

THE NEWSLETTER

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900 PRINTERS SACKED: LABOUR MUST ACT

Solidarity and strategy will win this fight

By Our Industrial Correspondent

A CALL for a concerted strategy by the working-class movement to defeat the printing employers, who have just sacked over 800 compositors in an attempt to smash the print unions, is made in a statement issued today by the executive of the Socialist Labour League. The text of the statement appears below.

The League says it is the duty of the whole Labour movement to shut down the establishments of master printers who will not come to terms, and that special efforts must be made to prevent the import of printed matter from abroad.

Cause of the dispute is the rejection by the British Federation of Master Printers and the Newspaper Society of claims from nine unions in the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation for a 10 per cent. pay increase, a 40-hour week and other improvements in conditions.

ANSWER THIS DECLARATION OF WAR

THE decision to sack between 800 and 900 members of the London Typographical Society is an open declaration by the printing employers that the war against the 40-hour week is on.

The dispute in the printing industry vitally concerns the entire Labour and trade union movement.

Ever since the end of the war the 40-hour week has been one of the most important demands by workers in all trades. The employers have constantly refused to grant it. Unfortunately the Right-wing trade union leaders have been all too ready to accept this refusal.

Today the printworkers stand at the forefront of the working class in this fight for a fundamental trade union demand.

Like the London busmen last year, the printers cannot win this dispute by themselves, no matter what funds they may raise or what levies they may impose.

SHUT THEM DOWN

Duty of the Labour movement

Behind the printing employers stand the whole employing class and its Tory government, just as they stood behind London Transport a year ago.

To win this strike the movement needs a firm strategy. The printworkers must have the support of all other unions.

The **AMALGAMATED ENGINEERING UNION** should stand by to call all its members off maintenance work at the affected print-shops.

The **TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WORKERS' UNION** should refuse to allow the carrying of paper and ink, and should prevent the import of 'black' work from abroad.

The **NATIONAL UNION OF RAILWAYMEN**, which organizes dockers at ports like Harwich, where this 'black' work is likely to be brought in, should make its position absolutely plain.

The **ELECTRICAL TRADES UNION** should immediately declare that its members will do no maintenance or repair work for printing employers in dispute.

(Continued overleaf)

MORE AND STILL MORE PROTESTS AT THE PROSCRIPTIONS

The two main trade union and Labour Party bodies in Eccles, near Manchester, have protested against the proscription of the Socialist Labour League and The Newsletter. They are the Eccles Constituency Labour Party and the Eccles Trades and Labour Council.

Two other protests from the Manchester area to Transport House are those of Middleton and Prestwich Constituency Labour Party and Prestwich Labour Party.

Decision of East Salford Labour Party's management committee to lobby the national executive last week against the proscriptions has been endorsed by several affiliated bodies, including East Salford women's section and Broughton branch of the Amalgamated Engineering Union.

By 16 votes to 2, Harrow Central Constituency Labour Party has passed a resolution protesting at the proscription of the Socialist Labour League and The Newsletter and calling for an immediate lifting of the ban.

By a large majority, Croydon Labour Party's general management committee has passed a resolution protesting at the proscription of The Newsletter, and declaring:

'We consider this an infringement of democratic rights, and claim freedom to buy, read and circulate any matter we so choose.'

FOUR MORE SOCIALISTS EXPELLED FROM LEEDS LABOUR PARTY

From Our Leeds Correspondent

FOUR more members of Leeds Labour Party were expelled at a meeting of the general management committee on Wednesday night.

They were John Walls, an engineering worker; Norman Harding, a clothing worker; Mrs Celia Gale; and John Archer.

When the accused members were given a few minutes each to put their case John Walls stated categorically that he was a member of the Socialist Labour League. The vote for his expulsion was 97 to 45.

Asking if delegates knew who had really broken the constitution of the Labour Party, Mrs Gale asked: 'Did you know that the Labour Party is having to pay the costs of a legal action?' There were cries of 'We didn't know.'

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HELP THE PAISLEY STRIKERS

MASS pickets line the gates of the Paisley Thread Mills as the strike of over 2,000 workers, mainly women and young girls, enters its second week. The urgent need is to bring out the remaining labour force of 3,000 and bring the mills of J. and P. Coats to a standstill. Shouts of 'scab' and 'blackleg' follow those who break the picket line, and tempers shorten as the strikers see production continue.

The responsibility for pulling out the other workers does not lie only with the strikers themselves. It is the responsibility of the whole Labour movement throughout Glasgow and the district around. The employers imposed speed-ups, with wage reductions for downgraded workers, and finally suspended those who failed to complete allocated work. This is a threat to every worker in Scotland. This action is closely connected with the attacks on the hosiery workers in the Midlands. The thread mills, with their partial trade union organization and mainly female labour force, are seen as a weak section of the working class, ripe for the employers' assault. If Moulden, of the National Union of Hosiery Workers, had stood firm against the employers, instead of helping them by accepting wage cuts for his members, then the Paisley workers would be in a stronger position today. A defeat for the Paisley workers would mean the stepping up of employers' attacks in every trade and industry. Coats will already be receiving the full backing of the employers' federation. Every Clyde employer is eagerly awaiting the opportunity to follow the Paisley example—and they will not delay should the Coats workers be defeated.

