

# FIGHT FOR LABOUR'S POLICY IN 1961

## *Unite the Left Against Gaitskell!*

*A Statement by the Editorial Board*

**THE Right-wing witch-hunt is in full swing. Gaitskell is determined to stifle the voice of all those who support the Scarborough decisions. The youth paper, Keep Left, is ordered to close down. Mr. Crossman, the elected Chairman of the Party, may not attend press conferences. Instead, Mr. A. L. Williams, a faithful stooge of Gaitskell and a full-time functionary, speaks at such gatherings in the name of the party. Elected officials are replaced by political flunkies.**

Mr. Zilliagus is charged with a serious breach of discipline for writing an article in the World Marxist Review. Mr. Crosland, however, the architect of Gaitskell's, policy can write as he pleases in the magazine Encounter.

Three Members of Parliament, who sponsored the Daily Worker Conference in February, have been instructed to quit such activity.

Those in the Left-wing of the Labour Party who ignore these autocratic actions are guilty of a most dangerous error. Gaitskell is out to submit the Labour Party to the will of his clique or else he will split it in the most disastrous way he possibly can. The war against the Left-wing involves the future of the entire Labour Movement.

The Socialist Labour League, irrespective of its differences with other sections on the Left, is opposed to witch-hunts of any description. We do not agree with the Communist Party but we feel that if that Party provides an opportunity for political discussion at the Daily Worker Conference in February then there is nothing whatsoever wrong with people going there and stating their viewpoint.

The movement can only benefit from the frankest discussion at this critical hour.

### Against Witch-hunts

We are opposed, therefore, to the attack made against M.P.'s who are certainly not stooges of the Communist Party but who thought it necessary to sponsor the Conference.

We do not agree with Mr. Zilliagus, but we see no reason why he should be disciplined in any way for writing in what is, after all, an organ of working class opinion. To say that Mr. Zilliagus is a stooge of the



KONNI ZILLIACUS

Communist Party because he does this is to ignore the vicious attacks which that Party made upon him during his courageous defence of the Yugoslav Revolution in the 1950's.

The Left-wing must forge a united front against the Right-wing witch-hunters. All those who support the Scarborough decisions and who want to see them implemented by the Labour Party should get together and work out ways and means to resist the attacks of the Right-wing. We pledge ourselves to do everything possible to see that these measures are implemented.

## U.S. ELECTION FIGURES

FROM AN AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT

THE 1960 socialist presidential vote represents an encouraging trend. A total of 87,723 votes were cast for Dobbs and Weiss of the Socialist Workers Party and Hass and Cozzini of the Socialist Labor party. It was the largest total socialist presidential vote since 1948.

Official returns from 12 states credited the Socialist Workers ticket with 40,174 votes in the 12 states in which it was on the ballot. The Socialist Labor party, which ran in 16 states, was credited with 47,549 votes.

For the S.W.P. it was the biggest vote since it first contested for president in 1948.

In that year, out of a total socialist vote of 182,271, Norman Thomas of the Socialist party received 139,414. The S.W.P. polled 13,613 votes in 11 states.

In 1952, the S.W.P. vote dropped to 10,312 and in 1956 it was down to 7,233.

The 1960 returns for S.W.P. state tickets were also encouraging. Like the national vote, they represented gains over previous years.

In New Jersey, Gladys Barker Grauer, candidate for the U.S. Senate, polled 11,784 votes. The S.L.P. candidate for the same office was credited with 3,840 votes.

In Michigan, where the S.W.P. polled its best presidential vote so far and won a higher vote than any of the four other minor parties on the ballot (S.L.P., Tax Cut, Prohibition, Independent American), these returns were reported for statewide candidates:

Robert Himmel, for governor, 3,387; Frank Lovell, for U.S. Senator, 3,282; Evelyn Sell, for lieutenant-governor, 2,967; Larry Dolinski, for secretary of state, 3,225; Rita Shaw, for attorney-General, 3,096; Harriet Talan, for treasurer, 2,679; Edith Gbur, for auditor-general, 2,635. (We have not received returns for the S.L.P. candidates in Michigan.)

## Socialist Labour League Salutes BELGIAN STRIKERS

THE National Committee of the Socialist Labour League warmly salutes the tens of thousands of Belgian working people who are on strike against the attempt of the Belgian capitalists to reduce their standard of living and working conditions.

