

# THE NEWSLETTER

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## NO COMPROMISE ON THE 40 HOUR WEEK Trade Union Unity in Action Can Win Victory

By BOB PENNINGTON

**THE 40-hour week battle, the key demand for 1960, now switches to engineering and shipbuilding.**

On Tuesday, bosses and union leaders meet to discuss the claim of 3 million workers for more pay and shorter hours. An offer of a 42½-hour week has already been tossed out by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions. The engineering employers are now expected to come forward with a new offer of a 42-hour week.

The ready acceptance by the union leaders of the electricity authorities' offer of a 42-hour week indicates that the engineering employers will not have a rough passage in avoiding the full claim.

The Trades Union Congress issued a statement on Monday approving the demand for reductions in working hours. It would be wrong, however, to assume that the knights of Great Russell Street are going to lay aside their coronets and dash into battle with the employers.

The 'statesmen of labour' see the gaining of the shorter working week as a process of persuasion. Their statement says: 'The only question is how long will it take to convince the employers that this development is both inevitable and desirable.' The Financial Times of December 28 described the statement as 'cheering from the touchlines.'

Production continues to increase. In the last 12 years there has been an overall rise in productivity of 20 per cent. Profits and dividends break new records. In 1958 shares increased their value by an average of 40 per cent. This week shares of the Vickers engineering combine jumped 3s. to 38s. 1½d. Shipbuilders Harland and Wolff rose another 1s. 9d. to 30s. 1½d. Just before Christmas, shares in the John Brown shipbuilding concern bounded by 4s. 7½d. to a new 'high' of 52s. 6d.

Last year people who draw their incomes from rent, interest and dividends grossed between them a total of £1,488 millions, an increase of £326 millions on the previous year.

There is certainly plenty of money in the kitty. The 3,000 'top-people' in Britain who each have a yearly income of £20,000—in 1957, before tax, they received £86 millions—can well afford to meet the cost of higher wages and shorter hours.

### Employers' strategy

The strategy of the employers is to avoid a showdown with the working class. They hope to avoid a fight by granting a 42-hour week and also give the union leaders a get-out, enabling them to go back to the rank and file saying, 'well at least we got you something.'

In our opinion it would be quite wrong for the C.S.E.U. to tamely accept the 42-hour week, although everything indicates that they will do so. It stands to reason if the employers will grant a 42-hour week without a struggle, then by using the full force and strength of the membership the C.S.E.U. can force the employers to concede the full claim.

The five million workers from various industries who have lodged claims for a 40-hour week are entitled to expect something more than wordy statements of approval from the T.U.C. Memories will be stirred of the side-line attitude adopted by the T.U.C. to the fight of the printworkers. But without that struggle it is doubtful whether the employers would today be even granting the 42-hour week.

What is required from the T.U.C. is an unambiguous statement that they will back to the hilt the fight of all unions to achieve a 40-hour week. That in order to assist the unions to defeat the employers they will organize the maximum financial and practical support that is necessary.

### John Brown Land Boilers

## Men Stay on Strike

By E. Knight

**'Defend Shop Stewards!' 'No Victimization!' These were the calls of the strikers from John Brown Land Boilers as they demonstrated their solidarity in a march past the factories and shipyards of Clydebank on Monday last.**

A mass meeting confirmed their intention to continue the strike against the victimization of Ian Clark, convenor of shop stewards, despite the fact that the 500 workers involved have only national assistance money for their wives and families, with nothing for single men. This decision is a slap in the face for the employers who believed that the men could not face the traditional Scots New Year holiday without a wage packet.

### Clyde shop stewards meet

A conference of Clyde shop stewards called by the strike committee just before Christmas, pledged full financial and moral support for the strikers. Collections are being organized in factories and yards. The stewards also proposed that demands should be made for the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions to call a token strike throughout the Clyde in support of John Brown's workers, and as a clear indication of their determined opposition to any victimization. A recall conference, to be held early in January, will consider what progress has been made on this demand.

Ian Clark who is also district president of the Plumbing Trades Union, is a recognized militant. In two-and-a-half years under his leadership 100 per cent. trade unionism has been established in the factory. Attempts by the management to cut conditions have been rebuffed. On the very morning of his dismissal the management were defeated in a move to cut pipe bending times by two-thirds.

Financial aid must now roll in, but this is not enough. The demands on the Confederation must be backed by every factory and trade union branch. An extension of the dispute is the only way to halt the employers' attacks and it is this question which faces the recall conference of Clyde shop stewards.

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### INTO THE SIXTIES

'The 1950s,' says the Financial Times 'have been a paradoxical age.' Yes indeed! Superficially it would appear that whereas they began with the war in Korea which threatened to develop into a third world war, the 1960s begin with what the diplomats of the Soviet Union and imperialism claim to be a new possibility for world peace through the summit talks.

It would however be a mistake to examine the 1950s without taking into account certain important issues which must play an enormous role in the development of Marxist theory in the next period. These may be summarized as follows:

Will the ending of full employment lead to a repetition of the classical slump of the 1930s?

Has capitalism, as the Right-wing claim, really found a new way to resolve its crisis?

And finally, does the absence of large-scale struggles between capital and labour in Britain since the end of the war mean that the working class are more politically backward than during the 1920s and 1930s?

The division of the world into the camps led by the Soviet bureaucracy and Wall Street imperialism is not the decisive criterion for the international outlook of Marxists. Whilst it is true that these forces rest on fundamentally different property relations, nevertheless they both in their own ways fight tooth and nail against the working class in order to maintain their privileged positions.

