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Socialist Labour League

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What we think

The danger of provocation

WHAT LIES behind the capitalist press's field-day over last Saturday's anti-American demonstration in Grosvenor Square?

In fact, grave dangers to the labour movement were revealed by the demonstration, and immediate steps need to be taken in learning the lessons.

In their campaign leading up to the General Election, the Tories are working for what they call 'law-and-order' measures.

This means changes in the law to enable them to imprison demonstrators and the organizers of demonstrations.

Similarly the press blew up the Rosemary Whipple witch-hunt as part of their preparation for anti-union laws and conspiracy charges.

First the Saturday demonstration was given a big preliminary build-up. The 'Daily Telegraph', followed by the rest of the capitalist press, last Friday predicted a march of 30,000 on Saturday.

By the Saturday afternoon of the march, the London papers were talking only about '10,000 marchers'.

And by Sunday morning, the 'Sunday Telegraph' had sobered down to 5,000. Monday's 'Morning Star' confirmed the figure of 4,000 counted by its own Workers Press reporters.

Even with the support of the Communist Party, this was all that could be mustered from the remnants of the 'protest' movement.

Why the build-up then? The answer is given by the actions of a minority on the march, undoubtedly egged on by planted provocateurs, in smashing store windows and overturning parked cars.

This provocation is part of the campaign to create the atmosphere for 'law and order'.

The Socialist Labour League did not participate in Saturday's demonstration because we disagreed with the politics of mere protest.

We have insisted all along, as our main article on this page shows, on industrial action to stop the war.

After the January 25 demonstration against Wilson's visit to Washington, the Workers Press drew attention to incidents in which Special Branch men showed up among the demonstrators, and were even involved in clashes with the uniformed police.

The turn away from the working class by the protesters and the Stalinists, attracting all kinds of anarchist and middle-class riff-raff, creates ideal conditions for the work of provocateurs.

For this reason, the campaign for working-class action against the war, initiated by the Socialist Labour League, is now the main and urgent task.

This is the way to hit back at the danger threatened by the press and the provocateurs who work on behalf of big business and its repressive plans.

We will support fully all actions and demonstrations which have working-class action against the war as their centre.

That is why we welcome the Communist Party call, howsoever belated, for industrial action.

The CP's 'Morning Star' complains bitterly (Monday) about the minority who did not keep discipline on Saturday's march.

But discipline is not a gentleman's agreement! It comes only from principled politics. Once you depart from these principles of independent working-class action and leadership, the discipline of the middle class takes over.

And the big capitalists and the Tories, through their provocateurs, turn this to their own advantage.

That is the danger from Saturday's demonstration.

C.P. makes a partial turn to trade unions

Hope of united action against Nixon grows

BY THE EDITOR

WORKERS PRESS and the Socialist Labour League unhesitatingly support the executive committee statement of the Communist Party adopted at the weekend, which states:

'It would be a splendid thing if the suggestions being made for the TUC to call a day of protest action were to be implemented. All means of pressure, including industrial action, should be exerted to compel the British government to end its backing for the US war.' ('Morning Star', May 11, 1970.)

Although it is not clear if, by making this statement, the CP envisages a campaign within the trade unions for industrial action against the Vietnam war, this statement could certainly be the start of such action.

If, on the other hand, the CP are simply making 'left noises' as a diversion, this will soon become clear, once the campaign gets under way. It will be no use, either, hiding behind the proposition that the TUC must call the strike.

Whilst we make such a demand we must prepare the independent initiative of the working class to act despite the right wing of the TUC.

That was the lesson of the May 1 1969 strike against the anti-union laws.

The initiative of many thousands of workers under SLL and CP leadership was a powerful factor in the struggle to force Wilson to retreat. So we will be now if we proceed in the same way.

Confirmed

The relevance of the EC statement as well as the remark of George Matthews—editor of the 'Morning Star'—that 'an election year is not the case for a policy of class peace, but for intensified class struggle' is vividly, if paradoxically confirmed by the political futility of last Saturday's diversion—led by Lord Brockway and supported by the CP and every variety of anarchism and opportunism on the left.

Now the 'Morning Star' is forced to confess that the 'disruptive activities of this minority . . . play into the hands of its enemies'.

This is true, but so long as the anti-war movement is based on the assumption that the working class and peasantry of imperialist statesmen can be radically altered by the exercise of pressure—physical or moral, individual or collective is immaterial—then provocations and ultra-left diversions will not mention intensified police repression, will continue.

The reason Lord Brockway can support this kind of demonstration is because it is completely separate from the working class and poses no threat at all to the imperialist system—no matter how many police are hospitalized and how many windows are broken.

If only 4,000 people turned up for the demonstration, there is good reason for it.

It is because more and more people are becoming disillusioned in the efficacy of protest politics and the credibility of its middle-class leaders, whose antics cause enormous confusion in the minds of backward workers and facilitate the 'law and

order' measures.

Page FOUR COL. 4



Rock-throwing Teamsters defend their picket line in Cleveland, Ohio. It was the same National Guardsmen who fired on the Teamsters' Akron, Ohio, picket line, who were later to shoot dead four students at the Kent State university. The workers' offensive against the rising cost of living and sell-out policies of their union leaderships can now rapidly merge with the students' struggle against the SE Asian war.

