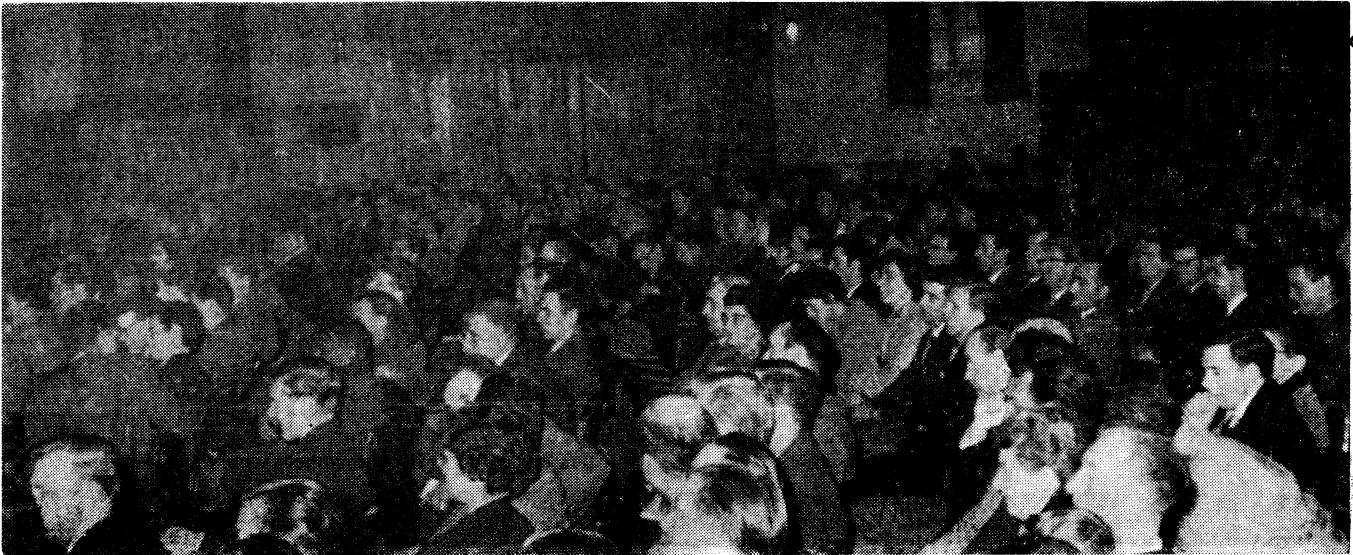


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## THE NEWSLETTER

*Weekly Journal of the Socialist Labour League*

Vol 3, No 127

Threepence

November 21 1959

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There were 283 delegates representing factories, building sites, docks, coal-mining, railways, peace organizations, Labour Youth Sections, Co-op parties, Co-op Women's Guilds, colonial organizations, Labour parties and Communist Party groups.



This remarkable gathering was summed up by **MR D. G. WILLIAM**, vice-president of the Ceylon Federation of Labour who brought greetings to the congress:

**'I have listened very carefully to the speakers and I am very impressed by this gathering of militant British workers. I am convinced that you have taken a great step forward today.'**

The Assembly of Labour marked a big step forward from the National Industrial rank-and-file conference of last year. Present at the conference were many of those prominent trade unionists who supported last year's gathering such as Hugh Cassidy, former works convenor at the Shell Mex site, South Bank; Hugh Barr, former Federation steward at Belvedere Power Station; and Mick Maguire, former secretary of stewards at Shell Mex. These comrades are actively engaged in the struggle and their presence was a powerful demonstration of confidence in the Socialist Labour League.

It was in the range of speakers that the real power of the conference was revealed. Boilermakers' steward Joe Davidson, from the giant industrial concern of Babcock and Wilcox, and apprentices' leader Joseph Waterson from the same firm were

joined at the rostrum by Oliver Bates, secretary of the Manchester dining-car strike committee, John Stones, miner from Brodsworth colliery and Gerry Fitzgerald, a miner from Coventry.

