

THE NEWSLETTER

Weekly Journal of the Socialist Labour League

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SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE CONFERENCE

A Welcome to All Delegates and Visitors

THE editorial board of The Newsletter warmly greets the delegates to the Second National Conference of the Socialist Labour League which is being held in London on June 4, 5 and 6. This will be a far more significant event than the founding conference last year. In the past twelve months the Socialist Labour League has transformed itself into an organization which is not only firmly united in struggle against the employers and the Right-wing Labour leaders, but what is more important, as a Marxist organization it is better prepared theoretically than any similar movement in Western Europe.

For the past eight weeks discussions have been taking place inside the League around two resolutions outlining the economic prospects of British capitalism and the political tasks ahead. Each week special internal bulletins have been issued covering all aspects of the pre-conference discussion, and the membership have been free to contribute to this discussion.

During this time, aggregate meetings have been held twice in Scotland, Yorkshire, the Midlands, the North-West and London. Branches have submitted amendments to the documents and the fullest discussion has taken place on the names for the new National Committee. There is no organization more democratic and more disciplined than the Socialist Labour League.

Over the past twelve months, the League has organized the National Assembly of Labour attended by over 700 delegates and visitors. Local Assemblies of Labour have been held in Glasgow, Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham and London. Tens of thousands of leaflets outlining the policy of these assemblies have been distributed. Over 150 public meetings have been held at factories, docks and building sites. No other organization has been more active for its size than the League.

The Newsletter has appeared regularly each week and its circulation has substantially increased during the past year. The conference will discuss the launching of a national campaign to increase the sales, enlarge and improve the paper.

Owing to the heavy technical commitments of the League, the publication of its theoretical organ, Labour Review, has unfortunately been slowed down. It has appeared approximately quarterly instead of each two months. The installation of new and more modern equipment on the printing side will enable us to improve this position and we hope to produce a monthly publication during the latter part of this year.

Marxists in the universities

One of the highlights of the League's activity is the steady growth of its influence in the universities. Speakers from the League have been in great demand at Labour societies and the formation of the Marxist societies in the universities, although not connected organizationally with the League, is an important attraction for students sympathetic to its policy.

The conference will discuss the appeals of seven former members, three of whom were suspended and four expelled over the past year. Amongst these is Brian Behan, former national chairman of the Socialist Labour League and, until January of this year, in charge of its industrial work. Whilst basing itself on the widest internal democracy, the League is

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ETU and ASW Oppose Clause Four Change

By Our Political Correspondent

The Electrical Trades Union meeting in Hastings carried the following resolution unanimously:

'This conference places on record its complete faith in the principle of public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange and affirms that nationalization is an essential prerequisite for any advance towards socialism.'

'The union opposes, and calls upon the Executive Committee of the Labour Party to oppose, any attempt to remove the conception of social ownership from the constitution or change the identity of the party.'

'Conference calls for the extension of nationalization to all major industries. It demands that such a policy of nationalization must be a socialist one, which will mean better conditions to the workers employed in the industries and bring better and cheaper services to the people.'

At its conference in Worthing the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers decided, with only one vote against, to oppose any change in Clause Four which would 'nullify its socialist content'. An attempt by the Right-wing to carry a motion which called for bringing it 'up to date' in terms of a 'mixed economy' was voted down by a large majority.

Mr. George Brinham, present chairman of the Labour Party, is a member of that union and he will now have to oppose Mr. Gaitskell's proposed addendum to Clause Four.

These decisions, taken in conjunction with those of the Scottish Trades Union Congress and the Amalgamated Engineering Union recently, leave not the slightest doubt that the unions are moving further to the Left.

The Left-wing of the Labour Party, organised around the

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SLL CONFERENCE—(Continued from page 1)

determined not to permit anyone to break its discipline in the manner of these people. Their written appeals have been distributed to all the members of the League and they will be given time to present these to the conference when the item of their expulsions is discussed. There is no other organization in the Labour movement which permits such democratic practice.