The use of police and troops by the Belgian ruling class should act as a warning to militants in all the capitalist countries of the world. There is no peaceful road whereby the working class can attain its legitimate demands. As it is in Belgium today, so it will be Britain tomorrow. A strong Labour movement needs a Marxist leadership.

The Socialist Labour League pledges itself to do everything in its power to rouse the working-class movement in Britain to extend support to its Belgian brothers. We call upon the Trades Union Congress to halt all supplies for Belgium. An international strike fund which will supply assistance to the Belgian strikers should be opened at once. A delegation of British trade unionists should leave immediately in order to take the greetings of the working people in Britain as well as to investigate on the spot the undoubted brutality of the Belgian police and military authorities.

We appeal to all our readers to rally all the support they possibly can behind this great struggle.

In Minnesota, Carl Feingold drew 4,085 votes for U.S. Senator in a contest that included Hubert Humphrey, a top Democratic vote-getter. The S.L.P. gubernatorial candidate polled 5,518 votes.

Jack Wright, Socialist Workers candidate for governor of Washington, was officially credited with 992 votes.

Returns for the Pennsylvania state S.W.P. ticket have not yet been received. Nor has there been a report of the write-in votes for Erroll Banks, Congressional candidate in Los Angeles, and Howard Mayhew, U.S. Senatorial candidate in Illinois.

The modest gains in the socialist vote on a national and state basis reflect the revival of socialist consciousness that has been apparent in the country the past several years.

## League Representative Invited to Cuba



MICHAEL BANDA, a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Labour League, has been invited by the Cuban People's Friendship Institute to attend celebrations in Havana on January 1.

★

On his return to Britain, he will write a series of articles for The Newsletter on the present situation in Cuba.

*The Editorial Board of The Newsletter sends warmest New Year greetings to all its readers and supporters overseas and in Britain*

# Algeria



## A New Stage in the Revolution

TOM KEMP

THE open insurrection of the Muslim population of the cities of Algiers and Oran last week tears away the veil of make-believe from de Gaulle's policy. It demonstrates the real and profound nationalist sentiment of the mass of the Algerian population, a demand for human rights and the recovery of their own land. De Gaulle's policy in recent months has been based on the attempt to find tame Muslims, with some backing in the population at large, able to become figure-heads in an ostensibly 'independent' Algeria.

Such a government could be presented as a recognition of self-determination and a reason for continuing to refuse negotiations with the nationalists. It would, of course, enable the main interests of French capital in Algeria to be fully preserved. It would require some sacrifice of the privileges enjoyed by Europeans in Algeria—and their enraged opposition sparked off the latest upheaval. Events have shown that they either have to accept the coming reality of Algerian independence, staying on without privileges or packing their bags, or impose their will both on the majority of the Algerian population and on the French government. The de Gaulle middle way shows itself less and less

feasible. But stormy days undoubtedly lie ahead; the final showdown has yet to come . . .

In 1957 the paratroops and the psychological warfare section of the French Army waged the 'battle of Algiers' to break the nationalist network in the Casbah. It was a vicious struggle. It was then that torture was first used systematically and that the men who killed Audin and tormented Alleg got their apprenticeship in Gestapo methods. Collaborators were enlisted from thugs, murderers and prostitutes in the Casbah itself to terrorise and spy upon the population. All to no avail. The dragon's teeth sown then in terror and death have now grown into the young men who

proclaim their allegiance to nationalism in the muzzles of French tommy-guns.

Even the slogan 'Algerian Algeria', proclaimed by de Gaulle to enable the links with France to be maintained, has been torn from his grasp. For the mass of the Algerian people it has been seen as a temporary stop on the road to complete independence: seen concretely as the shoving off their backs of the arrogant 'black feet' (European settlers) and the whole burden of French administration and military terror.

In a movement of such elemental force violence is inevitable. We have criticised before the indiscriminate terrorism which the F.L.N. leaders have from time to time encouraged. We have especially criticised that terror when directed against other tendencies in the nationalist movement. What has happened in the last weeks is essentially different; it is violence which has been provoked by the Europeans and their security forces. The figures of casualties speak for themselves. This was nothing short of a massacre of unarmed demonstrators.

Thoughts on . . .

