

# THE NEWSLETTER

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## LANCS LABOUR SUPPORT 'END BANS' LOBBY 'Allow policy discussion', NEC will be told

**L**ANCASHIRE Labour has given a lead to Labour Parties all over the country in the campaign against bans, proscriptions and expulsions. East Salford Labour Party is sending two delegates to the lobbying of the Labour Party's national executive committee, which takes place outside Transport House, Smith Square, Westminster, S.W.1, next Wednesday, from 8.45 a.m. onwards.

From Norwood Labour Party, still defying the demands of London party officials that they expel some of their most active members, there will be five delegates. Decision to send them was taken unanimously by Norwood's general management committee.

And there will be delegates from Camden Town branch of the Electrical Trades Union, and from union branches and Labour Parties in Liverpool, Leeds and many other provincial centres.

Branches are asked to bring their branch banners. An attendance is expected far beyond members of the Socialist Labour League, the organization which is immediately hit by proscription.

Many Labour Party members and trade unionists who disagree with the policy of the League will be supporting the lobby, on the ground that there should be freedom inside the party for different points of view.

Many of those intending to lobby this week are writing letters to various members of the NEC telling them they will be hoping to see them and discuss with them on Wednesday morning.

### LEEDS WORKERS ANSWER WITCH-HUNTERS

*From Our Own Correspondent*

**D**ESPITE the witch-hunt raging in the Leeds Labour Party, over 100 people attended the first public meeting

### HIGHBURY ENGINEERS PROTEST AT BAN ON THE NEWSLETTER

Highbury (north London) branch of the Amalgamated Engineering Union has passed a resolution expressing 'its disapproval of the recent proscription of the Socialist Labour League and The Newsletter', calling on the Labour Party's national executive 'to withdraw all bans and proscriptions of Left-wing organizations' and calling on the AEU representatives on the NEC to fight for this policy.

of Leeds branch of the Socialist Labour League.

'This is no time to sit quietly in the Labour Party with padlocks on our mouths,' declared Gerry Healy in his opening statement. Replying to discussion, Brian Behan said Gaitskell and those like him had far more in common with the Tories than with the Labour movement.

A collection of £13 11s. was taken.

**FOOTNOTE.** To its May Day meeting in Leeds Civic Theatre the Labour Party—with five MPs on the platform— attracted fewer than 100 people.

## Help Us Fight Fascism in Notting Hill

**T**HIS week we are making an appeal for financial assistance, and we are confident every socialist will answer it without hesitation.

We need more cash to help the work of combating fascism and race hatred by taking the socialist answer to the coloured and white workers of north Kensington.

**BUILDING A MOVEMENT.** The London branches and members of the Socialist Labour League have worked unstintingly since last week-end to build up a movement in Notting Hill against fascism.

In two days over 750 copies of our pamphlet 'Workers' Defence Squads for Notting Hill' were sold in the Portobello Road and Westbourne Park area. On Saturday afternoon and Sunday 253 copies of The Newsletter were sold there—mainly to coloured workers.

At Hyde Park hundreds of people heard speakers from the Socialist Labour League explain the militant socialist policies that alone can defeat fascist-inspired race violence. During the meeting a well-known fascist

was busy taking photos of the three speakers.

Every evening this week the drive with our literature has gone on. We aim to ensure that every coloured worker and white trade unionist is reached. Meetings are also taking place outside Labour Exchanges.

This week-end at least fifty members of the League will be conducting a mass canvass and street sale in north Kensington. Speakers from the League will also run open-air meetings in the district.

**PARTICULAR APPEAL.** Other meetings will be held in Brixton and other areas where there are communities of immigrant workers, and again at Hyde Park.

Of course we need cash to intensify our activities. We make a particular appeal to our readers in the provinces who although they may not be able to come and sell can give this work a boost by sending us a donation.

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**THE NEWSLETTER**

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SATURDAY, MAY 30, 1959

**FREEDOM TO DISCUSS**

**B**Y taking Wednesday morning off work and going along to Smith Square, Westminster, to lobby the national executive committee of the Labour Party, readers will be striking a significant blow for free discussion inside the Labour Party. This applies, not only to those readers who support the policy of the Socialist Labour League in its entirety, but also to the many Labour Party members and trade unionists who have disagreements on a few or on many points, but who share our disgust at the unconstitutional and arbitrary methods adopted by the party leaders to silence a voice that calls for socialist policies. Wednesday's lobbyists will not be asking the national executive to change Labour's policy on the H-bomb, or to scrap 'The Future Labour Offers YOU', or to become Marxists. They will be asking them simply to permit a climate within the party in which these questions and similar ones *can be discussed*. They will be asking them to end bans and proscriptions; to restore full membership rights to the seven active Labour Party members who have been railroaded out of the party without a hearing (or, as in Leeds, with the derisive offer of five minutes to state their case); to end a régime in which local bureaucrats can put hard-working members out of the party by decree.