The Soviet bureaucracy, like the reformist bureaucracy of the Labour Party, remains a parasitic stratum reflecting the pressure of imperialism on the world of labour. The crisis of mankind remains the crisis of revolutionary leadership. But to resolve this crisis it is necessary first to realize that the mere presence of these two fundamentally different social systems has created enormous problems for the imperialists as well as the bureaucrats. The stalemate of the Korean war was one aspect of these problems. Wall Street imperialism was not only forced to halt but to consider such fundamental changes in its military strategy that have been going on ever since. The Hungarian revolution, the deep unrest in Poland and the problem of revolutionary China are samples of the type of 'headache' that the Soviet bureaucracy has had to endure.

Soviet science has sent a rocket to the moon, but the leaders of the Soviet Union are unable to write an authentic history of how the state responsible for such great progress came into existence. The development of atomic science has opened up a new vista for mankind, but the fatal casualties from the explosion of the hydrogen bombs in preparation for world war III continue to mount.

In the capitalist world new industries devoted solely to electronics and nuclear developments are coming into existence, whilst the older and more basic industries such as coal, cotton and shipbuilding are declining into recession and slump.

Since the dawn of imperialism it has been a fundamental policy to deliberately maintain colonial countries in a state of economic and cultural backwardness. The great sweep of the Asian revolution whose sinews are

rooted in the October 1917 revolution, has forced imperialism to reconsider their colonial policies and pour loans and material aid into these countries in a desperate effort to stabilize reactionary puppet regimes as a stopgap against the expansion of the socialist revolution. The possibilities of Soviet loans to colonial and semi-colonial countries not only infuriates imperialism, but aggravates the contradictions of their outlived economic order.

The most important aspect of the 1950s was the appearance of this multitude of problems which brought together in one short decade all the ailments of capitalism and their implications for the Labour and Stalinist bureaucracies. There have been booms and recessions, preparations for war which posed the destruction of mankind, alongside unstable peace alliances and the possibilities of top level talks. The great scientific achievements of the soviets have flourished alongside the most ruthless exposure of the bureaucratic regime. The building of atomic factories and nuclear power stations in capitalist countries proceeds at the same time as unemployment rises in the towns dependent on the old basic industries—which provided the sources of basic wealth for the early capitalists.

The political education of the working class today is being determined not so much by the threat of slump or the ending of full employment as by a combination of events which will be decided by slumps in certain industries, temporary booms in others, the instability of summit talks and the gigantic preparations for world destruction. Temporary colonial peace under some imperialist puppet propped up by loans from Wall Street and the City of London will go side by side with the brutal realities of French imperialism in Algeria and such issues as the Chinese intervention in Tibet. Far from the crisis of capitalism receding, all the factors which have given rise to the crises of the past are now present: boom, slump and the threat of a war which would bring total destruction. In a word, capitalism has entered its most serious crisis whose solution cannot be attempted except through the bloodiest of conflicts with the working class and the colonial peoples. That is why the tension from this crisis is driving the working class more and more to seek political solutions in a way that was unthinkable in the twenties and thirties.

Here lies the great significance of the 1960s. During the next ten years a new era of political understanding will emerge in which the Marxists will have their greatest opportunity of all time. The 1950s have revealed the essential problems of capitalist crisis and the fact that imperialism and Stalinism have feet of clay.

The 1960s will be the years of challenge for Marxists. Like all great occasions in the past, this challenge is first of all a challenge of theory. Marxists must not run away from this multitude of problems posed in the world today by hiding behind abstractions which have no relation to real life. Abstract theory, is at best, an indispensable guide towards research into the future and an understanding of the problems that will be posed. It cannot be a substitute for the research itself.

The Marxist movement is based on the strongest of all theoretical foundations. It faces the future with confidence because Marxism is the only body of scientific thought which can examine with complete objectivity the present developments in society. In this way it will learn to enrich and apply its programme in a way that will assist a rapid transition from the propaganda groups of today to the revolutionary parties of tomorrow.

# PALMIRO TOGLIATTI

By BRIAN PEARCE

**It was Polonius who agreed with Prince Hamlet when he said a certain cloud in the sky was shaped like a camel; agreed with him again when he changed his mind and said it resembled a weasel; and agreed yet again when Hamlet compared it to a whale.**

The Stalinized international Communist movement has known and still knows a lot of officials of that type, people with no ideas of their own who merely wait for 'the line' to be thrown to them. Perhaps the classic case was Professor Varga, Moscow's economist-in-ordinary, who is said to have telegraphed back on one occasion when he was instructed to prepare a report on world economy for a Comintern gathering: 'What must facts show? Impending slump or continued stabilization?'

Palmiro Togliatti, whose important article in *Rinascita* for July-August, summarized in *World Marxist Review* for November, was discussed by Gerry Healy in the last issue of *The Newsletter*, is no Polonius. His record shows him to be a man of outstanding ability, capable of original and independent thought. Unfortunately, it also shows him as being ready as any Polonius to subordinate his thinking to the current requirements of the Kremlin just as soon as the whip is cracked.

During the discussion which broke out in the world Communist movement following the publication of Khrushchev's 'secret' speech at the 20th Congress, Togliatti wrote a most penetrating and suggestive commentary on that speech. Published in *Unita* of June 17, 1956, it was issued—through clenched teeth—in an English version in the form of a special supplement to *World News*, the British Communist Party's weekly. (Some ill-conditioned intellectuals who read Italian had seen the article and bombarded party headquarters with demands for its publication.)

