

THE NEWSLETTER

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BRITISH MARXISTS' HISTORIC CONFERENCE

'THE finest conference ever of the Marxist movement in Britain.' This was the feeling voiced on all sides by the delegates and visitors to the second national conference of the Socialist Labour League. At no time in the history of the Communist movement in Britain has debate been so open and frank. From start to finish there was an air of revolutionary purpose about the deliberations.

With only one vote in favour and one abstention, conference rejected the policy put forward by a delegate from the Behan faction which called for the launching of an independent party and characterized the Labour Party as a capitalist party. The delegate who supported this line, Granville Stone, announced that he felt it impossible to abide by the decisions of the conference. He made this statement after the conference, by an overwhelming majority, passed a resolution that it is a basic principle of the Socialist Labour League that the Labour Party is a working-class and not a capitalist party.

In the opinion of conference the Labour Party is a working-class party with a reactionary bureaucracy foisted upon it as a result of the pressures of British imperialism.

Conference overwhelmingly reaffirmed that the Socialist Labour League is an integral part of the Labour and Trade Union movement in Britain. The first step in the fight against bans and proscriptions was the stepping up of the campaign for the reversal of the National Executive Committee's decision to proscribe the Socialist Labour League and ban its paper, The Newsletter.

The political perspective of conference

CLIFF SLAUGHTER, a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Labour League and one of the editors of its theoretical organ, Labour Review, presented the main political report. He laid particular stress upon the character of the crisis which is now developing inside the Labour Party. This, he emphasized, was a fundamental crisis for social democracy, in which three great issues were tending to merge together in a single platform of struggle.

The defence of Clause Four was essentially a struggle to extend nationalization to all the basic industries. The resistance of the Trade Unions to Tory attacks was raising more and more the problem of socialism for the rank and file. The attack on Clause Four by the Right-wing Gaitskell leadership was drawing the membership of the Labour Party and the trade unions together in a united movement of resistance to all attempts on the part of the Right-wing to disrupt and weaken the Labour movement.

The great interest shown by the British Labour movement in the struggle of the South African people supplied clear evidence that the domestic struggles in the British Labour movement were more and more related to the struggle of the colonial people for freedom and independence. Cliff Slaughter stressed the profound effect which the Sharpeville massacre had upon the ranks of British Labour. Conference enthusiastically supported his call for solidarity with the South African people now engaged in a life and death battle with the reactionary Verwoerd government.

A considerable portion of Comrade Slaughter's speech was devoted to the struggle for peace which was, he said, related to the fight to stop the manufacture of the H-bomb and the abandonment of the testing of all nuclear weapons. The Socialist Labour League, said Comrade Slaughter, was the only organization to warn the working class in Britain about the summit talks and the fact that these talks could not

achieve a real peace.

In the discussion delegates described how the sales of The Newsletter were considerably increased as a result of the correct position which we had on summit talks.

The history of the struggle to end the manufacture of the H-bomb by the use of industrial action, which has been consistently advocated by the Socialist Labour League, was shown to be correct, Comrade Slaughter claimed. We were the only organization which had a principled attitude towards the great Aldermaston marches. On the one hand we stressed the limitations of pacifism which only served to immobilize those who wanted a real struggle against the third world war, and on the other hand, we exposed the fraudulent claims of the Communist Party which asserted that summit talks could bring peace. Only the independent struggle of the working class, led by a Marxist leadership, could halt the preparations for a new war.

The campaign in defence of Clause Four, support for the colonial revolution and the ending of the manufacture of the H-bomb had now become the great rallying points for large numbers of people who wanted to get rid of the Tories, and their Gaitskell allies in the Labour movement.

- Conference called upon the Labour movement to join with the Socialist Labour League in a united struggle to lift the bans and proscriptions. It appealed especially to Labour Left-wingers and rank-and-file members of the Communist Party to unite around this important issue.
- Conference called for the Labour movement to clear out the Tory government of Macmillan and replace it with a Labour government pledged to implement a socialist policy that would extend nationalization to all basic industries without compensation and maintain full employment by reorganizing industry under workers' control.
- Conference called for an all-out effort by the Labour movement to stop the manufacture of the H-bomb, and to bring to an end all work on rocket bases and nuclear installations.
- Conference called for full support for the South African and colonial peoples by redoubling our efforts here in Britain against the imperialists of the City of London and their Tory politicians.

(See further report overleaf)

Debate and Decision at Conference

ALASDAIR MacINTYRE, although not a delegate to the conference spoke with the agreement of the delegates on behalf of the open party faction.

'The question confronting us in the League at this moment,' he said, 'is whether the perspectives of our political work should be tied down and limited by the work inside the Labour Party, or whether, although we continue Labour Party work in various ways, we confront the working class with a much more realistic political alternative.'

'We are faced today with a working class experiencing great strains and unevenness and when I said that part of that class was being bourgeoisified (an unhappy word), I did not, of course, simply mean that some workers are getting high wages. I meant also that there are millions of working-class Tory votes, that there are millions of working-class Labour voters who vote for the Labour Party because they know very well that the Labour Party's policy is a pseudo-Tory policy, that we are confronted with a working class in which we have to move into action the militant sections of the workers so that they can transform their class and that we cut ourselves off precisely from these sections by tying ourselves down to the total entry perspective.'