Our enemies constantly predict the collapse and weakening of the League. This has been their policy ever since the emergence of the Trotskyist movement. The reality is that 1959-1960 has been a year of great activity by the League under the most rigorous witch-hunting conditions. The policy of our organization has been constantly twisted and distorted by the capitalist press, with the sole exception of The Guardian which, whilst it is hostile to the League, has endeavoured to present an objective picture. On the other hand, the Daily Worker has absolutely refused to protest against the expulsion of League members from the Labour Party and the constant attack on our movement from such employers' organizations as the Economic League. The chickens have indeed come home to roost for the Communist Party as we can now see from the attack on the Electrical Trades Union, carried out by the Trades Union Congress and the same organizations which attack the Socialist Labour League.

A special appeal to the Left

The Second National Conference of the Socialist Labour League will make a special appeal to all forces on the Left to join together, close their ranks and, whilst preserving their political differences, unite as one in the fight against the witch-hunters. This is the only way to preserve working-class democracy.

The steady recruitment to the League which has gone on since its formation, must now be joined by the addition of a large influx of new members over the next few months. Young people who are coming into politics for the first time and joining the Young Socialists are in many cases prospective candidates for the Socialist Labour League. Young apprentices, on the way to playing an important role in industry, have already demonstrated that they not only want to fight but they are urgently looking for a real Marxist organization which translates its theory into practice.

The delegates at the Second National Conference can be proud of their efforts over the past year. The League has emerged a stronger and more mature organization. We confidently predict that this will be the trend in 1960-1961.

LABOUR**THE STOOGES**

Latest target of the Economic League is the Labour Research Department. In a leaflet being put out at factory gates by one of the League's 63 professional leaflet distributors, the LRD is characterized as a 'stooge organization' of the Communist Party. Whether this is true or not we don't know; what is certain, however, is that the Economic League is a stooge organization of the employers.

'Facts about the Economic League' (LRD Publications, 6d.) is presumably the booklet that provoked the League's outburst. It tears the non-political mask right off the face of the Economic League.

Of the Economic League's 41 Council members and directors, 33 are company directors. These 33 can tot up 198 directorships between them—banks, insurance companies, investment trusts, steel, shipping, chemicals—the lot. Assets of the companies involved exceed £8,000 million.

You might think the Economic League was opposed to nationalization. But without injury to his conscience or his ten other directorships, League Council member, Sir Edward

Herbert, squeezes in a part-time job on the nationalized East Midlands Gas Board (salary, £1,000 a year). His colleague, Colonel H. H. Peile (one chairmanship, 5 directorships), is a member of the Northern Gas Board (£1,000 per annum). Sir Michael Malcom, described only as a 'former coal-owner', must feel let down at this open aid to the enemy.

The Economic League 'has no connection direct or indirect with any political party'. That's what they say. And to prove it—1 Tory MP, 4 former Tory MPs, 2 Tory peers and the President of the Rugby Conservative Association. Even Mr. Gaitskell can't get in on this one.

The Economic League is a powerful and wealthy propaganda organization for the Tories and big business. Their witch-hunting methods against all working-class organizations from the Socialist Labour League to the Labour Research Department, should be met by a solid front of Socialist Labour League, Communist Party, Labour Party and trade union militants.

THE SUMMIT: WHAT NOW?

By Our Political Correspondent

The assessment of the attitude to the Summit fiasco of Labour's Left MPs, contained in G. Healy's article last week, was only too well borne out at Saturday's Open Forum called by Victory for Socialism. In the same room which had been packed to overflowing only two years ago by the inaugural meeting of VFS, a few dozen turned up to hear comrades Davies, Silverman, Swingler and Zilliacus talk about 'The Summit: What Now?'

This all-star cast was performing at a time when foreign policy and defence issues form one of the main centres of the crisis in the Labour Party. The reason for the decline in attendance must be sought not in the fine weather, as suggested by Harold Davies, but in the policy followed by VFS over the past two years.

Not that there was any lack of criticism of Gaitskell. Mr. Silverman was very, very rude about him. All speakers emphasized their opposition to the H-bomb. But none of them showed any real policy for getting rid of either the leader or his bomb.

Sidney Silverman was certain that the warlike actions of the Americans were responsible for the collapse of the Paris talks. His answer? Further talks, involving this same US government, to bring about 'mutual understanding'.

Stephen Swingler demanded a 'workable and effective defence policy', pointing out that Britain (he meant the Tory government) could no longer pretend to have an independent nuclear 'deterrent'. But what was his defence policy intended to defend? British capitalism and its Empire? If so, the more unworkable and ineffective it is the better socialists should like it.

