

# THE NEWSLETTER

Weekly Journal of the Socialist Labour League

Vol. 4, No 146

Threepence

April 9, 1960

## SOUTH AFRICAN REPRESSION GROWS

### South Wales Miners call for Embargo

By JAMES BAKER



*Part of the crowd at last Sunday's Socialist Labour League Demonstration in Trafalgar Square*

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No praise is too high for the heroism of our proletarian brothers in South Africa. They are unarmed and starving. Their leaders are in prison or in exile. Police terrorists are breaking into their homes to drive them to work with clubs and whips. Saracen armoured cars are poised to shoot them down without mercy. Heart-rending scenes are taking place in the streets of the Union of South Africa. Horrors that make one's blood run cold have become commonplace occurrences. Women and children, old men and young are being stopped in the streets and lashed until they are unconscious. 'There is blood everywhere,' said an African nurse. 'We are doing our best for the injured, but we have run out of bandages.' But the resistance of the working class in Capetown, Johannesburg, Durban and Port Elizabeth has not been broken. Their strike against the butchery of the Verwoerd police State goes on. Such a people can never be defeated.

No condemnation is strong enough for the racist fiends who are temporarily in control of the State in South Africa. But their fate is sealed. Nothing can save them from the vengeance of those whom they have despised and tortured for so long.

But what is the British working class to do in this period? We may repudiate contemptuously the representatives of the capitalist class in Britain who installed the Nationalists in power, and who now like Selwyn Lloyd, counsel 'patience, understanding and time' as the means by which South Africa's

(Continued on Page 110)

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**THE NEWSLETTER**  
186 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4  
Telephone Macaulay 7029  
SATURDAY, APRIL 9 1960

### CLASS ACTION—THE ONLY ANSWER

WHY has the South African Boycott campaign faded out of public activity since the Labour Party's demonstration on March 24? Until that demonstration, thousands of young people thronged the steps of South Africa House day and night, protesting against the South African white terror. A considerable number of arrests were made and fines imposed.

Now, precisely at the time when the terror is getting worse, the campaign has dwindled. The Communist Party has not organized a single central public meeting or demonstration on South Africa. The Labour Party has confined itself to London and avoided calling similar demonstrations in the other main cities. What is the reason for this betrayal?

It is our opinion that the campaign on South Africa is being deliberately played down in order not to embarrass Macmillan's trip to the summit conference. An organized movement to place an embargo on South African goods, backed by militant demonstrations all over the country, would embarrass the Tory government.

Tied as they are to the chariot of Tory foreign policy, the Labour leaders have no fundamental differences with Macmillan. The Stalinists of King Street, whose every decision must reflect the requirements of the Soviet bureaucracy, are hoping that their inactivity will impress Macmillan and draw him closer to the camp of Soviet diplomacy. It is for this reason that they, too, do not want to embarrass the Tory chieftian. Both camps want to avoid like the plague the development of class struggle in Britain which would be the only answer to the South African racialists.

Fortunately, the great solidarity traditions of the Labour movement are beginning to manifest themselves. The decision of the South Wales miners calling for dockers and seamen to refuse to handle South African goods, has broken the class truce.

This is a splendid decision, worthy of the great traditions of the Jolly George and the Haruna Maru. It will cheer the embattled workers of Cato Manor, Nyanga and Sharpeville. It provides a clear lead for the whole of the Labour movement at a time when its leadership is prostrate before the politicians of the City of London.

The Socialist Labour League calls upon all supporters of the Boycott movement, no matter what their political beliefs, to step up the campaign against Verwoerd and his gangsters. We may have disagreements on many things, but any action, no matter how small, is preferable to the present blanket of silence.

We call upon Communist Party members to support the members of their party on the South Wales Miners' Executive who have called for an embargo on South African goods.

We call upon all members of the Labour Party and the trade unions to organize powerful demonstrations, particularly in those ports where goods for South Africa are being handled.

Lastly, we call upon those workers engaged in the manufacture of arms and military equipment going to South Africa to refuse to load these goods for the South African government. We call upon the workers of Alvis Motors to stop making Saracen armoured cars for South Africa.

Class action along these lines is the only answer which can produce effective results for the South African people. Time is short. Unless we take such action now we will, whether we like it or not, share the guilt of wielding the policeman's whip as it beats down murderously on the bare backs of the South African working class.

(Continued from page 109)

problems will be solved! Shall we have patience and understanding while our comrades in South Africa are being tortured? Shall we allow murderers time to commit further crimes? That is out of the question!

But what shall we say of those Labour Party spokesmen like the Rt. Hon. Arthur Creech-Jones, MP, former Secretary of State for the Colonies, who maintained last Saturday that 'Britain can do little to change the state of affairs in South Africa except to use moral influence'. Or like the Labour Party spokesman for Commonwealth Affairs Mr. Hilary Marquand, MP, who last Sunday confined himself to the view that 'it is good to know that the Security Council intend to take a continuing interest.'

