

# SCHOOLBOY, 17, WAS WITCH-HUNTED

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By Bob Pennington

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True enough. Left-wing candidates have to be supported against the present Right-wing leaders, and that certainly applied to the presidential election.

### SHRUGGING OF SHOULDERS

But by itself that is not enough. There is a tendency in some quarters to shrug shoulders at recent industrial defeats and consider them merely as good electoral propaganda.

The same leaders who caused the defeat can turn round and say: 'Strikes are useless. They lead only to defeat. The way forward is by negotiation, and that requires moderate and responsible leaders.'

Preparing for future battles means putting forward cast-iron arguments against this kind of talk.

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the fight waged by Trotsky against Stalin?' Unlike the Trotskyists, Stalin and his disciples, and the leaders of the British Communist Party, have brought discredit on the world communist movement.

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'What you really fear and are desperate to prevent is that our programme will attract to our ranks all those members of the Communist Party who want to break from Stalinism and fight for socialism.'

'You know that we have proposed to the Communist Party that we should unite in a common campaign to end the bans in the movement. Your reply can only be interpreted as an evasion of this proposal.'

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# THE NEWSLETTER

Weekly Journal of the Socialist Labour League

Vol. 3, No. 100 Threepence May 2, 1959

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## THE NEWSLETTER

180 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4  
Telephone Macaulay 7029  
SATURDAY, MAY 2, 1959

## WORKERS OF ALL LANDS, UNITE!

**T**HE Socialist Labour League and The Newsletter send May Day greetings to workers everywhere, to all who are struggling against imperialism.

Internationalism is the central theme of May Day, and internationalism is the keystone of our newly-formed League and of our paper, which is two years old next week.

Our League and our paper are under fire from all who, in one way or another, desire the continuance of the present order of things.

Not least of all, we are under fire for our internationalism, for our loyalty to the grand old slogan: 'Workers of all lands, unite!'

We reaffirm that the working people of Britain and America, of Russia, China and Africa, have common interests and aspirations. Together they will shake their enemies—the capitalists and bureaucrats—off their backs.

★

**W**E are proud that in the work and activity of the Marxist movement the employing class of Britain, the capitalist Press, the Right-wing Labour leaders, the leaders of the Communist Party and the so-called 'new thinkers' have all recognized a formidable challenge.

According to Tom Driberg, speaking at a London meeting last Monday, the Socialist Labour League is an 'insignificant clique'.

If this is so, how is it that hardly a week now goes by without some scare story in one or other of the millionaire-owned newspapers about the 'trouble-making' Trotskyists?

Trotskyism is the new spectre that is haunting the old guard of British politics—Tories, Fabians, Stalinists and all. Morgan Phillips exorcizes it week after week with his pen. But all to no avail.

The social forces that have led our world to the brink of thermo-nuclear annihilation; that have unleashed poisons which strike at the infant in the womb and at future generations, that thrive on mass unemployment; that torment the coloured peoples with crimes like the Poplarville lynching; that pervert the workers' movement into bureaucratism—all these forces see in the Marxist movement a growing danger.

But a growing number of militant workers see in the Marxist movement a new hope of effective and honest leadership in their struggles for bread, security, peace and socialism.

We do not shrink from the label that the book-burners and witch-hunters fasten on us.

Because we are Marxists we are also Trotskyists. Trotskyism and Marxism are one and the same. We are followers of Lenin and Trotsky, the giants of revolutionary thought and practice, who rescued Marxism from distortion and who showed the working class how to fight and destroy capitalist society and how to take power into their own hands.

★

**A**ND who on this May Day 1959, viewing soberly the state the world has been brought to by its present rulers and their hangers-on in the Labour movement, can fail to see the need for such a fight?

The battle for socialism is the battle for life. What hells have our rulers in store for us if we fail to destroy the H-bomb and overthrow the capitalist class which produces it and which depends on it for the maintenance of its rule?

Listen to Wing Commander Marshall, who last week-end was in charge of a mock nuclear war in which, 40ft below ground, the direction of sup-

posed radio-active fall-out over Britain was plotted.