In this article Togliatti looked below the surface of the 'cult of the individual', referred to various aspects of bureaucratic degeneration in Soviet society, and pointed to the need for 'a careful investigation into the way in which such a state of affairs came about'. It was probably this article and the worldwide interest it aroused that more than any other single factor led to the notorious June 30 resolution of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, officially 'closing the discussion'. And Togliatti, who had shown that he knew and understood a great deal about the origins and nature of Stalinism, obediently closed his mouth on the subject from that moment onward.

## A remarkable speech

In his 1956 article Togliatti alluded briefly to the infection of the international Communist movement with Stalinism, and remarked:

'If you can, have a look at the speech I made, for example, at the 6th Congress of the Comintern in 1928, and you will find criticism of some of these things.'

Yes, indeed, that was a remarkable speech. A brief report of it will be found in the English edition of *International Press Correspondence*, issue of August 23, 1928. Togliatti drew attention to the essential feature of Fascism, that it abolishes completely all independent workers' organizations, and to the political consequence of this, that it rejects all compromise with Social-Democracy.

Now this was quite a bold thing to say at that time. Stalin had promulgated in 1924, during an earlier ultra-left phase of Comintern policy, that 'Social-Democracy is objectively the moderate wing of fascism . . . These organizations do not negate but supplement each other. They are not antipodes, they are twins' (*Works*, English edition, vol. 6, p. 294). True, not much notice had been taken of this doctrine during the 1925-27 opportunist phase of Comintern policy, but it had never been repudiated, and when Togliatti spoke a new ultra-left phase was opening in which Stalin's bright idea was to be crystallized in the concept of 'social-fascism' and used to bring disaster to the working-class movement, especially in Germany.

However, once it was made perfectly clear to Togliatti that 'social-fascism' was compulsory doctrine till further notice, he adapted himself accordingly. In February 1930 he was writing:

'Italian Social-Democracy is fascising itself with great facility'. On which Trotsky commented: 'Alas, the functionaries of official communism are turning themselves into lackeys with even greater facility.'

## Togliatti and Trotsky

In the years 1928-34, to express the criticism of the 'social-fascism' doctrine and its practical consequences which Togliatti now puts before the world's Communists was one of the marks of the 'Trotskyist beast'. In Britain as in other countries men were expelled from the Communist Party in 1932 for circulating and discussing Trotsky's writings on the German situation in which he denounced the official policy and called for an orientation towards a united front of the workers' parties against Fascism. (It is worth recalling that Trotsky had shown up the fallacy of Stalin's formulation so far back as 1928, when he wrote in his 'Criticism of the Draft Programme of the Comintern': 'One might say that Social-Democracy is the left wing of the bourgeois society and this definition would be quite correct if one does not construe it so as to oversimplify it and thereby forget that Social-Democracy still leads millions of workers behind it and within certain limits is constrained to reckon not only with the will of its bourgeois master but also with the interests of its deluded proletarian constituency. But it is absolutely senseless to characterize Social-Democracy as the "moderate wing of fascism"'.)

Somehow Togliatti does not find it appropriate to pay tribute to those who were right at the time about 'social-fascism' and who were punished by him and his like for trying to correct this error when it was alive and kicking.

## Why this particular angle?

And why, indeed, does Togliatti dwell now upon this error and this alone in the record of the Stalinist movement? After all, current Communist policy is not of an ultra-left character, nor are there any signs of its moving in that direction—quite the contrary. It is strange that he has nothing to say about the opportunist errors of 1925-27, which preceded and prepared the way for the ultra-left convulsion of 1928-34—for this was in the main a reaction to the disasters brought about by these opportunist errors, and the so-called 'third period' can only be understood if one knows what went before.

That is to say, it would be strange if one did not know that Togliatti is writing as a politician, and a crooked one at that, not as an historian; and that just because Stalinist policy is now repeating in some respects the 1925-27 phase it is vital for him and his colleagues that the comrades' attention should not be directed to that part of their history!

When, in Britain, for example, the Communist Party is seeking an accommodation with part of the trade union bureaucracy as in the days of the Anglo-Russian Committee, and building up Cousins as it once built up Purcell, the less said about that period the better, from the point of view of Togliatti, Gollan and Co. Far better to wax retrospectively virtuous about the errors of the 'third period', which have far less topical a bearing.

## A question is begged

Had Togliatti written from a 'purely' historical angle, and chosen for reasons quite unconnected with current political preoccupations to write about the 'third period', one might still have expected some explanation of why he appears so confident that errors of the Leftist type are now definitely and finally out so far as the leadership of world Stalinism is concerned. That

explanation could have included a discussion of what happened to the left turn which his movement seemed to begin to make at the end of 1947 and in the immediately following period, after American and British imperialism had ended 'Big Three Unity' and launched the cold war. Why, this time, unlike what had happened twenty years before, did the Soviet bureaucracy shy away so quickly from even formal 'revolutionism' and move towards complete scrapping, in words as well as deeds, of the Leninist heritage? After all, there have been no such pretexts for a Rightward drift as existed in the 1930s—the triumph of Fascism in Germany and the subsequent readiness of France and Britain to flirt with Russia.

But to go into that would involve taking up the question of the bureaucratic degeneration of Soviet society and studying it as a process, with definite stages and an unfolding series of inevitable implications for the world Stalinist movement—the question which Togliatti dutifully laid down at the close of the 'false dawn' of 1956.

### STALINISM IN ACTION

In 1957 and 1958, the Communist Parties of the world, following Khrushchev's lead, welcomed the Union of Syria and Egypt as a great progressive step forward for the Arab people. At the same time they ignored the lack of any freedom for workers' parties in Egypt, and the fact that this would henceforth apply also to Syria. When Marxists raised this question, and exposed the nonsense of Communists calling Nasser a 'national hero,' they were called 'sectarians,' unable to recognize that Nasser was an ally against the 'main enemy.' The reason for all this, of course, was that Nasser was on good terms with the rulers of the U.S.S.R.