Glasgow Trades Council should call an immediate conference to mobilize the maximum support for the strikers. Mass meetings should be held in every factory and yard to explain the implications of the dispute.

PRINTERS (Continued from front page)

The establishments of those employers who have not come to terms must be shut down, swiftly, decisively, and absolutely. **It is the duty of the whole Labour movement to see that this is done.**

Sections such as the miners, who are not in a position to give direct solidarity help to the printers, will nevertheless find ways of co-ordinating their own struggle with those of their brothers in the printing industry.

In 1926 the printers refused to let a vicious article attacking the miners appear in the Daily Mail. In 1959 strong ties of solidarity must be forged once again between all sections resisting the employers' attacks.

Faced with a new round of sackings, the miners are still waiting for Jones, Paynter and Co. to get a campaign going on the seven-hour day. These gentlemen should stop moaning about the National Coal Board taking them in, and should fight the sackings by forcing a show-down on the reduction of working hours in their industry.

The more difficult the miners and other sections who hold great power in their hands make the life of the Tory government, by struggling against any 'solution' that means hardship for thousands of their fellow-workers, the easier will the

Delegations should go from every establishment and local Labour Party to join the picket lines in Paisley, and so present the scabs and the employers with a united front of labour. This is the policy that can strangle J. and P. Coats. This is the policy that can bring victory to the Paisley strikers. It is this policy that the Socialist Labour League is now campaigning for in Glasgow. Meetings, poster parades and marches will be used to rouse the Labour movement in Glasgow and Paisley to bring the maximum weight against the millowners. No effort will be spared to give support to the strikers. This strike must be won.

THE TIMES CORRECTED

IN its editorial justifying its speculations about Selwyn Lloyd's future, The Times complains of other newspapers' 'false excitement, fabrications . . . misrepresentations . . . misapprehension' and 'ignorance of the facts'. Very well. The Times on Monday, in its report of Kelso Cochrane's funeral, wrote: 'The Left-wing groups who had offered themselves as vigilantes to north Kensington were not in evidence.' This can only refer to the Socialist Labour League's proposals for preventing fascist violence against coloured people. These seventeen words contain two gross errors of fact.

First, at no time have members of the League 'offered themselves as vigilantes'. The proposal was quite clear: that a conference of Labour Parties, Communist Party branches, trade union branches, trades councils and shop stewards' committees be held to discuss the problem; and that this conference of the London Labour movement should discuss the formation of united defence committees and defence squads of white and coloured trade unionists. There was never any suggestion that the League should substitute its own small forces for the Labour movement. Secondly, eight representatives of the Socialist Labour League were present at Kelso Cochrane's funeral.

We do not know if these errors are 'fabrications' or 'misrepresentations' or just due to 'ignorance of the facts'. But is it too much to ask The Times to take the beam out of its own eye?

printers find it to give their own arrogant employers a thrashing.

That is the meaning of working-class solidarity.

But just as in the bus strike the Right-wing leaders from the start had no intention of lifting a finger to help the busmen, so a powerful movement of solidarity with the printers can be developed only by the rank and file.

Militants in the printing trade should immediately seek ways and means of creating a powerful rank-and-file movement embracing all trade unionists involved, directly or indirectly, in the dispute.

EXPOSE EMPLOYERS' CONSPIRACY

Demand that Labour acts

The Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party leaders, who are quick off the mark when it comes to witch-hunts, should be asked what they propose to do to help the printers.

Let the Labour movement demand that Gaitskell and Bevan try to cut through the apathy that now pervades the House of Commons and force a debate, in which the employers' conspiracy would be exposed.

Let Labour close its ranks and resist this attempt by the employers to destroy trade unionism in an important industry.

UNION OFFICIALS ARE CRIPPLING THE CAMMELL LAIRD STRUGGLE

By Mick Atkins

BIRKENHEAD

THE Cammell Laird management has now suspended or sacked a total of 2,500 workers, blaming the strike of 1,750 boilermakers, now in its seventh week.

Men who are suspended drift around Birkenhead leaderless, impotent and frustrated. They wait for the end of the strike with very little news from their unions at all, and no news of progress.

I talked to boilermakers on strike and to workers who had been suspended by the firm. They were not willing to let their names be published for fear of victimization.

First, there was a member of the Shipwrights' Association. The Boilermakers' Society have a demarcation dispute with this union, and the strike began when the firm refused to find work for two boilermakers other than on the job in dispute.

'Everyone should have struck'

'I do not agree with the Boilermakers' Society over this strike,' said this suspended shipwright. 'But I do agree in general on the need for unity among workers, to fight for rights and real trade union principles at all times.'

'I think the whole of Lairds' workers should have fought the suspensions by going on strike. It's too late now.'

He said that with a wife and five children to support he was receiving only £4 18s. 6d. a week.

He had an interview with Percy Collick, Labour MP for Birkenhead, who seemed 'sympathetic', but unable to help in any practical form.