More and more Labour Party members are disturbed about the policy on which Labour is entering a general election fight. Even Shinwell has recently been muttering that Labour's policy is too 'moderate' for him. Indeed, whether Labour wins the election or loses it, the party will face a crisis of policy. The necessary policy changes cannot be made except by free and frank discussion. The bans and proscriptions are an effort by the Right-wing leaders to prevent this discussion from taking place. Therefore a resolute fight against bans and proscriptions is a necessary precondition for any change of policy. Wednesday's lobby can draw many more socialists into the fight, and show the NEC that they are up against, not one minority organization, but an important body of opinion in the constituencies.

There are signs that this body of opinion is growing, and can soon become decisive. The experience in Leeds is highly instructive and heartening. An 'expel-at-any-cost' executive has received a salutary warning. Its decision to readmit those it expelled proved that the witch-hunters, not their victims, are the ones who drive a coach and six through the party constitution. It is the witch-hunters, not those who demand a fighting socialist policy, who hold the feelings of the rank and file in contempt. Wednesday's lobby can show the NEC that the rank and file intends to have a say in these matters: that it insists on the right to discuss policy.

**QUEER KIND OF SOCIALIST FIGHT—AGAINST THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE!**

By William Hunter

DELEGATES to last week's meeting of Liverpool Trades and Labour Council were amazed to see unity between Right-winger Alderman John Braddock and three supporters of Socialist Fight against a resolution protesting at the proscription of The Newsletter and the Socialist Labour League.

Socialist Fight is a monthly which by misunderstanding is sometimes called 'Trotskyist'. Recently it carried a short piece in general opposition to bans and proscriptions.

But what happened in Liverpool? On the executive committee of the trades council a resolution was carried strongly protesting at the ban.

Then a supporter of Socialist Fight moved an amendment. This, after declaring (without mentioning The Newsletter) that 'to ban or proscribe Labour journals is an unwarranted censorship of the free and frank exchange of ideas', ended with an attack on the Socialist Labour League.

The League 'can only hamper the development of the movement in its struggle for socialism', the amendment said.

With Right-wing support the amendment was carried by the EC.

**Covered themselves with glory**

Socialist Fight supporters covered themselves with further glory when the amendment came onto the floor of the trades council.

Said Councillor Brian Deane: 'These resolutions of protest commit you to the policy of The Newsletter.' Which was, of course, untrue and a poor cover for a capitulation to the Right wing.

'The Newsletter knew the NEC would try to expel them,' continued Deane. 'They were going to be the big boys and kick the NEC on the backside. Now they are asking you to support them.'

'They're so big-headed that they try to tell you that to belong to the Left wing you have to support The Newsletter. They brought the NEC into this and encouraged them to take note of other minorities.'

What a miserable and unprincipled way for one of these other minorities to try and protect itself—by helping the Right-wing attack on The Newsletter!

'Minorities should have rights,' said Laura Kirton, another supporter of Socialist Fight. And then, speaking like any Right-wing bureaucrat, she added: 'But we should not allow organizations to have one foot in and one foot out of the party.'

The trades council meeting was adjourned before a vote on the amendment was taken. If its next meeting fails to go on record against the latest proscription from Transport House, then the responsibility rests solely with the supporters of Socialist Fight, who disgusted and angered Left-wing delegates.

**INDUSTRY****FIVE DAYS' STRIKE, THEN VICTORY FOR SHEET IRON WORKERS**

From Our Scottish Correspondent

VICTORY after five days of strike action was won by the sheet iron workers at Fairfield's shipyard, Glasgow.

The strike of 280 men, brought about by the sacking of thirteen workers alleged to be redundant, brought not only the men's reinstatement but also an increase of twopence per hour on bonus working, which had earlier been rejected by the management.

Other questions which have been under dispute in the yard

have been referred to works conference.

Jim Hooper, chairman of the strike committee, summed up the victory: 'This has shown once again that redundancy can be fought and attempts by managements to blackmail workers into submission need not be tolerated,' he told me.

### **PAISLEY STRIKERS, MAINLY GIRLS AND WOMEN, FIGHT ATTEMPT TO PUT CLOCK BACK 25 YEARS**

**By Edward Knight**

A COMPLETE stoppage involving nearly 6,000 workers will take place at the Ferguslie and Anchor Thread Mills, Paisley, in support of the workers' demand for the reinstatement of two dismissed men.

At the beginning of the week over 700 workers were already on strike at the Ferguslie Mill, and on Monday the call went out to all union members in both mills to stop work.

Cause of the dispute is the management's attempts to impose speed-up methods on the workers in the process of alleged reorganization.

