

The Newsletter

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PENSIONS INCREASE DELAYED, WAGES FROZEN, BUT PRICES SOAR

FIGHT RISING COSTS

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TSR2 crisis. Nationalize armaments industry

THE Newsletter has always maintained that a Labour government operating capitalist policies would bring nothing but discredit to the labour movement. The November budget has resulted in employers pushing up prices, so up goes the cost of living and down goes the real value of wages. The people who voted Labour are those who are worst hit.

Wilson and company refused the old age pensioners an increase by Christmas so that when they get it on March 29 it will already have been considerably reduced in value.

Now we have the TSR2 crisis. If there was ever a racket that needs exposing within Britain today, it is that of armaments.

When there are wars, they make fabulous sums by charging the top prices for all weapons produced for government departments. In between these wars the armaments kings are constantly selling ideas about the 'ultimate weapon' to these same government agencies.

Millions of pounds are spent on fruitless projects. As soon as one contract for a prototype of the 'ultimate weapon' comes to an end, another one is conveniently started. Thus the taxpayers are plundered out of millions of pounds. All this is well known to Wilson and the Labour government.

At the 1960 conference of the Labour Party he called for the nationalization of the arms industry. But, of course, all this has been evaded, and nationalization dropped in order not to antagonise the floating voter. What happens as a result of this is that Labour antagonises its own supporters.

In Preston, where you have a most marginal seat covering the aircraft industry, TSR2 workers are up in arms because no one has bothered to explain to them what has been happening. They would vote 100 per cent, if the Labour government was to nationalize the industries they are working in.

If the government were then to open the books of this industry and reveal the rackets that are taking place, every single worker would applaud them.

If the Labour government were to introduce in a nationalized armaments industry workers' control in order to plan production of things that were needed and not armaments, it would have the support of every Labour voter, intelligent enough to understand that the armament chiefs are not only 'the merchants of death' but the modern highwaymen of capitalist economy.

Now the Labour government has to endure the spectacle of its own supporters marching to demand that it keeps the production of the TSR2 going. Once more the right wing have split the working class.

Of course, there is the usual silence in left-wing circles of the Labour Party. 'Tribune' will not demand nationalization. It will only begin to move when it is too late and the Tories are on their way back to power—precisely what Bevan did in 1951.

The Newsletter has continuously called for the nationalization of the engineering, shipbuilding, aircraft and chemical industries. We repeat this call now.

Only if the Labour and trade union movement force the present leadership to change their disastrous course can Toryism be kept out of Westminster.

NOW

With demands for nationalization

By John Crawford

THE tidal wave of price increases shows again the complete subservience of the Wilson government to the monopolies. The government and the employers plan to hold wages down. Increases in pensions are delayed. But the cost of living soars.

The 1 per cent rise in the November cost of living index, although the biggest jump for many years, gives no real measure of the effective cut in workers' living standards since the election.

The index notoriously under-estimates the effect on the working-class budget, not to speak of the starvation budget of the old age pensioner.

Food prices went up by 1.3 per cent in November, but the biggest changes started later. Some 4,000 grocery items have gone up since November. Fares have increased, as have beer, sweets and chocolate. Soon national insurance contributions will take a bigger cut from the wage packet and postal charges are expected to rise.

The rise in rail freight charges and the sixpenny petrol duty are sure to be made the pretext for further increases. ICI has already put up the price of dyestuffs, which, with Callaghan's 15 per cent import duty, will mean that the price of clothes will go up further.

Brown's letter asking manufacturers why they ask for higher prices would be a joke if the situation were not so grave for millions of workers, housewives and pensioners.

As on every other question, the Labour leaders are dominated by the power of the monopolies. Since Wilson turns his back on nationalization as the answer to the problems of British economy, he must carry out their dictates!

Hard hit

Breaking every pledge made to 12 million Labour voters, the government's actions strengthen extreme right-wing forces. Getting the Labour movement blamed for the effects of the capitalist crisis, it alienates the middle class, also hard hit by the rising cost of living.