He said the Trades Union Congress should intervene before things got worse.

A boilermaker declared that the Press and Cammell Laird's were doing everything possible to turn public opinion against the Boilermakers' Society.

'Demarcation disputes are settled every other day in the yard,' he told me, 'and although there has been some clever talk over this dispute the fact remains that two men were victimized. That was the issue which led to the strike, purely and simply.'

He was against the TUC intervening in the strike, but did not mind its intervening on demarcation, later.

Bag of hot air

Here are some other comments:

A suspended labourer said 'I don't know what it's all about, some say one thing, some another. Our officials and stewards should have DONE something over suspensions.'

A labourer still employed at the yard was definite in his opinions: **'I think the Confed. is a big bag of hot air. In this dispute the officials seem to be walking around gagged. What's the matter with them?'**

'If they were getting sacked I'll bet we would hear some screaming from them.'

One of the plumbers reported that when a deputation of plumbers saw their union organizer and asked him what was his opinion on suspensions, he replied he had no opinions.

This plumber said that the feeling of himself and some of **his mates was that the union officials in reality liked to have the demarcation issue played up.**

'To bring out the issue of sackings and suspensions as the main one would mean a fight against the management,' he said.

Resist a real fight

'Now the TUC is going to intervene and bring the boilermakers' union and the shipwrights together to discuss demarcation. But what about uniting the workers against the management?'

Whatever other differing opinions they might express about

the strike the workers I discussed with had one thing in common—a criticism of local officials of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions for their failure to give a lead and their resistance to a fight on suspensions and sackings.

There has been no mass meeting to inform men inside and **outside the yard what is happening.**

Militant policies to fight the management would have helped unify the yard, but union officials clearly do not want to fight on issues where they could have got the maximum unity against the employer.

WHAT IS REALLY WRONG IN SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY—AND WHAT CAN WORKERS DO?

By an Industrial Correspondent

EMPLOYERS' spokesmen have recently been writing articles in the national Press on the state of the shipbuilding and ship repair industry in this country.

They paint a gloomy picture, and draw unfavourable comparisons between the position in this country and that in foreign shipbuilding countries, particularly Germany and Japan.

The implication is that the main factor contributing to this sad state of affairs is that the shipbuilding workers in this country make wage demands and have demarcation disputes.

It is conveniently forgotten that the shipyard workers in Germany were on strike last year for an increase in wages; and that the Scandinavian employers pay more—Swedish workers draw 40 per cent. more than their British counterparts.

And two years ago the general secretary of the Japanese Shipyard Workers' Union, who was a delegate to our boilermakers' annual conference, told us that their demand for an increase in wages had been met with the plea from the Japanese employers that they could not compete with the lower-paid British workers.

Can end fratricidal strife

There is no evidence for the employers' claim that the workers are to blame for the undoubted deterioration of Britain's position in the shipbuilding world.

Wage demands are not peculiar to British workers, and demarcation disputes—which must be deplored by us as socialists—are no new thing in the shipbuilding industry.

We believe the British trade union movement is big enough to solve the inevitable problems which arise from the introduction of new methods in ship construction, in such a way as to obviate fratricidal strife between sections of workers.

At the moment there are some 14,000 shipbuilding workers idle, and overtime has been greatly reduced. Tonnage figures for the first quarter of 1959 do show Britain's position to be unfavourable in relation to other countries.

A look at some figures in connexion with the employing side of the industry, however, can provide a clue as to where the blame really lies.

In the Scandinavian countries the bosses have spent much greater sums in modernizing their yards. For example, in Holland one yard alone has spent £10 million in one year, while in Sweden £750,000 per year per yard has been spent for several years past on modernization.

Still using ancient machines

In contrast to this, on the Clyde, the hub of British shipbuilding, sixteen yards in the fourteen years since the war have spent between them a total of only £20 million—while, despite the recognized need for a new dry dock at Greenock, the shipyards based on the Clyde could produce between them only £1,250,000 of the total of £4,500,000 required for this project.

In some yards here workers are still using flanging machines, rollers, and hydraulic presses which are older than the twentieth century.

Despite the gloom allegedly overshadowing the industry in Britain, the sun continues to shine on the shareholders.

A typical example is the recent report of the Swan Hunter group, which showed a trading profit for the year 1958 of £2,311,557; the directors were in the happy position of declaring a dividend of 15 per cent.

In the light of reports such as this, one suspects that the motive behind the publication of gloomy prophecies in the national Press is that the employers intended to launch an offensive against the shipyard workers in an attempt to solve problems in the industry which are of the employers' own making.

Those of us who were in the industry between the wars remember the results of the bosses' efforts to 'cheapen costs' and rationalize shipbuilding by means of the activities of National Shipbuilding Securities Ltd, who were responsible for the destruction of 159 of the 684 berths in this country between 1933 and 1935, and the resulting murder of such towns as Jarrow.

The guarantee for the workers in the shipbuilding industry that they will not go back to the bad old days of the thirties, when 77 per cent. of the manpower was unemployed, is to adopt a militant industrial policy coupled with a political campaign.