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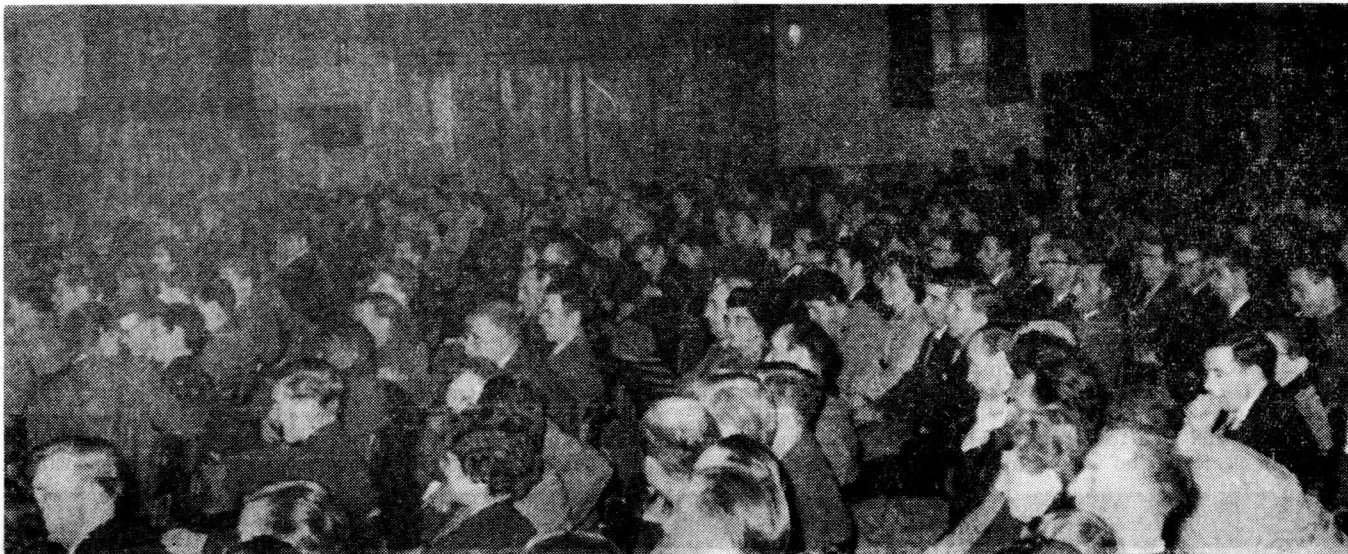
All were united on the need to go forward from the National Assembly of Labour to apply in their areas the policy which was adopted by the Assembly.

Conference decided that delegates from the different areas should constitute themselves into committees for the preparation of local assemblies and for conducting a campaign during 1960 for a recall of the National Assembly of Labour in 12 months' time.

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of the British working class and that factor alone was sufficient to silence even the greatest enemy.

The most impressive feature of the Assembly was that all shades of opinion were welcome to participate in the discussion. Because of the time limitations contributions were restricted to delegates and observers such as Pat Arrowsmith, who received a special invitation to attend the Assembly.

A small number of people hostile to the Assembly, feeling that the recent Press publicity around Mr Fryer and Mr Cadogan afforded them an opportunity to make a scene which would receive wide notice from the capitalist Press, received a powerful rebuff from the delegates. Mr Cadogan, who attended the conference as a visitor, was refused the right to speak by 76 votes to 39. Afterwards the conference granted him a concession and allowed him to speak.

Delegates, some of whom had travelled hundreds of miles to the Assembly, were extremely hostile to what was an organised attempt to add grist to the mill of the capitalist Press.

Those elements who set out to disrupt the Assembly should

take note of the new warning issued by the employers and the Right-wing trade union leaders immediately after the Assembly concluded.

On November 17 representatives of the building trade unions met representatives of Sir Robert McAlpine and Sons from the Shell, South Bank site. The Financial Times of November 18 reports the proceedings as follows: 'The Unions sought the company's assistance in organizing labour on the site. They pointed out that there was a large amount of non-union labour working there and warned that if this was not unionized the Socialist Labour League might gain influence on the site as it did in September last year.'

Needless to say, the Socialist Labour League has always supported 100 per cent trade unionism on South Bank, and it is quite clear that the Shell Mex strike of 1958 will long be remembered in employer's circles.

The Assembly has demonstrated that the Socialist Labour League is building up a solid base for itself amongst industrial workers and Labour Party members who want to see socialism.



BRIAN PEARCE

GERRY HEALY

BRIAN BEHAN

**BRIAN BEHAN** welcomed delegates and visitors to the National Assembly of Labour on behalf of the National Committee of the Socialist Labour League.

'The National Committee of the League is convinced that our discussion here today will mark a great step forward in the building and construction of a powerful socialist movement. We mean to solve the crisis of capitalism at the expense of the capitalists by their removal and the establishment of a socialist society.

'This weekend we will be deciding on a different programme, a different method of struggle from past political organizations in Britain. We will discuss how best we can unite the working class in struggle. When we say that, we also say that we reject the reformist methods of solving the problems in society. We reject the advice of the capitalists and their lackeys that all we need do is collaborate with capitalism, that we can solve our problems in line with the wishes of capitalism. When people tell us that, we say that all the working class received

as a result of long years of collaboration between 1920 and 1939 was unemployment, economic crisis and a world war.

'The road to struggle for the unification of the working class is the only means by which we can finally abolish capitalism and open a whole new era for humanity.'

Brian Behan spoke of the Press campaign against the Socialist Labour League and of talk of splits in the movement.

'The Socialist Labour League stands today more united than ever. This movement cannot be split because it is part of the objective needs of the working class to establish socialism. When the Socialist Labour League calls an Assembly of Labour it is really attempting to prepare the working class for the struggles that lie ahead.

'We have absolute confidence in the strength of the working class in Britain. Once this working class begins to move there is no power on earth that can prevent it from building a new society.

'This Assembly of Labour can go forward to build a unity in action that can prevent the betrayals of the past.'