It is now very interesting to read the comments of the exiled Syrian Communist leader, Khaled Baghdash, in a Prague journal: 'Thousands of the best sons of the Arab nation—workers, farmers, officers and intellectuals—are rotting in the prisons without trial. What Nasser calls "the road to Socialism" is a mockery, since it has brought upon the workers only inflation, unemployment and tyranny.'

## INDUSTRY

### Shell Sparks Face Enquiry Trap

By Brian Behan

The Minister of Labour has appointed Mr. Roy Wilson, Q.C., to head a committee of investigation into the dispute between the Electrical Trades Union and E. H. Wheeler and Co., sub-contractors at Shell Mex House.

A ministry spokesman told me that they hoped 'the men would get back to work in the meantime and await the outcome of the recommendations that the court will make.' When asked when this would be he said that it would be the first week in February at the earliest.

He said that the ministry had had long talks with both the employers and the union representatives under the chairmanship of the chief conciliation officer before reaching this decision. The union had indicated its willingness to accept the decision to set up the committee and had decided to give evidence.

It is clear that the ministry is intervening to help the employers and to try to rob the workers of victory. There would have been no talk of inquiry but for the stubborn way in which the workers have maintained their ranks. The govern-

ment fears that if the dispute continues a number of things may happen. First, there may be an extension of the dispute to all electricians employed by Wheelers on other building sites. Second, the E.T.U. may be compelled by their own members to do what they should have done eight weeks ago and withdraw all E.T.U. labour employed on the site.

This is a critical hour in the dispute. MacAlpine's are faced with more sackings and fear another 'Battle of Waterloo'. Men on the site say 'the whole site is closing down on January 7 if the sparks are still out.'

It is vital that the electricians stand fast. MacAlpines cannot face another stoppage like the last.

Why didn't the Ministry call for this investigation in the first week of the strike? Obviously they were hoping the men would collapse. What guarantee have the strikers that if they go back to work they will get a penny? None at all. They should stay out and demand that Wheelers settle the claim out of the £173,542 they made in 1958.

What anyone will get out of the committee of investigation will be determined by whether the electricians are still out on strike and squeezing MacAlpines and Wheelers.

The E.T.U. leadership should pull out all electricians working on the site and, if necessary, all those working for Wheelers on other sites. The building trade unions should at once withdraw their labour in support of the sparks at South Bank.

A powerful victory can be won if the workers remain united. And a victory for the electricians will be a blow struck on behalf of all building trade workers.

## ANTI-H-BOMB CAMPAIGN

### TORIES DETERMINED TO KEEP C.N.D. MEMBERS IN JAIL

By Bob Pennington

The refusal of Tory Home Secretary, R. A. Butler, to remit the two-month jail sentences meted out to the six members of the Direct Action Committee against Nuclear War comes as no surprise.

The request of Sydney Silverman and 37 other M.P.'s for their release received a curt no from Butler. 'I have ascertained that the prisoners are in good health and that imprisonment is not having any harmful effect on them,' was his cynical reply.

Appeals for 'mercy' and 'clemency,' such as recommended by one leading clergyman, fall on deaf ears. The men who condoned the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are not given to mercy.

The well-dressed and suave politicians of the Tory Party plot and scheme with their imperialist allies, the American government, to produce even more deadly and fiendish weapons than those they dropped in 1945. At Eniwetok in 1954 they tested a bomb with an explosive power equivalent to 15 million tons of T.N.T. This explosive power is a thousand times greater than the one used to murder Hiroshima.

### Butler is satisfied

The members of the Direct Action Committee are in jail today because they played such a prominent role in exposing the Tories' war plans and because their anti-rocket base demonstrations have brought to public attention the location of these sites. For these 'crimes' they have aroused the hatred of the capitalist politicians.

Butler did not refuse to remit their sentences because he felt bilious and irritable after excessive Christmas celebrations. He and his fellow Tories want to teach the defendants and all others who oppose their war plans, a salutary lesson. The Tories aim to intimidate and silence.

In his reply to Silverman, Butler reiterated that the prisoners could go free even now, if they gave sureties 'to be of good behaviour and not to take part in or encourage any breach of the peace.'

What the Court demands and naturally the demand is endorsed by Butler, is that the defendants cease their campaign. To achieve this they use a piece of 14th century legislation. Such legislation will if required, be used against trade unionists during strikes.

The defendants were quite right to refuse to give up their right to campaign against nuclear weapons. By taking such a decision they help to defend the political rights of every trade unionist and socialist. Now the working-class movement must face up to its responsibilities to the prisoners and organise a campaign for their release.

Butler will not order them to open the cell doors at Brixton and Holloway as a result of pleas or prayers. What will make him move is the Labour movement which has a duty to call meetings and demonstrations demanding the release of the defendants and the repealing of the Act under which they were charged.

### **SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE HOLD PROTEST MEETING**

At an open-air meeting in Central London last week, the following resolution was carried with 56 votes in favour and one against:

"This meeting organized by the Socialist Labour League at Manette Street on Wednesday, December 23, 1959, records its strongest protests at the vicious sentences of two months' imprisonment imposed on the six members of the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War at the St. Marylebone Court on Tuesday, December 15.

"It demands that the Home Secretary, Mr. R. A. Butler, M.P., order their immediate release from gaol.