We must make it clear that these faint-hearted politicians do not speak for the British working class. We have no confidence in the desire or the capacity of the United Nations Organization to intervene on behalf of the working class in South Africa.

We are not interested in applying moral pressure to fascist thugs. Nor will we go out of our way to condemn the Pan-Africanist Congress which has led the heroic resistance of the African working class as 'plain chauvinists' (New Statesman, April 2, 1960). We will support all those who are fighting against oppression.

A police State has been brought into existence in South Africa so that even the Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg is in danger of arrest and had to take refuge in Swaziland.

### British Labour must act now

The Pan-Africanist Congress has appealed for support to be withdrawn from the Nationalist Government of South Africa and for the setting-up of a provisional government. If such a government is set up which contains representatives of all parties and groups genuinely engaged in the struggle against the Nationalist government it will have the support of the working class in Britain. Such a provisional government is likely to announce a programme which will include the abolition of the pass system, universal adult franchise, the guarantee of rights of political association and trade union organization. It will probably campaign for the holding of elections to a constituent assembly, for the immediate raising of wages to a minimum of £1 a day and for the division of the land among propertyless African farmers.

At the same time as full support is given by the working class to such a provisional government it should also impose an immediate embargo on all goods for South Africa. Such a policy will bring into existence what Mr. Eric Luow, Macmillan and Eisenhower most fear, a proletarian State in which there is no difference between black and white. It will help to do so not only in South Africa but also in Britain and in the USA.

## LETTER

### THE ANGRY SILENCE

Having now seen the film 'The Angry Silence', it is clear that every word of Benita Teper's article (Newsletter, 19.3.60) is very true. I think, however, that one very important point was not brought out, and in view of the constant misrepresentation in this respect (as in others concerning workers) by the general press, it was disappointing not to find the Newsletter stressing it.

In almost all the cases of 'sending a blackleg to Coventry', no violence is used. But much is made of the suffering (?) caused to the blackleg when his workmates refuse to have anything to do with him. The point always seems to be missed that if a man is so concerned about the friendship of his workmates, then he should also be concerned enough not to go against the vast majority of them in matters where their very livelihood is at stake.

A. ANDERSON.

# South Africa, the H-Bomb and the Summit

By R. PENNINGTON

**De Gaulle has now exploded his second A-bomb. At the same time as the pall of smoke was rising over the Sahara another explosion of a different kind took place in South Africa. Following the Sharpeville massacre, 30,000 Africans marched on Capetown. Throughout the Union, Africans began to fight back against the apartheid policies of the Verwoerd government.**

There can be no doubt, that as the smooth-tongued statesmen sit down to the summit conference, the echoes of these two explosions will still be ringing in their ears.

For premier Macmillan, the crisis-ridden African continent, with its massive accumulation of British investments and its large expanses of British territory, will be very much a matter of concern. As the head of a Tory government, which stands for the protection of capitalist interests in Africa, he will seek during the secret discussions at the summit conference, guarantees and agreements that will help him to keep Africa safe for British capitalism.

When Macmillan left London recently to visit America for pre-summit discussions, the question of Africa was high on the agenda. On the day he left London Airport he was given a send off by Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament banners wishing him: 'God speed and good luck' in bringing back a 'ban the bomb agreement.' This turn towards Macmillan by the CND, with its implicit encouragement of the belief that he and his fellow Tories can bring peace and end the threat of nuclear war, registers a failure by CND to see any connection between the explosion of the French bomb and the explosion of the African Revolution.

## British capitalism in South Africa

In South Africa, 11 million coloured people are struggling against the domination of three million whites. In order to safeguard the investments of the City of London in diamonds and gold and in order to protect the concerns like Unilever, ICI, English Electric, Vickers, Stewarts and Lloyds, Tube Investments, African Explosives and Chemicals and Barclays Bank, the African people are subjected to the most ruthless oppression, exploitation and degradation.

The whole African population lives on 12 per cent. of the country's land, only 40 per cent. of their children go to school. Apartheid is made official government policy in order to supply cheap labour for British and South African capitalism.

These are the reasons why Foreign Minister Selwyn Lloyd says he is opposed to 'outside interference' in South Africa's affairs and why Alport, the Secretary for Commonwealth Relations, says that British governments, 'help other Commonwealth governments to meet their armament requirements.'

The Tories know full well the dangers of the South African revolution. In neighbouring Rhodesia, African mineworkers sweat and toil for an average wage of £80 per year. Railway workers receive £20 a month in comparison to the minimum rate paid to Europeans of £60 a month.

In Central Africa, firms such as Imperial Tobacco, Rhodesian Anglo-American, Rhodesian Selection Trust and British South Africa, all dominated by British capital, control all the copper, coal, lead and zinc mining and tobacco processing, besides owning forests, ranches, merchant banks and newspapers. The fight now being waged by the African people in South Africa acts as an inspiration to the native people of Central Africa, and places in jeopardy the future of British investments and capital there.

