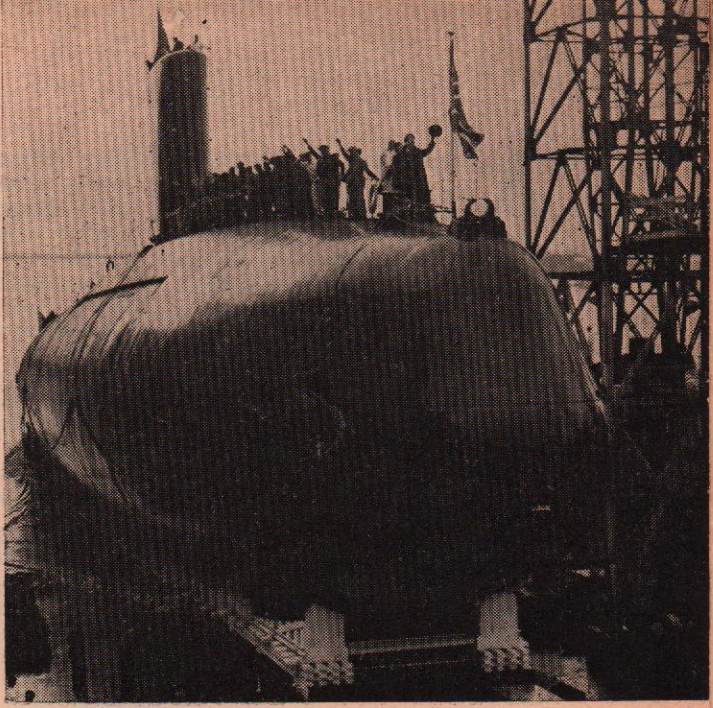


JACK GALE writes on the issues that face marchers on Aldermaston 1963

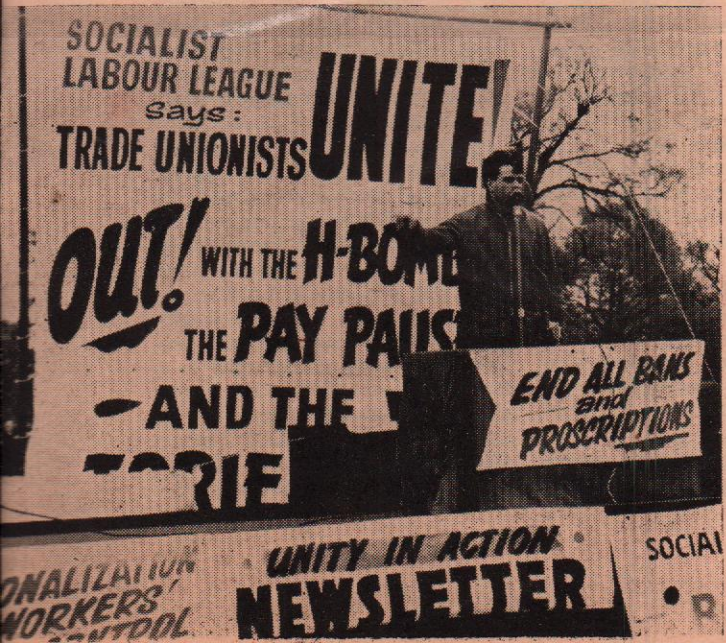


The Bomb

the Working class

and the

Witch-hunt



A NEWSLETTER PAMPHLET
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AS marchers demonstrate on the sixth Aldermaston, it is time for all unilateralists to ask: How can we win? If we are to prevent Aldermaston from becoming an annual ritual, and anti-bomb demonstrations becoming gestures of empty despair and fizzling out into nothing—as they have done in the past year—what policies are needed?

The Socialist Labour League puts forward the following programme:

1. A fight inside the Labour Party and trade unions for a policy of unilateralism, combined with a socialist programme of nationalization. This requires the defeat of the right wing, who cling to the bomb.

2. The blacking of all work on H-bombs, rocket sites and bases, and germ warfare factories. The building and transport unions, the Chemical Workers' Union, the ETU and the huge general unions have the power to stop the H-bomb menace.