Konni Zilliacus, of course, told us about the United Nations Charter. In answer to a questioner, he agreed that imperialism had been trying to overthrow the USSR for nigh on 43 years. But he thought that there might be a good chance that capitalists would now start to see what a big mistake they have been making. He also considered that the working-class struggle against war existed only in the imagination of Trotskyists.

Somebody in the course of a rather long afternoon compared Mr. Gaitskell to the Grand Old Duke of York. But VFS, like that celebrated nobleman, has also played its part in leading its troops to the Summit and back. And with equal effect on world affairs.

ETU—(Continued from page 1)

Clause Four Committee and Victory for Socialism, must now redouble their efforts to bring trade unionists into activity inside the party. The Socialist Labour League is being consistently proved correct in its attitude to this all-important question.

Fight the Coal Board!

By JACK STONE, Brodsworth Colliery, Yorks.

THE local press—which rarely gives an accurate account of disputes in our industry—has recently carried a number of letters attacking the militants in Brodsworth pit. In particular, one pathetic letter from former branch committeeman **Jim Woodhead** needs a straight-from-the-shoulder reply.

Brother Woodhead talks of such members as **Curly Owen** destroying the National Union of Mineworkers. In fact it is the sort of people who attack **Curly Owen** who have put the Union in the sad state it's in now.

I remember my particular section of workmates having a serious grievance over the new grading system for day-wage men. Every man on that section knows we had to fight our own Union officials harder than the management.

I have never been in favour of 'rag-out' strikes. They whittle our strength away. But the time has come when the rank-and-file miners must say quite definitely to the National Coal Board—and our union leaders—that it is time to stop.

We have had enough wage cuts

We are sick of the failure to implement the miners' charter.

From now on we fight back. And believe me, when the rank and file decide this, then no power on earth can stop them. The people who are always knocking the militants have reached the point in life where senile decay is obviously setting in. They are doing the very thing that the Tory government and reactionary NCB officials desire.

There is a lot of talk about 'loyalty to our leaders'. But isn't it time that our top leaders returned this loyalty? I well remember Mr. Paynter, NUM national secretary, speaking in Doncaster not long ago when he stated—as he had in South Wales before becoming national secretary—that we would fight contraction and redundancy in the pits. If we judge by the state of affairs since then we can only come to one conclusion.

There has been no fight and no policy. There has been no attempt to enforce the miners' charter.

It is time we made a stand for:

1. **Revision of the Price List.**
2. **An end to Compulsory Arbitration.**
3. **Revision of the Grading System for Day-Wage men.**
4. **An end to all intimidation and victimization in the pits.**

It is also time we routed out leaders who are just marionettes, whose strings are pulled by NCB reactionaries all over our industry.

The supporters of the Right-wing officials locally apparently forget that they have had several votes of no confidence passed on them by the Brodsworth men. They seem to be in favour of public notices being posted condemning fellow committeemen—as happened to **Curly Owen**. And also to favour secret meetings with the management behind their members' backs while a strike is in progress. If we are going to be critical, let's be critical all round.

Finally, it's high time that all the unions and their rank and file put up a united fight against capitalist society that rules us and that creates war either militarily against other nations or industrially against the workers. When we do that we will not only be able to tread on the capitalist cat's tail, but also its neck—and we will squeeze it to a quick death.

A Pamphlet on Clause Four

From MacDonald to Gaitskell

By **ALASDAIR MacINTYRE**

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

THE UPTON STRIKE

By G. Gale

Last week's strike of 1,400 Upton miners was one of the most significant in the history of the Yorkshire coalfield.

The system of an out-of-date price list made up to a living wage by a complicated system of allowances makes it easy for the management to introduce disguised wage cuts. This happened at Upton, causing losses of between five and twelve shillings per shift.

Similar cuts have been occurring throughout the coalfield, so that here was a dispute that affected every pit in Yorkshire.

The Upton men realized this. Angered—but not surprised—by the failure of the Yorkshire NUM officials at Barnsley to do anything about their complaint, and undeterred by recent NCB threats to close down Upton pit because of its militancy, they set out to create an all-Yorkshire strike.

The branch officials offered to resign because Barnsley's inaction made it impossible to carry out their responsibilities to the men. The men refused these resignations and instead elected a strike committee, collected money to print leaflets and organized a fleet of cars to tour the coalfield. This got the NCB and NUM officials seriously worried.