As well as being bound up with these firms, and their protectors like Verwoerd and Welensky, Macmillan is also intimately connected through the NATO alliance with other stalwart defenders of freedom such as De Gaulle, Adenauer and Franco. The highest military expression of this alliance is, of course, the H-Bomb; the French nuclear explosion is the practical demonstration of the intentions of this alliance.

## Reform by persuasion

The job of NATO, SEATO and 'the Commonwealth', is to protect the interests of international capitalism. No serious struggle can be made against the H-Bomb unless that struggle is directed against these organizations and the capitalist governments who have brought them into being.

Little wonder that Macmillan in April 5's parliamentary debate argued for what he called caution in any action concerning South Africa. This, claimed Macmillan, 'if foolishly carried out, might jeopardize the whole structure of our Commonwealth proceedings in their formal character.' Naturally, Mr. Gaitskell had no intention of doing anything so serious as damaging the Commonwealth, and contented himself with a plea to the Tory Premier to, 'express his regret' over the latest wave of arrests and beatings.

The martyrs of Sharpeville, the imprisoned Kgosane, the jailed Kenyatta and Algeria's 'House of Birds' bear sombre and gruesome testimony to the futility of reasoned appeals to Macmillan and international capitalism.

From all over the world verbal protests have poured forth over Verwoerd's apartheid policies. By nine votes UNO's Security Council rebuked apartheid. Even the Vatican has condemned the Sharpeville shootings—although its paper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, considers tear gas and fire hoses more civilized than rifles. The British Labour Party leaders, in their own peculiarly well-mannered and inoffensive way, have also lodged their protest.

Still the arrests continue. Ill-treatment and beatings increase. On April 4, South Africa's civilized white police shot seven-year-old Grace Mbulu. Colonel Reay, acting deputy commissioner of Cape Town's police, says this was done to 'protect Africans who wanted to go to work.'

If such polite and persuasive protests are unable to divert Verwoerd from pursuing the interest of his class, similar methods will certainly have little success in convincing the imperialists to renounce their ultimate and most powerful class weapon—the H-bomb.

This dependence on Macmillan exacts its own terrible price in the struggle against war. From the northernmost corner of Algeria, to the Cape Peninsula in the south, the African continent is ablaze with revolt against imperialism.

## African revolt—a blow for peace

A success for the Algerian revolution would immediately put an end to French tests in the Sahara. In Kenya, Tom Mboya has declared that when Kenya gains its independence, the Kenyan people will not permit the British to maintain any military bases in that country. The overthrow of Verwoerd and his white supremacist government in South Africa, would weaken the military as well as the social domination of the African continent by imperialism.

The great African revolution steps forward as the most powerful ally of those who are fighting against nuclear war. In the early 1950s it was the sacrifice and heroism of the north Korean people that prevented American imperialism crossing over into the Chinese People's Republic and thereby commencing the third world war. In 1958 the overthrow of the Nuri-es-Said regime in Iraq disrupted and blew to smithereens the Baghdad Pact, striking a devastating blow to

(Continued on Page 112)



(Continued from page 111)

imperialism's war plans in the Middle East. Today, it is the Africans who are the spearhead of the fight against war.

Unfortunately, there appears to be a conception held in certain quarters of the British political movement, that as the summit comes closer it would be wiser not to embarrass Macmillan too much over the South African question. This is of course an opinion with which Macmillan heartily agrees.

On Sunday, March 27, thousands of white and coloured people marched to Trafalgar Square to demonstrate their solidarity with the fight against apartheid. Since then a silence has descended over the protest movement.

For ten days not one picket has appeared outside South Africa House, except those sent by the Socialist Labour League and a number of individual members from the Boycott Movement. All last week and into this week the repressions against the Africans have continued. But neither the Boycott Movement, the Communist Party, the Labour Party nor the Movement for Colonial Freedom have called a mass protest meeting, march or demonstration.

### Solidarity action

On Sunday, April 3, the Socialist Labour League held a well-attended meeting in Trafalgar Square, addressed by Linden Burnham and League speakers, to protest at the jailing of the political prisoners in South Africa. Although we extended invitations to the Boycott Movement, the Communist Party and the Movement for Colonial Freedom, all declined to send a speaker. One must assume that the Communist Party, besides endorsing Khrushchev's statement that the 'people's of the Middle East are not yet ready for communism,' also considers that the African Revolution em-

barrasses the struggle for peace.

At its meeting on Tuesday, April 5, the Executive Committee of the South Wales Miners carried a resolution calling on 'all dockers and seamen, to whatever union they may belong, to refuse to handle goods destined for South Africa.' The Daily Worker of April 6, in reporting the decision of the executive, placed this important decision third paragraph down in its report, headlined 'Call matches off—Miners.'