'When it is said that the perspective of this movement is always towards building in the end an open revolutionary party, we have got to ask what is the point at which this end becomes imperative and it is precisely the point, I think, at which working within the Labour Party prevents one offering the working class any alternative as a class.'

'We therefore think that although Labour Party faction work should continue, the most important challenge for the Labour Party and the one which is most likely to move policies inside the Labour Party is not one of total entry, but one of open challenge from outside.'

'We have at the moment the successes of the CND and the CP combined with the fact that the movements arising in this country at the moment are looking for an open and programmatic opposition to the Labour Party and not absorption in it.'

'We stand at the moment in a position in which perpetual new crises are going to confront us in Social Democracy and Stalinism and I think it is a mark of the failure of our perspectives that we are so little ready for this. Of course the line taken on the summit was absolutely correct, but if the answer to people who begin to see through the CP's line on this is "Right, come on, join us and we will set you to working inside the Labour Party, whose leadership is even more tied to summitry than your old leadership was", then you are going to allow yet more Left political militants to go

out in waste and disillusionment with all Left-wing leaderships.'

'I think that the important political need for the working class today, and this is the central point of the minority and the reason why I adhere firmly to the minority's platform, is the presentation, systematically, to the British working class now of a political alternative which militants can grasp and present to the rest of their class.'

GRANVILLE STONE, delegate from the Nottingham branch of the League, supported the call for the Socialist Labour League to declare itself an independent revolutionary party and said:

'I would say quite clearly now that in my opinion the Labour Party is not a working-class party, it is the left arm of capitalism, a petty-bourgeois party, anti-working class, despite the fact that it has some workers in it, active ones.'

Comrade Stone said that he had come from the Communist Party into the Trotskyist movement, like others, in the years 1956-57 because they wanted to join a revolutionary workers' party and recognized that the Communist Party did not play this role.

'All of us expected this conference to say how near we are to the formation of this party, but instead our main work, if not our work for as far forward as we can see is in the Labour Party.'

'We have got to ask ourselves whether such a method will build a revolutionary workers' party. I think history proves otherwise. For the past 15 years at least the Trotskyist groups have carried out this entry tactic with some very interesting results. Until 1956 everyone of these groups was minute.'

'The entry tactic has led to some unprincipled happenings. There was the liquidation of the Revolutionary Communist Party, then there was the Socialist Outlook, which was allowed to be crushed by the Labour bureaucrats without hardly any fight being put up.'

Granville Stone said that the policy of total entry had led to a watering down of revolutionary principles, and quoted the Newsletter's support for nationalization, workers' participation in industry and the suspension of compensation payments in the mines as examples. He believed that this was a deliberate policy to give us a link with fake Left people in the Labour Party to get them to come over to us by leading them to think that we were not really revolutionaries.

'The revolutionary workers' party is needed as a service to the working class as a preparation in the coming struggles in industry and against war. At the moment no party in this country is attempting to lead the industrial workers in a

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MRA FINANCE

A Mr. Joseph Hancock, of Liverpool, whose activities on behalf of Moral Rearmament were exposed recently in The Newsletter, has written to us, more in sorrow than in anger. We were particularly amused by the following paragraph in his letter:

'The difference in the scale of financial support for the Socialist Labour League and MRA reflects the vastly greater measure of support for and the acceptance of the need for men to unite to create under God a new and better social order than for the ideas of class hatred and division between people that is the backbone of Communist thinking.'

In the nature of things, the Socialist Labour League finds support almost exclusively among people of small financial means, and it takes a lot of such people to contribute to us what one rich man (Henry Ford, say) can give to an organization like MRA. We have not and cannot expect to have such friends either, as Mr. James Coltart, right-hand man of Roy Thomson, Britain's latest press and television magnate. Coltart's boosting of MRA through 'The Scotsman' and Scottish Television is mentioned by Tom Driberg in his useful, wide-ranging article, 'MRA—A New Offensive', in the New Statesman of June 4.

Driberg has made it his business over a long period to keep a bright light focused on MRA's connections with big business, strike-breaking and reactionary politics. His well-informed exposures deserve close attention from militants who have to deal with the Buchmanite nuisance in the course of their day-to-day struggles.

struggle against war, only the industrial workers can end war by the seizure of power internationally. No party aids the workers in the struggle for the defence and betterment of their conditions. Therefore the need is obvious for a revolutionary workers' party, an open, independent party. This is the only way that the theories of the Permanent Revolution can be carried out.'

ALEX McLARTY, of Glasgow, said:

'I think it was Marx who said that the workers cannot pick and choose the institutions in which they work, that these institutions are there ready at hand and however difficult it is to work in them, nevertheless Marxists must work in the mass organizations of the class.

'Just as workers cannot pick and choose the institutions in which they work, the trade unions and the Labour Party, so it is for Marxists, for the simple reason that there is only one Marxist movement. Pre-war in this country, it is quite true to say, that in the difficult conditions of the time there were a few Trotskyist groups, but arising from the conscious efforts of the Trotskyists, through fusion, through struggle, there has emerged the Socialist Labour League.