Frequent short 'rag-out' strikes, first at one pit, then another—that's all right. In fact, it's a good way of sapping militant energy. But now the men had seen that this was the road to nowhere. United action was being developed. The strike had a programme—to end the dependence on allowances and create a new up-to-date price list.

Widespread support

Markham Main (Armthorpe) joined the strike. So did Frickley. So did Askern. And South Elmsall. Men from Bentley and Kirkby stopped work.

The Barnsley big-wigs—so aloof earlier on—were only too anxious to come to Upton now.

Mr. Sam Bullough (Yorkshire NUM Vice-President), Mr. Sid Schofield (Compensation Agent and former Labour MP) and Mr. J. Stone (Area Agent) appealed to a strike meeting for a return to work, but got the rebuff they deserved.

The following day, these 'workers' representatives' had a meeting with NCB officials about stopping the strike. They then called an emergency Delegate Council meeting at 24 hours' notice, where they steamrollered a 'return to work' by 92 votes to 12.

Following this vote Armthorpe returned to work. It appears that leading CP spokesman Jock Kane told the men that Upton would now vote to go back.

Meanwhile, Right-wing officials all over Yorkshire worked desperately to stop the strike from spreading. At Brodsworth, Secretary Kelher and Chairman Marshall refused to allow men from Upton into a branch committee meeting. And at the branch meeting they refused discussion on a resolution for a strike because 'it didn't come through official channels'.

Kelher then posted a notice at the pit top saying that work would continue pending the decision of the Yorkshire Delegate meeting.



LEON TROTSKY

WHERE IS BRITAIN GOING?

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■ Prospects

The purpose of recent witch-hunting attacks by the Area NUM on Curly Owen and other Brodsworth militants is now clear. The aim was to try to isolate and discredit the more class-conscious workers in this vital pit, for precisely such an occasion as this.

In addition it was hoped to drive a wedge between militants at Brodsworth and militants at other pits.

For instance, it appears that the Upton men at the delegate council meetings were told that the Brodsworth militants never suggested support for Upton, and never tried to get the Upton representatives into the Brodsworth committee meetings. These were deliberate lies.

The CP does nothing

The Communist Party was remarkably quiet during this strike. Apart from Jock Kane bringing out the Armthorpe men—and taking them back again—the Party did nothing. There are three reasons for this:

1. The CP welcomes no industrial militancy that it does not control.

2. There was a danger of this struggle spreading—not only throughout Yorkshire—but beyond. This would have embarrassed 'Communist' Will Paynter—it would have shown up the fact that a Party member at the head of the Union has not benefited the working miner at all.

3. The tactic of the CP is not to wage a militant fight amongst miners but to jockey for positions in the NUM.

Thus all those who are afraid of real militancy in the pits combined—actively or passively—to dampen down this strike. Under all these pressures, Upton returned to work.

What are the lessons of this strike?

First, the position of workers in a nationalized industry. The mines are run by highly paid Coal Board bureaucrats, many of whom have close connections with private industry.

Profitable sections of the industry—machine installations, coal distribution, etc.—are still privately owned. While miners are much better off than in the old days, nevertheless they have no say in the running of the industry, which is geared to the needs of capitalism. This leaves the workers open to repeated attacks by the management, and a recession in the industry can undermine all the gains made since nationalization.

The Campaign to extend nationalization to the whole economy—under workers' control—takes on flesh and blood when seen through the Upton strike.

Second. The permanent officials at Barnsley are hand in glove with the management against the men. In fact, many strikes in the pits are aimed more at the union officials than at the management. They are often the only way to get these officials to take up the men's case.

It is clear that any militant movement in the pits will have to challenge the union leadership.

Third. Despite the failure on this occasion, this strike was a move in the right direction. The action of the Upton branch officials in offering to resign, and the setting up of a rank and file strike committee shows that miners are realising that a real fight is impossible within the framework of NUM official machinery.

A new, important form of workers' organization is springing up, which is bound to affect future struggles.

Fourth. Above all—the need for preparation. It is not enough to seek support in other pits once a strike has begun. The links must be created in advance. Militants in Upton must start now developing permanent contacts with rank and file militants all over the coalfields.