His observers man 1,500 posts scattered throughout the country, 500 of which are already 'completely equipped for nuclear warfare'; four men could stay in each of the latter for nine hours without ventilation, 'or indefinitely with filtered air'.

When the warning goes, says Wing Commander Marshall, 'grab five kettles of water and get below is the most sensible advice to give people'.

While the mock wars go on, the real fall-out continues, and the rate has doubled in a year. But let us be comforted: the Prime Minister is keeping 'a close watch' on its effects and speaks reassuringly about the strontium-90 in our bones.

Trust Macmillan and buy four spare kettles. To this pass have the worshippers of the 'deterrent' brought us.

★

**M**EANWHILE capitalist society is creaking through another period of economic stagnation.

But there is hopeful news for those who sign on at the Labour Exchanges. Who is this just back from west Germany, eager to pour out to the Daily Telegraph his discoveries about German efficiency, German expansion, German productivity, and the way the happy German worker loves his boss?

Why, none other than Sir William Lawther, who used to be president of the British miners, and who now commends to us the three-years wages standstill agreed to by the west German miners' leaders.

But Lawther lets the cat out of the bag when he tells of the millions of refugees, who have been 'unwilling to indulge in unrest' and 'have exerted a powerful steadying influence' on the German workers.

If the British workers could be made to accept such semi-colonial conditions, how happy the employing class would be!

★

**F**ORTUNATELY the British working class is in no mood to be fooled by those who want to curb its militancy. There are too many 'rebels', like the Port Talbot steelworkers, who will not accept mis-leadership.

The rank-and-file steelworkers are fighting for more say in their union's affairs and policy. That such a fight is absolutely necessary is one of the two main lessons of every recent dispute.

The other is that only under Marxist leadership can the workers ever hope to achieve lasting successes from their struggles against sackings, wage-cuts and victimization.

Already the capitalist class is very well aware of this. That is why its witch-hunt and Press campaign against us are so vicious, so scurrilous and so sustained.

We are confident that workers who are seeking a way out from the bankruptcy of capitalism in decay will hear our message. To workers in all lands we say:

Despite the betrayals of social democracy and Stalinism the working-class struggle for socialism must and shall go on.

A new world communist movement, pledged to do away with capitalism, to defend the Soviet Union against imperialism and to support the Soviet workers' struggle for socialist democracy, will bring to fruition the socialist revolution that began in October 1917.

A new world-wide revolutionary leadership can be built. This is the task to which we Marxists have set our hands.

Resolve on this May Day to join the Socialist Labour League!

## It's a class struggle in Tibet

By John Archer

Tibet's social institutions and culture are like those of Europe in the Dark Ages. The much-publicized monks ('lamas') number 150,000. As in medieval Europe, many are parasites; but they contribute to running the State in the interests of about 150 aristocratic landowning families, and monasteries also exploit peasant land-workers.

Chinese governments have long been interested in Tibet because it lies athwart some of the very few possible land routes for invading armies into China.

Chinese moves in Tibet since the revolution can easily be related to the penetration of U.S. interests (financial and military) into Afghanistan or the haggling over Kashmir.

### UNTHINKABLE TASK

Sensational British newspapers, primarily those served by Noel Barber, have suggested that the Chinese People's Republic plans a full-scale conquest and colonization of Tibet. This seems so improbable as to be mere 'cold war' propaganda.

To colonize Tibet would involve killing off the present inhabitants, for there is no spare cultivable land, and the task of raising current output would be unthinkable.

To garrison Tibet would involve an army of 750,000 served by a gigantic and highly vulnerable transport link with China of up to 1,500 hard miles.

Nor is there any sign that, as yet, money economy or trade have become dominant institutions; trade inwards is in tea and outwards in wool, but it is terribly restricted by transport difficulties, and by the policy of the Tibetan government.

The feudalists and their religious administrators not unnaturally want to exclude any ideas later than those of about the first century A.D.

### FEUDAL LEVIES

So far the fighting has been entirely between the Chinese forces, small in number, and feudal levies. There is yet no evidence that the Chinese have made any political impact on the peasants.

The big argument whether the Dalai Lama was kidnapped and forcibly abducted to India by the feudalists, or went voluntarily, is really a side-issue in the Asian revolution; it is important only to those who hope to defend the gains of the Chinese revolution in alliance with Asian feudalists and religious leaders.