"It further insists that the decision of magistrate Sir Lawrence Dunne to bind over the original seven defendants to keep the peace for 12 months be immediately repealed."

The League speakers urged those in attendance to carry similar resolutions in their Labour Parties, trade union branches and factory committees.

## **LABOUR**

### **WANDSWORTH TRADES COUNCIL SPEAKS OUT AGAINST BANS AND PROSCRIPTIONS**

*By Our Industrial Correspondent*

At its meeting on December 14, the Wandsworth Trades Council passed the following resolution by a vote of more than 2 to 1:

"This Trades Council calls upon the London Federation of Trades Councils to accept the alteration of Rule 3 which at present reads: "The Federation shall consist of duly elected representatives of affiliated trades councils registered by the TUC. The Federation shall refuse to accept the credentials of a representative from an affiliated trades council if the representative is a member of Communist or Fascist Parties or any subsidiary organization proscribed by the TUC.", to now read: "The Federation shall consist of duly elected representatives of affiliated trades councils which are registered by the TUC."

Moved by a Balham AEU delegate, who is a Communist Party member, the resolution received wide support from the floor from both Labour Party and Communist Party delegates. (Wandsworth Trades Council removed its own 'black' circular several years ago).

Later in the meeting the Trades Council elected three delegates to represent it at the Daily Worker conference on January 17.

### **LABOUR PARTY MILITANT EXPELLED**

*By Our Manchester Correspondent*

THE witch-hunt against members and supporters of the Socialist Labour League continues. It has now spread to Salford. On Thursday December 17 the delegates to

the Salford East Constituency Labour Party were faced with an ultimatum from Regional Organizer Reg. Wallis. If they did not carry out the NEC decision and expel Harry Ratner, an active member of the party over the last twelve years the Party would be disaffiliated.

The 'crime' that Harry Ratner committed was that he acted as Manchester organizer for the National Assembly of Labour and refused to dissociate himself from the Socialist Labour League.

Salford East CLP has consistently opposed proscription and witch-hunting of Left-wingers. In March they overwhelmingly protested against the proscription of the Socialist Labour League and in June sent two delegates to participate in the lobbying of the National Executive.

Even though Harry Ratner's association with the Socialist Labour League and The Newsletter was quite openly known the local party refrained from taking any action against him. At the December meeting however the delegates were faced with an ultimatum—"Expel or be disaffiliated!" Prior to the meeting Right-wing officials stated that a name vote would be taken and that any voting against expulsion might themselves be liable to disciplinary action.

Despite this intimidation only a minority of the delegates present voted for expulsion. The vote was twenty-two for, seventeen against, and eight to ten abstentions. It is quite obvious that had it not been for the shameless pressuring of delegates a majority would have opposed expulsion.

The bulk of the trade union delegates voted against expulsion. Broughton Branch of the AEU of which Harry Ratner is president, unanimously endorsed a statement of his position. In addition the following AEU branches opposed expulsion: Salford No. 3, Salford No. 4, Salford No. 5 and Salford No. 6. Also voting against expulsion was a delegate from the Municipal and General Workers.

One significant feature was the way the pro-Stalinist elements lined up with the Right-wing and voted for expulsion.

One of the main speakers for the expulsion of Harry Ratner was Councillor Peter Grimshaw who only recently had made a statement to the Daily Worker calling for support for the Daily Worker Conference. Despite the fine words of the Daily Worker and Grimshaw about 'unity of the Left' and the fight against bans and proscriptions, this apparently does not extend to the Socialist Labour League. It is noticeably different from the attitude of many rank and file Communist Party industrial militants in the Salford area who are now beginning to see need for genuine unity in the actual struggle against the Right-wing.

In a statement after his expulsion Harry Ratner said that despite these witch hunts and unholy alliances the Socialist Labour League would continue to extend its support. In March the Manchester and Salford Branch of the League will be calling a Conference of delegates from trade union branches, jobs and pits, local labour organizations and Nuclear Disarmament Groups to follow up the London National Assembly of Labour. It will be preceded by a series of factory gate meetings and visits by League speakers to branches.

### **... AND HOW IT WAS DONE IN HULL**

*by Ray Bradbury, Sec., Hull Branch, S.L.L.*

My expulsion took place last week from the Labour Party. The Right wing thus continue their offensive against the Left. Their aim is to ease the carrying through of their plan to emasculate the Party completely as far as Socialism is concerned. The Left must organize to fight back.

It is interesting to see the vicious slanders that the Right wing have to resort to in the absence of any political principle which they could use. They must at all costs spread confusion on the issues and also distract from even what the issues are. Members of the Socialist Labour League, they say, are advocating violence and this is contrary to the aims of the Labour Party. It was certainly not contrary to the Right-wing

controllers of the Party who did not flinch from sending troops into Malaya and did not hesitate in condoning the brutal suppression of the voice of the African in Kenya by the most violent means.

Nor is it true to say that we advocate violence. What we do say is quite plain. We say that we do not believe it is possible to achieve Socialism by peaceful or Parliamentary means. It might be—but such a change to Socialism has never taken place this way before. The Tories have always been prepared to fight to the last ditch when their property rights were threatened. The leaders of the working class must prepare their ranks for this fact. If it is achieved peaceably then nothing is lost but a working class that has been lulled into a sense of false security could have its right filched away from it without any struggle and the way would be paved for the most violent and extreme form of Tory Government. Surely this is the lesson of the European countries both before and after the war.

They also smear us by saying that the type of democracy we believe in is the sort they have behind the Iron Curtain. Readers of The Newsletter will know of the unceasing fight we have waged against all these undemocratic practices of Stalinism—at times when ours has been the only voice doing so.