This referred to another decision of the executive, asking for a cancellation of all sporting events by British rugby and cricket teams against South African touring teams. The Daily Worker leader on South Africa, of the same day, made no mention of this call for industrial action.

The CND must unhesitatingly give its full support to the African people, and that implies an alliance with the anti-Verwoerd, anti-Tory campaign here in Britain. If the fight against apartheid remains in the backwaters of petitions and pleas to Verwoerd, this will give the South African racialists time to violently suppress and behead the African movement. In that case, world imperialism would be strengthened and the dangers of war brought closer.

Now is the time when CND, the Boycott Movement, the Communist Party, the Socialist Labour League and the Left wing of the Labour Party should be joining together in a united campaign against nuclear war and in support of the African revolution. This means to fight for the withdrawal of Britain from NATO—the extension of the boycott on all South African goods to an embargo on all imports and exports—demanding immediate independence for the colonies and the withdrawal of all British troops from Africa, the nationalization of the arms industry and the resignation of the Tory Government.

## ECONOMICS

### AN ASTUTE BUDGET

By Tom Kemp

**The Budget was received without enthusiasm in Parliament and the press. It was not as tough as some had expected, but it was, nonetheless, an astute performance based upon a calculated risk.**

It is clear from what it did not contain that the Tories regard it as too early and too dangerous to take steps which may bring the expansion to an untimely halt. After all, that Budget day should be in April is an accident of history, and economic trends do not fall in such a way that this time of year is the best one to make judgments about the future course of the economy. But all papers drew attention to the most significant sentence in the Budget speech in which Amory said: 'I think it likely that the time may soon arise when it would be right that we should take other steps to restrain further expansion of private credit, and we stand ready to do so.'

That means that the Government will use the most direct brakes on the expansion, if pressure on prices or the balance of payments makes them necessary—i.e., higher interest rates and restrictions on bank lending. It is already getting more difficult to borrow through the banks. Why alter tax rates, court unpopularity, and perhaps have to change them later when the job can be done by other, less obtrusive methods?

The option for mainly monetary measures means that it is hoped that already developing pressures will not get out of hand. That's where the risk comes in.

The Chancellor stressed the dependence of British expansion on external factors. The growth in world trade permitted a rise in British exports last year, despite a decline in Britain's share. Nevertheless, there was a smaller surplus on the current balance of payments than had been expected, and export

of capital was running high. The Budget gambles on continued expansion here, or leaves any unexpected turn to be dealt with through emergency measures, notably Bank Rate.

At the same time, while taking measures against tax evasion from Labour's locker, and leaving little to fight about in Parliament, there is no doubt that outside the concomitant to the Budget will be an attempt to stiffen resistance to wage claims. In relation to what has happened to profits and wages during the past 18 months, the small increase in profits tax—which isn't going to seriously worry industrialists—is a decoy to make it appear that there is 'equality of treatment' and provide an argument against substantial wage increases.

For these reasons the Budget is an adroit political move, too much so for some of the duller-witted Tories to understand, and which can only be effectively dealt with from a principled socialist basis very far from that to which the Labour leaders are committed. No wonder they were cheering some of the Budget measures; why, even they could scarcely have done better in defence of British capitalism!—crocodile tears for the neglected old-age pensioners notwithstanding.

## DOCUMENT

### THE WITCH-HUNT IN BRITAIN

*Editorial comment from April 4 issue of The Militant, the American socialist weekly.*

**A wide section of the British Labour Party membership has vigorously protested the attempt of right-wing officials to proscribe and ban the Socialist Labour League and its paper, The Newsletter. Because of this, the one-year-old drive to expel the revolutionary socialists from the Labour Party and the unions has not gained much ground.**

Unfortunately, however, a number of groups and individuals who call themselves socialists—including the leaders of the

British Communist Party—fell in with the witch-hunters. They violated the first principle of socialism which demands solidarity when the capitalist class or its labour henchmen attack any section of the workers' movement.

A particularly odious example of the violation of the solidarity principle was provided by the paper of the British Independent Labour Party, the Socialist Leader. The ILP has made it a principle to stay out of the Labour Party, which is the mass political organization of the British workers and is based on the unions. But the ILP leaders have found no difficulty in combining their sectarian purity with the performance of dirty chores for the bureaucrats.

In an editorial March 7, 1959, the Socialist Leader declared: 'We have never disguised our opposition to the Labour Party. But, if Transport House has had enough of the Newsletter group and kicks its members out of the front door or, for that matter, the back door, we shall not utter a word of criticism.'

The Socialist Leaders not only kept its word not to criticize the hounding of militant workers out of the factories, unions and party, it opened a campaign of slander on its own against the SLL and its leadership.