**GERRY HEALY**, national secretary of the Socialist Labour League, moved the five-point resolution of the Assembly on behalf of the League:

'The election of a Tory government has changed the political situation in Britain,' he declared. 'Unfortunately the discussion in the Labour movement is proceeding as yet without real knowledge of what that change means.'

'The election of the Tory government was another development in the struggle which the employers in this country have waged against the working class since 1956. This offensive has now been politically consolidated by the result of the general election.'

### Reduce costs at expense of living standards

Mr Amory, the Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke to a bankers' dinner last week about the buoyancy of the British economy, but the most important part of his speech was that it would be necessary to reduce costs in order to compete on the overseas market with the rivals of British capitalism.

'We think that this drive to reduce costs is one of the main reasons for the struggles taking place throughout industry at the present time and lies behind the efforts of the government to cut down the number of miners, of dockers and of railway-men employed in the nationalized industries.'

'If we examine the reasons for this,' Healy went on, 'they all add up to one thing. That the introduction of new techniques and machines is now being arranged so that more and more work can be done by fewer and fewer people. In this way the exploitation of those at work can be so organized that what is being produced today can be got from fewer people.'

The Socialist Labour League did not say that a slump was imminent. What it did say was that the employers were out to cut costs for the export markets, therefore the character of the struggles in the next period will be determined by efforts on the part of the employers to reduce the standard of living.

Fortunately we have a working class of which the overwhelming majority are employed. 'It is a working class that is strong in spirit. It is a working class that is prepared to resist the employers' attack.'

### Rank and file resist

Gerry Healy gave us as an example the recent strike of dining car men who are not regarded as the strongest section of the trade union movement in this country. Because of their rank-and-file action, they had been able to force the leaders of their union to negotiate direct with them. This showed how unofficial action can make an impression upon the official union machine.

'This stubborn resistance is extremely important because whilst the Tories may have one policy to reduce costs and create a pool of unemployed and whilst they have a parliamentary majority to uphold this decision, nevertheless the working class in this country are not in any way defeated and stand as a powerful body resisting these attempts on the part of the Tories.'

Gerry Healy then commented on the wave of unofficial strikes. The Socialist Labour League had been blamed for fomenting these strikes. What nonsense that was. The real cause of the strikes was the employers, who were not prepared to part with a little of their vast profits to the workers.

### Tories prepare anti-working-class legislation

He poured scorn on the right-wing of the TUC, people like Sir Tom O'Brien, who condemned unofficial strikes, but who did nothing about unemployment.

'The employers and the Press say that there must be more responsibility amongst trade unionists and fewer wildcat strikes. There are approximately half-a-million unemployed in this country. I have yet to see the newspapers going down to the Labour Exchanges complaining about the number of

manhours lost by that half-a-million.

If you take the total figures for last year, three-and-a-half million working days were lost as a result of strikes, both official and unofficial, but 125 million working days were lost because of unemployment.'

The Press, acting as the agents of the employers were trying to create an atmosphere where the government could introduce legislation against strikes and strikers. They were always talking about the intervention of outside political groups in strikes—but the Press itself is constantly intervening with advice and exhortation to workers.

'Just because supporters of the League might be selling their paper around the area of the strike, we will not allow the Press to create the situation that we are responsible for the strike.'

### Workers control will gain support

The Socialist Labour League, he declared, felt 'that the struggles that are going to take place in industry will not be simply strike struggles of the type we have experienced in the past. The Socialist Labour League is not a strike-happy organization and we are not particularly interested in strikes for strikes' sake.'

Healy condemned the Right-wing leaders who led their members into strikes without preparation, so ensuring hardship and suffering for their members. 'We think it is highly possible you might have big unions involved in strikes and since they go into these struggles completely unprepared the workers can suffer serious defeats.'

The League believed that the demand for workers' control would come more and more to the forefront in the next period. In industries where the employers were unable to maintain people at work the demand would come for the nationalization of the industries under workers' control with a drastic reduction in compensation.

### The Labour Party crisis

Gerry Healy next dealt with the discussion going on inside the Labour Party and contrasted it with the discussion at the National Assembly of Labour.

'You can discuss as much as you like in these "discussions only" meetings as to why Labour lost the election but you can't decide on anything.'

The discussion in the Labour Party was artificial because it ignored the power of the working class.

### A programme for action

'The programme which we are presenting to you today is different from all other policies advocated by any other section of the Labour movement because each point outlined in that programme is a point that already has the support of considerable numbers of workers throughout the country.'

'We say that it is necessary to end the manufacture of the H-bomb. The struggle for peace is all important. We believe that the road to peace is the fight on the class front for socialism. You must make every strike a victorious strike, every struggle against the employers a successful struggle. You must support the colonial people in struggle everywhere.'

'We are opposed to class collaboration on the question of peace. We therefore believe that a socialist Britain should stop the manufacture of the H-bomb as part of the international struggle against imperialism as a whole.'