They also say we organize to propagate our views. To this we plead guilty. We believe that unless the workers do get together in an organization like ours, with a Marxist programme and with its own voice like The Newsletter then the Right-wing will attack the Left organizations one by one, The Newsletter today, Tribune tomorrow, then Victory for Socialism, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Left Clubs, until no opposition to their class collaboration policies exists.

Finally, I think that it is necessary to say that although we do have differences with the Right-wing of the Party with which, by the way, most of the rank and file of the movement agree, we do not advocate their expulsion. We merely claim our rights as Socialists to put forward our point of view as they do without fear of being banned, branded, expelled, exorcised or anything else. This is the issue which all supporters of the Left must raise now.

### ASSOCIATION WITH PROSCRIBED ORGANIZATIONS ?

Mr. Alfred Robens, Labour's 'shadow' Minister of Labour, has accepted a job as labour relations adviser to Atomic Power Constructions Ltd., the firm that is building the nuclear power station at Trawsfynydd, North Wales.

Mr. Robens is not the only Labour Party leader with a job in private industry.

When Tom Williams, former 'shadow' Minister of Agriculture, was an M.P., he took a job as consultant to a firm of tractor manufacturers.

These arrangements, says The Guardian of December 21, 'are mutually beneficial.' Ah well! If we can't have the spoils of victory, at least we can find consolations in defeat—and perhaps another argument against nationalization.

## IRELAND

### DUBLIN CITIZENS BATONED BY POLICE

by Liam Kelly

'You rotten b-----s'. 'Leave the old people alone you swine'. Such were the cries to be heard in Dublin's O'Connell Street on Christmas eve as the police, together with a specially-trained squad of street fighters used batons, boots and fists indiscriminately on innocent men, women and children.

It all began with the usual Christmas celebrations of Dublin working-class people for whom Christmas is one of the very few opportunities they have for enjoyment. My companion and I were just passing through at the time and all we could see were several late shoppers heavily laden with parcels. Young people were exploding fireworks, songs were being sung and everybody looked happy.

The first sign of trouble was an attempt by the police to pull a young man, who may or may not have committed a misdemeanour, out of a group of people. The group seemed to think he had done no wrong and tried to save him from arrest. The result was a tug of war with the police. Infuriated by this stubborn resistance, the police seemed to lose all control and acted like a pack of mad dogs. They attacked everyone in sight and the scene soon became reminiscent of the 1913 Labour struggles when workers were batoned to death. There were indiscriminate baton attacks on men, women and children and old people alike and the police used their fists and boots liberally.

In the confusion that followed, panic-stricken people in their attempt to escape the blood-thirsty fiends in uniform were running right into the path of equally blood-thirsty fiends in plain clothes. These were members of what the police themselves call the 'tough squad'. They have only recently been organized as a force and are specially trained in street fighting.

### Savage baton blow

While trying to guide a terrified old man out of the skirmishing crowd to safety my companion and I fell victim to these fascist-type thugs. I received a savage baton blow on the back of the head which knocked me to the ground. This was followed by a kick which fractured my elbow. I was taken to hospital in a crowded ambulance and detained overnight. I later learned that my friend had escaped with some bruises and a torn overcoat.

Forty-two people registered in the hospital and there were several other bloodstained victims who did not register. Several women, one of them 74 years old, were among the injured.

This is the first time this special plain clothes squad of thugs has appeared on the streets of Dublin, but we can be sure it will not be the last. They have already dispensed with legal procedure, no arrests being made. A police officer told a newspaper reporter later that 'there was no time for arresting and charging.' Apparently their job is not to arrest people but to beat them into submission. Their success in doing this will make their capitalist masters eager to use them against workers in industrial disputes, beginning with the smashing of pickets and eventually smashing trade union organization altogether. The working-class movement must fight back now. It is up to every worker to demand through his trade union branch that this squad of thugs be disbanded immediately.

### A COMMENT ON THE IRISH WORKERS UNION

By P. O'Donovan

SINCE the publication of its manifesto, interest and speculation have been rife about the Irish Workers' Union because of the manifesto's apparent attempt to combine socialist aims with aims of a dubious character.

Two paragraphs illustrate the contradiction. The IWU intends to: 'align the collective strength of Irish workers throughout Britain with the British Labour movement in common struggle against the entrenched power of capitalism.' Every socialist will agree with this.

But another paragraph says: 'All members of the IWU must be members of the trade union covering their calling. Members of the Communist Party and its auxiliary organizations or of Fascist bodies are not eligible for membership of the IWU. Auxiliary membership (without voting rights) of the IWU may be granted to non-Irish supporters of its objective, policy and programme.'

Socialists and Marxists immediately take issue with two glaringly deviationist statements here—the ban on the Communist Party and the chauvinistic approach to membership.

(Continued opposite)

## JOE PAWSEY—1910-1959

**On Wednesday, December 16, Joe Pawsey, a life-long Marxist and foundation member of the British Trotskyist movement died in St. George's Hospital, Hyde Park, from bronchial pneumonia.**

**Joe was born in West Norwood in 1910. His political career began when, as a schoolboy, he became noted for his outspoken Left opinions.**

He joined the Independent Labour Party in 1930 and it wasn't long before he saw through the loose, middle-of-the-road policies advocated by people such as Brockway and Maxton. Joe became one of the founding members of Trotsky's Left Opposition when its opinions spread to the I.L.P. He helped to launch the Marxist Group in that organization.