When Peter Fryer, one of the founders of the SLL, suffered a breakdown in the face of the witch-hunt, became disoriented and walked out of the organization, then turned up in the capitalist press making vague and unspecified accusations against the SLL leaders, the ILP solidarized itself with him—and with the boss-class press which eagerly exploited Fryer's 'charges'. The Socialist Leader printed article after article presenting matters as if the main problem facing the British socialists was not the witch-hunt against the SLL but some alleged 'Stalinist methods' of Gerry Healy, the SLL secretary.

Now the witch-hunt in Britain is not the exclusive concern of British socialists, it is also of great importance to revolutionary socialists throughout the world. In such a situation it is customary—and in fact obligatory—that Trotskyists in other countries take their stand on the side of the victims of the witch-hunt, even if they have no organizational ties with the latter or are in disagreement over certain aspects of policy.

Unfortunately, again this hasn't been the case in the current witch-hunt against the SLL. As we have indicated before in the Militant, a Trotskyist group in Europe, headed by Michel Pablo, came dangerously close to aligning itself with the witch-hunters, when it apologized for the conduct of a grouping in the Liverpool unit of the Labour Party, which had formed a bloc with the right-wingers to bar support for the SLL. The motion the Liverpool group advanced protested bans and proscriptions in general—but without offering to defend the specific victims of the right-wing's drive to strangle party democracy.

We repeat what we have said before: we think it is Pablo's duty to defend the SLL against the witch-hunters despite any disagreement he may have with the SLL's policies. This, it appears to us, is elementary.

We think that in this instance Pablo might well follow the example of a group in the U.S. which has even greater differences with the SLL than he has. In the February 15 issue of its paper, the Workers' World Party says:

'We feel that Comrade Michel Pablo and his co-thinkers made an unfortunate error in appealing to Fryer and his collaborators against the SLL. In our opinion the SLL leaders were on firm ground (despite their own wrong position on Hungary, etc.), in their recent conduct with the Fryer grouping. It goes without saying that we unconditionally support the SLL against the present witch-hunt of the Labour Party bureaucrats.'

Certainly, Pablo, who claims far greater political agreement with the British Trotskyists than the Workers' World people, can do no less than take a clear stand for the SLL in its fight against the witch-hunters. So far we have not seen a trace of such solidarity in any publication influenced by Pablo.

## INDUSTRY

### UNITED ACTION TO WIN INCREASED WAGES AND SHORTER HOURS

By Brian Behan

Last week, Jim Matthews of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, claimed that he alone possessed knowledge of a nationwide 'Red plot' aimed at crippling gas and power stations on April 8.

His 'disclosure' comes at the same time as the Gas Council, alarmed at the strength and determination of the shop stewards to have a wage increase, have begged the unions to do something to stop action being taken.

Matthews' statement is part of a general witch-hunt now under way against the shop stewards' movement. Already the ground has been well laid by films like 'The Angry Silence' and 'I'm All Right Jack', and the press campaign against the ETU. Now comes the banning of the Manchester Assembly of Labour, organized by the Socialist Labour League, by the Executive Council of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, and of the Midlands Assembly by the Labour Party regional organizer.

The next stage will be the publication on April 11, of the Trades Union Congress 'inquiry' into unofficial disputes. According to advance press reports, the inquiry will make a number of recommendations, including the dismantling of established shop stewards' organizations which, in the eyes of the TUC, 'constitute an alternative leadership to the established trade unions.'

According to The Guardian, a dossier has been compiled by the TUC on the 'activities of members of the Socialist Labour League and the Communist Party in recent unofficial disputes.' It is felt that the TUC will ask for the unions concerned to take disciplinary action against members involved, including expulsion.

Of course the TUC are right when they complain about shop stewards being an alternative leadership. The need for this alternative leadership grew because of the failure of the established leadership to fight for better wages and conditions. Workers know from their own experience in factory after factory, that the shop stewards have been able to negotiate conditions and rates of pay far in excess of those negotiated by their national officials.

This is what the employers are anxious to end. They want to replace militancy with a tame work force which will participate in speed-up and rationalization. The drive against the Socialist Labour League and the Communist Party is because the employers recognize that it is the politically-conscious worker who is often the backbone of the shop stewards' movement. His Marxist principles are a real aid in fighting the employers. Their attempt to divide the stewards must be resisted.

Joint action between members of the Communist Party and the Socialist Labour League to fight the witch-hunters is an urgent necessity. The Socialist Labour League is prepared to work for such unity now in order to strengthen the fight for higher wages and shorter hours.

We must remember that standing in the background is the Tory government, determined eventually to shackle the trade union movement with anti-working class legislation. The drive by the TUC and right-wing trade union officials is part of the necessary preparation, and must be recognized as such.

*A New Pamphlet on Clause Four*

### From MacDonald to Gaitskell

By ALASDAIR MacINTYRE

Price 3d. from 186 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4

# The Struggle in the Amalgamated Engineering Union

By OUR INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

**In the last few years the right-wing leadership of the Amalgamated Engineering Union under William Carron has been engaged in a large-scale attack on the rank and file of the union.**

This right wing has attempted to convert the AEU into a carbon copy of the bureaucratic National Union of General and Municipal Workers.