The Chinese contact with Tibet inevitably must introduce changes which disturb the old régime, despite the 17-point pact which Mao's government (with Nehru's approval) signed with the Dalai Lama's representatives in 1951, whereby Tibet recognized the supremacy of China but the Dalai Lama was to retain control over domestic affairs.

In short, the Asian revolution has still to reach this, the most backward, corner of the continent. The difficulties of the Chinese may well give the people of Asia an unfavourable impression, which can be erased only by much more decisive intervention to liberate the peasants from feudal burdens.

Even in Tibet, 'peaceful coexistence' between social systems may in the short run appear to be a workable policy, but can suddenly and rapidly be destroyed by the realities of life, and can result in weak compromises.

There is no parallel between the struggle for the Dalai Lama and that for Hungary. But Peking would win the confidence of the common people of Asia more securely by example and leadership in struggle against feudal landlords and usurers than by fine-split argument about who is really the head of the Buddhist hierarchy.

## HE MOULDED IRELAND'S RED ARMY

By John Byrne

James Connolly, who was shot in Kilmainham prison on May 12, 1916, was a true revolutionary.

In all his writings, and in all his activity in the industrial struggle, he consistently stressed the need for overthrowing the ruling class and setting up a workers' republic in Ireland.

Connolly was both teacher and leader of the Irish Labour movement. He expounded Marxism clearly and fearlessly.

He was always ready to work with anybody who was prepared to work in the movement; but he was never prepared to water down his own revolutionary thinking.

### Man of action

Discussing revolution in the abstract had no appeal for Connolly. He was at all times a man of action, who at the first opportunity put theory into practice.

He never tired of driving home that lesson that the working class must fight on the industrial and political field—that to fight on one and not the other is like a boxer fighting with one hand tied behind his back; and he always practised what he preached.

As Jim Larkin's associate in the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, as leader of the Republican Socialist Party, as head of the Irish Citizen Army and commander of all republican forces in Dublin during the 1916 rising through which he hoped to build a workers' republic—in all these roles we get a true picture of Connolly.

One of the things that showed Connolly as a true revolutionary was his forming the Irish Citizen Army in 1913 to protect the members of the Transport Union, who had been locked out by all the Dublin employers, led by Martin Murphy, because they would not sign an undertaking to break with that union.

Pickets were batoned by the police every time they tried to exercise their legal right to picket peacefully.

### Rifles and ammunition

And so you had in Dublin a workers' army with rifles in their hands, and, needless to say, ammunition in those rifles, accompanying the pickets wherever they went, pledged to fight and if need be die to protect their class and their class interests.

It goes without saying that police brutality stopped.

One amusing incident of this period was related to me some years ago by Bernard Conway, who was a dockers' delegate at the time, and a member of the Citizen Army.

He told me that on seeing the pickets marching down to the Quays accompanied by armed Citizen Army men, some of the officials and police who had been taunting them the previous day jumped into the River Liffey or ran for their lives.

As Barney put it, they thought their day of reckoning had come. And they were right too, had they not mended their ways!

### In the vanguard

But the Citizen Army did not stop at protecting pickets; it was moulded by Connolly into an effective fighting force, which three years later was in the vanguard of the armed struggle against British imperialism.

So we see Connolly acting as a true revolutionary, taking advantage of capitalism in conflict by striving to free a subject working class and peasantry.

Truly it can be said of the Irish Citizen Army that it was the forerunner of all Red Armies.

★ A meeting to commemorate Connolly will be held at Caxton Hall, London, on Tuesday, May 12, at 7.30 p.m.

## Campaign to end the bans

(Continued from front page)

themselves for many years.

The London area committee of the Socialist Labour League is running a series of factory gate meetings between now and the conference at which the case against bans, proscriptions and expulsions will be put to the workers.

Gerry Healy, provisional national secretary of the Socialist Labour League, said yesterday:

'The resistance of a number of Labour Parties to the proscription of the League and the banning of The Newsletter has given heart to all who value democratic rights inside the Labour movement.