The whole labour movement must mobilise to fight this dangerous and treacherous policy. Action for higher wages and in defence of organisation by any section must be backed by the entire working-class movement.

In particular, the demand to increase pensions at once, and to backdate the increase, is vital.

The lobby of Parliament on this issue, called by the Young Socialists for February 4, must be given massive support.

Monopolists must not be allowed to use their power over Wilson to hold the workers up to ransom.

Investments must be taken out of private hands and used to produce wealth under the control of the workers and for the benefit of all.

TSR2 workers rally for march

SHIFT after shift at the Weybridge, Surrey, works of BAC where the TSR2 aeroplane is produced expressed support for the demonstration of workers (including 800 apprentices) through London to Hyde Park and Parliament on Thursday against the cancellation of the aeroplane. Despite talk by shop stewards about 'keeping politics out of the affair', many rank-and-filers told Newsletter reporters the case for nationalization of BAC was obvious.



KICKED TO DEATH IN THE CONGO

THE men on the ground in this picture are being beaten to death. The boots and rifle butts being used belong to members of the Congolese Army and mercenary battalions. On this particular occasion, 10 men were kicked and beaten to death in the village of Ituru as 'a reprisal'.

This picture illustrates the role of the civilising mission of the United Nations in the Congo. It illustrates also the consequences of all the illusions held by so-called radicals, socialists and pacifists about the role of the United Nations in establishing 'the rule of law' and world peace.

The United Nations forces in the Congo were hailed as a great force for progress against Tshombe, the Prime Minister of Katanga and an open agent of Belgian and British imperialism. The actual results are well known: the cold-blooded murder and mutilation of Patrice Lumumba; the 'accidental' death of Dag Hammarskjöld; and finally the installation of Tshombe him-

self as the Congo's prime minister. Throughout, the main victims were hundreds of thousands of ordinary Congolese people. Their lives were sacrificed as the different imperialist forces and their agents in the Congo fought out their war for profits. The Newsletter and the Socialist Labour League attacked and exposed this fraud of the United Nations from the start.

The bloody and violent rule of Tshombe is the responsibility of all those who gave uncritical support to the United Nations operations and failed to build a fighting alternative to imperialism. During the fighting in the Congo in the last three months, the British press has been filled with atrocity stories and adulation of the heroism of Tshombe's mercenaries, consisting of the scum of Western Europe and South Africa.

Now the truth has broken through. All the earlier reports are confirmed by J. Anthony Lukas' despatch to the 'New York Times' of January 10, in which he

describes the execution of 500 rebels in late 1964, the period in which reporters were banned from Stanleyville.

'Those executed during this period were chosen in an unusual ceremony at Stanleyville's ramshackle Lumumba Stadium. Suspects were led into the Stadium one by one. If the spectators cheered or clapped, the suspect was released. If they booed, he was condemned to death.'

'The bodies were left lying at the side of the road. Later they were buried in four mass graves under the direction of a United Nations sanitation official.'

Wilson boasts that the foreign policy of the Labour government is based upon the United Nations. Are these then to be the results of a Labour foreign policy?

Just as socialists must fight against the capitulation of Wilson to the bankers on the home front, so they must break with all the liberal rubbish about the United Nations and fight against it as an organ of imperialism.

SOCIALIST POLICY FOR THE DOCKS

PROMINENT spokesmen of big business, including the big companies on the docks, are calling for modernisation and the press is attacking the dockers for being lazy, selfish, arrogant and so on. According to them, the docks are inefficient because dockers are old-fashioned and oppose mechanisation.

This is a lie: dockers are paid a basic wage of only £10 18s. to work in an industry where working conditions and safety regulations are of nineteenth-century quality and they are for better pay in a cleaner, safer and more efficient industry.

But dockers have experience of the employers' aims, and they know that the employers only want mechanisation at the workers' expense.

The National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers has quite rightly demanded guarantees on redundancy, wages and a say in manning scales before agreeing to large-scale mechanisation.