US WORKERS MUST JOIN ANTI-WAR STRUGGLE

CONTRARY to the predictions—and hopes—of pro-Nixon pressmen and politicians, Sunday's rallies against the war in Indo-China took place with very little violence.

In WASHINGTON, about 100,000 gathered on a green close to the White House, barricaded off from the crowd by a long line of buses hired for the purpose.

In a crude and cynical attempt to 'defuse' this new upsurge of opposition to the war, members of Nixon's Administration were sent into the rally to 'fraternize' with students and youth.

Met students

Nixon set the example himself early Sunday morning when he met students camped out by the Lincoln Memorial.

While the organizer of the Cambodian invasion claimed the meeting to be 'one of the greatest experiences of my life', his student audience thought differently. One girl commented:

'Here we come from a university that is completely upright on strike, and when we told him where we were from he talked about the football team, and when someone said he was from California he talked about surfing.'

Nixon then returned to the safety of the barricaded White House, doubtless convinced that he had broken down the so-called 'generation-gap'.

While he talked football and surfing (taking time out to praise Winston Churchill) millions of American youth

Page FOUR COL. 4

IRELAND

A growing danger of civil war

BITTER street fighting erupted in the streets of Belfast at the weekend as more than 1,000 troops and police battled with crowds of workers throughout Saturday and Sunday nights.

More than 100 canisters of CS gas were used in the fighting, which came, according to one eye-witness, 'within a hairsbreadth of developing into a shooting match'.

For the first time since last summer, the fighting went on into daylight on Sunday. 33 people, including 27 soldiers, were injured, and six people were arrested.

Meanwhile, in Dublin, a marathon debate in the Dail (Irish parliament) over the 'gun-running' allegations against ministers dismissed last week, ended in a formal victory for Prime Minister Lynch.

New ministers

After 37 hours of debate, the parliament finally voted 73 to 66 to approve the nomination of new ministers—an issue which had become a question of confidence.

But the 'green Tory' government of Lynch remains a government of crisis, heavily compromised by its admitted collaboration with the British Secret Service, and its clear determination to adhere to the division of Ireland.

At all costs Lynch wants to preserve his 'special relationship' with British imperialism.

Not only does he accept the presence of British troops to hold down the working class in the North, but he also collaborates as closely as possible with Westminster to police partition.

Shortage

It was claimed that the Leicester lay-offs were necessary because of a shortage of tyre fabric from

Page FOUR COL. 8

Socialist Labour League and Young Socialists

LENIN CENTENARY MEETING

Birmingham

Sunday, May 17, 7.00 p.m.

DIGBETH CIVIC HALL

Speaker: Gerry Healy, national secretary, Socialist Labour League

Admission 2s

More Dunlop lay-offs as strike continues

FOUR HUNDRED Dunlop workers in Leicester yesterday joined the 4,000 already laid off by the company in Birmingham because of the 11-day-old strike of maintenance engineers there.

Stocks of some car and commercial vehicle tyres have now run out, a Dunlop spokesman said yesterday.

Shortage

It was claimed that the Leicester lay-offs were necessary because of a shortage of tyre fabric from its recent increase in wholesale prices, indicates that the company is prepared for a determined struggle to force the engineers back to work on its terms.

Mass meeting

Thursday's mass meeting is expected to show that the strikers are even more determined to win their demands.

Birmingham's key Fort Dunlop plant at Erdington.

The 1,500 maintenance engineers—who walked out of Fort Dunlop on May 1—are demanding a pay increase of £6 without 'strings'.

They have so far been offered only £3 to £3 10s tied to 100 'voluntary redundancies'.

Dunlop's merger with Pirelli, taken together with

HOSIERY STRIKERS SPEAK OUT

REPRESENTATIVES of striking hosiery workers at Cudworth, Yorkshire, meet management today to press their claim for a 20-per-cent wage increase.

A group of strikers—G. Hutchin, J. Smith and V. Ward—told the Workers Press yesterday:

'The strike committee met [the management] and Mr Green [hosiery union regional officer] asked if they would give £1 per week for everybody except new starters. The management could not come to an agreement.

'The workers wanted 10 per cent in July and not 5 per cent plus five in January . . . we never agreed to 5 per cent . . . we don't want to settle for less than £1 now and 10 per cent in July.'



MEMBERS of the Israeli Revolutionary Action Committee Abroad (ISRAACA) held a 24-hour hunger strike outside the Israeli Embassy in Kensington yesterday, Israeli 'independence' Day.

The demonstrators distributed leaflets to people attending the embassy's celebrations of the 22nd anniversary of the state of Israel.

The demonstration was in solidarity with a hunger strike of prisoners in the Damoun prison, Israel, many of whom have been detained without trial for long periods.

The Damoun hunger-strike, led by Sabri Jiryis, a lawyer, and the poet Fawzi Al-Asmar, has been temporarily broken, according to latest reports. But it is also known that Israeli commander in chief Bar-Lev personally endorsed the renewed detention order on May 5 which detains Sabri Jiryis for a further period without trial.

Hundreds of other prisoners are held in similar circumstances all over Israel.

Members of the Matzpen socialist youth movement held a demonstration of solidarity with the prisoners outside the Damoun prison on May 2.