In 1958 the Executive Council banned inter-branch circularization, formerly a jealously guarded right. On receipt of the executive's instruction, scores of branches passed resolutions declaring that they were not going to apply this ban. The Executive Council was powerless at that time to do anything.

There has been the systematic leakage to the press of union information which allows the press to intervene in elections by whipping up a witch-hunt against Communist Party and Left candidates. This tactic has been successful in a number of cases, particularly in Sheffield and London North, culminating in the election of Chapman as divisional organizer in Division 25.

Another weapon used by the leaders has been the withholding and delay in granting dispute benefit. In some cases the Executive has made it conditional that the men must go back to work before they receive strike pay! The total figure for strike pay in 1959 was £61,369 compared with a total of staff and officials' wages of £349,659.

## The Sheffield Shop Stewards' Conference

Last year the executive banned and proscribed conferences such as the Sheffield conference, the Aircraft shop stewards' conference, the Daily Worker conference and the Manchester Assembly of Labour.

Many union members considered it wrong to let the executive council get away with banning the Sheffield conference without a fight. Many shop stewards' quarterly meetings, often not Communist Party controlled, protested against this action of the leadership. They took the view that the EC had no right to interfere with what shop stewards did in their own time. Members know that Carron spends much of his time at meetings of the British Productivity Council. They held the view that if the Sheffield conference had taken place and a campaign been carried on inside the union, the Executive Council could have been defeated and consequently Bro. Caborn would not have been suspended.

The aircraft shop stewards ignored the banning of their conference and the right wing were unable to take action for fear of stirring up trouble for themselves.

In 1958, the Executive pushed through the Rules Revision Meeting (on the chairman's casting vote) an amendment extending the term of office of full-time officials from three years to five. They claimed the main reason was to save money on elections. At the same time they suggested increasing the salaries of full-time officials!

## The right wing strengthens bureaucratic control

The Executive Council has consistently ignored the decisions of the National Committee, which is supposedly the policy-making body of the union. The National Committee decided to push forward with the claim for the 40-hour week, a £1

wage increase and three weeks' holiday with pay. Carron and the right wing ignored this and accepted a 42-hour week without a wage increase. The National Committee policy of 'no sackings' and of opposition to victimization of stewards and other militants has also been ignored.

Now the Executive Council is suggesting the election of Trades Union Congress and Labour Party Conference delegates on a three-yearly basis instead of annually as at present.

Another proposed alteration to rule reads:

'Members of the union, who are members of a political party not eligible for affiliation to the Labour Party, shall be exempted from payment of the political levy and shall not be eligible to take part in the management, control, nomination or voting relating to the political fund.'

Again the Executive are suggesting a wage increase for officials. The general secretary, president and Executive Council members, it is suggested, should each receive more than £6 a week increase. The president's present wage is £23 a week, plus £100 personal allowance, plus £1 a week London differential. Expenses are also quite liberal. The delegation expenses alone of the 26 divisional organizers averaged £262 per head for 1959.

From December, 1948, to December, 1959, wages of staff and officials (taking a six-monthly period) have risen from £77,451 to £175,174, an increase of approximately 120 per cent. Members' wages in the same period have increased by only about 70 per cent.

The Executive Council has now started to make direct interference in elections. It declared the election of Bro. Spencer as district secretary in London North void on the grounds that a speech of Spencer's had been reported in the District Committee minutes and this they claimed influenced the vote.

When Carron and other officials give television interviews and press statements at the time of their election, these presumably have no effect.

Now the Executive is delaying the declaration of the election of Communist Party member Reg Birch as North London divisional organizer. (He won by a large majority.)

On March 31, 1960, the Daily Telegraph published a report of a 'secret' agreement signed by the AEU, NUGMW and the Ford Motor Company giving the two unions 'a number of advantages' in the proposed Ford factory on Merseyside. Is it a coincidence that these two unions were chosen by Fords for preferential treatment? In the very same week, Matthews, extreme right-wing official of the NUGMW, and Carron had issued warnings about alleged 'wild cat' strikes in several industries, including motors. Carron also instructed his members to 'scab' in the event of any unofficial stoppages.

It is obvious that Carron and Matthews agreed to discipline their members and to keep them in order and in return Fords are to grant them special facilities to collect union subscriptions.

This agreement gives an ominous warning for the future and illustrates the close ties between the right-wing union leaders and the employers. Naturally, Carron sits on the TUC's inquiry committee into unofficial strikes.

The urgent task confronting us in the AEU is to build up a united front of Communist Party members, Socialist Labour League members and other Lefts, to fight the witch-hunt. This means a principled opposition to all bans and proscriptions and entails defending the rights of both Communist Party and Socialist Labour League members.