'The struggle for the 40-hour week is part of the struggle against the H-bomb. It can only be won in conflict with the employers. We do not exclude the fact that you might get a reduction of hours through negotiation, but if you want the 40-hour week you must be prepared to have a real struggle as they did in France in 1936 with their great wave of sit down strikes.'

'The Socialist Labour League is for the struggle for the 40-hour week. We are for all struggles to improve wages and conditions. We believe that right is entirely on the side of the working class in this period of tremendous profits.'

'We are opposed to all rent increases and particularly those imposed by Labour Councils, such as the disgraceful situation in Birmingham. You must bring into the struggle all the forces of the working class to stop this attempt to reduce the standards of living of the people. We are proud to have in this audience representatives of tenants' associations, including some from the St Pancras Tenants' Association because this Assembly sees that the fight against rent increases is part of the common struggle.

'We are for the extension of nationalization to all the basic industries, particularly engineering, under workers' control and with a reduction in compensation. To pay out tens of thousands of pounds in compensation to large finance corporations for further speculation in the interests of capitalism is nonsense economically.

'We do not believe that because racist outbreaks are confined to a few areas in this country at the present time that this question is a little thing. We think the Fascist groups of tomorrow will be drawn from the racist gangs of today. It is part of the long-term preparations of the employers to split the working class and to introduce amongst backward elements in particular, means whereby they can be divided off from the common struggle for socialism.

'Government legislation is useless. The period in which the Nazis grew most powerful was when they were actually illegal. You cannot defeat the forces of Fascism and reaction by legislation. It is part of the struggle for socialism.

'We think that the working class in these areas affected by racialism should join hands with their coloured brothers and resist all attempts to attack these workers and to divide them

off from the struggle of the white people in this country. The Labour movement in these areas must become an integral part of that struggle.

'This struggle against racialism is bound up with the struggle for colonial independence. We must march hand in hand with the colonial people. Each time they weaken imperialism so they facilitate our struggle here. If we permit any kind of wedge to be driven between ourselves and the colonial people we will not get socialism in Britain.'

Gerry Healy dealt with the fight against the bans and proscriptions. Morgan Phillips was trying to prevent discussion on policy inside the Labour Party.

'You will not be able to prevent the Labour movement from discussing when miners, dockers and engineers go into action. You will have discussion whether you have Transport House or not.'

'We ask all members of the Communist Party and all members of the Labour Party join in this campaign to end all bans and proscriptions and domination from the right-wing at the top.'

The national secretary of the Socialist Labour League concluded by saying:

'We are extremely confident of the success of this Assembly, despite the relatively small numbers involved at the present time. This very important meeting, if it decides on the policy I have outlined to you, will go forward with a policy that meets the requirements of the working class and all those struggling for peace at the present time. It will unite them all in a common struggle for socialism.'

## Discussion



**JIM ALLEN**, a Lancashire miner and member of the editorial board of 'The Miner.'

He said that there were about 39 miners present at the conference. He criticized the policy of the executive and in particular the policy of two leading members of the Communist Party, Will Paynter and Abe Moffat.

'Paynter made one of his great militant speeches, "Not a man for the road," he said. "We will not tolerate any unemployment in the pits." Today many

miners have been unemployed for something like six months.

'Devon Pit was the first great opportunity with miners prepared to go on strike against pit closures. The strike took place when 60 miners refused to come up until the National Coal Board took back the decision that Devon Pit would close. The strike spread rapidly, within 24 hours 20,000 miners were out and then, at the eleventh hour, along strode Abe Moffat and he called off the strike, although this strike had been planned months before by members of the Communist Party.'



**OLIVER BATES**, Secretary of the Dining Car Strike Committee, Manchester. 'I would like to ask you if you have ever seen a wildcat before, because that is what the capitalist press calls me.

'This infiltration of our services by the Pullman Cars has been going on for many years, it is not a recent thing. Over the past two years the dining car men have become more militant, more vigilant and have been watching what has been going on. We have made protest after protest through the organiza-

tional channels since the 1958 conference of the Catering Section. Finally we got to the annual general meeting of the NUR

which passed a resolution saying that the union was completely opposed to the extension of the Pullman Car Service and that the Pullman organization should be assimilated within British Railways. When it came before the Executive Council they decided to defer consideration of it.

'The Executive Council have been negotiating for better rates of pay and conditions of service for the Pullman boys. They were in a position to bargain, but the E.C. allowed the Pullman Car Co. to include together the two questions of rates of pay and conditions of service along with the extension of the services. The Pullman management said that they could give no further negotiations on the rates of pay unless the other question was discussed and the E.C. overthrew the resolution of the Annual General Meeting.

'We could see that by protesting through the normal channels our efforts were going to be of no avail, that we had to take a resolute stand.

'The lesson is plain if your leaders do not do what you want them to do, then you have got to let those leaders see that you mean business.'



**GEOFF KENNEDY**, London busman. 'Wages and conditions and the life of Transport and General Workers' Union members are worse than those of anyone else. Lorry drivers, often away from home three or four days at a time, take home £9 15s. a week.