Socialist programme for shipbuilding

Firstly, there should be amalgamations of the existing trade unions into two unions to cover the entire shipbuilding industry: one covering workers engaged on the construction of the ship, and the other dealing with the finishing trades.

Secondly, pay-offs should be strongly resisted and consultation with the shop stewards and trade union officials must be insisted on.

Thirdly, an immediate demand should be made for a retention payment of so many hours per week.

Fourthly, a pension scheme should be formulated to enable the older members in the industry who wish to retire to do so on a pension of at least two-thirds of the prevailing average earnings.

Coupled with these steps, a general campaign should be conducted inside the shipbuilding trade unions for them to take their rightful position in the wider political movement and work for the return of a Labour government pledged to nationalize the shipbuilding and ship repair industry.

WHEATSHEAF MINERS WIN A VICTORY AND 'DICKY' GETS HIS JOB BACK

From Our Manchester Correspondent

MINERS at the Wheatsheaf colliery, Pendlebury, near Manchester, have won the reinstatement of a Polish fellow-worker, 'Dicky' Zachart, who had been sacked for allegedly 'losing' £4-worth of steel.

Zachart, a ripper, had the steel up as a breaking-off bar for his rip, and left it in as a safety measure until a ring was set.

The gang of which he was a member had been rushed that shift. They had two arches to set, and the rip was in bad condition. The strip had to be left until the following shift.

But in the mean time, on a report from the steel inspector, an ex-overman, Zachart was sacked.

This sacking was the culmination of a series of disagreements between the rippers and the management. The previous week four rippers had been sacked over another issue, and then reinstated.

Felt they must act

Miners at the Wheatsheaf pit told me: 'We felt this was victimization, and that we ought to get something done about it.'

So on June 1 the night shift refused to go down the pit, and the day shift stopped work in sympathy next day.

On the advice of union officials the men went back to work after two days to allow negotiations to take place. They were

fully determined to come out again if Zachart was not reinstated.

But their action resulted in complete victory. Zachart was unconditionally reinstated.

COLLIERY MANAGER THREATENED A MILITANT

FOLLOWING the publication in The Newsletter of two items about Denby Hall colliery, Derbyshire, Granville Stone was asked by the manager to sign a document saying the facts given in The Newsletter were false.

When he refused to sign, Stone was asked by the manager if he 'wanted to run this bloody pit'.

And the manager told him that at the first 'real slip-up' he would be sacked.

This threat was made in front of three members of the local National Union of Mineworkers committee, not one of whom said a word in his defence.

'This is known as "co-operation" between the NCB and the NUM. As usual in this sort of "co-operation", the worker suffers', writes Stone in the current issue of the Miner.

HOSIERY WORKERS FORM RANK-AND-FILE COMMITTEE TO WIN BACK WAGE CUTS

By Robert Shaw

FINE gauge hosiery knitters in the Ilkeston and Mansfield district have formed a rank-and-file committee to defend their conditions and win back wage cuts imposed on them in recent months by the employers and the union officials.

The committee has formed links with other districts as far apart as St Albans and West Hartlepool.

Its first action was to have a show-down with Moulden, the president of the National Union of Hosiery Workers.

About 150 delegates from all parts of the district met at Mansfield on May 30, long-distance expenses being met by collections of up to £20 in the factories.

Wages cut by £8

The aim of the knitters at this meeting was to force Moulden to agree to rank-and-file control of negotiations over conditions and wages.

The knitters argue that only rank-and-file control will enable them to win back the cuts of up to £8 which they have sustained.

This figure of £8 was actually quoted in the meeting by a knitter who produced details of his earnings to prove it.

The delegates were determined to see the meeting through, and the feeling was that they could not be provoked by talk of 'secret meetings' and 'political interference' thrown at them from the platform.

At one stage thirty knitters angrily made for the door after Moulden had refused to answer a question. They were, however, persuaded to stay and fight for their right to control the leaders of their own union.

Demands were voiced that 'the executive should be subject to recall by the rank and file'.

Delegates elected from factories

The final decision of the meeting, accepted by the platform, was that a national delegate conference be convened in five weeks' time to discuss conditions affecting the fine gauge section and that the delegates to this conference be elected from the factories themselves.

After the meeting many of the knitters I spoke with were very bitter against allegations which have been made about outside political interference.

A handful directed their anger against The Newsletter itself; which seems to show that Moulden knows what he is doing when he tries to divert attention from himself to the 'red bogey man'.

But all those who read The Newsletter articles—and some of these described themselves as Tories—testified to its fairness and complimented the paper on a good job done.

Workers showed me a statement made to the Press by the managing director of Aristoc Ltd, to the effect that the fine gauge hose section was doing fine and selling more than ever before.

Why then have their wages been cut? The Aristoc workers want to know. The cuts were necessary because trade was poor, they were told.

£1,500 per week saved

At another Mansfield firm the wage cuts had saved the management £1,500 per week, I was told. Yet none of this surplus has reached the consumer in price cuts. Prices are the same as before, and profits will be up, not down.

The fine gauge workers say they are only beginning to fight back. They are confident that other sections of the trade will

follow them in the fight to bring Moulden and Co. under rank-and-file control.