3. The nationalization of all industries connected with armaments. The implementation of already existing Labour Party and trade union policies—like the Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding's 'Plan for Engineering' and the Labour Party's Clause Four. These should be fought for by all unilateralists.

4. Lifting of all bans and proscriptions in the labour movement. Determined opposition to the witch-hunting of left-wingers and unilateralists, which is seen most clearly in the hounding of the Young Socialists by Transport House.

5. Withdrawal from all imperialist alliances, including NATO. This again involves a struggle against the Labour Party leadership.

The Guardian of April 2, 1963, under the headline Fears about Labour's Foreign

Policy allayed', says: 'Mr. Harold Wilson, leader of the Labour Party, has created an excellent impression in the United States and his speech at the National Press Club helped to convince many an American that the prospect of a Labour government in Britain was not such a bad one after all . . . he has declared himself a firm supporter of the NATO alliance and has denied that he has ever felt differently.'

6. No reliance on Summit talks or UNO. Throughout the entire fight against the H-bomb, the Communist Party in particular, has attempted to divert the efforts of unilateralists towards Summit talks.

Each time these talks have been buried beneath the fall-out from exploding H-bomb tests.

As for the United Nations, that 'thieves' kitchen' should be thoroughly discredited by its shady role in the Congo and its connivance in the murder of Patrice Lumumba.

7. An international campaign linking the British labour movement with the working class in other countries in a united attack on imperialism and its military system.

Is this an 'unrealistic' programme? Will it 'take too long'?

On the contrary, events since Aldermaston 1962 have proved this to be the only effective programme for a real fight against nuclear weapons.

Following the wholesale retreat of the Labour 'lefts' around *Tribune* after the defeat of unilateralism at the 1961 Labour Party Conference (which was itself a direct result of their failure to fight the right wing after the Scarborough victory of 1960*) the last year has seen a similar retreat by trade union unilateralists like Frank Cousins and by the liberal-clerical leadership of CND.

Last year's Aldermaston was a highly political demonstration. Banners calling for 'Socialism not War'; 'End the Tory H-bomb';

* See 'Unite Against The Bomb', Newsletter pamphlet, April 1962.

'Down with the Tory H-bomb government'; threw the pacifists and 'non-politicals' into a high state of alarm.

Their tame policies—they ended last year's demonstration with a silent march on the American Embassy and a telegram to President Kennedy—were clearly ineffectual, as Kennedy showed by announcing more nuclear tests even as 120,000 people massed in Hyde Park.

The thousands of unilateralist youth were clearly in danger of coming under the leadership of the militant left-wing Young Socialist movement.

This was made worse, from the leadership's point of view, by the growing support for industrial action against the bomb—first put forward by the Socialist Labour League in 1958.

This was highlighted by a one-day strike against the bomb by over 750 engineering and building workers at the Wimpey's petrochemical site at Carrington in Cheshire.

Caused panic

And it was driven home by the resolution passed at the CND national conference in June which called for token and direct industrial action, including the blacking of work. This resolution was passed despite the opposition of Michael Foot and caused panic amongst the CND leadership. It was repudiated by Canon Collins and ignored.

The refusal of the CND leadership to implement this conference decision was on a par with Gaitskell's refusal to implement the unilateralist resolution passed at the Scarborough Labour Party Conference in 1960.

The hesitation and cowardice of the CND leadership was accompanied by an all-out onslaught by Transport House against unilateralists inside the Labour Party. The disturbances at Labour Party May Day meetings in London and Glasgow (which today look suspiciously like stage-managed provocations) were seized upon as a pretext for an attack on the Young Socialists, in particular on the youth paper *Keep Left* and on left-wing members of the YS National Committee.

At the same time, Lord Russell, Canon Collins and Lord Chorley came under fire for their sponsorship of a world disarmament conference in Moscow.

The attack on Russell, Collins and Chorley was defeated. But many people who protested at the attack on these three ignored the fire being directed at the Young Socialists.

The *Daily Worker*, in particular, took this line and assisted the witch-hunters in their main purpose—to cripple the youth movement.

