively response.

Some of the replies sent in the stamped envelopes could not be printed.

But there were disquieting signs that this spirit amongst the men was not matched by the leaders. The Sheffield 'Star', the same day, carried an amazing report headed 'A strike without leaders?' in which a member of the branch committee denied that they were leading the strike but said that the committee was acting as 'intermediaries between management and men'.

At 12.50 p.m. on Wednesday the branch committee announced through the Press a strike meeting for 7 p.m. that evening. This was not printed till the second edition and many workers were unaware of the meeting until too late. Others thought that the meeting was simply to tell them not to fill in the employer's ballot form, and so did not attend. Few expected a decision about a return to work, especially as at the last meeting only two days before, the secretary of the committee, councillor Scott, who is a full time, appointed, trade union official, had said that a further meeting was unlikely for some time.

This meeting, then, was attended by about 1300 strikers—by far the smallest attendance at any of the strike meetings.

The men were told that a group of about sixty workers had visited the strike committee and demanded a return to work on any terms.

Busmen I spoke to afterwards felt that this was a small minority of men, especially after well over a thousand busmen had voted to stay out at meeting after meeting. They felt it was the job of the committee to bring this minority behind the majority, and that this could have been done had there been a real fighting campaign to win from the start.

A secret vote

But the committee instead, while leaving a decision to a free vote, in fact spoke in terms favouring a return to work.

At a previous meeting on the Monday, the men had overwhelmingly turned down a request for a secret ballot. This time the committee recommended a secret vote and ballot forms were already prepared.

In the confusion many militants refused to take part in this ballot vote, the result of which was 592-514 in favour of a return to work—with about 300 people at the meeting not voting.

Busmen I have spoken to feel confident that had there been ample notice of the meeting with everyone voting, the decision would have been to stay out.

They feel that they have gained nothing, whereas a few more days could have brought them complete victory.

The lesson of this strike is the need for firm leadership. The spirit of the rank and file was tremendous. They resisted all the blustering of the employers and all the blandishments of their national officers. But nothing concrete and constructive was done by the branch committee. Appeals for financial help were sent out to other bus branches but no speakers were sent to depots in other cities, although some busmen volunteered to go. No appeal was made to the Labour movement, although this would have been one of the most effective ways of fighting the Labour-controlled Council. Above all no attempt was made to establish contact and joint action with other busmen faced with the same problem.

Sheffield busmen were left to stand alone, without effective leadership. This underlines the need for rank-and-file link-ups between busmen in different cities, and also between transport workers in other industries.

STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE meeting on October 31 and November 1, unanimously decided to expel Peter Cadogan from membership of the League on the grounds that he had violated the constitution of the League by circulating policies which were contrary to the policy adopted by the League's inaugural conference among people who are not members of the League.

The League's constitution provides an opportunity for Peter Cadogan to present his appeal against this decision, at next year's annual conference.

Peter Fryer, former editor of The Newsletter, in a letter to the Guardian on Tuesday, November 10, alleges that Peter Cadogan was expelled because the general secretary of the Socialist Labour League would not tolerate free discussion.

The following extract shows the inaccuracy of Mr Fryer's statement.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Brian Behan, national chairman of the League put the following questions to Peter Cadogan:

Behan: Have you had ample opportunity for discussion within the Socialist Labour League yourself?

Cadogan: Yes, I have certainly had plenty of opportunity.

Behan: Do you agree that you have had a fair deal from the National Committee?

Cadogan: I agree that I have had a fair deal from this meeting.

Peter Fryer could have ascertained these facts before he rushed into print, but he did not bother to do so.

He resigned from the editorship of The Newsletter on the grounds that it was affecting his health. Since August 28, there has been ample opportunity for Peter Fryer to put his point of view inside the Socialist Labour League, but he has not done so. To this day the League is unaware of Peter Fryer's opinions, other than those which he held when he was active in the League.

As a responsible member of the National Committee of the Socialist Labour League, Peter Fryer was charged with the main drafting of the present constitution and with the incorporation of the amendments agreed by conference. He proposed the constitution to the conference, making it perfectly clear what violation of the constitution would mean.

The National Committee of the Socialist Labour League considers that the expulsion of Peter Cadogan was correct in accordance with the constitution and it will defend this position at the next annual conference of the League.

Since it is obvious that Peter Fryer now has differences of opinion with the League and since his sympathies extend to Peter Cadogan, the Executive Committee believes that the fullest possible discussion inside the League is highly desirable, so that the members can decide on the issues. It has accordingly requested the National Committee to withdraw its decision to expel Peter Cadogan, and provided that he together with Peter Fryer will accept the constitution of the Socialist Labour League they should be afforded every opportunity to present their opinions to the membership in person, and in writing between now and the next conference. The conference as the highest body in the League will then decide on Cadogan's expulsion. Needless to say neither Peter Fryer, or Peter Cadogan were offered these facilities when they were expelled from the Communist Party.

Calling Students

The University of London Marxist Society has been granted recognition by the University authorities.

The society seeks 'to promote interest and discussion in the theory of Marxism, with special attention to the contributions of Lenin and Trotsky.'

In line with this, study groups on 'The Young Marx' and 'The Roots of Bureaucracy' have recently been started. On Friday, November 13 at 5.30 p.m. in the University of London Union Building, Alasdair

MacIntyre will speak on 'The theory and practice of Marxism.'