## Constant Reader | Young Socialists

FRIENDS working in the Labour Party youth movement have asked me to write about the earlier history of this movement, before the period of Stalinist control in 1936-1939, which I discussed in this column for December 12 last.

The fundamental fact is that the Labour Party bureaucracy have never wanted a youth movement, and have only ever given it countenance under pressure and in order to avert some greater 'evil'. Arthur Peacock, who edited 'The New Nation', the official paper of the Labour League of Youth in 1933-1936, writes in his book 'Yours Fraternally': 'Somehow or other the official adult movement never caught on to the League. It was not really welcomed.' And Maurice Webb (Minister of Food in 1950), who was made the Labour Party's national youth organizer in 1933, revealed the spirit in which he approached his job when he wrote: 'If we do not give them leadership they will find it elsewhere' (in 'Plebs', October, 1933).

Youth sections were first formed in the Labour Party in 1924, mainly in order to counter the attraction of the Young Communist League. In 1926, the bureaucrats felt obliged to go further, owing to the success of the Independent Labour Party's Guild of Youth. In those days the ILP was affiliated to the Labour Party and was a very considerable force in many working-class areas. After the expulsion of the Communists from the Labour Party in 1925, left-wing trends expressed themselves increasingly through the ILP, and this compelled new gestures to the Labour youth. The youth sections were formally grouped into a 'Labour League of Youth', and it was permitted for members, who could join at 14, to stay on in the League until they were 25, instead of leaving it at 21.

Nevertheless, the League's functions were defined strictly as 'recreational and educational'. After much unrest, the young people were allowed to have a national conference in 1929, and there to elect a Youth Advisory Committee with the task of 'co-ordinating' the work of the branches in consultation with the Labour Party's national executive committee. But an official pamphlet about the League, published in 1931, laid it down that, 'as it is an integral section of the Labour Party, the League does not concern itself with questions of policy.'

When the ILP broke away from the Labour Party in 1932, and for a short time looked as though it might develop as a revolutionary Marxist party, the Labour Party leaders got really worried. A national youth organizer was appointed and a monthly printed youth paper launched. It was agreed to have two representatives of the League at the Party's annual conference and to include the League's chairman on the national executive committee. But the right to discuss policy was still refused, and the work of the League was hedged about with restrictions. Maurice Webb's handbook on the League, 'Youth for Socialism' (1934), made it quite clear that the League's annual conference and the national advisory committee it elected were to confine themselves to organization and administration problems; and while in each town the senior party should allow the youngsters to develop their League branch in their own way, this must be 'subject, of course, to the necessity of avoiding contraventions of the Party constitution and programme.'

'The New Nation' was an intolerably dreary paper, continually warning its readers against getting mixed up in unofficial anti-war and anti-fascist activities, ending lively controversies in short order with 'this correspondence must now cease', and generally playing right into the hands of the Stalinists. The latter were able, by striking militant attitudes, both to win a number of young Labour people away to the Young Communist League and to get control (from 1936 onward) of the League itself, their faction paper 'Advance' replacing 'The New Nation' as the League's official paper. What happened then is outlined in my notes of December 12.

The ILP Guild of Youth, which at one time seemed capable of rescuing the socialist youth from both the Right wing and the Stalinists, suffered from the victory, on the issue of 'workers' sanctions', of the pacifists over the Marxists in the ILP itself, which began the downward drift of that once significant party (see this column, November 28 last), and the Guild lost many of its best people to the Stalinists from 1935 onwards.

### O'Casey and Gorky

Are the people who write to the Daily Worker consciously dishonest or just stupid? A little of both, perhaps—or maybe a lot of both. This reflexion is prompted by one page of one issue, that of March 31.

Here we have the reviewer of a new book about fellow-travelling playwright Sean O'Casey objecting to the author's remark that 'O'Casey overlooks the fact that if he wrote about Russian life in the critical way that he wrote about Irish life, the commissars would probably treat him more roughly than the clerics did.' What about the way Gorky, a rather similar writer, was honoured and cherished in Soviet Russia, demands the reviewer.

Well now, surely a man of the theatre like Mark Dignam cannot but know that the plays Gorky wrote between his return to the Soviet Union in 1929 and his death in 1936 were all laid in pre-revolutionary times? In his creative work Gorky avoided representing the Soviet scene. So Dignam's point hardly reaches its target; and one is left wondering with David Krause ('Sean O'Casey, the Man and His Work', MacGibbon & Kee, 18s.), whether O'Casey might not show the same discretion as Gorky were he placed in the same setting.

### Those Tory 'Friends'

The other item on that page I have in mind is a malicious letter from ultra-reactionary Tory MP Sir Thomas Moore. A 'profile' of this person had omitted to mention Moore's role in a certain connexion during the last years of the second world war, and so he writes to point out: 'I was a founder-member of the Anglo-Soviet Friendship Society and from its inception until the end of the war helped to set up branches in most of our chief provincial cities. For this I was warmly thanked by many of your comrades, including the late Mr. Rust.'