But more than these guarantees are required. Dockers face the same problems as millions of workers in all industries faced with mechanisation and automation.

In every one of these cases, it is necessary to go far beyond promises from the bosses, which will be broken at the first opportunity. A policy to enforce better conditions and security of employment must be fought for.

The dockers can fight for such a policy and win. That is why the employers are preparing so thoroughly to break the dockers. That is why the dockers' fight

Statement by the Political Committee of the Socialist Labour League

is a fight on behalf of the whole working class against the plans of big business to solve its problems of 'modernisation' at the expense of the workers.

The present position under the Dock Labour Scheme amounts to a 'nationalization' of the dockers

without nationalization of the docks!

Hundreds of private employers are supplied with 'labour' and provided with a disciplinary machine against the men. The men themselves, on the other hand, are only permitted to take partial and limited action for their own aims because they are divided between different employers.

The bosses are talking about reducing the number of firms on the docks. This would only provide the present 'service' for a few big monopolies instead of to a large number.

(Cont. p. 2, col. 1)

MEETINGS

Labour Must Stop Retreating!

No Wage Freezing!

Backdate the Old Age Pension Increase Now!

Full Support for the Dockers

London

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1
Saturday, January 16, 7.30 p.m.

Speakers: G. Healy, Peter Kerrigan, NASD (in a personal capacity)

Newcastle

Bridge Hotel
Sunday, January 17, 7.30 p.m.

Speaker: Cliff Slaughter

Liverpool

Lecture Hall, Walker Art Gallery, William Brown Street
Sunday, January 24, 7.30 p.m.

Leeds

City Museum
Sunday, January 31, 7.30 p.m.

Speaker: G. Healy

Leicester

Co-op Hall, 168 Belgrave Gate
Sunday, February 7, 7.30 p.m.

Glasgow

Partick Burgh Hall (Lesser Hall) (near Merkland Street underground station)
Sunday, February 14, 7.30 p.m.

Speaker: G. Healy

SHEFFIELD AEU SUPPORTS PENSIONS STRUGGLE

THE Sheffield District Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union has pledged full support for the campaign to backdate pension increases to November and to support the lobby of Parliament called for February 4. A donation of £5 was given by this powerful committee to assist in the preparation of this campaign.

After its meeting, a member of the DC spoke to The Newsletter. The committee, he said, had been approached by a young engineering worker and member of the Apprentices' Direct Action Committee in Sheffield. He spoke before the DC and asked for support for the campaign, pointing out the betrayals and retreat on this vital question by the Labour government.

After a sharp discussion lasting 20 minutes, during which time many questions were asked about the activities of the Young Socialists in the area, it was agreed to support the campaign and make a financial contribution.

This is a very powerful blow on behalf of the pensioners. All AEU branches in the area will be circulated by the DC informing them of the decision.

Already AEU No. 9 branch, long renowned for its militancy, has given full support to the campaign and has elected a delegate who will represent the branch on February 4, joining the many young workers, students and apprentices who will come from the South Yorkshire area.

This action by the Sheffield engineers is a magnificent show of solidarity with the youth movement which has led the fight for an immediate rise in pensions.

'Many young workers suffer in the same way from the constant attacks that capitalism makes on them. They know that when no more profit can be made out of them they will be turned out on to the dole.'

Asbby went on to explain how many young people who had joined the Young Socialists were either being forced to work in dead-end jobs which offered no future, or were being used as cheap labour as apprentices.

In addition they were constantly hounded by the police.

These young people joined the Young Socialists because they wanted to fight back. They were in a position to appreciate the plight of old people and the brutal treatment they had been given.

REAL FIGHT

Young Socialists were fighting for the pensions increase because they could see it linked up with their own struggles. It was nothing to do with crocodile tears you got from the so-called 'lefts' of the Labour Party.

'But it goes further than this,' he added. 'Young people have joined the Young Socialists over the last four years to carry out a real fight against the Tories.'

'This brought them into conflict with the right wing in the Labour Party who only wanted to use the Young Socialists to do election work. The right-wing leadership has always been opposed to the socialist inclinations of young people.'