'The Socialist Labour League is the historic continuity of the Marxist movement right from the days of Karl Marx up to the present day in the conditions operating in Britain at the present time.

'From that point of view in order to be able to understand the present conditions and present policy of the Socialist Labour League one must approach it from a historical experience. But the basic weakness of the minority faction is that they don't approach it from this historical point of view and therefore they become confused about today's realities.

'That is quite clear in the case of Comrade MacIntyre. Comrade MacIntyre's opinion is that a large section of the working class is bourgeoisified, that it will be difficult to move large sections, that we must orientate ourselves towards the more militant or lower-paid sections, that that bourgeoisified section more or less reflects itself within the Labour Party. Because the minority does not understand the historical developments leading to today's reality they become impatient, they look for a quick approach, a road out and therefore their inadequate theoretical understanding makes them attempt to revise the policy of the Marxist movement.

'Comrade MacIntyre says we must have an open party. On the one hand the minority say that if our perspectives document is accepted by this conference we will be immersed in a swamp of reformism. On the other hand they say that our movement is afraid to fuse with other elements who have a clear programmatic outlook.

'Who are these other elements? Is it the Pabloites, is it the ILP, is it Cadogan? They don't state who it is, but of course it is quite clear the only point on which they agree is the need for an open party. So that any element which says we must have an open party that is the element with a clear programmatic outlook.

'But they don't understand that for years now there have been groups up and down this country who roar and shout that very same slogan at the street corners. But the reason why these groups cannot build up is precisely because they have got no historical principles or continuity of any sort whatsoever.'

TED KNIGHT, a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Labour League, believed that what the conference was debating and what the League had been debating over the past few months was 'are we going to build a movement or are we going to destroy it?' When we were dealing with ideas and with people who are putting forward ideas which would lead to the destruction of our movement then we must speak out frankly. He accused the minority faction of stringing together facts in such a way as to deceive and to hide the real issues behind them.

He went on to give as an example of this the charge that we had not fought against the ban on the Socialist Outlook.

When the paper was banned he said: 'We in the Labour Party put up a tremendous struggle. We fought the bureaucracy inside the Labour Party and took into account the development of the Bevanite movement and the Left in the party. We saw that the bureaucracy in Transport House was coming down on the developing Left-wing of which we were part, and was attacking the Socialist Outlook and the extreme Left in order to proceed to smash the Left and Tribune.

'We waged a campaign up and down the country, holding well attended meetings, rallying Labour Parties to the defence of the Socialist Outlook. But we didn't rally them on the basis of "Let the Trotskyists have a paper". We rallied them on the basis that this was part of the struggle of the Right-wing against the Left. We equated this with the development of Left struggles inside the trade union movement.

'We retreated on the question of Socialist Outlook. Why? Because at that stage in the development of the Left to have gone out would have left a vacuum in a developing situation. Within a matter of months after the banning of the Outlook, Bevan was up on the mat to be expelled. We say our fight around the Socialist Outlook enabled the Left in the movement to mobilize itself around Bevan in that fight.

'We are also told that the Marxists made no contribution. You completely forget the developing struggle in the course of the growth of the Left-wing. You forget Korea and the role of the Marxists, completely isolated in the Labour Party. But because of their being inside the Labour Party, because of the consistence of our fight against Strachey, Attlee and Bevan, the development of the Left of the Labour Party was greatly enhanced to where the whole atmosphere inside the Labour Party changed.

'If you dismiss the role of the Marxists inside the Labour Party you have got to say something about it. You cannot just say they made no contribution at all because the 15 years to which you refer have seen a big development of a Left inside the Labour Party in which the Marxists, stage by stage, participated.'

IAN LAMB, delegate from the Southwark branch of the League, moved an amendment from the branch to the political resolution.

He criticized the document for not being specific enough on certain very important questions.

'We know from the economic perspectives document,' he said, 'that British capitalism at the moment is in a particular sort of situation where you have in some industries a relative boom and in other industries, the old basic industries, such as coal and cotton, a situation where the capitalist class is attempting to run down the industries and put its eggs in another basket.

'This situation presents particular problems to the working class which I think are different to the problems which were presented at the time of the formation of the League. At that time our analysis was that the employing class was on the offensive, attempting to drive down the standards of living of the working class and that expressed itself in the sort of offensive we saw at Shell Mex with the victimization of militants.

'But,' comrade Lamb went on, 'because some industries were enjoying a boom it is possible for the workers to take the offensive and say to the employers that as they were making larger profits, the workers in the industries were entitled to more wages.

'Nevertheless the Upton (Yorkshire) coalfield situation shows that the situation is not the same in all industries. That in some industries workers are still fighting for their very existence.

'I think we have got to look at this situation and realize that our policy has got to be different in these two separate sections of the economy. I don't think the document sufficiently brings this question out and that is the purpose of the Southwark branch amendment.

'The offensive mood of the working class is very real and
(Continued on back page)

INDUSTRY

VICTORY FOR STANDARD CLERKS

By a Standard Clerk

At a hurriedly called mass meeting, 400 workers voted unanimously to strike. Once again workers had seen through the tricks of management and thereby the capitalist system; but this was no ordinary decision, for the workers in this instance were clerical workers.