And they intend to wage a fight against the employers for the scrapping of the wage-cut agreement.

PRESSED STEEL MEN SHOW SOLIDARITY

Workers at the Pressed Steel Co. Theale (Reading), have declared Rootes Mouldings work 'black'. The management has laid off 200 men, with another 300 to come.

The Rootes Mouldings strike has now entered its tenth week. It started over the sacking of seven toolmakers, including the shop steward. The firm refuses to discuss the sackings. Another grievance is the firm's refusal to recognize the shop steward.

The strike has the backing of Slough district committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, and of the union's executive.

OUR STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALIST POLICIES GOES ON

By BRIAN BEHAN

THE decision of the Labour Party national executive to reorganize the Streatham and Norwood Labour Parties is a blow against every member of the Labour movement who wants to fight for socialist policies in the Labour Party.

But the decision of the Norwood general management committee to reject the reorganization of the local party is no less powerful a blow against the Right, and a foretaste of the new and formidable Left-wing movement that can emerge in the Labour Party.

The NEC is trying to destroy two active local Labour Parties because they have struggled consistently for socialist policies.

It has selected the Socialist Labour League as its principal target because the League has been foremost in the fight against the Right-wing policies that are shackling the Labour Party.

NEC members and factions

There are two Labour Parties. There is the Labour Party of the ward members and rank-and-file trade unionists who want to organize for socialism. And there is the Labour Party of Gaitskell and Bevan, who want to preserve capitalism.

Everyone knows that members of the NEC, among whom are middle-class careerists and reactionary trade union leaders, belong to various factions. Everyone knows that NEC members write for capitalist-owned newspapers, including the Daily Telegraph and the News of the World.

The Labour leaders' real objection to the Socialist Labour League and The Newsletter is not that the League is a separate organization, but that it does its best to organize the fight for socialism within the party and challenge the grip of the Right.

The Right wing dare not allow the Left to become as well organized as the Right, and will use any methods to retain its grip.

As the problems facing the working class become more acute, so does the working class seek ways of fighting, within the Labour Party, for the socialist policies that alone can solve the workers' problems.

Where they went wrong

This has happened in the past, too. But always in the past the Right has been able to defeat the Left, in one of two ways:

(1) By forcing the Left to go outside the party and set up independent parties.

Both the Communist Party and the Independent Labour

Party were correct to fight for their right to have policies and journals and organizations in the Labour Party that enabled the Left to challenge the Right.

Both were wrong when they turned their backs on the Labour Party and left the field clear for the Right. This sectarian policy helped the Right wing.

(2) By buying off the leaders of the Left with positions at the top in return for their abandonment of socialist policies.

The Socialist Labour League is determined to avoid both these traps. We have not the slightest intention of abandoning our right to be in the Labour Party. Our policy has more in common with the views and aspirations of the ordinary Labour Party member than Gaitskell's policy has.

Labour Party's basic aims

Thus the Socialist Labour League stands for the extension of nationalization. This demand is in line with the basic aims of the Labour Party.

Morgan Phillips's waverings in face of the employers' attacks on the feeble proposals contained in 'The Future Labour Offers YOU' are not in line with the basic aims of the party.

The Socialist Labour League is not a breakaway organization. We want to see militant workers joining the Labour Party to carry on the struggle there for policies that will help the workers defeat the employers and their government.

The situation is favourable for a resolute struggle by the Left. The Right-wing leaders cannot consolidate their position, by putting forward a large-scale programme of reforms.

The workers are now facing new problems—unemployment, wage cuts, the H-bomb—which the Right-wing leaders have no policies for solving.

Since 'The Future Labour Offers YOU' was published the Labour Party has lost 216 seats in the local elections.

Radical change in policy

Unless there is a radical change in policy, the danger exists that the Tories will go back into power at the next election.

We are absolutely opposed to the working class repeating the experience of the hungry thirties. To prevent this the Socialist Labour League intends to continue and intensify its campaign for a socialist alternative.

There are people who say we should keep our mouths shut about these embarrassing questions until after the election. We are not going to take this advice.

Labour's election programme will solve nothing. It is our duty to say so, and to fight for a programme in the workers' interests, even if some of us are expelled for speaking out.

A genuine Left movement can be built only on principles, and in the struggle for principles.

What do the present 'Lefts' on the NEC know about principles? They have no fundamental disagreement with the Right. They unite with the Right to proscribe the Socialist Labour League, and to destroy two local Labour Parties.

Our appeal to Left

Bevan says he wants to defend nationalization. But he unites with Gaitskell to throw out of the party members of an organization which has the extension of nationalization as one of its main aims.

We appeal to the whole of the Left to fight against this alliance of Right-wing careerists and pseudo-Lefts at the top of the Labour Party.

We appeal to the Left to fight against the reorganization of local parties, and for their maintenance as Left-wing parties campaigning for socialist policies.

In some areas this will mean a fight against rump organizations set up by the Right. This is a fight against leaders who have no scruples about splitting the movement.

To give way to these leaders for the sake of 'unity' means abandoning the party to the Right wing.