'Townsend, the national secretary of the passenger group, having just come back from selling the busmen out in Sheffield, was now saying "Look at me, I'm a militant" because he was claiming £1 a week increase for busworkers.

'Yet the leaders of the T.G.W.U. have helped the right wing controlled Sheffield Council to force the Sheffield busmen back to work.

'How can you trust these leaders to get you anything? They won't get you even 2s. a week.'

'We must form a movement of the rank-and-file in all the depots and garages to fight for our rights; against the bigger buses and for our wage increase.'



**WALLY STEVENS**, a delegate from the Abbey Wood building site, said that he welcomed the idea of the conference even more so because he knew that every contribution would be listened to.

'The situation in which the conference is taking place is an extremely good one so far as the working people are concerned, in as far as we have a Tory Government preparing to attack the working class and secondly alongside this we are beginning to rethink in the Labour Party.'

He disagreed with the Socialist Labour League on a number of points. 'As the attacks come from the Tory government and the rethinking takes place in the Labour Party arising from them, what is the role of the Socialist Labour League? It is isolated from the main stream of the Labour movement, as indeed the Communist Party is. We have the position where the S.L.L. is spearheading the attack from outside the Labour movement. This sectarian step should not have been taken.'

He said that 1960 would be a decisive year for the working class and because of the discussion in the Labour Party, the Socialist Labour League should be able to get its policies accepted by a vast number of people. But they were outside it.



**PAT ARROWSMITH**, said that she was speaking as a full-time worker for the Direct Action Committee against Nuclear War. Before she took on that job she had been a member of a trade union, Confederation of Health Service Employees, but had been sacked for circulating a petition against nuclear armament.

'We are living in a situation where we and most of the people in the world could be wiped out at a moment's notice and this seems to me to be something

quite beyond any other issue that we have to contend with today.

'I think that probably everybody in this room would like to see world disarmament. But if you hope to get it you must begin to take a stand on this issue. Every single person must take a stand by taking what action they can in their organisations.

'I think that the problem of the hydrogen bomb is certainly tied up very closely with the problem of vested interests. But I also think that it is not simply tied up with the class struggle.'

She went on to outline the work of the Direct Action Committee at Stevenage and on various rockets sites. And spoke about a group of people from Ghana, the United Kingdom, the U.S.A., France and India who were proposing to enter the test area for the French A-bomb. 'The fact that individuals are prepared to make this sort of protest involving a possible very, very real sacrifice is something acting as a focus point to people throughout Africa and support for this protest is being built up around the fact that there are individuals prepared to take this sort of action.'

Speaking of the actions of various groups of workers against nuclear weapons by token strikes, etc., she appealed to the people present at the conference to organize token strikes in support of the group protesting against the French bomb or in support of the picketing of the Harrington rocket base on January 2.



**RON KELLY**, a West Indian delegate from the North Kensington branch of the Socialist Labour League spoke about the racist attacks on coloured people in North Kensington.

'The fascist faction are fighting coloured workers claiming that they come here to lower the working conditions of the British working class. The reason why the coloured workers come to this country is because of the evils of British imperialism. We come here because we cannot find the means of

existence in our own country.

'A great factor in world politics is the colonial upheaval we see through the whole colonial world. I feel that it is vitally important that the strength of the common people all over the world be united against the common enemy imperialism.'



**ALASDAIR MACINTYRE**, lecturer in philosophy at Leeds University and a delegate from the Leeds branch of the Socialist Labour League.

'This National Assembly is the beginning of a real reawakening of the Labour movement. This is the first step towards a completely new type of activity in the British Labour movement and that is why it is very important that we have here today not only comrades from the docks and the mines, but also comrades who are students and who are teachers.

Comrades who have the specific task here and now to help to raise the standards of work in the movement by helping to ensure that all our activity is guided by theory.

'Intellectuals have got to learn that they are not sent from heaven or the Fabian Society in order to guide the Labour movement from above with their theorizing, and on the other hand intellectuals might as well not be in the Labour movement if they are simply going to be the office boys of the trade union bureaucrats.'

He went on to speak of the lessons to be learnt from the struggles of the past and how the intellectuals have to explain theory.

'Marxist theory can provide a guide to what can be done and what must be done. That is why we need a Marxist Party, because only through the Marxist party can this unity of intellectuals and workers really be constructed.'



**DENNIS TRIM**, a delegate from a Labour Party Ward in North London said that he had been an active member of the Labour Party for many years and had very reluctantly come to the conclusion that you could not get socialism through the Labour Party.

'I had never heard of the Socialist Labour League before the Labour Party proscribed them. I helped second a resolution protesting against this and I was then asked to join the League. I did not join the Socialist Labour League

light-heartedly. I thought a very long time about it. At first I refused. The reason why I refused was that I had the impression they might be just another sectarian society which would be ineffective. I am not interested in any body which is going to be ineffective. I joined because I felt that here at last there was a hope. I have gone round the streets from time to time and I sense this feeling of frustration. A few years ago the Labour Party was known as "we". Now the feeling is "them". I would like to appeal to all Labour Party members here: come off the fence, you must decide what you are going to do one way or another. Fill up the forms and join the Socialist Labour League.'