Latest instance affected the vacuum strippers—men who clear away waste products from the spinning machines.

As a result of time and motion study the work to be done by the men was increased from eighty to ninety-four machines, to be serviced twice every shift. The 'experts' also found some additional work for the men to do.

#### **'Malingers and lead-swingers'**

When given the new allocation the workers protested that it was impossible to carry out the amount of work indicated. Trials by the workers showed this to be the case.

'Malingers and lead-swingers' was the management's retort. Attempts by officials of the National Union of Dyers, Bleachers and Textile Workers to have the matter discussed and the new times investigated were rejected.

The management then threatened to dismiss or suspend any workers failing to carry out allocated work. When told that this would result in possible strike action the union was informed: 'If they want to walk out they can do so, and we will see them when they come back.'

This was followed by the suspension, indefinitely, of two vacuum strippers who had been unable to complete the work allocated to them. An immediate stoppage took place.

The strikers, in the main young girls and women, were quite clear that the employers, J. and P. Coats Ltd, were out to destroy working conditions won over recent years. 'They want to make us crawl,' was how one woman summed it up.

In one section alone fifty workers out of the eighty employed had suffered wage reductions as the result of reorganization. Many wage packets were reduced by as much as 30s. and 40s. Every retiming of a job resulted in the downgrading of some workers and the increasing of work loads for others.

#### **Further sackings are threatened**

Redundancies have already taken place and further sackings are threatened. Boys in the turning shop are at present only working four weeks out of five.

It is only some twenty-five years ago that a worker at the mills had to sign a form declaring that he was not a member of a trade union and had no intention of joining one. If the present methods of the management succeed then it will be only a short step to return to those conditions.

### **GLASGOW DOCKERS REBUFF EMPLOYERS**

**From a Correspondent**

Dockers at Glasgow's KLV dock last Saturday successfully opposed a move by the employers to substitute, for a regular squad that had been working on the SS Neleus, staff foremen who intended to muscle in on the Sunday overtime shift.

Willie Burns, one of the dockers, said: 'Because this ship must sail on Monday the employer gave way, recognizing that the men were determined to take action.'

### **BUILDING WORKERS CALL FOR UNITED FRONT AGAINST EMPLOYERS**

**By Our Industrial Correspondent**

REJECTION of the building workers' wage claim is described as 'very serious' in a resolution passed by Brixton branch of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers.

It would be fatal, says the branch, to wait until next year before pressing the claim. Therefore the executive should approach other unions with claims for higher wages and shorter hours, and propose a united front against the employers.

The Brixton building workers also call on their executive to consult the members through mass meetings.

They are opposed to any further reference of the claim to arbitration, 'which we believe in the light of our experiences to be a farce and designed to help the employers'.

And they ask other branches to discuss with them the setting up of rank-and-file committees to campaign for higher wages and better conditions.

## **WORKERS' DEFENCE SQUADS FOR NOTTING HILL**

**By GERRY HEALY**

### **I. FASCISM OFFERS A SCAPEGOAT**

FIFTEEN years after the horrors of Belsen, Buchenwald and the other fascist concentration camps, the menace of fascism is once again raising its head in western Europe.

De Gaulle's victory in France a year ago, and the brutal atrocities against colonial peoples in Algeria, Cyprus, Kenya and Nyasaland, have strengthened the fascist demagogues in their belief that the hour is approaching.

Notting Hill is a training ground for the fascists. In this district, inhabited by some of the poorest of the white population of the metropolis, and by 10,000 coloured immigrants, the fascists have for months been active, trying to whip up racial tension.

Notting Hill is a slum landlord's paradise. Many of its buildings are old; whole streets are in decay; yet exorbitant rents are charged and overcrowding is rife.

Nobody has bothered about the people who live in Notting Hill. To the official leaders of the Labour Party they are 'backward' people. To the capitalist Press they are 'rowdies'. To sociologists they are subjects for high-powered 'investigations'.

Yet there is nothing unusual about Notting Hill. When poor whites living a hand to mouth existence look around for a way out of their difficult conditions they do not turn to history books.

They provide ready-made material for the fascist demagogues who tell them that the cause of their troubles is the 'niggers' or the 'spades'.

But in reality the fascists care nothing about colour.

In Spain in 1936 the fascist General Franco was quick to use Moorish troops against the working people of Spain.

For the fascists the colour bar is the same sort of pretext that anti-Semitism was in east London in the thirties. It is simply a means of dividing working people on racial lines, and so preventing them from organizing in common action to improve their conditions.

Fascism takes root primarily among the lower middle class and among the less skilled and less advanced sections of the working class. And in Notting Hill fascism speaks with two voices.

To the lower middle class it says: 'We love peace and hate violence. All we want is for the coloured people to go back to their own countries.'