## The Fight For Peace

BRIAN PEARCE

THE Chemical Workers' Union brought out during the 1930s a very effective pamphlet called 'The Menace of Chemical Warfare to Civilian Populations', written by the general secretary Arthur Gillian. It first appeared in 1932 and was reprinted seven times between then and 1935; and the copy I have is a 'revised edition' published in 1937. The pamphlet described the horrors of poison gas, and declared that, 'agreements or no, Poison Gas Warfare is certain—unless the masses rise against the mass murder of themselves by the militarists and warmongers'.

Well, we had a world war from 1939 and 1945 and there have been not a few little wars since then, but in no case, I believe, has poison gas been used—though, to be sure, there have been such original developments as napalm bombing. Does this mean those who in agitating against imperialist war made use of the horrors of poison gas were only making fools of themselves?

The answer, I suggest, is no. Apart from the probable relationship between the campaign against poison gas warfare and the fact that it has not been resorted to, there is a larger issue involved. It is absolutely right and absolutely necessary to keep before the people the trend of war technique towards more and more horrible methods. We didn't get Lewisite—we got the atom bomb instead! After the atom bomb has come the H-bomb; and who can say what unimaginable new frightfulnesses are being cooked up for us even now, which will soon cause nuclear weapons to seem as old-hat as Dum Dum bullets?

The movement against imperialist war needs to utilise all the most sick-making details of current war technique in order to bring home to the masses what, in concrete terms, is meant when we say that the alternative to socialism is barbarism. But all this has to be set clearly against the background from which in fact it does emerge.

### THE ROAD

It was, I think, the French revolutionary Blanqui, who said: 'Our hearts must burn like flames, but our heads must be as cold as ice.' In relation to nuclear weapons, as to war generally, passionate feeling has to be linked with, and subordinated to, hard scientific objectivity. If we really want to banish these terrible things from the world, and not just to strike an attitude of rejection, we have to work for a world which can do without them, and that means a socialist world. The strategy of this fight must inevitably be the strategy of the fight for socialism.

As regards tactics, we have to be clear where the nuclear weapons now existing in the world have come from, in order to approach realistically the task of getting rid of them. If there is a Soviet H-bomb it is because there is an American H-bomb, and not the other way round. The road to the elimination of all nuclear weapons lies only through the unilateral disarmament of the imperialists, as the first stage.

In this respect it is the same as with the whole problem of how to achieve the restoration of workers' democracy, the regime of Lenin and Trotsky, in the Soviet Union. We cannot expect the Russian workers to go forward in the massive and risky undertaking of a political revolution in their country unless and until they see something very different from what meets their gaze, eastward and westward, at the present time. The biggest single blow suffered by the Left opposition in the Soviet Union was the triumph of Hitler in Germany. The biggest encouragement to a revival would be a victory of comparable significance for the workers' movement in one of the advanced capitalist countries.

Britain is better placed than any other country, even perhaps better than Japan, to make this historic breakthrough. Tremendous possibilities on a world-wide scale would be opened up through a campaign waged by a Labour Party purged of Gaitskells and Gaitskellism and backed by powerful movements in industry, to implement the Scarborough decisions on the bomb and on nationalization. A Labour government swept into office by such a campaign could by a bold socialist foreign policy confound the plans of the imperialists, help the workers' and national liberation struggles everywhere—and put the bureaucrats of Russia, China and the rest well and truly on the spot with their own people.

### THE OPPORTUNITY

The opportunity before us in this country in the next few years is enormous; and the responsibility to measure up to it is in proportion.

Besides the hindrance constituted by the opportunism of the Right wing and by the hysterical refusal to think which exists in some pacifist circles, the movement encounters, in its striving to fulfil the responsibility which lies upon it, also the diversionist efforts of certain ultra-left groups. As other methods lose their effectiveness in holding back the advance we must expect these to be pushed forward more and more prominently.

At the time of Mussolini's attack on Abyssinia in 1935-1936 the Trotskyists tried to get the Independent Labour Party to adopt the line of workers' action in support of Abyssinia, through refusal to load or unload Italian ships, etc. They were met with the argument from the ultra-lefts (who were sometimes Right-wingers using protective colouring) that the quarrel between capitalist Italy and feudal Abyssinia was of no concern to the British workers; certainly they should not side with the 'feudals' against the 'capitalists', and it was up to 'the workers' of Abyssinia to solve their own problems. That type of argument cut a remarkable lot of ice in circles which considered themselves Left and even Marxist in the 1930s. But in the very different political climate of the 1960s we can hope with some confidence that genuine Marxism will have a lot less difficulty in disposing of the various parodies and caricatures still in circulation.