Glass men reject union 'bribe'

BY DAVID MAUDE

STRIKERS at Pilkington's St Helens, Lancashire, glass factories are to meet again tomorrow against a background of concerted union, management and government attempts to force a return to work.

These attempts have now been knocked back on two fronts.

Strike leaders yesterday REJECTED the General and Municipal Workers' Union's offer of £100,000 for a return to work.

And Sunday's mass meeting DASHED the company's hopes of re-opening its gates in an attempt to encourage further 'blacklegging'.

Rank-and-file committee treasurer John Potter yesterday contemptuously dismissed the union's offer—amounting to £12 per worker 'to relieve hardship'—as 'a bribe' and a last-ditch bid to retain the strikers' membership.

CONTRACT OUT

Sunday's mass meeting voted unanimously to continue the strike and overwhelmingly accepted the committee's recommendation to contract out of the G&MWU.

Workers also firmly rebutted the allegations of loyalist shop stewards that 'subversive elements are keeping the strike going and that St Helens is being held to ransom' by a small group of men.

DONATED £500

Shop stewards at British-Leyland's bus and truck plants at Leyland and Chorley—who were involved in a hard-fought and successful struggle against similar odds last year—have donated £500 to the strike fund.

Mrs Barbara Castle's court of inquiry into the dispute, however, remains a threat.

Mrs Castle yesterday appointed Sheffield law professor John C. Wood—described as 'one of her most trusted "peacemakers"'—to chair the inquiry, which is expected to sit either at Liverpool or in St. Helens itself and last several weeks.

A spokesman for the strike committee told the Workers Press after the announcement that while the strike was 'open to any inquiry' there was no question of it being called off.

Strikers should, however, take warning from the experiences of other sections of workers who have co-operated with such inquiries only to find them skillfully turned into a platform for anti-union propaganda in the Tory press.

'Nationalize Motors' call as Lucas stewards oppose C.I.R. inquiry

SHOP STEWARDS have decided not to co-operate with Mrs Barbara Castle's Commission on Industrial Relations inquiry into labour problems at Lucas-Girling's five Merseyside plants.

A meeting of the combine's trade union area committee at the weekend declared its opposition to the inquiry and endorsed the refusal of stewards at Lucas Industrial Equipment, Fazakerly, to give evidence.

The committee stated, reiterating the policy of an earlier meeting, that 'if the Labour government wishes to make a contribution to industrial peace in the motor industry it should nationalize the motor car and components industry'.

Laid off

Meanwhile, 1,000 workers have been laid off from the Fazakerly plant of Lucas's CAV subsidiary following a bonus dispute.

Some 24 workers on the factory's camshaft line walked out when new bonus times were issued following changes in a production method and the heat-treatment section struck in sympathy.

One CAV steward told the

ALL TRADES UNIONS ALLIANCE MEETINGS

LEEDS

'Productivity Bargaining and the Economic Crisis'

Wednesday, May 13, 8 p.m.

Prince of Wales Hotel Mill Hill (off Boar Lane)

Speaker: Jack Gale

PETERHEAD

(near Aberdeen)

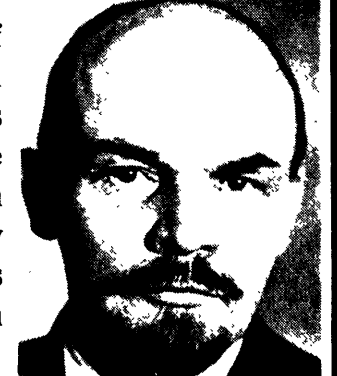
'The Crosse and Blackwell strike—Fight the Tories'

Monday, May 18, 8 p.m.

Rescue Hall

Lenin Centenary

The second of two London lectures to mark the hundredth anniversary of Lenin's birth



Monday, May 18, 7.30 p.m.

'Lenin and the coming English Revolution'

Lecture given by G. HEALY, national secretary of the Socialist Labour League

BEAVER HALL

Garlick Hill, London, E.C.4 (Near Mansion House tube station)

Admission two shillings

WEATHER

London area, SE England: Hill fog patches. Mostly cloudy, occasional showers. Wind northerly. Moderate. Near normal. Max. 15C (59F), but 11C (52F) near East coast.

Central southern and central northern England, E and W Midlands: Scattered showers and sunny intervals. Wind north-easterly. Light or moderate. Near normal. Max. 15C (59F).

Channel Islands, SW England: Mostly cloudy, with occasional rain or drizzle. Wind easterly, light or moderate. Near normal. Max. 15C (59F).

NW England, Glasgow area, Ireland: Mainly dry, sunny periods. Wind north-easterly, moderate. Near normal. Max. 14C (57F).

Edinburgh: Hill fog patches. Rather cloudy, mainly dry. Wind north-easterly, moderate. Near normal. Max. 14C (57F) but 10C (50F) near coasts.

Outlook for following 48 hours: Outbreaks of rain chiefly in SE. Elsewhere mainly dry with sunny periods. Rather cold in East, otherwise temperatures near normal.

DURING the Nazi invasion of Russia the late David Low drew a cartoon which showed the reactionary White Guard Finnish General Mannerheim with hand on heart and simulated innocence on his face exclaiming, in the presence of his German allies: 'Mine, as you know, is a separate war'.