Unlike other Left-wing movements in the Labour Party, the Left we now must build will have a Marxist leadership.

It is being born, not out of the defeat of the working class, but at a time of rising working-class militancy, when there is a real basis for challenging the Right wing's domination.

Stay in and fight

Unlike the Communist Party, the Socialist Labour League does not seek to pull the Left out of the Labour Party into a small sectarian organization. We answer the reformists' attacks by remaining inside the party and carrying forward **the fight against the reformists and for a socialist programme.**

The Socialist Labour League is able to unite with the Left in the Labour Party because it has no separate interests from the Left. Around our programme can be forged the widest possible unity.

The first serious resistance to Right-wing policy is being waged. Every trade unionist and Labour Party member who joins the Socialist Labour League can make an immense contribution in his local Labour Party towards the adoption of a fighting socialist policy.

CAMBRIDGE DECIDES TO 'GO IT ALONE'

General management committee of Cambridge City Labour Party has unanimously passed a resolution declaring 'that armament is futile and that a Labour government in Britain ought to give up the H-bomb forthwith as an example to the rest of the world and to help to promote eventual all-round disarmament'.

The resolution adds: 'We resolve to make this a major feature of our general election policy.'

BIRMINGHAM ENGINEERS PROTEST AT BAN ON WORKERS' PAPER

By Harry Finch

A MEMBER of Birmingham 4th branch of the Amalgamated Engineering Union walked into Key Books, Dale End, Birmingham, and asked for a copy of The Newsletter.

He was told that this Communist Party bookshop did not sell it and did not intend to sell it.

The member, Bro. H. Samuels, was not satisfied. He went back to his union branch, which had just passed a resolution condemning the Labour leaders' ban on The Newsletter, and started a discussion.

The literature secretary of the branch, Bro. Jock Leishman, sits on the Birmingham executive of the Communist Party. The branch members asked him to raise this question on the Communist Party executive and get the bookshop to sell The Newsletter.

At the next branch meeting there was a further discussion on bans and proscriptions, and the members asked Bro. Leishman what he had done. He said:

'I raised it on the committee and got the reply I expected. They say The Newsletter is a paper that continually runs down the Communist Party and denigrates its leaders; therefore they have no intention of putting it for sale in the bookshop.'

Arch-imperialist's book displayed

One member pointed out that the Communist Party Press attacked The Newsletter, and asked:

'How do you explain that in the bookshop they put on display Churchill's war memoirs, a book by an arch-imperialist, but won't display another working-class paper?'

The members told Bro. Leishman that in effect the Communist Party leaders had banned The Newsletter as well as the Labour leaders banning it.

A motion was put to the meeting, to be sent to Birmingham Communist Party, deploring their ban on The Newsletter 'as an attack on minorities and the freedom of the Press' and calling on them to lift the ban immediately.

The motion was carried with one abstention, that of Bro. Leishman, who told the meeting: 'Key Books is a business. It is not run by the Communist Party. And in any case we haven't banned The Newsletter.'

WHEN JOHNNY WAS A COMMUNIST

J. R. Campbell, whose retirement next month from the editorship of the Daily Worker was announced last week, recently saw fit to stick the epithet 'anti-communist' on the Socialist Labour League.

We have pleasure in giving some space this week to the Campbell of nearly forty years ago—Campbell the revolutionary, not the one who pins his faith to summit talks, Frank Cousins and the lobbying of MPs.

Readers can judge for themselves whether it is the Socialist Labour League or the Communist Party that is carrying forward traditional communist policy on trade union problems.

This is how J. R. Campbell reviewed the lessons of 'Black Friday' in the Glasgow weekly, the Worker, for April 30, 1921:

WITH a very few honourable exceptions the trade union bureaucracy is hopelessly incapable of fighting the battle of the working class, and the question arises, why?

If it were merely a few individuals amongst officials who were concerned in this chronic treachery, we might put it down to personal villainy, but when we find that the mass of national officials are tarred with the same brush, then we must seek the cause elsewhere than in the defects of personality.

The first cause of this defective leadership is to be found in the middle-class environment to which the official has been raised. This involves sooner or later the acquirement of a middle-class outlook, which is dangerous to working-class progress.

Allied to this is the fact that he is remote from working-class conditions, and cannot see things from the rank-and-file point of view.

Different angle, different psychology

When we add to that the fact that his job is a life or long-term job, all the conditions are there for the development of a section coming in contact with the facts of life from a different angle from the working class and thereby developing a

different psychology.

The structural changes in unionism must then involve (1) a lowering of the officials' standard of life to nearer the working-class standard; (2) short terms of office; (3) right to take vote on the recall of any official provided it is demanded by a certain percentage of branches.

These are the structural changes which are necessary to meet this problem, but they must be accompanied by a change in the outlook of the rank and file, else we will be knocking down one wobbler merely to put another in his place.

The change of outlook can only be brought about by the persistent agitation of a rank-and-file organization within the unions.

CAN YOU SPARE THESE BACK NUMBERS?

The editorial office of The Newsletter and Labour Review urgently needs complete sets of the New Reasoner and Universities and Left Review. Any reader who can spare copies should send them to The Newsletter, 180 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4.