'Transport House has been halted temporarily. Its aim of throwing out of the party all who want a fighting socialist policy can be defeated if the whole movement is mobilized against the witch-hunters.'

Gerry Healy is still awaiting a reply from Morgan Phillips to a letter offering to send

a deputation to Transport House to answer any questions the NEC might desire to put, to give any information it might wish to have, and to answer any charges it might wish to make.

Nor has there yet been any reply to a letter sent by Healy to John Gollan, general secretary of the Communist Party, declaring the League's opposition to witch-hunts against members of the Communist Party, despite its political differences, and adding:

'We are prepared to work with all members of the Labour movement, including members of the Communist Party, to end all bans and proscriptions, and we propose a joint campaign with your party along these lines.'

Discussion is now taking place throughout the Socialist Labour League on the draft political resolution for the Whitsun conference, and amendments are being received. New branches continue to be formed; the latest one is in Exeter.

# Pay up or else, say the Printworkers

From a Special Correspondent

A good deal of nonsense is being spread through the national Press by the printing employers in an attempt to distort the present state of affairs in the printing industry.

The unions are claiming a basic working week of 40 hours, an increase in basic wages to £11 10s. plus 13s. cost of living bonus, and certain domestic variations which vary from union to union.

When the last agreement was reached, in April 1956, it was agreed that it would run for three years, to be ended by either side giving six months' notice.

This notice the nine unions involved gave in October 1958; they also put forward their claims and suggested amendments to the agreements.

At the first meeting with the employers early this year the employers rejected the entire claim.

## EIGHT-PAGE PAMPHLET

A week or so earlier the employers' organization had refused in advance to discuss any alteration in the agreements and had suggested that the present agreements should run for a further year.

Behind this suggestion was the hope that the Tories would win the coming election: the screw could then be turned hard.

This thought had been in the employers' minds through all the succeeding talks—talks which have been confined to a statement of claims by the unions and a dismissal of these claims by the employers.

The latter even went so far as to issue an eight-page pamphlet setting out in detail how hard it would be for the poorer firms in the industry to meet the union's claims.

The pamphlet included a number of graphs purporting to show how profits had run down and what a parlous state the industry was in.

Some copies were given out by employers to union members. These copies, often with ribald remarks appended, gained wide circulation in the printing offices as further ammunition for the unions' claims!

## BOARD OF STOOGES

The arguments contained in the pamphlet, and the graphs with which it was illustrated, were exploded by an answering pamphlet from the unions which blew wide open the employers' side of the case.

Among the many arguments put forward by the employers was one relating to the high incidence of purchase tax on printed matter. The unions told them that as Macmillan was a 'publisher' and also head of the government, they had the remedy in their own hands.

The employers next asked for the case to go to arbitration. This is the trump card played by all employers, knowing that with a board composed of government stooges they will take all the tricks.

A union ballot is now in progress which is asking for members' support on a number of points: a ban on overtime working, a ban on admission to the unions, a ban on admission of apprentices, a 'work to rule' enforcement, and, if none of these proves effective, a nation-wide strike in the industry.

On the result of this ballot will depend further action by the unions.

My belief, after talks with many printers in various areas, is that the union claims will receive overwhelming support and if the employers are not then willing to get down to normal negotiations the balloon will go right up.

## BEHIND DELAYING TACTICS

Behind all the delaying tactics is the employers' hope that another dose of Tory rule will give them much of what they want. They hope for the coming election to put the big stick firmly in their hands, and they want to be able to wield it without hindrance from any agreements forced on them by a strong union offensive.

This, therefore is a political fight just as much as it is an industrial fight. The printers are in the mood to win it. Given strong leadership, they certainly will.

# The twenty quid swear-word

From a Correspondent

'Disciplinary' measures are being tightened up in the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire coal-field.

At Gedling pit a miner was recently fined £10 and suspended for three days simply for swearing at a deputy. Thus he received the equivalent of a £20 fine from the National Coal Board for an offence for which he would probably have been fined 10s. in a court of law.

At the same colliery a coloured worker was fined £5 by the manager for allegedly jumping off the underground 'manrider' while it was in motion.