The Russians, history records, were not taken in by this argument.

We think that this analogy sums up the attitude of the International Socialism (IS) group to the witch-hunt of Rosemary Whippe by the press and TV. We are referring in particular to the scurrilous innuendo contained in the statement of Terence Barrett at the May 1 meeting of IS at the Holborn Assembly rooms:

'We have seen a feature of substitutionism this week with Rose Whippe, the girl who had two days off work and wanted to be victimized. The average worker can't afford to have two days off.'

The detestable lack of principle and the cringing adoration of capitalist power which characterizes your movement is crudely but explicitly expressed in Barrett's slander.

An open letter to the I.S.

BY WORKERS PRESS EDITOR

MICHAEL BANDA

Conforms

That he should have been supported by Messrs. Hallas, Palmer and Foot is not extraordinary. It is in conformity with your political practice.

Your movement is well known for scabbing on the Trotskyist movement in the post-war years.

When you weren't scabbing on us you were busy cooking up some provocation against the SLL and the YS. It would not be uncharitable to say that

you blamed the Trotskyists for having 'provoked' the witch-hunt against them. Predictably, your services were rewarded by the right wing who solicitously encouraged 'Young Guard' and proscribed 'Keep Left'.

During the struggle inside National Association of Labour Student Organizations (NALSO) against the right wing and centrists your group openly invited the Stalinists

The fact that you have issued a belated statement condemning the witch-hunt one week after the event will not blind the vigilance of those who see the slander of Barrett as representing the real position of IS.

Since you have not dissociated yourself from this remark—and it is not likely that you will—we are free to draw what inferences we please.

of a vile attack from the capitalist press.

You know as well as we do that principled differences should not invalidate the solidarity of disparate political groups in resisting a common threat from the capitalist class.

Notwithstanding our differences with your group, we have never hesitated to defend your members as we did, for example, during the court case against Geoff Mitchell, ex-convenor of ENV.

This is a basic principle of the Marxist movement. If you contravene it you imperil your own existence and you facilitate the attacks and divisive measures of the employing class.

This is too obvious even to need repetition.

Yet your leaders chose to consciously impugn this principle and in the course of it, you heaped insult upon infamy by grossly misrepresenting the facts about Rosemary Whippe's sacking.

Lie

Firstly, it is a lie to suggest that Rosemary wanted to be victimized.

Secondly, it is equally mendacious to say that she took two days off work.

Not even the capitalist press was able to surpass this piece of distortion by your spokesman. We quote the 'Liverpool Daily Post':

'At the meeting, Mr Frank Shaw, Amalgamated Engineering and Foundryworkers' Union convenor at the factory, said the girl's sacking was a "terrible situation".

'She had been at the company for a week, and in the second week had been off ill for one day he said. On the Friday she was given her cards.' (April 28, 1970.)

And lastly, your reference to 'substitutionism' is only a belated echo of the distortion spread by the Stalinists that the Trotskyists are disrupters who try to 'substitute' themselves for the working class instead of leaving the workers captive to the traditional leadership in the trade unions.

'Martyrs'

Before we deal with this odious middle-class prejudice, we will return to the first allegation.

Unlike IS, the SLL, being a serious proletarian revolutionary organization, does not suffer from the 'martyr syndrome' which afflicts every petty-bourgeois organization in Britain and Europe.

We do not seek to be victimized or martyred, no more than we indulge in symbolic gate-smashing, flag burning and embassy stoning.

We do not advocate this form of protest. In fact we oppose it.

All that the theatricality

and melodrama of protest—whether by students or workers—ever achieves is a cheap and ephemeral publicity in the capitalist news media.

All that it expresses is the hysterical impotence and political despair of the middle class; a 'sound and fury signifying nothing'.

No, Rosemary Whippe did not seek to be victimized. Her record as a socialist and a trade unionist does credit to the Young Socialists.

She fought for her principles uncompromisingly—something which your paper and organization have never yet understood.

And she suffered for them. You think that this is a criticism of Rosemary? In fact it is a condemnation of the



Geoff Mitchell, ex-convenor of ENV.

capitalist system and the kind of industrial relations which exist—and which your organization helps to uphold with your support of 'productivity dealing', etc.

First battle

Rosemary's first battle in Plessey's was precisely against the kind of deal which your movement recommends workers to accept—albeit with reservations of 'mutuality'.

After this struggle she was sacked by the Plessey management, who interviewed her in the presence of hostile union officials about her attitude to productivity deals before they did so.

Her fight at Plessey's did not escape the attention of Merseyside employers who are everywhere trying to force through productivity deals with the support of the union bureaucracy.

The bosses have their own intelligence network, which is nationwide.

In your paper (May 2, 1970), for example, you refer to the activities of the Economic League on Clydeside.

You state that a certain Mr Teacher, who runs the Glasgow Economic League branch, has an extensive card-index file on 4,000 to 5,000 militants in Scotland and that representatives of this sinister organization were inquiring into the activities of militants in the Upper Clyde Ship-builders.

'... Your refusal to support the defence of a deformed worker's state in N Korea (right), against imperialist obliteration, meant, in effect, your support of the witch-hunt of those who oppressed the Korean war in the Labour Party and the League of Youth'.

You also state that 60 or 70 firms in Glasgow are affiliated to the Economic League and that they phone Teacher when employing new workers about their previous records.