In the slum streets it says to the young people: 'Have a go at the niggers.'

Among the middle class, the fascists try to create the feeling that prosperity will return if the coloured people are not allowed to enter Britain.

Among the poor people, the fascists are busy spreading all kinds of lies to inflame their passions and to divert their quite justified indignation against racketeer landlords, employers and Tories into indignation against a scapegoat: the man with a differently coloured skin.

That was exactly Hitler's propaganda method in the late twenties and early thirties.

Notting Hill today is a breeding ground for future British Hitlers. That is why all serious workers must understand what is going on there, and what can be done to put matters right.

## II. THE MEANING OF NOTTING HILL

THERE are nearly half a million unemployed in Britain, and unemployment is rising among young people. Unskilled workers are the worst affected.

The Tory government helps the employing class in its offensive against the trade unions, and hopes that unemployment will provide a means of weakening organized Labour.

The employers and the Tory government want a 'show-down' with the trade unions. And the same type of industrialist who supported Hitler in Germany

This article on the Socialist Labour League's answer to racialism is available as a pamphlet, price twopence, from The Newsletter, 180 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4.

—there are many of them in this country—understands very well that a show-down with the unions raises the question of the destruction of the unions as an organized force.

These industrialists think along exactly the same lines as the fascists are thinking.

If we were permitted to see the names contained in the red book of Captain Ramsay we should find that a considerable number of the leading figures in British industry openly professed fascist sympathies in the thirties.

These people have not changed. And it would be a great mistake to imagine that they are not capable of

once again supplying funds to various fascist organizations.

The fascist demagogues do not mind the sneers of the Press, because they know that the capitalist class in Britain needs to protect its property and privileges, and that when that power and those privileges are seriously challenged the capitalist class will be only too willing to use the fascists who have shown that they can do the job.

So there is a certain amount of competition at Notting Hill among various brands of fascist thugs, to prove to the big employers that they are a force to be reckoned with.

Big strikes are in prospect in industry. The employers will be needing an army of scabs—people who go to work in a factory whose workers are out on strike for higher wages, or for shorter hours, or against sackings.

What better recruiting ground than the poor white population of Notting Hill? This is part of the service that fascism gives to the employing class.

In many industries there are now skilled workers from the colonies, and many of these have proved themselves good, loyal trade unionists.

If tomorrow strikes break out in these industries, if tomorrow unemployment spreads in these industries, we can easily see how race hatred can be used against the trade unions, against the interests of the whole working class.

What is happening in Notting Hill is the beginning of a fascist movement among the unorganized white workers. The main target is not the coloured population. For the fascist leaders the main target is organized Labour.

If the Labour movement lets the fascists build up a scab army in Notting Hill, we shall have the beginning of a mass fascist movement in Britain.

The only way to prevent the splitting of the working class on racial lines, to counter fascist lies and violence, is to mobilize the full strength of the organized Labour movement against the fascists now, before it is too late.

## III. CAN THE POLICE DO THE JOB ?

CAN the Tory government and its police force fight the fascist menace?

Never in a million years. The Tory government is the agency by which the big business men of the City of London rule this country.

When this agency becomes inadequate and the employers can no longer rule through parliament they will do what they did in Italy and Germany: they will pour millions of pounds into the building of fascist movements.

Fascism and parliamentary democracy are two ways in which the employers rule. And you cannot expect a government which defends the employers' interests to do anything serious about stopping the fascists, who seek to serve the employers.

The police force is the instrument of the Tory government, and is open to fascist ideas and fascist influences.

Only recently a young coloured worker nearly lost his life while cleaning windows at Scotland Yard itself. Over 100 policemen were interrogated, in an effort to find out who cut the ropes of his platform. But, so far as is known, it was never discovered who did it.

Inside the police force there does exist sympathy with fascist ideas. The Committee for African Organizations says coloured citizens in Britain have lost confidence in the ability of the police to protect them.

This does not mean that the police cannot and will not on occasion prosecute individual thugs who attack coloured people.

But what they cannot and will not do is deal with fascism as a mortal enemy of organized Labour.

To crush fascism an iron hand is needed. Only the organized Labour movement has that iron hand. What is needed is the will to use it.

#### IV. SELF-DEFENCE AGAINST FASCISM

In line with their general policy of betrayal of the workers' interests, the Right-wing leaders of the Labour Party do their utmost to prevent the Labour movement from understanding what is involved in the racial disturbances, and from taking any effective action.

'Leave it to the police,' they cry. 'Law and order,' echo the 'liberal' Press and the Tory Press, regardless of the fact that if coloured people are frightened to walk the streets, that is fascist 'order'.

Under the eyes of the police things go from bad to worse in Notting Hill. Knifings and beatings are commonplace, night after night.