RENTS

RENT SHOCK FOR WANDSWORTH TENANTS

HOUSING committee of Tory-dominated Wandsworth Borough Council has decided to recommend rent increases in October to twice the gross rateable value.

Only exceptions are old people's homes and old age pensioners living alone. Rents for new flats due to be finished within the next few weeks will be at the new level from the time they are occupied.

These recommendations, which are to go before the Council meeting on June 23, are made only nine months after the Tories were forced by the tenants' organizations to withdraw similar proposals. A pledge was given then that there would be no review of rents for twelve months.

The committee has also decided to authorize council officers to give notice to quit as soon as rents arrears mount up to three weeks.

Constant Reader | Origin of a Caste System

AT the annual conference of the Civil Service Clerical Association the general secretary spoke of the malaise among the lower grades due to the still rigid 'stratification' of work in government departments.

This has the effect of keeping everything that relates to policy-making a monopoly of the narrow upper circle of officials, recruited directly from the ruling class.

'The idea that young people are content to go on doing routine work, day in and day out, without any scope for showing what they are capable of doing, is the shortest way to ensure a regular turnover of staff,' said G. F. Green.

Safeguard against democracy

The caste system in the British Civil Service as we know it today began to be introduced in 1870.

It was a direct result of the Second Reform Act (1867), which had given the vote for the first time to a substantial body of workers.

Robert Lowe, Gladstone's Chancellor of the Exchequer, who sponsored the Civil Service 'reform', said in this connexion that he could 'fancy no employment more worthy of the philosopher and statesman than the invention of safeguards against democracy'.

What the 'reform' did was to establish a bureaucracy so constructed as to keep all real power in the hands of a privileged officialdom drawn from the upper classes.

Gladstone himself remarked: 'I do not hesitate to say that one of the greatest recommendations of the change in my eyes would be its tendency to strengthen and multiply the ties between the higher classes and the possession of administrative power.'

He understood that the key feature of the 'reform' was 'the separation of work . . . into mechanical and intellectual', with reservation of the latter to a special, separately-recruited grade.

Many experienced officials pointed out at the time that such a separation would not make for efficiency, and that it would be disastrous for the morale of the lower grades, restricted to performing 'mechanical' work for the whole of their working lives.

But Robert Lowe was brutally frank. What mattered was that in the controlling positions in the service, deciding policy in discussion with the leaders of capitalist society, should be 'men whose associations and ideas belong to the class with whom they will have to deal', possessing that public school and Oxbridge training which 'gives a sort of freemasonry among men which is not very easy to describe but which everybody feels'.

The Civil Service has been consciously shaped since 1870 as a bulwark of capitalism against the dangers of democracy.

The discontents of the lower grades result from a structure of the service which is essential from the standpoint of Britain's ruling class.

Realities of 'the State'

Our colleagues in the New Reasoner circle attribute special importance to the increased role of the State in the British economy.

Remembering John Hughes's fine article on steel nationalization, it occurs to me that a detailed study of the British State as it is today—not a supra-class abstraction but an organization of men with definite class ties, including Old School ties—would be a most valuable contribution to knowledge of the political facts of life.

'The British State', by James Harvey and Katharine Hood, published last year by Lawrence and Wishart, is a good beginning. (I was gratified to find that in one place it draws on a privately-circulated monograph on Civil Service history I wrote ten years ago, even bodily lifting some phrases.)

But we need something that goes further, giving candid, convincing particulars about individual tie-ups, on the lines of that splendid pre-war study of the parliamentary Conservative Party, 'Tory MP' by Simon Haxey.

Afraid of their own past?

The Labour Monthly has a feature which always interests me, called 'Twenty-five Years Ago'. It is intriguing to see what is chosen from the issue of a quarter-century before to link what the journal was saying then with what is happening now.

In the June number a piece from R. P. Dutt's Notes of the Month of June 1934 is given, attacking the Labour leadership of that time for 'drifting towards war'.

The quotation is, of course, cut short before we can appreciate that what Dutt was condemning was support for 'war in defence of the collective peace system'—which became Communist Party policy only a little over a year later!

I should have liked to see instead a piece from the article in the same issue on the historic strike at the Lucas factory in Birmingham, part of the break-through then being battled for in that 'city of mass production at sweated rates'.

'The Lucas strike shook the capitalist police régime in Birmingham. One of the Lucas girls was arrested on May 1. She is put in the dock first and pleads guilty to the charge of disorderly conduct and police assault.'

'But she was quickly got out of the court back to the factory. The guardians of law and order were in mortal fear that the Lucas workers would come for her.'

But whom would such a quotation please and encourage in 1959? Only 'Trotskyist trouble-makers and their dupes'!

BRIAN PEARCE

LETTERS

EX-SECRETARY OF BPFS DECLARES SUPPORT FOR SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

A RUMP gathering of nineteen members of the British-Polish Friendship Society threw out the last vestiges of pretence at a recent Conway Hall meeting, described as an 'annual general meeting'.