### NOT ANTI-SEMITIC

French propaganda has made much of the fact that some Jewish shops were smashed up and that a synagogue was entered and a nationalist flag hoisted over it. Obviously it tries to influence world opinion by evoking memories of Nazi anti-semitism. As far as can be seen, Jewish shops have been treated no differently from those of the French shop-keepers, and, indeed, all those considered to be associated with French rule. In fact, ever since 1871, French colonialism has tried to split the Jewish community (a large section of which had been established in the country for centuries) from the Muslims by enabling the former to accede to French citizenship while the latter were denied it. Even so, in many places large numbers of Jews and Arabs live side-by-side in harmony and the Jewish community, through the six years of bitter war, has not had to complain of anti-semitic acts even in cities like Constantine where it is especially large. In parts of the South there are villages where Jews live much as they did in biblical times; it is said that they have given active aid to nationalist fighters and have even furnished recruits to the partisan bands.

As for the enraged European population, it still has a strong bargaining position. It clearly benefits from the support of the army as well as that of right-wing forces in France. The presence of Salan and Lagailarde in Spain show the possibilities of civil war inherent in the situation.

### IMPOTENT LEFT

The policy of the French left, in its official form, will clearly reflect its impotence and its general inability to link up the national struggle in Algeria with the working class movement in France. So far it has shown itself incapable of mobilising an effective protest movement against the massacres. Some elements have for some time been taking shelter behind de Gaulle. Such tendencies were echoed in recent Tribune correspondence and by a broadcast by Alexander Werth, well-known 'expert' on French politics who has friends in French left-wing journalistic circles. Expression is given to the same tendency, with a little more subtlety, by 'new' left Claude Bourdet, who recently wrote, not of supporting de Gaulle, but of pushing him along the road that he wanted him to travel. Those on the left who adopt such an approach show a complete failure to understand the role of de Gaulle and an irresponsible attitude towards the task of building a powerful opposition movement based on the working class.

The events in Algeria underline once again the inescapable necessity for such a movement in order that the French working class can at least pay its debt to the Algerian revolution and go forward to make its own.

## After Scarborough THE BATTLE BEGINS

PROSPECTS AND TASKS FOR THE LEFT IN  
THE LABOUR PARTY

By G. Healy

Price 2d.—From The Newsletter, 186 Clapham High St., S.W.4

## Labour's Fifth Column (4)

# Socialism and a Labour Government

By Cliff Slaughter

The last of the series of articles analyzing the past and present role of the Right wing in the Labour Movement

ONE of the commonest arguments used by Gaitskell's clique against the Labour Party majority is that the policies of large-scale nationalization and unilateral renunciation of the H-bomb will make it impossible to win a general election. They try to pose as the hard-headed leaders, telling the airy-fairy, old-fashioned socialist idealists that **power** is the important thing. 'Have all the radical policies you like,' they say, 'but unless you get into power they are just a dream.'

In the first place, it should not be forgotten that we have already **lost** an election with Gaitskell's policy! Secondly, the Ebbw Vale by-election showed that the electorate will vote for a socialist candidate on these issues. **How much bigger would the majority have been if we had had a party leadership united on the majority policy put forward by Michael Foot instead of the 'leaders' using their position to sabotage the movement?**

But there are more important arguments than these. When Gaitskell, Healey, Crosland, Brown and the others talk about power they mean something different from the Marxists. They do not mean working-class power against the capitalists, but power for the Labour and trade union officialdom to administer capitalism in a more reasonable and 'moral' way. This is possible, they say, because capitalism has already changed into something else (Crosland), or will inevitably do so. Crosland says, for instance, 'Capitalism . . . is forced to give birth to a new society: first, because the political pressures against it are so strong as to make its position untenable; secondly, because the capitalist class has lost the will to resist of its confident heyday; thirdly, because in any case the absolute power of private property has had to give way, under the impact of technical change, to managerial control.'