**The Right-wing Labour leaders** want to immobilize the working-class movement.

**The Socialist Labour League** wants to see the working-class movement swing into action against the thugs.

The Socialist Labour League has proposed the setting-up of workers' defence committees and defence squads, consisting of white and coloured trade unionists.

The job of these committees and defence squads would be to protect the persons, lives, property, homes and civil liberties of all victims of the fascists and their dupes.

They would by their mere presence make it impossible for the racialists to show their faces or distribute their inflammatory propaganda.

The defence committees would carry out a wide-spread publicity campaign, explaining to white youth the falsity and bad faith of fascist propaganda, answering the lies about immigration and immigrants, pointing out that only a united working class can resist the employers' offensive against jobs, wages and conditions.

The defence committees would make themselves responsible for providing material and financial aid to coloured people who had been attacked, replacing spoiled furniture and clothing and broken windows, not as an act of charity, but as a means of demonstrating in practice the solidarity of white and coloured workers.

The capitalist Press is howling about the Socialist Labour League's proposal for the establishment of workers' defence squads. It is seeking to turn attention away from the fascists' brutality.

**The Socialist Labour League makes it absolutely clear that these proposed defence committees and defence squads would not be for the purpose of attacking anyone.**

They would simply be a means of self-defence for the workers against fascist provocation and fascist thuggery.

If the fascists stop knocking people about and the thugs stop knifing people, then there will be no need whatever for the formation of workers' defence squads.

Those responsible for unleashing violence must take the consequences of their actions. The British Labour movement traditionally abhors violence—but it will be making a big mistake if it imagines that by ignoring what is going on at Notting Hill it can avoid violence.

For every coloured worker assaulted—or murdered—on the streets of north Kensington today, thousands of white trade unionists will be assaulted in days to come, unless we put a stop to this business now.

It is in the interests of white trade unionists to join forces with coloured trade unionists in all areas where there is an immigrant population, so that a powerful united front can be built to defend the workers' traditional liberties.

How can workers' defence committees and defence squads be formed? First of all, London Labour must rally to the defence of the coloured people of Notting Hill.

The Socialist Labour League proposes that there be held a conference of local Labour Parties, Communist Party branches, trades councils, shop stewards' committees and other working-class organizations, together with coloured people's organizations.

Such a conference could consider all practical details, and could organize demonstrations and public meetings to carry forward the campaign.

Shop stewards' committees in the large factories should organize deputations of their members to visit Notting Hill and pledge support to the coloured people.

Let Labour break down the intolerable isolation of coloured people from the Labour movement.

**The capitalist Press says workers' defence squads would be 'strong-arm squads'. We say: Let the strong arm of the organized working class protect the coloured people in our midst from fascist violence.**

Let us prove in deeds to the coloured workers in our midst that British Labour is a mighty force, which has the strength and the determination to sweep the fascists off the streets.

A united front of the working class, coloured and white, beginning in the factories and spreading through the whole Labour movement, is the only effective answer to fascism in Notting Hill.

The Socialist Labour League pledges that it will fight as hard as it can to make the proposals in this article a living reality.

**USSR**

#### ONLY SAFEGUARD OF PEACE IS ACTION BY WORKERS OF EAST AND WEST

By Tom Kemp

Most discussions of the seven-year plan consider merely technical aspects. Are the targets realizable? The physical possibilities are there. So is the technology. Continued investment yields constantly increasing levels of output, so more goods can be produced for consumers even without reducing the ratio of new investment imposed by the goal of catching up with capitalism.

Purely in these terms, it can be said that sooner or later the

Soviet Union will become the leading industrial country. This is a world-shaking fact which will dominate the history of the next twenty-five years.

Some apologists of capitalism—the American National Association of Manufacturers, the State Department's anti-communist publications—have naturally tried to minimize the evidence for growing Soviet economic power.

Even those who have resigned themselves to the economic challenge, and utter platitudes about how to meet it, have seldom got to grips with the political consequences.

What it amounts to is this: the world relationship of forces will become continually less favourable for capitalism. Even economic prosperity, which has been faltering in the last year or so, provides no guarantee against long-term decline and weakening.

Colonialism is going overboard in a political sense. The growth of the working-class movement, in the undeveloped as well as the advanced countries, will be spurred on still further.

In these circumstances capitalist stability is an illusion.

So far even the more realistic capitalist politicians have been assuming some permanent settlement with the USSR on the

This is the last in the series of articles by Tom Kemp, lecturer in economic history at Hull University, on aspects of the seven-year economic plan in the USSR. Previous articles in the series appeared on February 21 (pp. 54-5), February 28 (pp. 64-5), March 14 (p. 81) and April 18 (pp. 117-18).

basis of the indefinite prolongation of the existing balance of forces. But that is an impossibility. Their hopes are built on sand.