## LABOUR REVIEW

is a journal of Marxist theory and practice, edited by John Daniels (Nottingham University), Peter Fryer and Cliff Slaughter (Leeds University). It is indispensable reading for the factory militant and the serious student of Marxism. It is obtainable from 266 Lavender Hill, London, S.W.11, price 2s. 5d. per issue, post free.

# BIG RAIL STRIKE LOOMING

By Brian Arundel

The meeting of representatives of the National Union of Railwaymen and British Transport Commission, called for next Wednesday to discuss the NUR's claim for a substantial wage increase, will once again spotlight the railways.

BTC economies have resulted in the wages of thousands of railway workers being slashed to the basic minimum, which means that workers with families are in many cases expected to live on £7 to £8 a week.

The current inquiry into wages and conditions on the railways—it has been dragging on since last autumn—offers no quick solution.

Other workers in the industry, such as foot-plate staff and clerks, have not felt the pinch so sharply.

And while the rank and file of the NUR has put pressure on its national executive, the same thing has not happened in the two other rail unions. So the NUR is to face the BTC alone.

## FOBBED OFF

That the NUR executive—the same one that accepted the 3 per cent. and economies and was fobbed off with the present pay inquiry—has now decided to cut through the delaying mishmash and put in an immediate pay claim shows how great the rank and file pressure is.

This pressure has not been confined to wages. The announcement of economies be introduced in the Scottish region of British Railways has been met by hostility and contempt.

Resolutions from some of the biggest district councils in the country show that if the BTC puts its proposals into effect it will have a major rail strike on its hands.

In reply to Sir Brian Robertson's answer to the NUR request for trade union membership in certain areas and grades to be made a condition of service, the union has announced that on June 30 it will withdraw from joint consultation.

At present joint consultation is only serving to delay and side-track issues that would otherwise be quickly resolved if railwaymen used the strength which the BTC knows and fears.

If our leaders do not respond to demands for action when the time arises we must take it alone.

## committee ended

Derby Hall branch of the National Union of Mineworkers has voted overwhelmingly to end the joint management and workers' committee on 'absenteeism'.

# THEY WON, BUT BENEFIT IS CUT

By Edward Knight

Eight weeks' strike benefit for fifteen weeks on the street. This is what the executive of the Amalgamated Engineering Union is giving the victorious workers at Harland and Wolff, Scots-toun (Glasgow).

Summoned to a meeting last Saturday morning, the workers were told that their refusal to obey the executive's instruction to return to work—i.e., to accept defeat—made them ineligible for any benefit.

The executive, however, was prepared to grant benefit up to the issuing of its first instruction.

The outcome of the strike—victory against victimization, and the prevention of redundancies—apparently has no bearing on the matter. Defiance of the executive is a crime, and the workers must be punished.

Though instructed to attend the meeting, they were not permitted to discuss the executive's findings.

# £200 RISE FOR DICK

## Will productivity go up?

By Our Industrial Correspondent

The proposed joint conference of unions and employers to discuss problems created by new techniques in the building industry 'will eliminate difficulties which impede the productivity of the industry'.

Announcing this at last week's conference of building unions, Sir Richard Coppock, general secretary of the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives, also mentioned the million men in the industry who did not want to lose their jobs.

As in all other industries, the building employers have used the increase in unemployment of the last year or two to introduce many new techniques, particularly the manufacture of curtain walls, prefabricated units and parts.

In the last two years some 5,000 bricklayers and 1,000 masons have been forced to leave the industry for good.

## JUICIER PROFITS

Yet building firms are making juicier profits than ever. Wimpey's have netted £4,726,197, Laing's £1,702,073 and Portland Cement £14,628,000 in the past year.

But some of the union leaders are not doing badly either. Sir Richard himself, according to the NFBTO general council's minutes, recently accepted a salary increase of £200 per annum.

Will he and his colleagues put up a fight for the rank-and-file claim for a 40-hour week and the fourpence an hour?

As these claims go to the Industrial Court this Friday building workers are keeping a watchful eye on those who represent them—and are discussing the need for a rank-and-file movement to step up the fight inside the unions.