London students interested in the society should contact me at my home address.

The provisional committee of the society has decided to send delegates to the National Assembly of Labour. We will seek endorsement of this policy at the inaugural meeting of the society.

12 Terrapin Road,
Balham, S.W.17.

BILL PARRY

Constant Reader | Never Again?

FAR be it from me, who am no economist, to prophesy in such matters, and farther still to seem to wish for a repetition of the terrible depression of the early 1930s, with its train of misery and suffering. Nevertheless, I have never been convinced by those who argue that such a slump is totally out of the question nowadays, and was therefore very interested in Professor J. K. Galbraith's article in the Observer of October 25 on the thirtieth anniversary of the Wall Street crash.

As author of 'The Affluent Society' Galbraith is very much an OK-name among New Thinkers. I trust they have noted his warning that 'there is a considerable chance that our past experience with boom and collapse will be repeated—sooner or later. I am myself keeping a small list of those who say that 1929 is unimportant and irrelevant because nothing like it could ever happen in the stock market again.'

With the Tory election slogans about our never having had it so good still ringing in our ears, Galbraith's concluding sentence falls with quite a sinister sound: 'The time to worry will be when important people begin to explain that conditions are fundamentally sound.'

Stale slanders from Khrushchev

Presumably in order to frighten Mao with a possible charge of the gravest of heresies, Khrushchev managed to bring a crack about Trotsky into his speech to the Supreme Soviet on Soviet foreign policy. 'Lenin and the party', it appears, 'had to fight hard against Trotsky' at the time of the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations in 1918. That wicked man 'raised leftist objections' and 'put forward his notorious slogan of "Neither peace or war", thus playing into the hands of the German imperialists.' 'Considerable difficulties' resulted: 'such were the fruits of adventurism'.

It is surprising that Stalin's successor should risk serving up this stuff in present-day conditions, when access to archives is said to be much easier in Russia than it used to be. The minutes of the meetings of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party for the relevant period were published in the historical journal Proletarskaya Revolyutsia, No. 2 of 1928 (No. 73 of the whole series). From them the student may learn that it was not Trotsky at all but a group which included Dzerzhinsky, later one of the saints of the Stalinist pantheon, that opposed on 'leftist' grounds signing 'peace with Germany and wanted a revolutionay war; and that among Trotsky's supporters against Lenin at one stage was none other than Stalin himself. So late as February 23, when the German army had resumed its advance, Stalin was still arguing that 'we need not sign'!

Khrushchev's illiterate (or disingenuous) references to the Brest-Litovsk episode conceal the real point at issue in that crisis. Lenin was most keenly conscious of Russia's inability to fight Germany in the circumstances of February 1918. Trotsky realized that too, but attributed very great importance to another factor as well. The Bolsheviks were then still

generally regarded among the workers in France, Britain and the Allied countries as a whole as a set of 'German agents'. It was necessary so to behave at Brest-Litovsk as to destroy that particular slander. The whole world must see that Soviet Russia was yielding to German imperialism only at the very point of the bayonet.

Whether or not one considers Trotsky went too far in his anxiety to clear up the misconceptions of the Western workers, it can be argued (as Trotsky himself did in his introduction to the official Soviet edition of the peace-negotiation documents) that he thereby created great difficulties for the interventionists in France and Britain, making it much harder for them than otherwise it would have been to justify their allegation that Lenin and Trotsky were stooging for the Kaiser. This was the positive outcome of Trotsky's 'socialist brinkmanship' at Brest-Litovsk.

A unique document

Among the bravest and best of the volunteers who fought in the International Brigade in Spain were the men of the Polish contingent. They came to Spain from a country where the Communist Party was illegal, to fight against the establishment of Fascism at the other end of Europe. Better than many others they knew what they were fighting against.

In 1938 the leaders of the Polish units were called to Moscow. There they 'disappeared', along with the entire leadership resident in Russia of the Polish Communist Party, including the Polish representative on the Comintern executive. It became known that Stalin had decreed the dissolution of the party in Poland, on the grounds that it had become thoroughly penetrated by police agents, fascists, Trotskyists, etc.

Thus, Poland faced the Nazi onslaught in 1939 without a Communist Party, and the present 'United Workers' Party' had to be built up practically from scratch in the years following Hitler's invasion of Russia.

This episode in the history of Polish Communism was one of several which were discussed by Isaac Deutscher, himself a member of the Communist Party of Poland for some years, in an interview with a Polish journalist which appeared in Sartre's magazine 'Les Temps Modernes' last year. It had been arranged for the interview to be published in Gomulka's own paper, 'Polityka', but somebody changed his mind; the text was, however, circulated in the Internal Bulletin of the Polish United Workers' Party.

The Socialist Labour League has now made this important contribution to recent history available in English as an 18-page pamphlet, 'The Tragedy of Polish Communism Between the Wars', price one shilling.

Some of the points dealt with are: the Rosa Luxemburg tradition in Polish Communism, the role of the party at the time of Pilsudski's coup d'etat, and its consequences, the 'People's Front' phase in Polish politics, the role of the Left Opposition in Poland, and the relations between the Russian and the Polish movements.

BRIAN PEARCE