Ten years ago both manual workers and management would have scoffed at the idea of clerical workers taking militant action, yet in the last few months clerical workers in the Coventry motor industry have made news with the following headlines: 'Standard Clerks Strike Over Shop Steward's Dismissal', 'White Collar Workers at Humber Strike Over Wage Claim' and the latest one as a result of the mass meeting referred to 'Standard Clerks Strike During Pay Claim Negotiations'.

The Standard clerks, in common with most clerical workers, only reach top rate at 26 and the rate of £13 7s. 3d. for men and £8 9s. 0d. for women. The claim submitted to the management was for a 30s. increase for men and 25s. for women, a compression of the wage scale to enable the adult rate to be reached at 24, and service increments of £1 after five years' service, plus a further 10s after ten years.

The justification for the claim is clear when you consider that the clerks' manual colleagues at Standards are averaging £23 a week (this includes female labour and overtime).

An attempted manoeuvre

Negotiations on the claim had almost reached breaking point, with the management flatly refusing to concede an all-round increase, when a group of progress chasers was called into the office (without the shop steward), and were told by a manager that the progress staff would be getting a considerable increase. The reason for this manoeuvre is obvious when you know that should the progress staff stop work all production of vehicles would cease within ten minutes. Modern automated plants are co-ordinated with a flow of paper work which is every bit as important as the continued flow of vehicle components.

As soon as the negotiating committee heard about the management's treachery the mass meeting was called and the decision to stage a sit-down strike was taken. An immensely heartening fact about the meeting was the disgust and anger displayed by the progress staff over the management's attempt to bribe them into not taking action when the company had rejected the pay claim.

After the strike was only three hours' old the management gave a full and unqualified apology for its actions, and gave an assurance that such actions would never be repeated. A mass meeting of 750 members of the National Association of Clerical and Supervisory Staffs (a section of the Transport and General Workers' Union) decided to return to work to enable negotiations to continue. The meeting left the management in no doubt as to what their reactions would be should the claim be rejected.

An important precedent

The outcome of the negotiations was the unprecedented offer of a flat increase for all the clerical workers. The pattern laid down in the past has been for the management to reserve the right to fight all increases on an individual merit basis, this has been called 'Grace and Favour Payments'. So, although the actual amount offered, 10s. for men and 7s. for women, plus a compression of the wage scale to 25 was unsatisfactory, the precedent established was an important victory. It was on the latter fact that the members agreed to accept Standards' offer.

The national press reports clerical disputes with amused

sympathy. Management in the Coventry motor industry is neither amused nor sympathetic, as their basic need to reduce the wages of the workers to compete in the export market is intensified. They can no longer rely on the clerical workers to subsidize their manual colleagues in wage increases. The attack on manual workers' pay and conditions will start in those firms where clerical militancy is the keenest. We should be prepared for this and make sure that we do not give the employers the opportunity of playing one section off against another.

WITCH-HUNT IN THE YORKSHIRE COALFIELD

By G. Gale

Right-wing officials of the National Union of Mine-workers are now saying that the recent strike at Upton Colliery (reported in last week's Newsletter) was exploited by the Communist Party in order to gain votes for Jock Kane in the current election for the presidency of the Yorkshire Area of the Union. These officials, widely regarded by miners as Coal Board puppets, say that the Communist Party has been particularly active in Upton, where there have been 15 disputes over wages so far this year, and where there were recently three strikes in three weeks. As reported in last week's article, the Coal Board has already threatened to close Upton Pit because of its militancy.

This is an attempt at a double witch-hunt. It is significant that the Daily Telegraph, after reporting this attack (Tuesday, June 7), goes on to say: 'The Communist Party had never forgiven miners' leaders in the neighbouring Nottinghamshire coalfield for banning Communists from holding the chief full-time posts of president, general secretary and financial secretary. It was done in 1956, after Russian atrocities in Hungary, the leaders declaring that men who were prepared to support such action were not fit to hold key positions in industry.'

The Press loves a witch-hunt

The national press loves to see witch-hunts against Communists, Trotskyists, and other militants in any industry, and continually presses for bans and proscriptions against them. They have particularly applauded William Carron of the AEU for his efforts in this direction.

The Socialist Labour League has fundamental political differences with the Communist Party. We were opposed to the atrocities in Hungary. And we oppose the Communist Party's policy in the pits. But we will not remain silent while members of the Communist Party are witch-hunted. We are opposed to the barring of CP members from union positions and we will defend them against press attacks.

This smear campaign is also directed against non-Communist Party militants. It is completely untrue that the militancy at Upton is in any way connected with the Communist Party. Communist Party influence is non-existent at Upton. The Party, as reported in the Newsletter last week, made no serious attempt to spread the Upton strike to the rest of Yorkshire. Its policy is based on manoeuvring for union positions and not on the struggles of the miners. The inactivity of Will Paynter makes this abundantly clear. This 'Communist' leader has done nothing to oppose pit closures, and has done nothing to implement the Miners' Charter. The Communist Party in Yorkshire was afraid of the Upton strike precisely because they did not control it.