The Soviet leaders feel uneasily the highly explosive nature of the course they are pursuing.

By the logic of their position they have to challenge capitalism, but they do not want to provoke the capitalist countries to war.

Hence they propose 'peaceful competition'. The working class in the capitalist countries must put pressure on 'their' governments to accept Soviet proposals and are offered a 'choice' between the two systems.

### Big advantages for Khrushchev

Undoubtedly an arrangement with capitalism offers Khrushchev inestimable advantages. By enabling the arms budget to be reduced, and by expanding trade with the capitalist countries, the burden of catching up can be considerably reduced.

Capital equipment from the west will provide a short cut to increasing the flow of consumer goods in line with the demands of the people for better living more quickly. It will be possible to attain plan targets with less strain.

Soviet leaders call for credits to buy equipment for which neither goods nor even gold are available at the moment. They even say to the capitalists: 'It will be in your interests to make us such loans!'

Indeed there is a network of contradictions. The Soviet leaders are clearly worried, and a certain inconsistency appears in their public statements.

The faster they go economically the more difficult it becomes to make the increasingly powerful machine obey their commands. Every move forward is a threat to capitalism. But they are asking, and desire, that capitalists should help them on their way.

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These international problems are interlocked with equally delicate domestic issues.

Some adjustments have been made since the Twentieth Congress under the pressure of the workers, peasants and

intellectuals, after a difficult period of trial and error. There have been appreciable improvements in living standards.

Outwardly the leadership is ebullient. Khrushchev rides the wave of successes and promises, with plenty of courtiers to tell him how good he is.

But the bitter attacks on the 'anti-party group' point to seething hates and jealousies just below the surface. One error or major failure could raise the tension and precipitate a new crisis.

So far the factional fights have been behind closed doors, but there is no guarantee that the masses of the people will not enter the arena on the next occasion.

What of the changes which have convinced some that there has been a 'liberalization', or even a movement towards democratic participation by the people?

### Descend from on high

There are, of course, 'nation-wide discussions', but the themes descend from on high and are translated into practice without major change. A purpose has been served. The social pulse is felt; a limited measure of dissidence is allowed on lesser points; a feeling of participation is induced.

This is a response to pressures from below, but the numbers who effectively contribute to decision-making are not greatly increased.

Control remains concentrated at the top. It is still arbitrary and centralized. There is no sharing of power. Forms are different: so-called 'legality' has replaced the irresponsible power of the secret police.

But the limits to such changes are narrowly set by the unresolved contradictions and conflicts of Soviet society.

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Things would be very much easier if it were true, as Khrushchev glibly proclaims, that 'the Soviet Union is no longer in capitalist encirclement'.

Yet in the next breath he has to admit that there is no guarantee against the possibility of capitalist aggression. In fact modern weapons and strategy have changed the meaning of encirclement.

If not, why the complaints about the chain of U.S. air bases throughout the world, or such matters as the establishment of west German military depots in Norway?

The threat of anti-Soviet war remains real enough. Utterances by western military chiefs which show this are frequently quoted in Soviet propaganda.

The Khrushchev policy is to gamble on the 'peaceful' capitalist politicians making a deal on the basis of the existing division of the world. In fact a summit meeting cannot settle the future.

For one thing, whether or not they want to, by their decisions on the economic front the Soviet leaders are producing the conditions for the further undermining of capitalism.

The last-throw stake on a preventive war to save capitalism—conceived, perhaps, in the first instance, as a limited war—may become not less, but more, attractive.

### 'Peaceful coexistence' no guarantee

Similarly, irresponsible adventurism cannot be ruled out in the Kremlin—or in Peking.

On any sober assessment a new war could destroy millennia of human achievement and wipe out a large part of mankind.

At first sight this stands as the major force behind the arguments for 'peaceful coexistence'. But reflection will show that as it is at present conceived of it gives no guarantee, even of a breathing space, since it means the continued possibility of a desperate gamble from one side or the other.

In fact there is only one safeguard—that is for the working-class movement to use its strength both in the capitalist countries and in the USSR.

Khrushchev offers no way out. He makes, and can make,

no call of this kind to the international working class because of his own internal position. And if he did it would cut no ice.

The safeguarding both of peace and of the USSR lies with the socialist and Labour movement bringing the working people into action. But this can be done only as part of a conscious battle for their own rights on terms which they can understand, not as expendable pawns of the Soviet leaders.

There is no easier way.

## CINEMA

### TOO SUPERFICIAL AND SENTIMENTAL TO GET TO ROOTS OF RACIALISM

'SAPPHIRE' has been hailed not only as a good thriller, but as a serious comment on the race problem.