# Why we support the Socialist Labour League

## MINER



The emergence of the Socialist Labour League is the natural result of years of frustration for many rank-and-file workers who joined the Labour Party to help bring socialism to Britain. Any worker seriously involved in the struggle for socialism should join the League. As a Marxist organization it is the only force in the Labour movement that can lead the workers in the fight against the ruling class.

At my pit we have gained eight members. This is only the start. In the pits, factories and docks, let militants begin now to establish branches of the League.

JIM ALLEN (member of the editorial board of the Miner)

## BOILERMAKER

I support the Socialist Labour League because it is the only organization within the mass Labour movement which has a practical policy of preparing and helping workers to defend their jobs and conditions.

The unity of the workshop organizations, irrespective of unions, is a necessary step in the fight against the employers' attacks. This industrial programme, linked with the need to work within the ranks of the Labour Party on the basis of an alternative militant policy to that of the Right-wing leaders, lays the basis of a strong independent Marxist movement which can lead the working class forward to socialism.

ABIE COURTNEY (Babcocks and Wilcox Ltd. Renfrew)



## STUDENT

Already a large number of young people in the Labour movement are looking to the Socialist Labour League for leadership. The League offers decisive policies on the vital questions of the day. For instance, it stands for working-class industrial action against the H-bomb. Unlike the Labour Party and the Communist Party, the League offers young people full opportunity to help in forming its policies. Against the chaos and destructive madness of capitalism and its Right-wing agents, the League is uniting students and teachers, clerks and industrial workers in the fight for real socialist policies in the Labour movement.

PAT BICKERS (Birmingham)

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

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

Name (Block Letters Please)

Address (Block Letters Please)

Occupation

Trade Union

Labour Party

N.B. Details given on this form are not for publication.

## HEADMASTER SPEAKS OUT

(Continued from front page)

### League at his school.

'This was never true,' declared Mr Gaskell. 'The most he did was persuade two chaps to go to a Socialist Labour League meeting. Those are the facts. Naturally, he is at liberty to persuade anybody to go to any meeting.'

(2) Any sixth-form boy at Alderman Newton's has the right to belong to any legal political organization of his choice.

'Any organization, provided it is not banned by the police,' Mr Gaskell emphasized. 'I do not exert any influence of any sort. What I do object to is boys' taking part in public political activity while wearing the Newtonian green and red scarf.'

But although he does not want his school to be identified in this way with any particular political party, Mr Gaskell wants his boys to be interested in politics.

'From the chairman of our governors downwards we have a liberal atmosphere,' he said. 'He is very liberal in his rule over the headmaster, and I try to be liberal with the boys—though of course I have to stress the need for work.'

### HOUNDED BY PRESSMEN Gross exaggerations

'David is a keen debater. We have all the usual school societies, and we are keen on debate.'

(3) No pressure of any kind was put on David Williams by the school authorities.

'I did not say to him that he should write the letter resigning from the Labour Party,' said Mr Gaskell.

(4) The Press reports have been grossly exaggerated, and this 17-year-old boy has been hounded by Pressmen.

Only when he spoke of the activities of reporters clustering round David's home for a 'story' did a note of distaste come into Mr Gaskell's voice.

'The Press blew it up in order to prick it,' he said.

David was a tough boy, he added, and would soon recover from the ordeal. But the fact remains that a young boy was treated in a way that brought about his nervous collapse, simply because he took an interest in the Socialist Labour League.

### THE NEWSLETTER SAYS:

David Williams was not brought up in a totally non-political home. His father is a member of the Labour Party and his mother is a former member of the German Communist Party.

It was natural for him to become interested in Left-wing ideas. But the millionaire Press was unwilling to let him think things out for himself.

The Socialist Labour League and The Newsletter believe that the treatment of David Williams is a matter of serious concern to all who value civil liberties. The Press Council should be asked to investigate the facts.

David's headmaster is well satisfied with his record as a student. There is no suggestion that he has neglected his school work.

### GUTTER JOURNALISM Unscrupulous men

If he had spent his spare time drilling in an officers' training corps, there would have been no witch-hunt, no persecution, no nervous collapse.