It is deliberate strategy by the Right-wing union officials and the national press to smear every militant worker as a Communist Party agent. This is a continuation of the witch-hunt against militants that has been taking place for many months at Brodsworth Colliery, and it has the same purpose. It is to smear the more class-conscious worker and try to cut them off from the rest of the men. This underlines the need for militants to build up rank and file contacts from pit to pit to combat the witch-hunters and to fight for an effective policy and real leadership in the mines.

African Revolution Worries Big Capital

By G. GALE

THE Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa—with investments in gold, uranium, diamonds, copper, iron-ore and coal—is worried about the future. At first sight there would seem little to worry about, since last year the Corporation and its subsidiaries had a record consolidated profit (after tax!) of £7,730,864. This compares with £7,181,537 in 1958 and £5,254,540 in 1957. Anglo-American also owns 700,000 deferred shares in the De Beers Consolidated Mines at 120s. per share. Last year the De Beers Company made a profit of £21,402,943—after tax. This was an increase of more than £3 million over the previous year.

The Central Selling Organisation sold diamonds to the tune of £91,135,043 during 1959—over £14 million more than in any previous year.

At the same time, gold production in South Africa increased to a record total of twenty million ounces. And the Corporations holdings in the copper industry of Northern Rhodesia—through Rhodesian Anglo-American—made a net profit last year of £3,854,213—again after taxation. This was an increase of more than £1 million over the previous year.

Dividends from coal investments are 'maintaining a satisfactory level' and new fields of investment in iron-ore deposits in Swaziland are being investigated.

But the directors of this highly profitable Corporation are worried about the dangers of the African Revolution.

The City of London sticks to its money

'Last year was a particularly successful one for our corporation, and if it were not for the difficult political situation the way ahead would be clear for a continuation of this rapid expansion,' said Mr. H. F. Oppenheimer, Chairman of the Corporation, in a statement to the members. He went on: 'The disturbances in the Union have gravely affected us in their immediate effects and we are also deeply concerned about their ultimate outcome. We have always looked to London, and to a lesser extent to the other capital markets of Europe and America, for a substantial proportion of the finances required for the South African and Rhodesian development for which we are responsible. The recent disturbances have affected these markets to a degree which is not generally appreciated in South Africa.'

'It is not only in relation to the inflow of capital that the adverse effects of Sharpeville and its aftermath are felt. For many new enterprises it is essential for a group such as ours to tie up with leading companies overseas. In no fewer than four instances—large-scale projects which we have had under active consideration have had to be put in cold storage because our overseas associates are not willing to proceed until the political situation in the Union is clearer.'

The writing on the wall

It is obvious that 'law and order' must be restored and maintained. But Mr. Oppenheimer and his associates are clearly afraid that the Verwoerd methods will put the leadership of the African movement into Revolutionary hands. He therefore calls for more moderate policies. 'There is no doubt that there is deep discontent among the African population in the urban areas. That is why the agitators have been so successful.'

'Unless we can create conditions in which agitators are ineffective, not because of Draconian legislation, but because people do not wish to listen to them, the future of South Africa will be a gloomy one.'

But, as Mr. Oppenheimer points out, the situation in South Africa is 'explosive' and 'many people in South Africa are convinced that no changes in government policy or European attitudes short of complete surrender to the full demands of the extreme African nationalists would suffice to secure African goodwill'.

It is extremely difficult for the spokesman of Big Business to see a way out of this dilemma. But since the immediate causes of recent African disturbances were the pass laws, the

laws governing sale of liquor to Africans and what Mr. Oppenheimer refers to, in gently reproving tones, as 'the unsympathetic manner in which they are sometimes administered', perhaps some moderation of these laws might head off the movement?

But even this presents problems, because the Pass Laws are an important method of controlling and directing the cheap African labour force. As such, Mr. Oppenheimer needs them. Thus his only positive suggestion is that the Pass Laws be modified to allow Africans the right to permanent homes in the cities. This, he hopes, will 'remove the sense of frustration which lies behind the present crisis'.

It seems more likely that an attempt by big Capital to calm the situation in this way will only make matters worse from their point of view, because a permanent, urban working class will be potentially an extremely revolutionary force in South Africa.

Whichever way they turn, the gentlemen with big investments in Africa face grave danger. At present some of them favour more moderate government policies in order to reassure foreign capital, and to try to head the Africans off from the revolutionary path. But they are by no means sure about this, and could well swing the other way.

Meanwhile, they have to face the situation as best they can.

'It would be idle to pretend that South Africa is not subject to serious political risks,' says Mr. Oppenheimer. Still, let us be philosophical about it. After all: 'There are very few parts of the world where there are not serious political risks of one kind or another.'

BOOKS

THE FALL AND RISE OF ALFRIED KRUPP

Gordon Young (Cassell, 21s.)

AT a time when Germany's past record is regarded by most Western leaders as something long dead and finished with, and having little or no connection with our present 'West German ally', a book such as Mr. Young's can be of great value in jogging memories and restoring a sense of reality about Germany to those minds which have so conveniently become blunted. In the course of Alfried Krupp's rapid ascension from the status of an imprisoned war criminal to that of an industrial tycoon controlling almost unlimited wealth and resources, there have, of course, been many indignant protests and outcries from various quarters; but Krupp and his supporters know very well that time is on their side, and that the more years separating them from the Nuremberg trials, the less the likelihood of any action being taken. What caused a great stir among the newspapers or in the House of Commons yesterday, will meet with little interest in a month's time, and even less in a year; until finally all is forgotten, and the man who employed over 70,000 slave workers in his factories is once again a respectable businessman, accepted in all the best circles, and head of one of the largest industrial empires in the world.