For 29 years Joe Pawsey lived and fought under the banner of Marxism and in these years he suffered the terrible effects of the isolation of Marxists, as well as the chronic evils of unemployment. Joe was one of the large army of unemployed who found it impossible to get a job during the 1930's. It could be said that the illness which finally claimed him had its roots in the starvation conditions which he had to endure during those terrible years.

Joe was one of those pioneers who refused to bow before the lies and distortions of Stalinism. Day after day, week in and week out, he argued tirelessly for the opinions of Leon Trotsky. At meetings, outside the Labour Exchange and in public demonstrations, Joe could be seen in all weathers selling the literature of the movement. Without such people as Joe Pawsey, the Socialist Labour League would not be in existence today.

During the war, he was conscripted to the armed forces and assigned to the Pay Corps, which eventually landed him on the island of Malta. Things were beginning to change for Joe; for the first time in ten years he was assured of a square meal. In his letters to England during the worst period of the bombing of Malta, he constantly requested literature and information about the activity of the movement.

He was responsible for holding political discussion groups under the very noses of the officers and under the bombs dropped by the Nazis.

From Malta he was transferred to Egypt, where he quickly made contact with the Egyptian Trotskyists. He was responsible for starting the first Trotskyist group in Cairo. A few weeks before he died he spent some time telling me about the fate of some of the members who formed this group and who languish in Nasser's jails today.

Joe returned from the army and immediately joined the Revolutionary Communist Party. His army gratuity was generously donated to the movement and he plunged into almost full-time campaigning in the National Council of Labour Colleges.

During these years Joe's closest friend was Karl Westwood, who lost his life in a motor-cycle accident in early May, 1951. Karl was N.C.L.C. organizer for the southern division and Joe was his leading tutor. Between them they recruited dozens of

people to Trotskyism. They covered Trade Union branches and Labour Parties all over the South of England.

When the Revolutionary Communist Party wound up and its members joined the Labour Party in 1949, Joe became a leading supporter of the Socialist Outlook.

At the beginning of the war in Korea, he went to Manchester and assisted in the work which eventually led to the formation of the Manchester branch of the Socialist Labour League.

During these years Joe earned his living as best he could, working in factories and offices. He was tireless in his efforts to build the revolutionary party in Britain. His library was always at the disposal of all those who wanted to learn what Marxism meant. No journey was too long for Joe to undertake to see a contact.

One of my most vivid memories of Joe was when I met him in 1954 on one wintry January day in the main street of Birkenhead. His clothes were wet through to the skin after having walked a long way in the heavy rain from the station, but Joe was full of excitement over the class on socialism which he was leading for a group of dockworkers. Those dockworkers afterwards led some of the most important strikes on Merseyside and it was with pride that Joe reported their receptiveness to Marxist theory.

He returned to London from Manchester during the summer of 1956. This was a great time for him. Khrushchev's 20th Congress speech vindicated everything that he had fought for. There were more discussions, more contacts to be visited, more meetings to be attended and he plunged into this activity even though he must have known that he was a dying man.

Joe Pawsey's recruits for Trotskyism are his lasting monument in the service of socialism in Britain. He threw open his library to all those shaken by the Khrushchev revelations and as a result several important new members were made for the Socialist Labour League.

Even as he lay on his death bed Joe fought the Right-wing bureaucracy at Transport House. He never quit.

He was expelled from the Labour Party six times and six times he went back. A few days before he died he received a letter from the Right-wing telling him that his position was being considered and that he would have to answer for his association with the Socialist Labour League. Joe was so used to the bureaucratic technique that he had already drafted a reply in advance setting forth his political position, as he had done so many times before for the small-minded gentlemen who dominate the top of the Labour Party. They can rest assured that if Joe had lived, whilst they might have put him out of the Labour Party for the seventh time, he would have found a way to get back in and continue the struggle against them.

In this tenacity and devotion Joe Pawsey personified the Trotskyist movement. The Socialist Labour League is proud of such people as Joe Pawsey. He never aspired to leadership. He was one of those in the ranks without whom there could be no movement. His name will live for ever in the history of British Trotskyism.

Goodbye, Joe Pawsey. We who remain will continue your work.

**G. Healy.**

Admittedly caution must be exercised in dealing with the perversions of Stalinism, but these perversions can only be corrected by explaining true socialist policy to the Communist Party rank and file and not by proscribing and antagonizing members of the Party.

The chauvinist clause is so flagrant and outdated that to comment on it at all is unnecessary. It is enough to say that the idea behind it could create serious social difficulties for the Irish in exile in Britain and elsewhere.

Many people will want to know how such views ever came

to be expressed in the union's manifesto. The answer is simple. The manifesto is the work of one man who did not reveal its precise content until it was printed. Consequently, the task now before the members of the Irish Workers' Union is to fight for the positive aims of the manifesto, whilst taking the necessary steps to reject from its programme all that is anti-socialist and against the communist teachings of James Connolly.

If this is done, then the IWU will have a great future as a militant, proletarian party—for socialist victory in Ireland and Britain!

## Constant Reader Keeping the Reds at Bay

I wonder how many Communist Party members really believe the legend spread among them by their leaders that the Socialist Labour League consists of agents of Wall Street? One place where they don't believe it in any case, is the American Embassy in this country.

A letter dated December 17, from the Visa Section of that embassy, instructs our editor Gerry Healy that he cannot be admitted to the sacred precincts of the United States, on grounds set forth in an attached extract from the Immigration and Nationality Act. This is aimed at keeping out 'members of the Communist or other totalitarian party of any foreign State, or of any political or geographical sub-division of any foreign State.' At any rate, I imagine that must be the operative bit of what is quite a long document—two-and-a-half foolscap sheets.