To refuse to do this because some militants were unable to get their pits to support them this time would play into the hands of Barnsley and the NCB.

The situation in the coalfields is still explosive. And the union bureaucrats are still sitting on the powder kegs.



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Constant Reader | Co-existence

IT may come as a surprise not only to Stalinists but also to others that there was a time when Trotsky was reproached by the Stalinists with propagating the idea of 'peaceful co-existence' between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world. This was in 1930, in a period when mass unemployment in the advanced capitalist countries coincided with intense industrial construction in the Soviet Union (the first Five-Year Plan). It was a period, too, when the politics of the Stalinised Communist Parties consisted merely of frenzied shouting about immediate revolution, coupled with adventurist strikes and demonstrations which merely discredited the Communists and isolated them from the working class.

Trotsky, who in those days was still working, though already in exile, as the leader of an opposition within the Communist International, put forward in March, 1930, a plan to help the Communist movement break out of its isolation and find transitional slogans by fastening on to the universal demand for work and the widespread interest in what was happening in the Soviet Union. The workers' organizations, particularly the trade unions, should be urged to draw up and popularize a comprehensive plan for economic collaboration between the capitalist countries and the Soviet Union. The right-wing social democrats then ruling in Britain and Germany would find it more difficult to defend themselves from an agitation based on a concrete plan of economically advantageous collaboration with the Soviet Union than from the shrill outcries on the theme of "social-fascism". . . . The whole essence of the campaign proposed by us lies in the fact that it can bind by a new and firm knot the need of the Soviet government for foreign products with the need of the unemployed for work, with the need of the proletariat for the alleviation of unemployment. . . . The political aim of the campaign is to attract to the side of the Soviet Union those workers who are at present indifferent to it or even hostile.' From the standpoint of the Soviet Union, the success of such a scheme as was outlined in Trotsky's 'World Unemployment and the Five-Year Plan' would ensure the supply of agricultural machinery and manufactured goods which was needed to facilitate the collectivizing of agriculture, both technically and politically.

A few months later, in August, 1930, in connection with propaganda around the anniversary of the first world war and the need to defend the Soviet Union from imperialist attack, Trotsky pointed again to the value of a practical plan along the lines he had proposed: 'The workers drawn into the campaign around this live and acute question of unemployment will, in the future also, come forward as the defenders of the USSR in the event of a war danger. Such methods of mobilization of the workers are far more substantial than the repetition of bald phrases about an imminent intervention.' Looking back in April, 1931 ('Problems of the Development of the USSR'), Trotsky regretfully reflected: 'World unemployment made the question of developing the economic relations between the capitalist countries and the USSR a vital problem for broad masses of the working class. Before the Soviet Government and the Communist International there was opened up a rare opportunity to attract the social-democratic and non-party workers on the basis of a vital and burning question so as to acquaint them with the Soviet Five-Year Plan and with the advantages of the socialist methods of economy. Under the slogan of economic collaboration and armed with a concrete programme, the Communist vanguard could have led a far more genuine struggle against blockade and intervention than through the repetition of one and the same bare condemnations. The problem of planned European and world economy could have been raised to unprecedented heights and in this manner could have given new nourishment to the slogans of the world revolution.'

For the last time (so far as I know) Trotsky advanced what the Stalinists then called his 'counter-revolutionary' proposals in September, 1932, in connection with the striving in Germany for planned reconstruction of that country's ruined economy,

a striving which the Nazis were soon to harness, through the failure of the Social-Democrats and Stalinist alike to anticipate them. 'The incoherent and cowardly state-capitalistic projects of the social-democrats must be countered with a general plan for the joint socialist construction of the USSR and Germany. . . . The discussions about planned economy so widespread in Germany, reflecting the hopelessness of German capitalism, remain purely academic, bureaucratic, lifeless-pedantic. The Communist vanguard alone is capable of drawing the treatment of the question out of the charmed circle. The socialist construction is already in progress—to this work a bridge must be thrown over the state frontiers.' ('The Only Road'.)

King Street and the Bomb

At our Denison House meeting on the Summit talks and their aftermath, a speaker from the floor questioned my linking the Communist Party's recent about-turn on unilateral nuclear disarmament with the breakdown of the summit talks. He pointed out that the new 'line' on the H-bomb was voiced by Gollan already in his May Day speech.