## 'INEVITABILITY OF GRADUALISM'

By 'political pressures' Crosland means the Parliamentary activity of people like himself. In his picture of the transition to socialism there is no room for the political and industrial action of the working class. Capitalism changes almost naturally. It is strange that people like Crosland constantly attack Marxism for its 'determinism', and yet it is they, the Right-wingers, who condemn the ordinary people to a passive role in history. Marxism says it is the masses who make history: for the Fabians, the people are only pawns in the game played by the ruling class and its paid super-

visors. Marxists see their task as bringing scientific consciousness and the will to power into the working-class movement: Fabianism lulls the working class to sleep with a lullaby of gradual and inevitable reform.

Once again, Crosland and his friends only express in more high-sounding terms the direct interests of the employing class, of international capital. If the preservation of international capitalism requires a safe military base in Britain, France and West Germany, then of course it is important for them to prevent any possibility of the major opposition party being committed to the overthrow of private enterprise. And so pro-NATO policies go along with the attempt to rescind Clause Four. If capital is to have freedom of movement from one country to another, to play off motor-car workers in one country against those in another, then of course nationalization of engineering is a demand that must be rejected. And so Gaitskell and Crosland must try and break conference discipline, to be free to carry out capitalist policies more effectively.

In all the NATO countries, the Right-wing Labourites are driving to destroy the working-class character of their parties. In Britain they have received a major setback at Scarborough, and Gaitskell is fighting a desperate rearguard battle on behalf of capitalism in order to have a 'safe' alternative government available for the next election. Because they are impelled by the objective historical needs of the enemy class, he and his friends are capable of any manoeuvre, any combination. They receive the 100 per cent. support of the capitalist press in their campaign. There will be no compromise.

In return, the Left must fight for a Labour government on a socialist programme. The Scarborough decisions are the basis for this, with the nationalization of the armaments industries as first priority. That is a programme which is utterly incompatible with Crosland's and Gaitskell's idea of a reformed capitalism. It will have to depend on the dispossession of the capitalists by the organized working class itself, forming its workers' councils and committees as the basis of a new state, the working-class state that will abolish class society.

Crosland is after something that sounds similar, but is in fact very different. In New Fabian Essays he says, 'The purpose of Socialism is quite simply to eradicate this sense of class, and to create in its place

a sense of common interest and equal status.' As we have seen, Crosland, one of Gaitskell's apostles, thinks capitalist society no longer exists, and so ideas about class are only a hangover from the bad old days: it is only the **sense** of class, not class divisions themselves, that he wants to abolish.

Naturally, such a different task requires also different methods, and Crosland thinks that Parliamentarians working within the capitalist state will be able to do this 'Public Relations' job. While he is absolutely **wrong** about the path to socialism, there is a basis of fact in what Crosland proposes. His theory in fact summarizes exactly what he and his friends are doing! They sell modern capitalism to the people; they channel the energies and activities of the Labour movement to making the capitalist system work; they help to nationalize and organize those industries which are unprofitable and are needed as efficient, cheap services by those remaining in private ownership; they collaborate in welfare services, conciliation machinery, productivity councils, the NATO Parliamentarians' conference, all in order to try and swing the working class into accepting the capitalist system.

## POLITICAL CONFIDENCE TRICKSTERS

This, then, is the meaning of the 'theoretical' work of Crosland, Jay, Healey and the rest of Gaitskell's top supporters. The gradual, peaceful path to socialism they describe is an illusory dream, arising out of their **own** role in society. Modern capitalism, requiring larger-scale state intervention, industrial arbitration, indoctrination of all kinds, a show of democracy to hide a growing bureaucracy and concentration of wealth and power, needs a caste of officials, public relations men, social and political confidence tricksters who parade as moral saviours—'humanizing private industry', as Crosland put it.

It is this new middle caste, servile to monopoly capitalism and the international military machine of imperialism, that is the social basis of Crosland and Gaitskell. The Scarborough decisions are the starting point of a process that will free the British working class of these agents of the enemy; that process will end in a Labour government in which the working class will rule, and not, as before, the salvage experts of the middle class and the bureaucracy, time-servers of capitalism.