As a thriller it is rather obvious. In its treatment of racialism it is deceptive.

No doubt the intentions of those who made the film were good. This is just what makes it dangerous; for the liberal explanation of racial hatred is superficial, and the solution is misleading.

A girl is found murdered. Investigations take the police to two worlds, one black, one white. In each, we are carefully told, there are 'good' and 'bad'.

### DECENT

There are debased coloured people, there are some who are anti-white, but then there are decent and tolerant ones too.

There are white people whose outlook is riddled with prejudice, who are even sick with hatred; but there are others who implement the 'brotherhood of man'.

Not even policemen are immune. We see a bigoted Scotland Yard man as well as one who is a worthy custodian of blind justice.

One important thread of the film counterposes the 'black' side of the girl's life—dancing and low dives—to the 'white' side—the civilized pursuit of studies in an academy of music.

But this is covered over by a series of sentimental and

banal assertions about coloured people's dignity and excellence.

There are in this film isolated moments in which prejudice is depicted with integrity. But having merely shown that racialism exists, the film as a whole simply states that it will take a long time to eradicate—and then, one gathers, through the individual efforts of 'good' men and women and the impartial operation of 'justice'.

### DECEPTION

At a time when a race murder has happened in our midst a film which sets out to explore this problem will have to go deeper than this to merit serious consideration.

For racialism is not the expression of an individual's corruption. It cannot be fought effectively by individuals' leading the 'moral life'. Still less it can be fought by the 'law'.

This is the liberal deception which seeks to disarm any militant attempt to destroy racialism at its root.

BENITA TEPER

### SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE APPOINTS ITS OFFICERS

Gerry Healy was elected general secretary of the Socialist Labour League at the first meeting of the League's national committee, elected at its recent inaugural conference.

Brian Behan was elected national chairman of the League and Peter Fryer was appointed Editor of its weekly journal *The Newsletter* and Managing Editor of its theoretical organ *Labour Review*.

Other members of the national committee are:

Brian Arundel; Michael Banda; Tony Banda; Alan Courtney; Harry Finch; G. Gale; Frank Girling; William Hunter; Tom Kemp; Peter Kerrigan; Edward Knight; Brian Pearce; Bob Pennington; Robert Shaw; Cliff Slaughter; J. Swan.

The following were appointed to the Editorial Board of *The Newsletter*:

B. Arundel; M. Banda; B. Behan; P. Fryer; Mick Gammon; G. Healy; P. Kerrigan; B. Pearce; C. Slaughter; J. Swan.

Brian Pearce and Cliff Slaughter were appointed Editors of *Labour Review*.

## Constant Reader | What Must Be 'Smashed'?

THE part of the Socialist Labour League's programme which speaks of the need to 'smash the capitalist State machine' will undoubtedly be misrepresented in various ways, for which we must be prepared.

One way in which this traditional communist idea has been distorted, in my own experience, is to turn it into a threat to the rank and file of the Civil Service.

I once heard a 'training course' of newly-appointed clerical officers being told that 'the Reds' would put them all out of jobs if they ever got power!

What we declare the need to abolish, root and branch, is the repressive part of the State machine.

Lenin himself pointed out (in 'Will the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?', October 1917) that 'besides the preponderant "repressive" machinery, the standing army, the police and the officialdom, there is in the modern State a machinery that is closely connected with banks and syndicates, fulfilling as it does a great mass of work of accounting and record-keeping, if one may so express it.

### Important distinctions

This machinery cannot and must not be broken up. It must be forcibly freed from subjection to the capitalists; the latter must be cut off, broken, chopped away from it with the threads transmitting their influence; it must be **subjected** to

the proletarian soviets; it must be made wider, more all-embracing, more popular . . . .

'This "State apparatus" we can "lay hold of" and "set in motion" at one stroke, by one decree, for the actual work of book-keeping, control, registration, accounting and summation is here carried out by office workers, most of whom are themselves in a proletarian or semi-proletarian position . . . .

'As for the higher grade office workers, of whom there are very few, but who incline towards the capitalists, we shall have to treat them like capitalists—"with severity".

'They, like the capitalists, will resist, and this resistance will have to be broken.'

These distinctions between different parts of the State machine and between the lower and higher Civil Servants are of vital importance for understanding what we have in mind and explaining it to people to whom it is a new idea.

### The ghosts walk again

It will be interesting to see how the British Stalinist Press copes with the new Soviet history of the second world war, with its severe criticisms of Stalin for his beheading of the armed forces in 1937-38, his foreign policy in the late 1930s and his conduct of operations.

The knock-down excuse for the secret trial and execution of

Marshal Tukhachevsky and his colleagues used to be that it had 'rid Russia of her fifth column'.