I may well have made my point a bit crudely, and it certainly deserves closer treatment. The changed attitude of the Communist Party came out even earlier than May Day itself—it was in the party executive committee's May Day manifesto, published in the Daily Worker of April 29 ('the British Government should stop now the manufacture of nuclear weapons'). What is most interesting, though, is that there was no hint of it in the statement by Lauchlan, the party's national organizer, in the Daily Worker of April 22, only a week earlier, on the results of Aldermaston and preparations for May Day.

At some moment, it would appear, during the last week of April, somebody made up the Communist Party's mind for it in the sense of declaring for Britain's unilateral nuclear disarmament. Now let us turn to the Soviet Union: it was on May 5 that Khrushchev made his historic declaration about the American spy-plane, which foreshadowed the collapse of the summit talks. He stated that the shooting down of the plane took place on May 1. The decision to do this and to make an issue of the matter was doubtless taken some days earlier, especially since he mentioned that a similar spy-plane had been observed but not attacked on April 9.

The sudden change of line of the British Communist Party may very likely be seen by future historians as one of the symptoms of a swing in the policy of the Soviet Government on summit talks, due to who-knows-what pushings and pullings inside the Soviet camp.

Anti-Humbug Department

For the attention of certain newly-baked fanatics for 'the old traditions of Trotskyism', herewith some remarks by James P. Cannon, founder of the Trotskyist movement outside the Soviet Union, which appeared in the New York weekly *The Militant* for June 11, 1932.

"Leadership is a necessary condition for any common action", says the resolution of the Third World Congress of the Comintern. This principle, which does not at all exclude rank-and-file control of the leadership, implies, however, a selection of persons for leading functions. And it has the same force whether the persons selected are professional leaders or rank-and-file workers elevated to leading positions or committees. In every organization and in every action the question arises at once and inescapably: who is going to lead? You can answer, this group or that group, this committee or another. But if you wish to be taken seriously, do not say the rank and file is going to lead the rank and file. And do not try to pass the problem off with a statement that the rank and file will control. That is not the same thing. . . .

'What does democratic centralism mean? On the one hand it means democracy in the organization. On the other hand—as against the anarchistic and I.W.W. idea of "no leaders"—it means a recognition of the function of leadership. This leadership, in the Communist conception, is not some kind of a clerical staff or information bureau. It is invested with real function and powers, that is, it is given the possibility to lead. . . .'

BRIAN PEARCE.

More Summits? — What Past Summits Produced

By JOHN ARCHER

There are people who talk as if these last 'Summit Talks' in Paris collapsed because it was the first time that they had been tried. Is there no chance of better luck next time? But the Paris fiasco was not at all like the fizzing flop of a new US rocket. How much can the 'expert' forget about the past?

'Summit Talks' have been held often in the not-too-distant past. We should look at what they produced. At the same time, we should look at the forces which have so far preserved the uneasy peace.

The Paris collapse does not mean that peace is impossible. It does not mean that Eisenhower and Macmillan are good men and Khrushchev a bad man. Nor does it mean the opposite. What kind of agreement does our experience show that they can make.

Summit meeting in 1942

In 1942 there was vigorous 'summitry'; it led to the Anglo-Soviet and US-Soviet treaties. These provided for military co-operation between the Soviet Union and the anti-German imperialist powers in the Second World War. But however necessary these military measures were to defend the Soviet state, the agreements contained other clauses which no word-twisting can justify as necessary for that end.

For example, the Soviet Union undertook not to make peace with any German Government without British consent. If the German workers had overthrown Hitler and his capitalist masters, they were still to find themselves officially at war with the Big Three allies. The Soviet Union agreed to the occupation of a defeated Germany by allied forces. There was no distinction between an imperialist, Fascist Germany and a workers' Germany. A German revolution was excluded, by agreement. What was to happen to a German workers' revolution we can guess, for what would happen to the Soviet lands if imperialist armies occupied them? Goebbels made full use of these agreements, to convince the German people that only Hitler stood between them and utter disaster, that revolution could offer them no hope.

By what conceivable logic could anyone claim that the occupation of Germany by British and US forces could help to preserve peace or defend the Soviet Union?

The US and Soviet Governments declared in 1942 that, the 'aggressors' having been defeated, disarmed and kept disarmed(!), 'they are engaged in a co-operative undertaking . . . to the end of laying the basis of a just and enduring peace, securing order under law to themselves and all nations'.