BRIAN

Constant



PEARCE

Reader

CO-EXISTENCE

AMID all the recent argy-bargy about peaceful co-existence, what it means and what it doesn't mean, nobody seems to have mentioned the views of the late L. D. Trotsky, one-time Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs and later for the Army and Navy, as given to the Dewey Commission on the Moscow trials in 1937. They are to be found in the book published by this commission called 'The Case of Leon Trotsky', where Trotsky is reported verbatim, speaking in English.

Asked about 'your theory concerning the possibility of a peaceful co-existence of the Soviet Union . . . with the capitalist countries', the former leader of the Soviet workers replied: 'The theory is simple. We needed that the others let us alone in peace. We were not interested in war, in provoking wars. We were interested in peace. That is the reason for the great concessions we made to the capitalist countries during this time, beginning in 1918 to 1924. But in 1933 or 1934 Stalin sold to Japan the Chinese Eastern Railroad. He was attacked by many Left elements in Europe, and I believe also unnecessarily, for this concession. I defended him in 1933. I explained that it was a question of peace and war; if we have a reason for war with Japan, if it is necessary, it would not be a question only of the railroad. If we can, by a concession of the railroad gain one or two or three years of peace, we must make that concession. I had great discussions about this, international discussions, with my own friends.'

## WAR AND SOCIALISM

Asked to speak more in general about the subject of co-existence, Trotsky replied: 'It cannot be indefinitely, such a co-existence. Because the capitalist world is not stable . . . It is not a stable situation. And we are interested in prolonging this situation, to give the possibility to the revolutionary workers' movement to develop, not to provoke ruptures, because the Soviet Union can be abolished as a workers' state. The capitalist states are now more powerful, many times more powerful, than the Soviet state.

But we must understand that this situation is not an eternal one, that the existence of the Soviet state depends in the last analysis on the development of revolution in the capitalist countries.'

He agreed that his view was that 'in order to save the Soviet Union you have to extend the revolution to capitalist countries.' To a question about the relation between war and socialist revolution, Trotsky replied that it was like asking: 'What is your opinion of cholera and epidemics for human civilization?' 'If war comes in spite of us,' he went on, 'we will use all the means to place the responsibility on the ruling classes and to accelerate the revolution. But to wish a war—it is absurd from every point of view. What do we need with artificial means for revolution. We have a revolution in Spain without war, but we are not capable of being victorious yet.'

Finally, Trotsky declared that he believed that 'the more a party, a workers' party, is revolutionary, the less is the danger of war, because the only handicap for the imperialists in beginning a new war is the fear of a new revolution.'

## RED INTERVENTION

In a later phase of his examination, Trotsky was asked about his general attitude towards the Soviet Union's making alliances with capitalist countries. He replied: 'In so far as it can serve to preserve the Soviet Union, an alliance becomes a necessity. It is only a question of not hindering by this alliance the workers' movement abroad.' The Communist Party of the capitalist country concerned must not be 'obliged to support its government', that was the essential condition.

To a question about 'the right of a workers' state to support revolutionary bodies in foreign capitalist states', Trotsky answered: 'I declared yesterday that I considered the Soviet state as a big trade union which has become the state, a big trade union organized as the state after the

political victory. Now, the big trade union has the duty to help the weaker trade unions in other countries.'

## Those Heights

WE heard a lot in recent discussions in the Labour Party about the need to restrict nationalization to the 'commanding heights' of the economy. Those who injected the expression preferred on the whole not to explain too clearly what they meant—though they presumably knew that in Russia in 1921, when Lenin used it in outlining the New Economic Policy, it had a quite definite meaning.

Trotsky recalled that meaning in an article he wrote for an American magazine in 1935 on the subject: 'If America Should Go Communist'. Discussing the petty-bourgeoisie of the United States, he observed: 'There is no reason why these groups should offer determined resistance to the revolution; they have nothing to lose from it, provided, of course, that the revolutionary leaders adopt a far-sighted and moderate policy towards them . . . The American Soviet Government will take firm possession of the commanding heights of your economy: the banks, the key industries and the transportation and communication systems. It will give the farmers, the small tradespeople and businessmen a good long time to think things over and see how well the nationalized sector of industry is working.'

'The American Soviets', Trotsky went on, 'would not need to resort to the drastic measures which circumstances have often imposed upon the Russians. In the United States, through the science of publicity and advertising, you have means for winning the support of your middle class which were beyond the reach of the Soviets of backward Russia with its vast majority of pauperized and illiterate peasants.'