Therefore this book is a valuable record of events which tend to be forgotten far too easily by far too many people. But to socialists it is also an indictment—though perhaps not intentionally so—of the type of political ethics operating in the world at present. At Nuremberg Krupp was found guilty

of the plunder and spoilation of occupied countries and the employment of slave labour, and duly sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment with confiscation of property. In 1951 the United States High Commissioner announced his immediate release and the cancellation of the confiscation order, with the very inadequate explanation that 'confiscation of personal property . . . is in contradiction of the American conception of justice'. But it was abundantly clear to everyone that he was being released and restored his 'personal property' for no other reason than that the Western governments urgently wanted to rebuild a stable capitalism in West Germany and Europe to 'shield' against Communism, and were willing to enlist the help of anyone, war criminal or no, who could help them do it. And apart from the weak excuse of the High Commissioner, very few bones were made about this; the governments taking it for granted that everyone would realise the 'defence of the free world' to be the first necessity.

A product of the Cold War

Thus Alfried Krupp became one more criminal whose fortune turned as a result of the 'necessities' of the Cold War. It was a long step from the Nuremberg sentence to the present situation, where the only restriction on him is the agreement of 1953 by which he is bound to dispose of the £25,000,000 coal and steel holdings, to avoid 'excessive concentrations of German industry'—an undertaking which has not been carried out, and for which a further time-lease was granted early this year. But it is a step which has been accomplished in record time, thanks to the post-war aims of Western capitalism. The Bonn government who, in 1954, accepted responsibility for seeing that Krupps' coal and steel

holdings were sold off, are naturally overjoyed at the firm's great contribution to their drive for overseas markets, and are in no hurry to press Krupp over the agreement. And, of course, Krupp has played the game and offered lavish sums as compensation to former slave workers in his factories—six million marks to pay for years of inhuman conditions which he claimed 'were not known to him' as sole proprietor of the German war factories.

The Butcher and Khrushchev

Nevertheless, Alfried Krupp and his friends are still faced with embarrassing situations from time to time, for it seems many people possess less elastic memories and consciences than the leaders. On his arrival in Ottawa, Krupp was met by demonstrators carrying banners, 'Back to Nuremberg, War Criminal!', and in Melbourne by cries of 'Jew Killer' and 'Butcher'—the last pathetic but genuine remnants of the judgment passed on him at Nuremberg. And finally, to complete the ironic story, Nikita Khrushchev, another man with an elastic memory, sent personal greetings to Krupp at the 1959 Leipzig Trade Fair, and following a recent £4,100,000 contract for a large chemical works to be completed in the Soviet Union by the end of 1960, expressed the hope that business between Krupps and the Soviet government would continue to increase. Needless to say, neither mentioned the thousands of Soviet prisoners previously employed by Krupp as slave workers, or the order in 1943 that all offences by Russian prisoners would merit execution, or the 70,000 villages destroyed and 25,000,000 Russians rendered homeless by Krupp's tanks and guns.

STEPHEN WILLIAMS

Constant Reader . Great Little Books

'THE British bourgeoisie take unerring account of the fact that the chief danger threatens them from the trade unions, and that only under the pressure of these mass organizations will the Labour Party, after radically renewing its leadership, be transformed into a revolutionary force.' So wrote Trotsky in 1925, in his book 'Where Is Britain Going?', now reissued by the Socialist Labour League after a long period out of print.

Much of what is written in the book about British politics reads as fresh today as when it was written. But in my opinion the main value of 'Where Is Britain Going?' is as an exercise in Marxist method which takes the form of a study of some of the peculiarities of British history. Trotsky revealed in this book an acute understanding of the special features of the setting in which British Marxists have to work, features often remote from those of the Russian and Continental scenes.

The Independent Labour Party publicist Brailsford, who wrote a rather patronizing preface for the original **British** edition (1926), claimed that Trotsky did not understand that religion here meant something very different from the Russian Orthodox Church, particularly in its relation to the working-class movement. Replying, in the pages of Pravda, Trotsky pointed out that he appreciated quite well that Protestantism had arisen as the banner not only of the bourgeoisie but also of the 'lower orders'. 'Naturally a Scottish woodcutter invested in the psalms he sang a different subjective content from that of the respectable Mr. Dombey, or his honourable great-grandson now sitting in the House of Commons, whether on the right or on the left of Mr. MacDonald. But the same is true of Liberalism (i.e., before the foundation of the Labour Party). The Liberal workers—not the trade union bureaucrats—understood the Liberal programme quite differently from Gladstone. They brought their class instinct into their Liberalism, though without effect. Would Brailsford be prepared, however, to disagree on this ground that Liberal-

ism was the programme of the rising middle and petty bourgeoisie of commerce and industry, and of the bourgeois intelligentsia?'