Is it not, therefore, entirely conceivable that the same thing goes on in the Merseyside area, and that when Girling's sacked Rosemary Whippe after four days, ostensibly for taking a day off work, they had 'other' reasons for doing so?

Otherwise, how do you explain the fact that she was sacked without her steward being present, a procedure not customary at Girling's.

Why is it that neither Barrett nor Hallas (who considers himself an authority on the SLL) nor Palmer could explain this simple little fact to their audience?

We ask this question because your speakers, in lying about Rosemary's desire to be victimized, omitted to mention another significant 'detail' which cast an entirely different complexion on her case.

This was the fact, known even to the capitalist press on the Wednesday before your meeting, that the recommendation for strike action against her sacking came from the local district committee of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering and Foundry workers (AEF) and the two shop stewards committees and not from Rosemary.

Different

Therefore, if anyone is to be made guilty of your grotesque charges of 'substitutionism' and 'wanting to be victimized', it must surely be the Wirral and West Cheshire district committee of the AEF.

That really is different isn't it?

The Marxist truth is always concrete.

When the strike motion was put, a group of backward and reactionary workers—in order to prejudice the vote and in order to embarrass their stewards who had voted for a stoppage on May Day in defence of Vietnam—raised a h and cry about a 'red plant' and of Rosemary having a degree.

It was absolutely clear from reading the press that a witch-hunt was launched against Rosemary at this meeting and that her democratic right to hold a job was being challenged. Read again what the press had to say:

'Set up'

'During the meeting, machine operator James Nicholas, aged 21, of Milner Street, Birkenhead, told the workers: "I think this is a plant. I don't mind going on strike, but not for a set up."

'His speech was greeted with cheering, with some shouting about a "Communist plot"...

'He [Nicholas] added, "There is no room for a dainty nose in this factory".' (Liverpool Daily Post, April 28, 1970.)

In the ensuing confusion the vote against strike action was carried. Having done his dirty work, the man who raised the cry of 'red plant' then repudiated it.

But it was enough.

The entire capitalist press picked up this filthy slander and tried its damndest to discredit and vilify the Socialist Labour League and create a lynch atmosphere to stampede backward workers to vote Tory in the next election.

It was not just a witch-hunt. It was a gigantic political hoax against the working class and not only against the League.

Thanks to the innate scepticism of the British workers towards capitalist press lies plus the discipline of the SLL, the press and ITN came unscathed.

For this success we owe you and the Communist Party nothing!

Mr Barrett, with his references to 'substitutionism' is



echoing this reactionary, lying rubbish about 'plants', 'plots' and 'dainty noses'.

It was also apparent that the 'Red plant' hoax wasn't merely aimed at getting rid of Rosemary Whippe from Girling's.

It was an integral part of the combined government and employers' offensive against the shop steward system in industry.

Since Girling's is the target of a government-sponsored inquiry led by the Commission of Industrial Relations (CIR) and since the 'Red bogey' has featured in every government inquiry, the right wing in the factory decided it was better to appease the CIR by sacrificing Rosemary than to fight the management and the CIR inquiry all the way.

Their aim is to please the CIR and Wilson by keeping socialist politics out of the unions.

Hence the witch-hunt and hence the statement by Mr Nicholas:

'It was no accident that she [Rosemary] was in the factory. This was an attempt to thumb a nose at the probe into the industry.' (Daily Express, April 28, 1970.)

Therefore what Mr Barrett calls 'substitutionism' is only a more sophisticated way of fighting socialist consciousness in the trade unions and defending opportunism—as Mr Nicholas is doing in Girling's.

A final word. May Day is a day of working-class solidarity, against the oppression and violence of capitalism.

For you, however, it is an occasion to dissociate yourselves from those who are under attack from the capitalist class and to uphold all that is backward and reactionary in the working class.

Until you publicly repudiate the lying allegation of Mr Barrett we shall continue to treat your public statement in the 'Socialist Worker' (May 9, 1970) as an act of political dishonesty and cowardice.



A sample of the Rosemary Whippe witch-hunt treatment dished up by the capitalist press.

the SLL provides the *raison d'être* for your group.

Consider your record in relation to us. In the early 1950s you broke with Trotskyism on the nature of the Korean war. Your refusal to support the defence of a deformed workers' state in N Korea against imperialist obliteration meant, in effect, your support of the witch-hunt of those who opposed the Korean war in the Labour Party and the League of Youth.

In the 1960s, it was your paper, 'Young Guard', renamed 'Rebel', and your supporters in the Young Socialists who lined up consistently with the right-wing in the witch-hunt of 'Keep Left' and the Trotskyists in the Young Socialist.

Shutdowns

You were for the lifting of the ban on Woodrow Wyatt—an unregenerate right-winger who advocated the atom bombing of N Korea in 1950—but you did not lift a finger to prevent the right wing from shutting down YS federations all over the country and in expelling leading members of the YS who supported 'Keep Left'.

You identified Trotskyism with Nazism and—like now—

and the 'Tribune'-ites into an unholy alliance against Trotskyism on the basis of gossip and slander against our tendency.

Reminiscent

Your attack against Rosemary Whippe is reminiscent of another incident in 1968 which proved beyond any doubt that you were quite prepared to collaborate with the news media against the Socialist Labour League and its members.