**CORRECTION:** The publishers of Julian Symons' book 'The Thirties' are the Cresset Press (not Crescent Press, as given in the last issue).

MINERS working a one-hour day! Impossible? Not according to Curly Owen. "The seven-hour day and three weeks holiday should be the first step only," he says. "Mechanisation should be able to cut hours to four, three, even one hour a day—and still improve the standard of living." "Of course" he goes on, "You'll have to change the whole system to get that. As things are now, increased mechanisation only brings the fear of men losing their jobs."

Mechanisation brings other dangers—accidents in the pit. And Safety is something else that Curly Owen feels strongly about. In fact it was over Safety that Curly had the clash with the Brodsworth Pit Management and N.U.M. officials that rocked the Yorkshire coalfield.

Thirty-nine year old Arthur (Curly) Owen has never been afraid of speaking out. Starting work at fourteen at Grimethorpe Colliery (Yorkshire), he had early experience of the Miners' fighting spirit. He can remember a union official going down on his knees in a strike meeting pleading for a return to work!

### ON THE BRANCH COMMITTEE

Leaving the army in 1946, Owen worked in Hucknall Colliery (Notts) for a while, then returned to Grimethorpe. After getting "Beat Knee" (a well known Miner's injury) he left Grimethorpe, which has all low seams, and started working in Brodsworth pit in 1949. Ten years later, he was elected to the branch committee where he worked tirelessly in the interests of the men, particularly on matters of safety.

Last July, he heard complaints that an electrically driven machine, which had been stopped by the driver when its cable was at full stretch, had been taken over by the Overman who caused the cable to be pulled out of the pummel. There were complaints that sparks had been caused. Curly raised this question at a Labour Party meeting and in a letter to the rank-and-file paper "The Miner".

This sparked off (if that's not the wrong phrase) an

# 'CURLY' OWEN

## Militant Miner



Jack Gale

enquiry by the pit management and led to a poster appearing in the baths, canteen, and pit-yard at Brodsworth condemning Owen as "malicious" and "anti-social". This scandalous poster concluded: "You are invited to draw your own conclusions as to the calibre of the person concerned and with what disrepute he should be held by yourselves in future."

### SUSPENDED

From then on all hell was let loose—for this notice carried the names of representatives of the management and also of eight members of the Brodsworth N.U.M. branch committee! At a stormy four-hundred strong branch meeting one of the signatories—Communist Party member Reuben Buffman—apologised for his action and three other committee men explained why they had refused to sign. The branch decided to hold a pit ballot to see who was in the wrong—Curly or his critics on the Committee.

The result was a foregone conclusion. So the Right-wing Officials appealed to the Barnsley Area Council to intervene. The union bureaucrats hastened to oblige and instigated a "Committee of Inquiry" which said

nothing about the ballot, but suspended Curly from Union office for three years. The men at Brodsworth immediately went on twenty-four hour's strike and Curly issued an appeal to the Area Council and distributed it at pits all round the district.

There was strong feeling in Curly's favour, not only in Brodsworth where a mass branch meeting expressed its disgust at Barnsley's action, but in surrounding pits as well. Nevertheless, Curly's appeal was turned down. We understand that the Communist Party members on the Area Council—including the well-known Jock Kane—did not vote in Curly's favour.

### WHERE DOES PAYNTER STAND?

Nevertheless, Brodsworth militants have not given up the fight. Curly has already appealed to the National Executive of the N.U.M. Militants in the Yorkshire coalfield will watch the outcome with interest. Where will Communist Will Paynter take his stand?

Meanwhile Curly continues his fight for better conditions in the pits. Every comfortable, complacent Union official, high and low, will feel uneasy as long as militants like Curly Owen keep up the battle.

For the attention of . . .

# Mr. Gaitskell

Sarah Horn

THE Labour Party was created by the working-class to fight for its interests in the political field, in exactly the same way as the Tory Party exists to promote and defend those of the ruling class.

It ought to follow that the one inexcusable offence a Labour Party member can commit is an offence against working-class interests.