**JOHN STONES**, miner from Brodsworth Colliery, said that he would speak about his own industry.

'This last weekend we have had in the national Press a statement about one of my fellow committee-men, Curly Owen. He has been vilified for a statement regarding the running of our pit. I would like to say here and now that I do not believe for one single moment that it is right for any trade union branch to vilify a fellow trade unionist on behalf of the management and to sign a statement

along with the management to this effect.'

Bro. Stones went on to speak about the management of the industry.

'We have the same clique ruling the industry that put us out in 1926. We have the same Tories in power controlling the nationalized industries and they are just beginning to show their spots.' He said that the decision of the disputes machinery was supposed to be accepted by both sides. The miners and the trade unions did this, but the management flouted it.

This was going on in all industries.

He finished by saying: 'We must unite together. The engineers' fight is our fight, the electricians' is our fight, the motor car trade is our fight. If we don't all come together we might just as well give up.'



**P. O'DONOVAN**, a delegate from the Irish Workers' Union, spoke of the need to create a workers' republic in Ireland.

'No party or group in Ireland will undertake this task. A group of Irish workers have come together and decided that the time is now ripe to start off and to work for the working people in Ireland. This organization calls itself the Irish Workers' Union. It aims to organize the Irish working-class in Britain in a militant fashion, to base itself on the trade unions and on the real needs of

the Irish. We will, of course, need a lot of support from the British workers and we hope that you will assist us in every possible way.'



**JOSEPH WATERSON**, Babcock and Wilcox Apprentices' delegate. 'I would like just to speak about young people. We in the Clyde feel that the trade union leaders are selling us out. We put forward a claim for a wage increase and each time it has been rejected. As Mr. Healy said, they just wanted to stay in their centrally-heated offices. So we formed committees in the Clyde to do something about this ourselves. For too long the apprentices have been pushed into the background. A wage

demand has been lying with the employers for six years. We have to eat and we have to pay the same prices as adults.

'A lot could be said about our working conditions. We decided not to sit back and hope for the best.'

He then quoted from a leaflet distributed amongst apprentices on the Clyde, which demanded the recognition of apprentices' committees by the employers.

'The employers don't want anything to do with us and when we take it to the adult union they are too busy with their own affairs to bother. We feel that we need recognition in the factory and we will deal with our own grievances.'

He spoke about the indentures which apprentices have to sign. 'Before I can start I have got to sign my name to a very elaborate set of indentures which say that I must work

overtime when told, I must go on nightshift, I must work away from home when told to. I feel that there is a very definite need for nationalization of industry to get that done away with.'



**GERRY FITZGERALD**, a miner and secretary of the Keresley, Coventry, Tenants' Association, who pledged £5 to the collection.

'There is a real need for a rank and file movement in the trade union movement. I can appreciate this in my own area. My tenants' association was formed purely and simply because we needed a rank-and-file movement to fight our union leaders.' The National Coal Board had implemented the Tory rent increases and the result was that rents

had been raised in some cases from 18s. to 38s. 3d.

'The Area Secretary of the N.U.M. said to me "The National Executive of the N.U.M. have decided, rightly or wrongly, that they are not going to fight any case in the courts of any tenant being evicted due to non-payment of rent."

'These miners I am talking about only receive £9 top wage. And they could not afford the increases. That was one proof where the rank and file movement was needed to come in to force the N.U.M. to act.'

Bro. Fitzgerald went on to give another example of the victimization of four brothers at Binley pit, who had been chucked out because they were so-called agitators.

'They came to us and we formed our own rank-and-file organization. We drew out the southern part of Warwickshire. First my own pit came out, then it was pit after pit. Although we beat the N.C.B. over the victimization the whole ending of the struggle was that we were actually fighting against our own union.

'So, comrades, if at any time you have any doubts about the Socialist Labour League, remember that it is a rank-and-file movement and as long as it stays that way I would ask you to give it your full support.'



**JOE DAVIDSON**, Boilermakers' Shop Steward, Babcock and Wilcox, spoke about the introduction of new machines. There had been no forethought on the part of the employers or the trade unions.

The employers were saying that one or two men could operate a machine which did the jobs previously done by 16, 8 or 5 men.

'I think that we have got to have a year's notice of the introduction of these new machines. We have got to have

consultation or we are going to feel the draught and there is sure to be heavy unemployment. The trade union leaders are saying that they are asking for another one man, but I feel that we shall have to drop the working week to 20 hours yet, it is the only way to prevent mass unemployment.'

Brother Davidson took issue with an earlier speaker who had criticized the leadership of the N.U.M., and especially Abe Moffat.

'I know the miners are very militant and if they think Abe Moffat's ideas are wrong they should tell him so. It is not very long ago that Bill Carron said that he would not ask for a wage increase but for the 40-hour week. The engineers from the branches put forward resolutions saying that they wanted a raise this year plus the 40-hour week. Mr. Carron said "You are asking too much; I will be prepared to go for a 40-hour week, I think that is the best." Well the A.E.U. told him different and told him that they instructed him to ask for both. And he did so.'