'Wilson and his friends use the old people in exactly the same way. Promises galore before the election; once in power they are more interested in winning the confidence of the banks.'

'But we intend to fight. The

(Cont. p. 3, col. 1)

Why we called the pensions lobby

YOUNG SOCIALISTS NATIONAL COMMITTEE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DAVE ASHBY, EXPLAINS



HUNDREDS of Young Socialists, students, young workers and apprentices, supported by trade unionists and shop stewards from some of the largest factories in Britain will converge on London on Thursday, February 4 for the lobby of Parliament called by the National Committee Majority of the YS.

Along with many old age pensioners they will be there to demand that the pension increase be paid immediately and back.

The Newsletter, which has always paid tribute to the struggle being waged by Young Socialists on behalf of the old people interviewed Dave Ashby, Chairman of the National Committee Majority. He was asked why it was that young people were ready to take on this struggle on behalf of the pensioners.

'The failure to pay old people their increase hits at the heart of the capitalist system of society in which we live,' he said.

'Thousands of old people will be condemned to a premature death this winter if the increases are not paid. Their only crime is that the bosses can produce no more profit from their labour.'

SOCIALIST POLICY FOR THE DOCKS

From page 1

It would be a step backward, leading to enslavement of the dockworkers. *There is another way.*

All firms on the docks must be nationalized, with control over their working by the dockers' own representation at every level. These representatives would be responsible for all working conditions and discipline, and would themselves be subject to the control of the men at work, who would elect them and have the right to recall them.

What is the first step to this? The trade unions and dockers' representatives, together with their own appointed advisers in accountancy and bookkeeping, must thoroughly examine and expose the books of all dock employers.

This will reveal the real reason for backwardness on the docks: profits have been used for the shareholders' own purposes, not for modernisation.

Modernisation

Since 1954 they spent only £200 million on modernisation, out of £3,000 million profit! Whereas output doubled the labour force was cut by 20,000! Those lazy dockers! Those forward-looking bosses! What are the discharge rates for cargoes? Where do the profits go?

Ever since the Dock Labour Scheme was introduced, the employers, helped by the Transport & General Workers' Union, have endeavoured to divide the men, who have still managed to preserve unity in action despite the split between 'blue' and 'white'.

We must go forward from the limited dual control over working arrangements introduced by the Dock Labour Scheme, to workers' control and removal of the employers.

The Devlin Commission must not be left alone to recommend mechanisation and redundancies with stricter bosses' discipline.

Intervention by the unions in the Commission to insist on workers' inspection of the companies' profits, to expose the real background to the present situation must be the demand in every union branch.

Policies

What policies should the unions fight for in this campaign for workers' control and nationalization?

1. If shift working, with mechanisation, under workers' control is more efficient, then we will have a national agreement for two shifts, 8-2 and 2-8 at £3 per shift. Piece rates should be increased by an equivalent figure (50 per cent).
2. Pensions must be increased to £5 per week and be non-contributory.
3. Four weeks' paid holiday per year at £18 per week.
4. Control of all hiring and firing through union hiring halls, with proper safeguards for democratic control of those responsible.
5. A complete overhaul of safety regulations, instead of the present system, where, for example, the Port of Liverpool has one safety inspector. There must be permanent safety officers—every one under the control of the unions.
6. In every port, representative committees of workers to investigate working conditions, safety, canteen and medical facilities and to report regularly. Compensation to ex-owners not even to be considered until these matters are rectified.

This programme can easily be met out of the profits of the employers. If the employers say it can't then *open the books*, as we have demanded, if you have nothing to hide!

Advance

Mr. Gunter and the Labour cabinet will say that this programme is against their 'incomes policy'. But the only incomes policy we know is one for bigger incomes for workers, at the expense of the profiteers.

This is the real way to advance the cause of Labour, and to break the power of those who attack the dockers and every other section of workers whenever they get the chance.

We call upon dockers in all parts to unite and fight for this programme through the trade unions, and to organise to win the support of workers in all other industries in the struggle against the port employers and the government.