The case of David Williams is an example of gutter journalism. It is a calculated attempt by highly-paid and unscrupulous men to inflame public opinion against the Socialist Labour League and a direct continuation of the witch-hunt launched on the eve of the National Industrial Rank-and-File Conference last November.

They have not prevented a branch of the League being formed in Leicester. They will not prevent its growing and gaining strength.

# THE FBU SOUNDS THE ALARM FIREMEN SEEK RIGHT TO PREVENT FIRES

From Our Own Correspondent

**FIFTEEN POUNDS.** That was the amount of the fine imposed on a Nottingham firm for failing to ensure that their employees were familiar with the routine to be carried out in case of fire.

In this instance the fire cost one man his life and jeopardized the lives of 250 of his fellow workers.

The factory, belonging to George Pearson and Sons, bleachers and dyers, was completely gutted when a fire broke out in the lower part of the building on February 11.

Workers from the upper two floors found themselves trapped by smoke and had to escape from the first floor windows after being warned of the fire by word of mouth.

No alarm bell was sounded, although the firm stated that an adequate electric alarm system was installed, but was put out of action by the fire.

### FBU BRANCH ANXIOUS

Several witnesses, some of them employees of long standing, declared that they did not know where the alarm system was, that they had no instruction how to operate the alarm, and that fire drill had never been carried out at the factory.

Nottingham branch of the Fire Brigades Union have been greatly concerned for some time that in many factories and workshops throughout the country not enough protection is given to workers by fire prevention measures, and by inadequate alarm systems and means of escape.

Anxious that steps should be taken to prevent such a threat to the lives of their fellow-workers, they put down the following motion at a meeting of the trades council on April 15:

'This trades council urges that legislation be introduced to ensure:

(a) That the responsibility regarding the measures to be taken to reduce the risk of fire, both breaking out and spreading, be transferred to the fire service;

(b) That local authorities should be required, and not merely empowered, to inspect means of escape whenever any change of whatever nature is made in any establishment and at intervals of not less than twelve months;

(c) That satisfactory means of escape for all workpeople, together with an approved alarm system, shall be installed wherever an escape certificate is required;

(d) That fire prevention officers shall be consulted when building plans for new factories are submitted to district councils.'

This resolution was carried unanimously.

### TRIPLE RESPONSIBILITY

Brother Thorpe, who moved the motion for the Fire Brigades Union, pointed out that responsibility to reduce fire risk in industrial establishments was divided between:

The factory inspector, who may take two to three years to cover his round of inspection;

The local authority, who are empowered

but not bound to act; and

The fire brigades, who enter the picture on a voluntary consultative basis.

Offices and shops not covered by the Factories Act do not receive even the limited protection of an occasional visit from the factory inspector.

Bro. Thorpe claimed that if workers in the fire service, trained and experienced in fire prevention, were empowered to inspect all places of employment, and give instructions for adequate safety measures to be applied, fire risk and the consequent loss of workers' lives could be reduced to a minimum and often avoided altogether.

This claim was wholeheartedly supported by the trades council delegates.

## HELP US IMPROVE YOUR PAPER

Do you want an even bigger, brighter and more attractive Newsletter?

This week's issue is only a foretaste of what we intend this paper to become, if you, the readers, can guarantee us £100 a month for our Fighting Fund.

Then we can have a paper like this every week.

We can have even bigger pages with **SPACE** for a more attractive layout; **SPACE** for photographs and cartoons; **SPACE** for a better coverage of your local political and industrial news; **SPACE** for more of your letters and articles.

A paper like this would be a tremendous help to the work of winning more and more workers to a militant socialist policy.

We ask every individual reader, and every branch of the Socialist Labour League, to set an immediate monthly guarantee. Write and let us know how much **YOU** are prepared to pledge.

## Boilermakers out

By Our Industrial Correspondent

Over 1,500 members of the Boilermakers' Society employed in Cammell Laird's shipyard at Birkenhead went on strike last Monday.

They walked out when the firm refused to give two boilermakers another job pending settlement of a demarcation problem involving boilermakers and shipwrights.

### VICTIMIZED

The strikers feel that the two workers have been victimized by the employers, who have provoked a dispute that could have been settled between the two unions.