Then quite substantial defections to the Nazis took place in 1941-42—including General Vlasov, one of the defenders of Moscow, from whose followers among Russian prisoners of war Hitler formed a 'puppet' army, as well as large numbers of Ukrainians, Caucasians and central Asians, who were utilized by the German forces.

In 1954 I wrote, in a document to be published by the British-Soviet Friendship Society, that certain Caucasian peoples, as a result of war-time events, had been deported en masse to less vulnerable areas of the USSR.

Following consultation between Andrew Rothstein and the 'Cultural' Attaché at the Soviet Embassy, this had to be changed to a statement that the peoples concerned had been 'given an opportunity to develop elsewhere in the Soviet Union'.

Readers were left to deduce that somebody was being rewarded somehow for some piece of good conduct!

Doubtless Rothstein, Dutt and Gollan would like to give those responsible for the new Soviet publication an 'opportunity to develop elsewhere', if only they could.

### Moan from a monolith

'They oppose the declared policy of the Labour Party from within the Labour Party.'

—Peter Robshaw on the crimes of the Socialist Labour League, in the London Labour Party's London News, May 1959.

BRIAN PEARCE

## LETTERS

### CAMPAIGN AGAINST ROCKET BASES IN YORKSHIRE

I SHOULD like to call on your readers to support the demonstrations which the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is organizing against the building of rocket bases in Yorkshire.

According to the Yorkshire Evening News of May 20, the Press has a 'gentlemen's agreement' not to print the names of the sites: they are Carnaby, Catfoss, Driffield, Full Sutton and Brighton.

The demonstrations are centred around the Brighton base, nine miles east of Selby. A picket is being maintained at the gates and a campaign of discussion and action with trade unionists and others is about to begin in the surrounding villages.

There will be poster parades in Selby on Saturday afternoons, beginning on June 6.

All these activities will culminate in a mass demonstration at Selby and Brighton on Sunday, July 5, at which A. J. P. Taylor, Mervyn Jones and John Rex will speak.

Pickers, canvassers and money are needed. If you can help, write to Francis Deutsch, 13 Park Grove, Hull.

Leeds, 6.

Mary Ringsleben

[The Newsletter is very glad to help the Brighton campaign by printing this letter. Members of the Socialist Labour League who are taking part in this campaign report that many workers agree that the bases do nobody any good, and waste land and money—but that all bring up the question of unemployment.

A young shipyard worker told one of our members that he agreed completely, but that he and many of his colleagues were to be laid off in Goole next week and could get no other work.

Others have been unemployed for up to eighteen months before getting work at Brighton.

Our answer to this is that (a) they should be building houses, flats and factories, not military bases; (b) Labour groups on local councils must press for direct works departments that can provide other jobs.

But the questions ordinary workers ask are very significant. The peace movement must see that its aims can be achieved only as part of a wider movement based on working-class struggle against the Tory government and the capitalist class.

In our opinion a speaker from the Socialist Labour League might well be given some time to put our point of view on these matters at the mass demonstration on July 5.—[Editorial Board]

### ONLY OUR LEAGUE CAN WIN YOUNG PEOPLE FOR SOCIALISM

I WAS very impressed by the Socialist Labour League conference and pleased to see a large number of young people there.

Young people need to be organized and educated so that they can play an important part in the struggles of the working class.

The attitude of the capitalist class towards young people is a condescending attitude, as if we were all bits of dirt in a gutter which they can pick up and utilize for their own purpose.

Young people resent this, but because they see no way to express their resentment and state of uncertainty, and because they see no alternative, their hatred of being pushed around is expressed sometimes in violence and riots—which unfortunately are also sometimes directed against the coloured people.

### Youngest by eighteen months

The fascists know of this resentment and try to pump young people full of stupid ideas about the coloured people, saying that they take their jobs and urging the youth to fight against them and drive them out of Britain.

Young people must be led away from the fascists and other reactionary organizations and shown the need for socialism.

I believe that our organization, the Socialist Labour League, is the only one that can do this.

May I correct Patricia McGowan, who wrote last week that the youngest member of the League at the conference was 16-year-old Nick Ralph? In fact, I believe I was the youngest member there, being 14½ years old.

Nottingham

Aileen Shaw

### SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE: PUBLIC MEETINGS

#### Liverpool

Sunday, May 31, 7.30 p.m. Walker Art Gallery,  
William Brown Street.

BRIAN BEHAN speaks on 'The Policy of the Socialist Labour League'.

#### London

Monday, June 1, 8 p.m. Lambeth Town Hall  
GERRY HEALY speaks on 'The Fight Against Bans and Proscriptions'

#### Manchester

Sunday, June 7, 7 p.m. Caxton Hall, Chapel Street,  
Salford.  
GERRY HEALY and JACK GALE speak on 'The Policy of the Socialist Labour League'