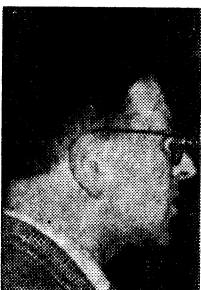
**RON FLOREY**, delegate from the Bradford C.N.D.

'The sense of urgency that many of us feel about the abolition of nuclear weapons does not seem to have entered into the Socialist Labour League. A socialist Britain must make a stand against the H-bomb, but there is a Fascist in France and there is no doubt that he will use his bomb to show his strength in Algeria when the time is opportune.'

He went on to criticize the C.N.D., who had urged their supporters to vote

for Frank Cousin's proposal at the Trades Union Congress. In conclusion comrade Florey said :

'I think that the Socialist Labour League should stress this fight against the H-bomb more rather than concentrate so much on industrial action. We must fight to get rid of capitalism at the same time as getting rid of the bomb.'



**HARRY FINCH**, a delegate from the Birmingham Branch of the S.L.L. and a member of the Editorial Board of The Newsletter, spoke about the role of the Newsletter in the struggle to build a united rank-and-file movement. He said that one of the things the paper did was to open its pages to workers on strike to put their case.

'We make no apology for giving the London bus workers half the Newsletter so that garage representatives should be linked together in their fight on the wage

claim. We gave space to the Shell-Mex strikers for them to bring their struggle to the rest of the trade union and Labour movement.'

He appealed to shop stewards' committees, trade union committees and tenants' associations to use the paper to explain their struggles to the rest of the working class.

'Of course The Newsletter is not just a strike bulletin, it is a political paper based on Marxist principles. The Newsletter is an organizer as well as just a reporter of workers' struggles. It organizes workers who are in dispute and links them with workers in the rest of the country.'

'Take bundle orders of The Newsletter into the factory and sell it to your workmates. Help The Newsletter with articles and money. Help us build it into a big paper, the genuine voice of organized labour fighting capitalism.'



**HARRY RATNER**, delegate from the Broughton A.E.U. and a member of the Salford Labour Party, spoke of the need to bring trade unionists into the Labour Party, to bring the class struggle into the local Labour Parties and stop them being mere electoral organizations.

'The job of militants is to convince workers of the need to take their fight back into the Labour Party.'

Speaking of the efforts of Transport House to prevent discussion on the policy of the Socialist Labour League in the

party, he said :

'For every single member expelled by Transport House, a dozen industrial workers influenced by the Socialist Labour League and its ideas will come back into the Labour Party and the ideas of the Socialist Labour League will triumph.'

'Groups like Victory for Socialism will continue to fail so long as they ignore the fact that the powerhouse of the labour movement is the strength of the workers in the factories and in the linking of the struggles in the factories, mines and on the docks.'



**JOE HANCOCK**, Liverpool harbour worker and editor of the 'Harbour Workers' Voice,' spoke about the need for rank-and-file organization. He explained the causes of the recent tugmen's strike on the Mersey and the victimization of a man who was reduced from skipper to mate.

'Bearing in mind the enormous victimization this man suffered I will tell you something that has not yet been revealed. This man, two years ago, helped to lead into our union 20 tugboatmen from the

Waterways' branch of the T.G.W.U. We were forced by the Bridlington Agreement to return these men to the union from whence they came. Thereafter they were waiting for a mistake. I saw this man a little before the strike started. I approached him to help start a rank-and-file organization on the Mersey. The first mistake he made after that, he was reduced to mate.

'What did the trade union officials do about this? They said, "we cannot interfere in the prerogative of management to discipline members." They were in effect disciplining him themselves.'

'In the end the men went back to work. The tugowners know officials will not fight. Now they can victimize any man in that fleet.'

'The answer is the formation of rank-and-file organization. We have set up on Merseyside a rank-and-file provisional portworkers' committee. We must continue to fight to impose the demands of the rank and file upon the trade union leaders who themselves are paid by our funds and yet refused to fight on our behalf.'

'One rank-and-file movement must link up with another. You cannot fight sectionally. The rank-and-file movement in the harbours must unite with miners, and the miners must unite with engineers and present a united front to the employers that is unbreakable.'



**GRACE JACOBS**, delegate from the Crawley Co-op. Women's Guild, described the victimization of militants in Crawley New Town. 'We had a rent strike in Crawley and I haven't been able to get a job in Crawley since.'

She went on to speak about how a group of people had acted as a committee of the Trades Council on trade union recruitment. This committee has produced a leaflet calling on all workers to join their trade union and setting out the legally accepted conditions under which they should work.

'If you have a glint in your eye and can look straight at the management you are sacked and victimized.'