As usual Cammell Laird's have been quick to use the Press in an attempt to create antagonism towards the strikers. The Manchester Guardian wrote on Tuesday that the stoppage was over who should chalk a line.

'Basically, this is a demarcation dispute,' alleges the firm's Press officer.

### LAI D OFF

W. Kerr, Merseyside delegate of the Boilermakers' Society, said: 'We are not concerned in this issue about the demarcation dispute. We are concerned about the men. There is other work for them to do. We are prepared to discuss the demarcation problem when these men are paid.'

The firm has also followed its usual practice of immediately paying off men not

involved in the dispute.

Six hundred workers have already been laid off. One of the first to go on Monday was a shipwright steward. The firm threatened to lay off another 5,000 this week-end. The men laid off have been refused unemployment benefit.

## Expelled by 2 votes

By 13 votes to 11, the general management committee of Finchley Constituency Labour Party decided on Tuesday night to accept Transport House's ban on The Newsletter, with as its consequence the 'termination of membership of the party' by Brian Pearce, a member of the paper's Editorial Board.

The Chairman, Councillor A. E. Tomlinson, of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, said they had no quarrel with Comrade Pearce personally; during his brief period of membership he had done 'very good work' as propaganda secretary and as membership secretary.

If they were to defy Transport House, however, that would mean disaffiliation.

The decision was adopted after a long and heated discussion, and the executive

### Constant Reader

## Marxists and May Day

THIS year's May Day demonstration will be of more than usual significance, and will be keenly watched by the political experts of the employing class.

It can serve notice of a new spirit in the movement in much the same way that the May Day of 1890 did.

Then, in spite of intrigues to keep them out of the Park by bureaucrats and sectarians in unholy alliance, it was the 'Central Committee', in which the Marxists played the leading role, that made the biggest impact.

Frederick Engels himself wrote soon afterwards to Marx's daughter Laura Lafargue:

'They have seen they have to do with different people from what they expected. I can assure you I looked a couple of inches taller when I got down from that old lumbering wagon that served as a platform—after having heard again, for the first time since 40 years, the unmistakable voice of the English proletariat.'

That voice has been heard by the bourgeois too, the whole Press of London and the provinces bears witness to that . . .

### Immense progress

The progress made in England these last 10-15 months is immense. Last May the 8-hours working day [the chief slogan of the 'Central Committee'] would not have brought as many thousands into Hyde Park as we had hundreds of thousands.'

How the little group of Marxists achieved that wonderful success—and why, nevertheless, the emergence of an independent working-class party in the following few years took place without Marxists in the leadership—is a subject well worth study today.

A beginning can be made with the chapter called 'The Rebirth of Socialism' in Allen Hutt's book 'This Final Crisis' (1935) and the appropriate parts of E. P. Thompson's study of William Morris (1955).

### Workers and bosses, unite?

'The party in Kerala was growing by carrying out certain vital democratic reforms and by uniting all sections of the people.'

So the Communist Party congress was told by the fraternal delegate from the Communist Party of India. Yes, 'uniting all sections of the people'—that's what the man said.

Regular readers of The Newsletter will remember reports we have published of the Kerala police being used against workers on strike.

Policies of 'uniting all sections of the people' always come down to policies of crushing the workers' struggle in the interests of the employers.

A fuller exposition of the theory behind the Kerala government's line is given in 'Kerala, Problems and Possibilities', a pamphlet by Namboodiripad, the communist premier of this Indian State, published in 1957, which a friend has just sent me.

'The trade unionists have to carry on a systematic campaign among the working class for a policy of industrial peace.' The government's aim is to 'secure the co-operation of all men and women of good will'.

### Ballot box

Such is the Indian Road to Socialism, according to India's Stalinists. And it is not only India to which little Kerala holds up the mirror of the future, either, if one is to believe the latest issue of Lawrence and Wishart's review of forthcoming publications.

Lawrence and Wishart are the British Communist Party's publishers, and in offering a book called 'Kerala—Past and Present', by A. K. Gopalan, to be issued this summer, they write:

'We are left with the conviction that whatever the future may hold for Kerala, the answer to this question of communism through the ballot box lies in the events that are taking place there.'

BRIAN PEARCE