But if the 'century of the common man' could be achieved under the leadership of Wall Street and its armies, when if ever would there be any need for a struggle for socialism?

As later events showed, all of the Big Three regarded a struggle for socialism as something which would upset the balance of power, disturb the status quo and have to be opposed.

The 'century of the common man' has actually proved to consist of the capitalist encirclement of the Soviet Union. To pretend otherwise to the workers and colonial peoples of the world has been simply to teach them to trust their exploiters. It places the Soviet Union in greater danger, and all the more because the world's oppressed people have been lulled by the Soviet Government itself.

Thus the 1942 agreements were already planting the seed of the Cold War.

A summit meeting in 1943

The 'Big Three', Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill, met during 1943 at Teheran to decide what to do with the countries from which the Nazis were being driven. Stalin agreed that Greece was to be a British 'sphere of influence'. In 1945, Churchill used this agreement to silence the Left critics of British im-

perialist intervention against the Greek revolution.

Churchill boldly stated in Parliament that ELAS, the Communist-led Greek resistance, was 'Trotskyist . . . a name equally hated in Russia'. Ernest Bevin confirmed Stalin's agreement at the 1945 Labour Party Conference. Stalin did not voice a word of protest in 1944-45 while British troops suppressed the Greek Communists and the mass movement which they led.

Churchill could exploit the agreement still further. He said in Parliament that the Greek Stalinists could not always control the mass struggles of the Greek workers and peasants, which often took on a mass revolutionary character.

True, the Greek CP leaders did their best to form an all-party coalition, with Monarchists, Fascists and bourgeois politicians, and to check and disarm the Resistance forces.

But, to make sure, Churchill put in power General Plastiras who, as 'Tribune' revealed, had lived unmolested in France during the Nazi occupation and had negotiated with the Nazi chiefs, as long as they looked like winning, about governing Greece as their Quisling. Later, he changed over to the winning side. Plastiras' reign of terror rewarded the Greek Stalinist leaders by murdering thousands of workers and peasants, not sparing any Communists, Socialists or Liberals he got his hands on.

Many servicemen in the British Army and South African Navy were sorely puzzled by the turn in the 'war for democracy' which found them ordered to fire on the Greek people.

Their military discipline deteriorated. But the ELAS leaders could make no political appeal to them, in any terms, which could further undermine the authority of Churchill's generals. These workers in British uniforms could not figure out why, despite the power of the mass movement, the ELAS leaders were forcing their reluctant followers to disarm and to evacuate Athens for Churchill and Plastiras to move in.

Not only was the Greek Revolution undermined from

A cover for Churchill

within, but the Greek Stalinists threw away this golden opportunity of winning allies by giving the soldiers a lead against Churchill and politically educating them.

By the Teheran agreement Stalin covered Churchill against attack from the Left. How could Labour MPs and Communist workers in Britain reject these bitter fruits of this 'Summit agreement', when they pinned their faith in such agreements? Their attack on Churchill's imperialist policies was paralysed.

Stalin did not have to make himself Churchill's accomplice in strangling the Greek Revolution. In 1944-45 the Red Army was sweeping across Central Europe. Tito's forces were in power in Yugoslavia (and we did not learn till later that they earned Stalin's bitter hostility by refusing to let him give away part of their country, too, to the Western imperialists). The Resistance movements of the West were in full flood.

By no stretch of the imagination did Stalin's agreement with Churchill defend the Soviet frontiers. It simply gave the imperialists precious time to occupy vital areas in the Eastern Mediterranean, where today stand the armies, aircraft and rockets menacing the Soviet lands.

With military bases secure, Eden could launch the Suez adventure in 1956, the US navy could threaten the Lebanon and the oil firms could carve up the Middle East.

But in one way the Greek disaster did serve Stalinism. It checked the spread of world revolution; it reinforced, for a time the position of the ruling bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

What forces can preserve peace?

The 'summitteers' of 1943 could strangle the Greek Revolution, but the mighty march of the colonial revolution every day checks the imperialists from going to war. We do not need to fear that peace cannot be defended until we have socialism. But to look to more 'Summit Talks' is to look the wrong way. It is the struggles of the working class and the colonial peoples which preserve peace and provide the basis for the fight for socialism.