But perhaps they think Healy teaches 'the duty, necessity or propriety of the unlawful assaulting or killing of any officer or officers (either of specific individuals or of officers generally) of the Government of the United States'?

This sort of anti-Red bumbledom usually has its farcical side, and the American document is no exception. Apparently one can get round the act if one can convince the Consul that one's membership of the undesirable party 'is or was solely when under 16 years of age, by operation of law, or for purposes of obtaining employment, food rations or other essentials of living and where necessary for such purposes.'

### No Cheers for the Red, White and Blue

The Communist Party's continual question-begging chatter about 'British interests' and its general Union-Jackery nowadays make appropriate some thought about what sort of 'patriotism' is fitting for Marxists. Here is what Lenin wrote on the subject, in December, 1914, when Russia was still in the grip of the jingo mood that accompanied the beginning of the first world war:

'Is the sense of national pride alien to us, Great-Russian class-conscious proletarians? Of course not! We love our language and our country, we are doing more than anybody to raise her toiling masses (i.e., nine-tenths of her population) to the level of the conscious life of democrats and socialists. It pains us more than anybody to see and feel the outrage, oppression and humiliation inflicted on our splendid country by the tsarist hangmen, the nobles and the capitalists. We are proud of the fact that these outrages have aroused resistance in our midst, the midst of the Great Russians. . . . we are filled with a sense of national pride because the Great-Russian nation has also created a revolutionary class, has also proved that it is capable of showing mankind great examples of struggle for freedom and for socialism, and not only great pogroms, rows of gallows, dungeons, great famines and great servility towards priests, tsars, landlords and capitalists.

'We are filled with a sense of national pride and for that very reason we particularly hate our slavish past (when the noble landlords led the peasants to war in order to crush the freedom of Hungary, Poland, Persia and China), and our slavish present, when these same landlords, backed by the capitalists, are leading us to war in order to throttle Poland and the Ukraine, in order to crush the democratic movement in Persia and China, and in order to strengthen the gang of Romanovs . . . who are disgracing our Great Russian national dignity.'

### Stalinism and Coal

The current betrayal of the miners by their Communist Party leaders has to be seen as the latest phase of something which goes back more than 20 years.

It was in 1936 that, on the basis of their record of militancy in the 1920's and early 1930's, a number of Communist miners were elected to official positions in the miners' union. Arthur Horner became president in South Wales. Very soon the Communist officials were taking steps which they would themselves have been the first to condemn only a little time before.

An agreement with the South Wales mine-owners to liquidate company unionism included provisions restricting the right to strike. When this came under criticism in the *New Leader* (the then journal of the Independent Labour Party and an important paper in the working-class movement) Will Paynter wrote to tick the critic off.

The paper's industrial editor pointed out that 'it is not easy to see how the commitments of the new South Wales agreement [relating to conciliation] are to be made compatible with the general struggle for improvements' which Horner had talked about when selling the agreement to his members.

Following this South Wales deal, the agreement made in Nottinghamshire, the other main centre of company unionism, perplexed and confused mining militants. Only one-third of the hundreds of miners who had been victimised in that coalfield for refusing to join the company union were to get their jobs back, and Spencer, the traitor of 1926, leader of the company union, was to be life-president of the 'unified' union.

Mick Kane, the Notts miners' Communist leader, pressed acceptance of this agreement on his men; and when he and others were arrested after a brawl with blacklegs at Harworth, and sent down with savage sentences, the Stalinists switched demands for a nation-wide strike of protest into a mere petition campaign.

I well remember how eagerly even workers remote from the coalfields and whom one had thought 'politically undeveloped' signed that petition in the summer of 1937. Clearly there was potential support on a wide scale for militant action. The general situation was most favourable for such action—the slump had given place to 'recovery' and the rearmament programme made the Government and the bosses anxious to avert industrial troubles and a coal shortage.

Why, then, did the Communist Party officials join with the Right wing in damping down the struggle? Basically for the same reason as now. The diplomatic calculations of the Soviet bureaucracy dictated that the class struggle in Britain should be 'contained' and the Communist Party cut a figure of moderation and respectability, in the hope that this would somehow make Liberals and even Tories readier to compromise with Moscow. To this vain hope the miners were sacrificed, along with other sections of the workers, in this and other countries, wherever the Stalinists had decisive influence in those fateful years on the eve of the Second World War.

### Joe Pawsey

Early in January, 1957, one very cold night, there came a knock at my door. I opened it to find an elderly-looking, white-haired man carrying some magazines. When I had let him in out of the biting wind he said he had seen my address on a letter in the *New Statesman* and thought I might be interested in a new publication called *Labour Review*. He added that he must mention that he was a Trotskyist.

I bought the *Labour Review* from him and gave him another address in the district to call on. Later I heard he had made a sale there, too. He had come up to Finchley from Tottenham to attempt these contacts.

This was an important event for me, marking my introduction to the literature of the movement out of which *The Newsletter* and the *Socialist Labour League* have grown. For Joe Pawsey, my visitor, it was a routine affair.

Later I got to know him well, in the Hornsey and District Socialist Forum and in other activities. He was very skilled at explaining the political lessons of the last 30 years of the British working-class movement, drawing on his own rich experience in the Independent Labour Party and the Labour Party. I learnt a great deal from him, as did many others now active in the *Socialist Labour League*.

When I hear certain new-baked converts from Stalinism or reformism talking superciliously about the 'old-time Trots' and their shortcomings, I remember Joe Pawsey, and wonder which of us will leave behind a record half as fine as his.

BRIAN PEARCE.