Class struggle and Christianity

Brailsford having triumphantly shown that in the early part of the 19th century there were petty-bourgeois radicals, opponents of class struggle, who inclined towards atheism, while the pioneers of trade unionism 'stood at the same time for Christianity and for the class struggle', Trotsky replied: 'Marxism does not teach at all that every man receives his ration of religion and philosophical convictions in accordance with the size of his income or his wages. The question is more complicated than that. Engendered on the soil of the material conditions of life, i.e., first and foremost on the soil of class contradictions, religious ideas, like other ideas, make their way in the world only gradually; also, they go on living, by force of conservatism, longer than the needs which first gave rise to them; and they are swept away only under the impact of serious blows and upheavals. The petty-bourgeois English radicals of the Utilitarian or Owenite schools could be militant atheists so long as they seriously believed they possessed a painless means of solving all social problems. But in proportion as class contradictions grew more acute, militant radicalism either faded away or migrated into the Labour Party, bringing with it into the latter its threadbare idealist arrogance and its political helplessness.

'The organizers of the trade unions, raised up by workers' strikes, could not repudiate the basis of their work and the source of their influence, the class struggle. But they remained at the same time within the restricted limits of trade unionism, without carrying the struggle to the necessary revolutionary conclusions, and this enabled (and still enables) them to reconcile trade unionism with Christianity, i.e., with a discipline which imposes upon the proletariat the dogma and morality of another class.

'It is absolutely beyond doubt that the revolution will find a substantial section of the Welsh coal miners still in the

grip of religious prejudices. And it is beyond doubt that, in spite of this, the coal miners will do what is needed. From some of their prejudices they will free themselves in the fire of struggle, and from others only after they have conquered. But we deny categorically that the Welsh coal miners and the British proletariat generally can be shown the correct path by people who themselves have not broken free from childish nonsense, who do not know how human society is constructed, who have not grasped its dynamics, who do not understand the part which religion plays in it and who are ready, to one extent or another, to subordinate their conduct to the decrees of the church morality, which unites oppressors and oppressed. Such leaders are not to be relied upon. The working class can always expect from them either surrender or direct betrayal—with references to the Sermon on the Mount—at the most crucial moment.'

Against the reformists

One reason why the harrying of Trotsky by the Stalinist bureaucracy between 1927 and 1929 contributed its part to the demoralization of many British Communist workers during those difficult years was that these workers had learnt to respect and appreciate Trotsky through 'Where Is Britain Going?' and through two other little books of his which were published here a few years earlier—'The Defence of Terrorism' and 'Between Red and White'. These books helped to educate the vanguard of a generation—including the few who became the nucleus of the Left Opposition here in the early 1930s.

'The Defence of Terrorism' was a reply to slanders on Soviet Russia by the German Social-Democratic pundit Kautsky—a companion-piece to Lenin's 'Proletarian Revolution and Kautsky the Renegade'. Among many other matters,

Trotsky in this book dealt with the abuse of the conception of workers' control then being fostered by the Mensheviks in order to disrupt Soviet industry. 'No board of persons who do not know the given business,' wrote Trotsky, 'can replace one man who knows it. A board of patients will not replace the doctor.'

'Between Red and White' was written as a reply to MacDonald, Kautsky and the whole gaggle of reformists who denounced as 'Red imperialism' the sovietization of Georgia with help from the Russian Red Army. This book contains a classic formulation of what was then standard Soviet doctrine on 'export of revolution' and remained to the end Trotsky's view on this matter. It is an instance of the illiteracy in these things, which flourished here only five or six years ago in normally well-informed circles that Norman Mackenzie could write, in his book 'Socialism' (in the Hutchinson's University Library series) that Trotsky wanted to spread the revolution by force of Soviet Russian arms. Here is what Trotsky himself wrote:

'Soviet Russia does not by any means intend to make its military power take the place of the revolutionary efforts of the proletariats of other countries. The conquest of proletarian power must be an outcome of proletarian political experience. This does not mean that the revolutionary efforts of the workers of Georgia or any other country must not receive any military support from outside. It is only essential that this support should come at a moment when the need for it has been created by the political development of the workers, and recognized by the class-conscious revolutionary vanguard, who have won the sympathy of the majority of the workers. These are questions of revolutionary strategy, and not a formal democratic ritual.'

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CROSSMAN'S COMMANDING HEIGHTS

By W. HUNTER

IN his pamphlet 'Labour In The Affluent Society', published last Monday (Fabian Society, 2s. 6d.) Mr. R. H. S. Crossman declares that the decisions of 'those who direct the great combines' of the private sector, are the real force behind British capitalism. He believes that power is now dispersed among the 'oligopolists', the group of firms which dominate British economy.

This 'irresponsible economic power' must, he says, be brought under 'public control'. He attacks the 'revisionists'—Jay, Crosland and Jenkins—for trying to show that the leaders of the Labour Party can manage capitalism as competently as the Tories. Crossman once again joins the attack on Gaitskell's leadership of the Labour Party.

'Under the personal leadership, and with the personal inspiration of Mr. Gaitskell', he writes, 'the image of a crusading Socialist Opposition was suppressed and the Labour Party presented itself as a humane, decent and business-like alternative to the Tories.'