We refer, of course, to the provocation organized by your members outside the Reyrolle factory at Hebburn on the Wearside in October 1968, when your members tried to disrupt an SLL-All Trades Unions Alliance meeting for the benefit of a BBC-TV unit.

Your group cannot bring itself to support Rosemary Whippe's fight against the capitalist press and its agencies in the working class, but it has never found difficulty in supporting the most reactionary causes—the imperialist-inspired secession of Biafra, the despatch of imperialist occupation forces to N Ireland and Black Power, which tries to split the working class on racial lines.

It is, in fact, typical of your group that you say one thing at the height of a crisis and another when the crisis blows over.

The most instructive example of this sort of skulduggery is provided by your *volte-face* on Ulster.

You were for the sending of troops when the prospect of an armed insurrection against British imperialism was imminent and you are against retaining the troops now that imperial 'law and order' has been re-established.

Said nothing

Similarly when the witch-hunt was at its height, on the Tuesday and Wednesday of the last week in April, your paper, which came out on the Saturday, had nothing to say.

Now that the press attack has been stalled by the SLL, you are quick to denounce Fleet Street—while keeping silent on the shabby role of your leadership when the heat was on.

Basically, your method is the same as the Stalinists who were more concerned in getting out of the line of fire than in defending the victim

IN A WEEK of wanton destruction in Cambodia, of the wilful murder of four students in Illinois, of the dive of Wall Street, of the dictatorial assumption of power by Nixon supported by the most rabid and lunatic assembly of generals, of the crisis of American imperialism reaching its sharpest and most barbaric expression, it seemed apt to see a film which dealt with the coming to power of Hitler and the Nazis in Germany.

Insights into this period are valuable.

Yet on almost every level Visconti's 'The Damned', currently showing at the Odeon, Kensington High Street, is unsatisfactory.

The situation he focuses on is promising enough. He selects a rich aristocratic German family, owners of a vast steel mill, adapting themselves to fascism.

The film opens with the birthday of the old baron. It is a gathering of the family. The home is magnificent, rich tapestries, furnishings, paintings, the finest of bourgeois art and refinement; the servants respectfully and dutifully prepare the dinner, the silver, the cut glass.

First there will be a family entertainment, which the children will give, a recitation, then a cello solo . . .

Divisions

Assembled are the sons, relatives, daughters; the only non-family visitor is the manager of the steel works, a middle-class technocrat who wishes to marry one of the daughters.

But divisions are apparent in the family. One member is in Hitler's army, another in the SA ('Brownshirts').

Yet the authority of the baron maintains a unity, for he is the unquestioned head of the family, of the steel works.

The one early jarring note is the grandson's party piece—a cabaret song dressed as a woman, much to the disgust of the grandfather.

But the apparent harmony is disrupted by the news that the Reichstag has been set on fire and that a Dutch communist has been arrested.

It announces a new period for Germany, the smashing of communism and the building of the new order.

The baron has hitherto preserved an aristocratic contempt for the upstart Hitler, but he



Machiavelli



and Marxism

THE DAMNED directed by LUCHINO VISCONTI showing at the ODEON Kensington

knows that his primary duty is to preserve his property, and regretfully he asks his son to resign from his post as managing director of the works to make way for someone who is more amenable to the Nazi regime.

The son, a classic liberal, denounces Hitler and a row breaks out.

Flees

That night the Gestapo arrive to arrest the son, who is persuaded to flee by the technocrat manager, who insists that he leaves his revolver behind. Later the baron is found shot in his bed by his son's gun.

The rest of the film concerns itself with the machinations in the family to seize control of the works.

The workings of the plot and the changing family situations immediately remind one of an Elizabethan world. 'The Damned' is, in fact, Shakespeare written as melodrama yet without Shakespeare. It's like an amalgam of

Hamlet and Macbeth, yet a Hamlet without the Prince, merely a sensualist substitute in the form of the grandson, who seduces small girls and finally rapes his mother.

And his mother is a cross between Lady Macbeth and Gertrude, urging on her technocrat lover to murder and take the crown of the steel works.

The technocrat is the ambitious Macbeth—the instrument through which the Gestapo work to wipe out the survivors of the family—who finally is usurped by the grandson, who forces poison on him and his new wife, to emerge as a fully fledged Nazi, the owner of the steel works and the second most powerful man in Germany.

Visconti, the Italian, seems unable to break from a Machiavellian view of history. It is this that predominates his thinking and fits comfortably with his melodramatic instincts.

The latter gives his work a statuesque, extremely formal quality which I find personally

lumbering, obvious and formalistic. He processes gracefully from one archetype to another.

It gives his work a predictable quality with few surprises or flashes of ingenuity.

The former means he is incapable of grasping the full political significance of fascism.

He can only see the steel-works as a symbol of power or, at the end of the film, the flames that announce the hell of damnation and national socialism, not as the machinery of class conflict and the extraction of surplus value.

His characters adapt to fascism, not primarily to save their tottering enterprises to allow Hitler to do their dirty work in defeating the working class, but to retain their power by humbling themselves to this unwanted intruder.

It is again the Machiavellian principle of power. The so called Marxist Visconti is really nothing more than a moralist.