PETER JEFFRIES LOOKS AT BRITAIN'S

FINANCIAL CRISIS

Economic forecast for 1965

THE current spate of economic forecasts for 1965 and 1966 by journalists, economists and other writers, which have appeared in all the leading daily and weekly papers, reveal the seriousness of the problems facing British capitalism and the Labour government as it enters 1965.

The basic weakness of the whole system can be seen most clearly in the balance of payments position: during the last year a huge deficit of £800 million has been incurred which called for borrowings from the foreign banks on the biggest scale since the war.

What are the prospects for 1965, according to the experts? It is generally assumed that the import bill will fall as a result of the 15 per cent import surcharge.

Foreign

During 1964, it has been estimated, every extra piece of machinery which was installed over and above the level of 1963 came from abroad ('Financial Times', 4.1.65). Such is the lack of competitiveness of much of British industry.

The export performance has been the real weakness over the last 12 months. Here there is no optimism, even from the staunchest supporters of the capitalist system. The imposi-

'SOCIALIST NOISES' FROM TRIBUNE'S CENTRISTS

From JOHN CRAWFORD

AS Wilson's betrayal of the labour movement comes increasingly into the open, 'Tribune' has to try harder and harder to make it palatable to the rank and file.

Last week, two academic relics of the so-called 'New Left', Michael Barratt Brown and Royden Harrison, undertook the task of presenting George Brown's 'statement of intent' on incomes as an example of socialist policy.

While prices rise, the monopolies hope to use the Labour government to hold down wages. All Wilson's talk of 'planning' is bound up with this attack on the working class.

To carry through this job for the employers and the bankers, the Labour leaders must trick the workers into accepting cuts in real wages and further state interference in union organisation.

The 'lefts' of the 'Tribune' species earn their political living by diverting the attention of rank and file trade unionists and Labour Party members with socialist noises.

QUOTE MARX

Thus, Barratt Brown and Harrison manage to quote Marx and Lenin in the course of their article.

They try to con the 'Tribune' reader into identifying George Brown's enthusiastic collaboration with the bosses with 'the political economy of Labour'. They talk of 'class struggle' and 'a challenge to management prerogatives'.

Dockers have already shown that workers are not going to be fooled quite so easily. They will resist attempts to make them bear the brunt of the crisis of British capitalism.

But trade union action will not be enough to beat back the employers' attacks. The wages question is a political question, though certainly not in the sense that 'Tribune' wants us to think.

To answer the problems facing trade unionists today, political action must be taken, so that the power of organised workers can smash the political and economic power of the bosses.

For this to be accomplished, a Marxist leadership must be built and the grip of the Wilsons and Browns on the labour movement broken.

The political con men of 'Tribune' will not prove much of an obstacle in this process.

tion of the import duty has worsened the position. By sheltering the domestic market it has made many firms less willing to sell abroad, where competition is strong and profit margins small.

At the heart of the export crisis stands the engineering industry. In many of its branches imports are growing faster than exports and the production target of 4 per cent set by the National Economic Development Council has not been met in 1964.

Crude and dear

The more sophisticated the type of machinery, the worse the record tends to be. Many firms, in textile engineering, for example, have long relied upon the relatively sheltered Commonwealth market, which has traded in the cruder types of engineering products. Apart from the question of price, British firms tend to take longer to build pieces of equipment, and there is a widespread failure to meet delivery dates.

As well as the figures for exports and imports, an important item in the balance of payments is the volume of capital outflow from London, which appears as a negative item in the balance of payments accounts.

As a result of continuing financial, economic and poli-

tical uncertainties it is widely predicted that this outflow will continue at a high pace during the coming year, especially to Australia, where profit expectations are high.

The net result of all these predictions indicates that the balance of payments will still be in deficit throughout 1965; this despite a 7 per cent Bank Rate, a 15 per cent import surcharge and a general credit squeeze.