**JACK GALE** made an appeal on behalf of the Socialist Labour League to those present at the Assembly to join the League. He described what sort of organization the League is and said :

'We want you to join the Socialist Labour League, but we don't want you to join it in a lighthearted manner because we are not really running a coffee-club organization, but an organization participating in the class struggle against the employers, and that is a serious business. We will ask you to work for

socialism, to sacrifice for socialism, and also to study and to learn for socialism. In doing this you will be in the same struggle as the people of the Soviet Union, of Algeria and of Asia and this is the most noble struggle known to mankind, the battle for socialism.'





**STAN WALL**, a Birmingham electrician and delegate from the Birmingham Branch of the S.L.L.

'I will confine myself to the question of racialism. We find that when we want to get any dirty work done by any young British soldier in the colonies such as Kenya we have got to instil in the minds of these lads that they are racially superior, and it is by virtue of this that we had quite a number of outbreaks in the colonies.

'I know that statements were made in the programme of the Labour Party during the course of the election campaign but it most certainly didn't get the message over either to the members of the Labour Party or to the floating voters.

'I find that racialism has a lot to do with landlordism. The question of landlordism has brought a lot of racialism to the fore. In most of the districts where outbreaks of racialism occur the rents are high and the conditions can only be called lousy and insanitary. But both white and coloured workers are the common victims of landlordism.

'The employing class will also try to kid us that unemployment is caused by immigration. If the bosses and the landlords are able to drive this home then, of course, they will weaken and split the ranks of the working class and give a chance to Fascist infiltration. If we don't win the Labour movement to the point of view expressed in the resolution then the next target will be the trade unions themselves. The Fascists will not restrict their violence to coloured people. It is our duty to protect the lives and the homes of coloured people.'



**JIMMY SHIPP**, a delegate from the Abbey Wood building site, appealed for support for strikers at the Shell Mex site, South Bank. He recalled the struggle when McAlpine's sacked the total labour force from the site, and asked all the delegates to go back to their factories and workshops to collect what they could for the electricians who are striking for better wages and conditions at Shell Mex House.



**TOM COWAN**, delegate from the Socialist Advance League moved a resolution: calling for immediate steps to lay the basis for the formation of a revolutionary socialist party, independent of reformist and class collaborationist forces.

In his contribution comrade Cowan opposed the idea that you could get wage increases or improvements in conditions from the present trade union leadership:

'I think that everybody this side of the platform has been one in condemna-

tion of the Labour leaders and the trade union bureaucrats. Yet the policy of the Socialist Labour League "is one of recruiting members to the Labour Party and of giving critical support for the Labour Party."

'The Socialist Advance League considers that the struggle of the working class to establish socialism must be the act of the working class itself. The 40-hour week must be raised on a political and a class basis; where they are the ones to develop the leadership against not only the Tory government but also against the capitalist class as a whole.'

'There are such people as Gaitskell and Bevan and we find that the Socialist Labour League actually are calling upon the workers to give these people critical support. We consider that to tell the working class to give their support to such people is not assisting the workers to break free from reformism.'



**PETER CADOGAN**, a Cambridge schoolteacher, spoke about peace and war:

'The question of peace and war is the most fundamental question and it underlines all others. We need a much clearer picture of where we stand and just where we are going. Socialists are nothing if not internationalist. The greatest slogan in the armoury of socialist ideas is "Workers of the world unite."

Cadogan went on to speak about the betrayals of the Second and Third Internationals which led to World War II. 'How can we bring our internationalism into action in time to stop world war III?'

We should realize the essential oneness of the people of Western Europe through a revolutionary renaissance. A socialist united States of Europe would confound tyrants everywhere.

## REPLY

In replying to the discussion **GERRY HEALY** said: 'We are extremely grateful to all the delegates, observers and anyone who has spoken from the rostrum for the serious way they have attempted to advance their points of view.'

'That was the purpose for which we organized this great Assembly. Represented here are all shades of opinion in addition to people who represent hundreds and thousands of workers. We have real power in this meeting.

'Compare this conference to that of the recent Tribune meeting. You did not have a single rank-and-file trade unionist speak about his experiences in relation to the Labour Party at that meeting. In this audience you not only have rank-and-file trade unionists but you have people who have real influence on jobs and in industry.

Gerry Healy concluded by calling for local assemblies of labour:

'We want the delegates from this Assembly to go forward when you return home to organize local assembly conferences, to organize joint campaigns amongst people who may differ from us in many respects but who agree with us in some respects. We want these recall conferences to take place throughout the country, as part of the preparations for a national recall conference of this Assembly next year.

'I want to thank you very much for this splendid discussion and I want to ask you to vote unanimously for the resolution proposed by the National Committee of the Socialist Labour League on the five points.'

The resolution was then put to the vote and carried unanimously. The Assembly concluded with the singing of the International.

## Resolution carried unanimously

- An end to the manufacture and testing of the H-bomb as well as the destruction of all existing stockpiles of atomic weapons;
- The strengthening of the fight for the forty-hour week, higher wages, defence of jobs and defence of shop stewards, against rent increases;
- A fight for the extension of nationalization;
- A fight against oppression in the colonies and against racialism in Britain;
- A fight against the bans and proscriptions inside the entire Labour movement and the trade unions.