The author of the profile replies: 'Sir Thomas has kept his work for Anglo-Soviet friendship very quiet indeed in recent years, so perhaps it is not surprising that I overlooked it.' Perhaps it was as innocent (and incompetent) as that. Or perhaps the writer did not wish to recall that period when all sorts of Tory elements, desperately needing the Red Army's help against Germany, and anxious to adapt themselves to the pro-Soviet feeling of the workers, temporarily put on the protective colouring of 'friends of the Soviet Union'. Not only did the Communist Party help them to get away with this masquerade, but also it fostered the impression that 'friendliness' to the Soviet Union as a military and diplomatic force implied some kind of conversion to Democracy and Progress on the part of the capitalist politicians concerned. (See, for instance, Pollitt's 1945 pamphlet 'Answers to Questions'.)

BRIAN PEARCE.

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SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE  
 OPEN MEETING  
 'The Social Revolution in Britain'  
 on  
 Sunday, April 10, at 7.30 p.m.  
 in the  
 TRADES HALL, LEEDS

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# SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE TRAFALGAR SQUARE DEMONSTRATION: LINDEN BURNHAM SPEAKS

By OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

Some 1,700 people attended the Trafalgar Square meeting called by the Socialist Labour League last Sunday to protest at the jailing of the South African political prisoners.

Chief speaker was Linden Burnham, leader of the People's National Congress of British Guiana at present in Britain on an official government delegation.

Burnham stressed in his speech that it is 'not enough to sympathize with the South African people. We want you to recognize that our struggle in the colonial world is part of your struggle to make a better world.'

Showing the connections between Verwoerd's regime and big business in this country Burnham added: 'The South African people are being shot down like dogs and Verwoerd can be sure that there are those in high places in Britain who will agree with him.'

**MIKE BANDA**, a member of the national committee of the Socialist Labour League, explained the similarity of the South African struggle and that in Algeria.

'The international Labour movement must support the demand made by the New Zealand Federation of Labour to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions calling for the boycotting of all South African ports.'

'That demand must also be extended to placing an embargo on all South African goods by both the ICFTU and the World Federation of Trade Unions,' said Banda.



'In its own interests British labour must support the struggle of the peoples of South Africa, central and east Africa.'

## Release Kenyatta, too

'We demand not only the release of Kgosane from Verwoerd's jail. We also demand the release of Kenyatta from the jail of British imperialism,' concluded Banda.

**BOB PENNINGTON**, London area secretary of the League, said the British Labour movement must extend the hand of solidarity to the South African people and to their imprisoned leaders.

## A blow against war

'The African revolution strikes a great blow against those who prepare for nuclear war. A victory for the coloured people of South Africa, the smashing of British imperialism in Kenya and the overthrow of French imperialism in Algeria, would make sure that there would be no nuclear weapons tested on the African continent,' said Pennington.

He considered that the Soviet Union should, as a practical measure of solidarity with the South African people, 'immediately break off all trade relations with the Union of South Africa.'

A resolution placed before the meeting by chairman **BRIAN BEHAN** calling for the release of 'all the political prisoners' was carried with only two votes against.

Behan denounced the city of London diamond and gold merchants 'who support Verwoerd as the protector of their investments.'

'The Socialist Labour League stands for more than pious messages of sympathy to the African people. We support their fight back against the barbaric practices of imperialism,

'The League considers that an immediate embargo should be placed on all South African goods coming into and going out of Britain and we urge you to demand in your trade union branches that the unions take such a step,' said Behan.

Called at exceedingly short notice which left no time for publicity in the national or weekly socialist press, the meeting was an undoubted success. An advert was submitted to the Daily Worker but refused, because according to their advertisement department 'such adverts require five days' notice.' It was pointed out that Verwoerd had neglected to give Kgosane five days' notice before jailing him.

## PADDINGTON BUILDERS PROTEST AGAINST SOUTH AFRICAN MASSACRE

The following resolution was adopted by the Paddington Branch AUBTW and accepted unanimously by the Annual General Meeting of North Paddington Constituency Labour Party.

'We wish to protest in the strongest possible terms against the violent action taken by the South African police that resulted in the killing of over 70 men, women and children in the town of Sharpeville. In their attempt to justify the massacre, and to congratulate those responsible, the South African Government is in effect trying to justify its hateful policy of apartheid.'

'We therefore believe that it is not sufficient just to register our protest, but that the Trade Union and Labour movement should consider as a matter of urgency the calling of a national conference. The conference should consider ways and means of bringing the greatest pressure on the South African Government in an effort to bring about a change in its detestable policy of apartheid.'

## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF LABOUR CAMPAIGN: AREA ASSEMBLY

BOOK THIS DATE NOW!

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