In this connection the recent activities of certain Labour Party members should bear a little close investigation by the disciplinarians of Transport House. Instead of rebuking Anthony Greenwood, carpeting Konni Zilliacus and hounding the Young Socialists, let Mr. Gaitskell and his coterie turn their attention to some recent news items:

### VOICE AND VISION AT WORK

In mid-September we read that Sir Roy Welensky was hiring the London publicity firm Voice and Vision for a year, at an estimated fee of £17,000, to "sell" the idea of Federation both in this country and to Africans in Rhodesia and Nyasaland. We also learnt that there was to be a new high-pressure Director of Federal Information. This was to be Mr. Colin Black, a journalist from South Africa who, according to the Observer, "made his mark last year in his handling of Federal information during the Nyasaland emergency". (How did Mr. Black "make his mark" at that time? Was it in helping to disseminate that farrago of exaggeration and downright falsehood, the "Massacre Plot"?)

It didn't take Voice and Vision and the new

Director of Information long to show results. As the Federal Review Conference was about to assemble in London at the beginning of December, the Tory press was full of "information" from Central Africa, clearly designed to swing opinion in this country away from sympathy with the Africans' struggle for independence, and in favour of Sir Roy Welensky and Federation.

We heard that the Malawi Congress Party were opposing the Federal smallpox vaccination campaign by spreading semi-superstitious rumours that vaccine caused sterility. There were also dark hints of witch-doctors and witchcraft flourishing and being supported by "nationalist politicians".

The idea behind all this was clear enough. It was to represent the African people as backward, primitive and unfit for political independence. Federation was to be shown as the only force of light and progress capable of saving Central Africa from a return to barbarism.

### LABOUR M.P.s TAKE A HAND

At the end of November six British M.P.'s (three of them Labour members) were invited to "tour" Central Africa by invitation of Voice and Vision. Timed to coincide with the London Conference, a cable was sent to Mr. Macmillan stating that the six M.P.'s were "gravely disturbed" by the violence and intimidation of the Malawi Congress Party in Nyasaland. The Labour M.P.'s were Mr. A. Roberts (Normanton), Mr. R. E. Woof (Blaydon) and Mr. J. McCann (Rochdale).

The presence of these Labour M.P.'s helped Welensky to frustrate the people of Central Africa in their struggle against a despotic ruling class. Can they be so innocent as not to realise the dangerous game they were playing?

Who comes next on our list? Step forward, Mr. Woodrow Wyatt, Labour M.P., and Mr. Jim Matthews, member of the Labour Party National Executive Committee. These two gentlemen, we learn, are to write regular articles for Aims of Industry, the Tory propaganda organisation which spent over £100,000 on helping to defeat Labour at the last General Election.

Will the 'Shadow Cabinet' send for all these people and ask them a few searching questions?

## League Notebook

### LONDON: Public Lectures MARXISM & BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT

All timed for 7.30 p.m. on Sundays only

#### JANUARY

- 1st—British Capitalism in the '60s Tom Kemp
- 15th—The Left in British Labour Brian Pearce
- 29th—The Coming English Revolution Cliff Slaughter

#### FEBRUARY

- 12th—The Working Class in British Politics Gerry Healy
- At 186 CLAPHAM HIGH STREET, S.W.4  
(Nr. Clapham Common Underground Stn.—Northern Line)

### NOTTINGHAM Discussion Meetings

Held at 294 Mansfield Road (opposite Clarendon College).  
All at 7 p.m.

- January 1st: The present crisis in the Labour Party and the task of the Left.
- January 15th: Labour and the anti-H-Bomb fight.
- January 29th: British Labour movement and the colonial revolution.

**Do you get The Newsletter regularly?**  
Become a subscriber and make sure of your copy each week

To: Subscription Dept., THE NEWSLETTER,  
186 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4.

I wish to subscribe to The Newsletter, and enclose 5s. for 12 issues, post free or £1 per year subscription.

Name .....  
(Block letters please)

Address .....  
(Block letters please)

**Don't leave it to that chance encounter. Send in this form and become a subscriber . . . NOW!**

Published by The Newsletter, 186 Clapham High St., London, SW4  
Registered at the GPO as a newspaper  
Printed by Plough Press Ltd. (TU), r.o. 180 Clapham High St, London

### Where is Britain Going?

By LEON TROTSKY

Including an introduction, a preface for America, and the preface to the German edition.

Price: Seven Shillings and Sixpence

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