They rejected a motion from Alfred Dressler calling for a complete review of the present position in the society and refused to read to the meeting a letter sent by the former secretary, W. J. Ellerby.

My own charges against the executive, quoting minutes and unfulfilled resolutions as some of the reasons for my resignation from the secretaryship last December, were received in silence.

During the days of the Eighth Plenum of the Polish United Workers' Party, and in the early part of 1957, the BPFS did some fine work. We duplicated information on anti-Semitism in Poland, together with the measures taken by the government to check an evil that had close links with the former Stalinist party apparatus.

The society also published in New Poland a great amount of the Eighth Plenum material, with documents and photographs of Polish reactions.

The result of all this was that New Poland was closed down within a few months. The excuse given was lack of money, but the French equivalent of the magazine was still appearing in January 1959.

Destroyed as effective body

The Eighth Plenum speeches were rejected by the Embassy and had to be given to an outside organization to publish. The society's National Day message, the first for many years to be signed by a wide selection of British workers and intellectuals, never appeared in the Polish Press.

The executive's refusal to learn from these things has finally destroyed the society as an effective body.

The executive has ignored letters from its former members; failed to take members into its confidence; delayed the calling of an AGM in the time required by the rules; failed to implement the decisions of the 1958 AGM, embodied in Professor Levy's letter to that meeting; and failed to hold the conference on British-Polish friendship requested by over seventy members on November 8, 1958.

This bureaucratic behaviour resulted from years of sitting in the 'Centre', dodging real conclusions on the fate of workers' councils in Poland, the suppression of Po Prostu, the Lodz tramway strike and many other matters.

There are more important things to do than flog this dead horse. And nothing is more important than the building of the Socialist Labour League, based firmly on Marxism.

London, W.13

Roy Sear

[Roy Sear, who is 37, joined the Young Communist League at the age of 13 and the Communist Party seventeen years ago. At one time he was music critic of the Daily Worker.]

At a special general meeting of the BPFS last November (reported in The Newsletter of November 15, 1958, pp. 293, 300) he announced that because of interference by Communist Party officials in the society's affairs, which had gravely harmed it, he was resigning from the party.]

GLASGOW ENGINEERING WORKERS WANT REAL FIGHT AGAINST SACKINGS

SEVERAL hundred members of the Amalgamated Engineering Union attended a meeting in Glasgow last Sunday to discuss redundancy in the industry.

The meeting was hastily convened by the Glasgow district committee of the AEU on the request of the Parkhead Forge shop committee, whose convener, Bro. Harry Dysart, is a member of the district committee.

The management of the forge, which is a large supplier of castings to the Clyde engineering establishments, is putting 1,000 workers on short time and sacking seventy.

The divisional organizer, Bro. Gray, and Bence, the AEU MP, both spoke at length on the general redundancy situation; neither of them said anything which could help workers fighting against unemployment.

Strike action: real weapon

Delegates from St Rollox and Cowlares railway workshops appealed for unity and a real fight against the employers.

Bro. Dysart, on behalf of the district committee, moved a resolution full of generalities ('We demand more work for Scotland' and so on) and then came discussion. Ten speakers were allowed three minutes each.

The only expression of militancy came from the floor. One delegate said strike action was the only weapon which could prevent workers being paid off, and this should be supported by the executive.

Of the ten speakers, four were rank-and-file members of the Communist Party, who raised the demand for a Glasgow demonstration against redundancy.

Another said the time for deputations was over, and cited the fact that the deputations to the House of Commons organized by the National Union of Mineworkers had proven ineffective.

Now the Parkhead Forge committee, led by a Right-wing convener, recently led a march of its workers to the City Chambers and interviewed the Lord Provost, creating the illusion that this gentleman, weighed down with his chains of office, could possibly solve the workers' problems.

Fritters the workers' energies

At a recent meeting in Glasgow Gordon McLennan, leading Scottish Communist Party member, replying to questions by members of the Socialist Labour League, proudly boasted that Parkhead Forge branch of his party was responsible for the march to the Lord Provost.

And the headline to the Daily Worker report was: 'Workers Preparing to Fight.'

The futility of this kind of deputation, which only fritters workers' energies and frustrates them, is beginning to become apparent to some rank-and-file Communist Party members.

Right-wingers like Dysart obviously thrive on such activities, since they are an ostensibly 'militant' substitute for workshop action.

If the Parkhead Forge workers decided to strike against the sackings it could lead to a mass campaign of support throughout the area. But if the stewards do not recommend strike action and the workers are paid off it would be a further incentive to the Clyde employers to attack the workers.

One thing is certain: the district committee will be compelled to launch some sort of campaign, if only to pacify the growing dissatisfaction of the rank and file.

The Socialist Labour League in Glasgow is putting forward proposals which include a complete district ban on overtime and the formation of an inter-union Clyde shop stewards' committee so that factories are not left to meet the employers' attacks in isolation.

Glasgow, W.1

Alec McLarty

BUILDERS TO DISCUSS NO-SACKINGS FIGHT

London building workers are holding a conference on the fight against sackings and victimization, and for higher wages and shorter hours, at Holborn Hall, Sunday, June 21, at 11 a.m.