But this attack had as one of its main aims, to make the Labour Party safe for the H-bomb. The youth are the driving force of the unilateralist fight in the Labour Party, a much more socialist force than the editors of *Tribune*.

The Labour leadership launched the witch-hunt because they feared the influence of the youth movement on the party as a whole. Right-wing policies were becoming increasingly unpopular in a period when rising unemployment and struggles between workers and the government could lead to an upsurge of militancy in the trade unions which could react back on the Labour Party.

Things were already 'delicate' in the Labour Party; for instance, the storm raised in the party by Gaitskell's private meeting with the Central Council of ICI and his 'no nationalization' pledge. And, again, the row when the news leaked out of George Brown's job as industrial adviser to the *Daily Mirror*.

The desertion of the youth in their fight against the witch-hunt therefore greatly weakened the fight against the H-bomb.

The responsibility for this must be placed squarely where it belongs—on the *Daily Worker* which said not a single word in defence of the youth; on *Tribune* who joined in the witch-hunt with a stream of sneers and jibes; and on Frank Cousins.

Silence

This same Frank Cousins who egged the youth on to fight (at the Blackpool Conference of the Labour Party he urged the youth to take as much notice of conference decisions as Gaitskell had

done), maintained a shameful silence when they faced the consequences of that fight.

It is significant that Mr. Cousins' failure to support the youth was accompanied by a retreat on his part both on unilateralism and on the industrial front.

Instead of a unilateralist resolution at the TUC, the TGWU submitted a safe resolution on industrial health and security. At the Labour Party Conference it put down a resolution of general



Russell; under fire

protest at 'all' H-tests. Cousins led no fight for unilateralism in 1962.

At the same time he joined NEDC, which has since called for a 4 per cent increase in productivity and announced that unemployment is here to stay; he supported the witch-hunt on Communist Party members in the ETU; and he refused to lift the ban on Communist Party members holding office in his union.

There is a connection between all these things. The H-bomb is inseparable from the economic and political crises of imperialism. For instance, the US is afraid to lose control of the Western 'deterrent' since that would strengthen her economic rivals in Europe.

Thus, capitalist economic rivalry, as well as the struggle against the Soviet Union, makes

the H-bomb an integral part of the profit system.

In addition, defeat for the trade unions in the imminent political and industrial battles between the monopolists and the working class would strengthen every reactionary trend within capitalism—including that trend towards H-bomb war against Russia.

The participation of trade union leaders such as Cousins on Tory-sponsored economic bodies; their failure to fight against government attacks on the working class, such as the Beeching plan; their betrayal of workers in their struggle against the employers, such as at Fords; the witch-hunting of militants, like Charles Doyle of the Power workers; all weaken the fight against imperialism and its H-bomb.

Witch-hunt

Such retreats before the right wing today are steps towards nuclear annihilation tomorrow. This is particularly true of a failure to fight the witch-hunt.*

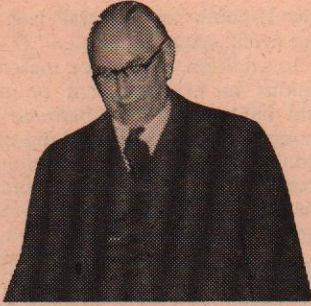
Just how this retreat can open the way to war was shown with startling clarity by the 1962 Labour Party Conference and the events which followed.

The H-bomb debate was pushed back to the last day and was overshadowed by the sham debate on the Common Market. 'Left' MPs and 'unilateralists' like Cousins went along with this procedure and in effect participated in what amounted to a fraud on the delegates and the party—a pretence that the H-bomb issue was no longer important.

Cuban crisis

Yet literally only a few days later the world was on the brink

* Even though the attempt to make 'guilt by association' a crime was defeated at the 1962 Labour Party Conference, that decision can be as meaningless as the 1960 unilateralist victory unless a real fight is carried on against the existing witch-hunt and its concrete expressions. For instance three members of the YS National Committee have been expelled without any charges or explanation whatever.