Again we go back to Hamlet, for his vision is of 'something rotten in the state of Denmark'.

CINEMA By Brian Moore

TUESDAY TV

BBC 1

9.15 a.m.-12 noon Schools. 1.00-1.25 P.m. Dyma wall. 1.30 Watch with mother. 1.45-1.53 News and weather. 2.05-2.25 Schools. 4.20 Play school. 4.40 Jackanory. 4.55 Summer search. 5.20 Shazzan. 5.44 Parsley. 5.50 News and weather.

6.00 London—Nationwide.

6.45 Z cars.

'Night Out'.

7.10 Good old days.

Old-time music hall.

8.00 Professional heavyweight boxing.

Joe Bugner v. Brian London.

8.50 News and weather.

9.10 On trial.

Roger Casement: a question of allegiance.

10.30 24 hours.

11.00 Celebrity concert.

Radu Lupu plays Mozart and Wagner.

11.55 Weather.

REGIONAL

All regions as BBC 1 except:

Midlands and East Anglia: 6.00-6.45 Midlands today. Look East, weather. Nationwide. 11.57 News, weather.

North of England: 6.00-6.45 Look North, weather. Nationwide. 11.57 News, weather.

Wales: 5.20-6.50 Telerade. 6.00 Wales today, weather. Nationwide. 6.45-7.10 Heddiw. 11.25 Z cars. 11.25 Wales today special: Royal inauguration. 11.57 Weather.

Scotland: 6.00-6.45 Reporting Scotland. Nationwide. 11.57 News, weather.

Northern Ireland: 6.00-6.45 Scene around six, weather. Nationwide. 11.57 News, weather.

South and West: 6.00-6.45 Points West. South today. Spotlight South-West, weather. Nationwide. 11.57 News, weather.

CHANNEL: 11.00 London. 4.10 Puffin's birthday greetings. 4.12 Hatty town. 4.25 Survival. 4.55 London. 6.00 News, weather. 6.10 Lookaround. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Movie: 'Hilda Crane' with Jean Simmons and Guy Madison. 8.30 London. 11.15 Moviemen. 11.35 Gazette. 11.40 Commentaries et previous meteorologiques, weather.

WESTWARD: As Channel except: 4.10 News. 6.00 Diary. 11.40 Faith for life. 11.46 Weather.

SOUTHERN: 11.00-3.45 London. 4.00 Junkin. 4.15 London. 6.00 Day by day. 6.30 Joker's wild. 7.00 Father, Dear Father. 7.30 Film: 'The Black Castle' with Richard Greene, Boris Karloff, Stephen McNally and Paula Corday. 9.00 London. 11.15 News. 11.25 Weather. 'Feed the Minds'.

HARLECH: 11.00-4.15 London. 4.25 Floris. 4.55 London. 6.02 Report. 6.10 Joker's wild. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Bonanza. 8.00 Mr and Mrs. 8.30 London. 11.15 Adam 12. 11.45 Weather.

HTV (Wales) colour channel 41 as above except:

10.30 Welsh scene. 11.00 Trip i'r teulu. 11.30 Y dydd. 11.55 Weather.

HTV (Cymru/Wales) black and white service as above except:

6.01 Y dydd. 6.30-6.35 Report Wales. 10.30 Welsh scene. 11.00 Trip i'r teulu. 11.30 Arthur to Alfred. 12 midnight Weather.

ANGLIA: 10.58-4.15 London. 4.30 Newroom. 4.40 Paulus. 4.55 London. 6.00 About Anglia. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.30 'Rogues March' with Peter Lawford, Richard Greene and Janice Rule. 8.30 London. 11.15 All our yesterdays. 11.45 Living word.

ATV MIDLANDS: 11.00 London. 4.10 Peyton Place. 4.40 Origami. 4.50 Flaxton boys. 5.20 London. 6.00 ATV today. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Western: 'Shoot Out At Medicine Bend' with Randolph Scott, James Craig, Angie Dickinson and James Garner. 8.30 London. 11.15 Douglas Fairbanks presents. Weather.

ULSTER: 11.00-2.55 London. 4.50 News. 4.55 London. 6.00 UTV reports. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Movie: 'Gideon of Scotland Yard' with Jack Hawkins. 8.30 Seven degrees west. 9.00 London. 11.15 Parkin's patch.

YORKSHIRE: 11.00 London. 4.30 Matinee. 4.55 London. 6.00 Calendar. 6.30 Beverly Hills, 7.00 Father, Dear Father. 7.30 'Sword of Sherwood Forest' with Richard Greene and Peter Cushing. 9.00 London. 11.15 All our yesterdays. 11.45 Weather.

GRANADA: 11.00-3.28 London. 4.25 Short story. 4.55 London. 6.00 News-view. 6.05 All our yesterdays. 6.30 Gilligan's island. 7.00 Film: 'Sailor of the King' with Jeffrey Hunter, Michael Rennie and Wendy Hiller. 8.25 London. 11.15 Four just men.

TYNE TEES: 11.00 London. 4.10 Racing from York. 4.10 Newsroom. 4.13 Enchanted house. 4.25 Freud on road. 4.55 London. 6.00 Today at six. 6.25 Where the jobs are. 6.30 Wally Whyton style. 7.00 Film: 'Simon and Laura' with Peter Finch and Kay Kendall. A theatrical marriage that seems perfect but isn't. 8.30 London. 11.15 News. 11.27 Epilogue.