Why does Mr. Crossman want increasing control of the 'commanding heights of the economy'? Here lies the basic flaw in his pamphlet. 'Public control'—to him is not nationalization—but a step that is necessary in order for Britain to win out in the competition with 'communism' or 'totalitarian socialism'. 'Until and unless', he says, 'there is a fundamental change in the structure of our modern, managed capitalism, the peaceful competition which has now begun between East and West must result in a series of Communist successes.'

He criticized big business for sacrificing the long-term interests of the nation in that competition. In the 'affluent society' the 'Individual rapidly grows more comfortable' while 'the community becomes ever more rapidly weaker and weaker'.

Big business resists public spending even where national security is concerned. Crossman gives as an example how, under the pressure of American business, 'although he knew that the present levels of American defence spending would permit the Russians to forge ahead, Mr. Eisenhower has preferred to accept defeat in the nuclear race.'

Conservative Party rule in the interests of the 'oligopolies', will lead to a shrinking of the 'frontiers of democracy' and an increase in 'Communist successes'.

But Mr. Crossman himself makes some telling points as to what the democracy behind those frontiers is. Several times he makes it plain that the real decisions in Britain are taken by the big monopolists. And he lands in a hopeless tangle.

The 'diagnosis'

'If the Western world is free, as it certainly is, from the terrible evils of totalitarianism, it is the victim of an even more debilitating disease—the emergence of a modern feudalism, which is strangling our democracy before it has had time to grow up.' (My emphasis.)

Yet, following Strachey, Crossman reproaches Marx for failing to see that 'democracy was a dynamic force in its own right'.

Because Crossman's attack will mean disarray in the ranks of the Right-wing, it is to be welcomed. He criticizes Gaitskell and Company for the policies which he describes as 'Vote Labour because you will be as safe with Gaitskell as you were with Macmillan'.

But he seeks to attack Gaitskell and advocate 'public control' of big business while maintaining fundamental agreement with the Right-wing on defence. 'Public control' becomes part of the defence against Communism.

However the 'oligopolies' which decide domestic policy also take all the real decisions on foreign policy. 'Defence' is defence of their interests and it is those interests which lead to conflict with the Soviet bloc.

The Left-wing of British Labour can only be victorious if it couples demands for nationalization with a thorough attack on the defence policy of the Right-wing. It cannot be against the power of monopoly capitalism at home and support a foreign policy that defends the interests of monopoly capitalism with alliances against the Soviet Union, rocket bases and the H-bomb.

Crossman, like Bevan, is attempting to do this.

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it is expressing itself in policy questions in the movement, for example, on the H-bomb and nationalization. Nevertheless, we have also got to bear in mind that there are large sections of workers in this country who are still fighting for these very existences and that our organization has got to be in a situation where it can intervene in this two-fold way.'

JOE FITZGERALD from Doncaster, a miner, said that he had only just recently come into politics. He thought that in the future one of the historic dates for the British Labour movement would be the formation of the Socialist Labour League, because if we examined it closely we could see that it is the only properly democratic organization in Britain today.

'For proof of this statement,' Comrade Fitzgerald went on, 'we have only to examine the cases of Cadogan and Behan. What other party would have tolerated these people for so long? What other party would have given so much time, money and facilities to allow them to put their case in front of the majority? If there is one I don't know of it.'

'I put my faith in the party that fights for the emancipation of the working class. The Labour leaders cannot do this because it would mean fighting capitalism and since many of the Labour leaders are capitalists themselves, I can't see them cutting their own throats. We would have to do it for them.'

'The leaders of the Communist Party have shown some very good examples of the way they fight for the workers' rights. It is my opinion that a good portion of these people are nothing but opportunists, and we know they are reformists. They have proved this by their actions in not helping the workers in struggle. The Communist leaders of the National Union of Mineworkers are exactly the same as the Right-wing leaders of the Labour Party—always making deals with the National Coal Board.'

'When Will Paynter was president of the Welsh miners, he made a statement: "We shall fight on every pit closure, we shall fight for every man who is sent down the road." These are fighting words. He repeated them at a mass meeting of miners in Doncaster. But when he got the job of general secretary of the NUM, the Coal Board said we are going to close 36 pits. Paynter said "No. We have got to negotiate." The Coal Board said: "Well, then, let's negotiate." Then they all went into a little room and I presume they drank a lot and talked a little, but when they came out 36 pits were closed. This is how they fight the employers.'

'The Socialist Labour League stands out as the only organization that has helped workers in struggle over the last two years. We in the mining fraternity have got a paper, The Miner, and without the help of the Socialist Labour League this paper would have been dead a long time ago and we thank the organization for pulling us through some very bad periods.'

'That is one reason why I feel that instead of arguing amongst ourselves as to whether we should have an open party or not we should close our ranks and carry on with the good work both inside and outside the Labour Party. Because I think we would all agree that the Labour Party is the only movement where you find the biggest concentration of workers. The rank and file of the Labour movement are all right, it is the leaders who are corrupt. Our fight is to change that leadership and I feel we should stick to that.'

A further Report on Debate at Conference will be included in next week's Newsletter.