Cousins: retreat on the bomb

of a nuclear war as the Cuban crisis erupted. And this crisis revealed the utter impotence of all the traditional 'peace campaigners'.

The helplessness, not only of the middle-of-the-road CND leaders and their *Tribune* allies, but also of the Committee of 100 and the Communist Party showed the complete inadequacy of their policies.

Their failure to penetrate the working class, their abandonment of an industrial policy, the way they had turned their back on the socialist youth, meant that when the crisis came they had appallingly few forces which they could call into action.

Collins and his supporters could not mobilise huge demonstrations, Bertrand Russell could only send appealing letters to world statesmen (including one to Castro, urging him to accept Kennedy's terms), Pat Arrowsmith fled to the West of Ireland, and *Tribune* was useless as usual.

CP desperate

The Communist Party—its policy of peace by negotiation blown sky high, its followers incapacitated by years of 'putting pressure on Mac'—was desperate to keep the anti-war feeling within safe channels and to oppose those who wanted to turn to the working class.

In Leeds the CP combined with pro-Kennedy Tories in trying to keep a banner calling for working class action against the government out of a 'Defend Cuba' march.

This was a classic example of how the advocates of Summit talks immobilise the working class in face of a real war threat. At such a time the right wing, the Communist Party, fake lefts and pacifists all serve the same end—they obstruct the development of

a real working class opposition to war.

And how much the Tories fear these 'leaders' was shown by the cynical government announcement—one week after the peak of the Cuban crisis—of fresh nuclear tests in the Nevada desert.

Meanwhile the CND leadership called on 'all parties in the British Parliament' to 'regain Britain's independent voice in international affairs' ('After Cuba, Steps to Peace').

Tribune announced for the ninety-ninth time that a test ban agreement could be reached. And the Communist Party hailed as a great victory Kennedy's 'promise' (?) that he would not invade Cuba.

The experience of the Cuban crisis; the climb-down in the Labour Party first of *Tribune* and the 'left' MPs, then of Cousins and the unilateralist trade union leaders; the retreat from unilateralism of the CND leaders and



Collins: emulated Gaitskell

their substitution of a policy of nuclear-free zones, power to the UN, negotiated test bans, Summit talks; the retreat from unilateralism by the Communist Party; and—over the last year—the crisis in the Committee of 100 and its increasing failure to mount effective demonstrations in the face of police and state oppression—all point to one conclusion: that the struggle against the H-bomb is doomed to sterility unless it becomes part of an all-out campaign against the Tory government.

This campaign can only be carried through by the working class, linking up the struggles over wages, unemployment, rents and housing.

The forces for that are present. 1,200 Young Socialists demonstrated in London on January 12 this year. 7,000 trade unionists

and unemployed workers lobbied Parliament on March 26.

Thousands of miners and railwaymen face struggles over pit and rail closures, thousands more factory workers will be in conflict with the employers over wages, conditions and victimisation.

Hundreds of thousands of trade unionists, employed and unemployed workers and youth will be involved in struggles over unemployment around a policy of no sackings, nationalization, bans on overtime and shorter hours.

Britain can see industrial battles such as that fought by the Spanish miners and engineers last year, and the huge strikes of French workers that are taking place at the time of writing.

Political fight

Along with this goes the political fight for socialist policies and against the witch-hunt that is going on inside the Labour Party—a fight headed by the Young Socialists.

This is reality. This is what is actually going on. Only when the struggle against the H-bomb is a part of this reality will it become effective. The H-bomb is not an abstraction, completely apart from everything else going on in the world, a product of 'the evil in men's minds'.

It is rooted in the crisis of imperialism and will only be destroyed by destroying imperialism.

The policies of pacifism, of 'Summitry', of *Tribune* fake-leftism, of 'Direct Action' have all been tried and got nowhere.

It is now time for a real fight against the bomb—a fight based on the working class and its struggles and directed in the first instance against the false leaders who hold back the development of effective working class action.

ONLY THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE FIGHTS THE BOMB IN THIS WAY.

The Socialist Labour League, 186A Clapham High St., S.W.4. I would like to join/know more about the Socialist Labour League

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Address

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