BORDER: 1.45 London. 4.10 News. 4.12 High living. 4.55 Oriam. 4.55 Floris. 5.20 London. 6.00 News. Look-around. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Western: 'Gun Glory' with Stewart Granger and Rhonda Fleming. 8.30 London. 11.15 Wally Whyton style. 11.45 News, weather.

SCOTTISH: 11.00-4.15 London. 4.20 Scotland early. 4.30 London. 6.00 Scotland now. 6.30 High living. 7.00 Western: 'Law of the Lawless' with Dale Robertson, Yvonne De Carlo and William Bendix. 8.30 London. 11.15 Late call.

GRAMPIAN: 10.58-4.12 London. 4.25 High living. 4.55 News. 6.00 News, farming news. 6.15 Preview. 6.20 Music of the Highlands. 6.35 Crossroads. 7.00 Comedy. 'Watch It Sailor'. 8.30 London. 11.30 Christian now.

Jason Robards Jr., Jennifer Jones, Joan Fontaine and Tom Ewell. Psychiatrist (Robards) marries wealthy, neurotic ex-patient (Jones) without realizing risks involved. Story from Scott Fitzgerald novel.

11.10 News and weather.

11.15 Line-up.

'Oh fie 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature Possess it merely.'
The German state is corrupt, the natural order breaks down, patricide, matricide, incest, perversion.
Indeed all of these are expressions of a wider crisis. Trotsky himself pointed out that the psychology of the Gestapo was that of pederasty.
One of the best sequences in the film is the SA, the 'Brownshirt' street thugs who killed and hounded communists and social democrats alike, carousing near Munich, drunk, some in women's clothes, the sentimentality of their singing, the ubermensch physique.
But in this film Visconti's understanding seldom transcends a moral outrage and the result is really an ambiguity towards the aristocracy.
For if the moral degeneration of the state signifies a breakdown in the natural order, what then is the natural order?



In this sense 'The Damned' is a lament for the passing of the old aristocratic values.
If we contrast the refined formality, the order, the sense of family, place and position of the opening sequence with the closing moments of the film, where the same house is strident with jazz music, drink, girls in a state of half dress being kissed and fondled, the furniture scattered, two poisoned bodies in one room, and the new head of the works in jackboots and Nazi uniform, it is hard to avoid this conclusion.
'The Damned' is obviously an intensely felt film. Visconti has said that it was made in hate, that it was made as a warning and reminder to the young.
But at a period when fascism becomes a real threat once again, youth need a clear political understanding to defeat it once and for all, by defeating the system that breeds it, capitalism.
I'm afraid they won't find it in 'The Damned'.

THE SHORT documentary 'Bagnolo' at Academy One, despite the pious intentions of its makers, is of considerable interest.
Bagnolo is a small Italian town near Reggio Emilia in the Po valley.
Like almost all the surrounding Emilian 'red belt' it is a stronghold of the Communist Party. 70 per cent of the young people are enrolled in the Communist youth organization.
In this prosperous agricultural region the Party has built a whole network of co-operatives and political, cultural and social organizations.
One after another its complacent functionaries appear

Italy's 'red belt': built-in peaceful co-existence

BAGNOLO a documentary about Italy's 'red belt'. Showing at Academy One London. Reviewed by **DAVID BARNES**

Leon Trotsky

Where Is Britain Going?

Available from New Park Publications Ltd, 186a Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4.

on the screen to recount its achievements in 'social progress'.

'While there are problems,' the film-makers are telling us, 'everything in the garden is rosey, and will get gradually rosier.'

The amiable villain of the piece is the Church, in the person of a grinning and gap-toothed priest.

The vicarage, the church (with an illuminated plate-glass spire) and the private shops share one side (naturally, the right) of the high street, while on the other are the Party offices, the Chamber of Labour and the co-operatives.

Built-in peaceful co-existence, one might say.

But in some scenes the character of class relations shows through. The honoured citizens of the whole town are the old men who survived from the resistance to fascism, chatting in a bar provided for their use and to commemorate those who were killed.

The big question mark is that of the use of the land.

The landlords want to switch from farming to poplar growing, profiting from Italy's booming demand for paper

with a much smaller labour force.

We see little of the ordinary people of the town, except to be shown their idiosyncrasies, such as life-long Communist Party members marrying sheepishly in Church.

The screen is mainly reserved for the notables and among them one contrast is outstanding.

Lack confidence

The Party men are serious, responsible figures who nonetheless seem to lack some inner confidence, to feel that what has been gained in Bagnolo is in some way too good to be true.

The priest, despite the fact that his congregation is tiny, is abubble with his plans and achievements.

Reflected in him is the unreduced power of an old possessing class.

As he says of a gift of a million lire towards a Catholic nursery school: 'Though times are not what they might be, the Madonna was kind enough to encourage me'.

EMMA'S TIME

The Wednesday Play

BY DAVID MERCER

BBC 1 9-10 pm MAY 13

Michele Dotrice plays EMMA

Completes a trilogy by David Mercer, the previous plays being 'On the Eve of Publication' and 'The Cellar' and the Almond Tree'