Indeed, the position at the end of 1965 could be much worse than in the last few months as industrialists once more build up their stocks from imported sources: this at a time when British capitalism desperately needs a surplus on its balance of payments out of which to repay some of the borrowed 13,000 million dollars to the foreign banks.

Deflation

In other words, the Labour leaders will only be able to reverse their present deflationary policies in the coming 12 months at the expense of further worsening a dangerous balance of payments position, and further reducing the slender reserves of gold and dollars, which today stand at their lowest for eight years.

The outlook for 1965 must, therefore, be one of severe deflation and rising unemployment.

After the previous crisis years

of 1957 and 1959, unemployment rose sharply—to over 620,000 in 1959 and to over 900,000 in 1963.

But these were years which had followed major spurts in production and when the balance of payments position was not so serious. The present crisis follows a year of relative stagnation during 1964 for British capitalism.

In other words, the winter of 1965-66 must see unemployment rise to at least the million mark, assuming that there is no major break in world trade and that the decline of British capitalism does not speed up. Should either of these occur, then the position would be even more serious.

This is the crisis facing Wilson: either devalue and sacrifice the £—and along with it the City of London as a leading financial centre earning a valuable income for British capitalism; or stabilise the £ at the cost of a steep rise in unemployment, industrial stagnation and the major political and industrial battles which this would bring.

Unsound

It is clear the United States is unwilling to allow Wilson to devalue, whatever the latter's views on the matter. This would impose further strains on the United States' already unsound external position and might lead to a dangerous 'devaluation cycle' of the pattern in the '30s.

Devaluation could only take place, in the present situation, at the expense of a severe rupture in the economic and political relations of the Western alliance.

These basic contradictions of British capitalism haunt the Labour government. They leave no room for manoeuvre, to expand the social services, to grant any substantial increases to the unemployed or aged, or indeed to carry out any of the election pledges.

The Labour government must be a government of continual crisis. As such, the socialist movement has every opportunity to make qualitative gains at the expense of the right wing in 1965.

The truth about decasualisation

By Reg Perry

BEHIND the pile of abuse hurled at the dockers by the national press during the past few weeks the most insistent demand has been for the 'decasualisation' of the labour force.

For many years the port employers have presented this demand as if they were granting a favour to dockers. The various decasualisation schemes they have planned have been dressed up to appear as schemes dreamt up by kind, considerate employers who were trying to create something like a Butlins holiday camp on the docks.

The hostility and hatred to which the dockers have been subjected recently, should make it abundantly clear that these schemes, cloaked by the inoffensive and laudible title 'decasualisation', are designed as a strait-jacket for dockers which will enable the employers to sweat more tonnage out of a smaller, docile labour force, and secure a faster turn-round of ships.

'Modern Luddite'

In the press the docker is presented as a modern Luddite, of subnormal intelligence, a 'Bloody-minded, Selfish, Arrogant' pre-historic monster who has opposed the good intentions of the employers and delayed the introduction of mechanisation and more efficient methods of working.

These lies must be answered. If they thought they could get away with it, the press would no doubt blame the docker for the rise in prices, the run on the pound through 'their Zurich agents', and even the closure of the Windmill Theatre.

The dockworker is not, and never has been, opposed to decasualisation.

Every portworker is well aware of the inadequacies of the Dock Labour Scheme introduced in 1947 under a Labour



London and Merseyside dockers at a joint meeting last year during the fight against decasualisation.

government. What he has opposed is the ceaseless attempts of the port employers to smash that scheme and return to conditions where employers have sole control over the hiring and firing of workers, discipline, recruitment and training, safety and welfare.

The docker has opposed the uncontrolled, ill-thought out introduction of mechanical aids, which would have resulted in higher profits for the employers and unemployment, more accidents, and speed-up for the worker, with little or no improvement in either wages or conditions.

'Progressive'

The docker is well aware of what happened in the mining and railway industries where such uncontrolled mechanisation was forced through.

They also know just how 'modern minded' and 'progressive' the port employers are from the rat holes which pass for canteens, the insanitary toilets (if they exist at all), and the refusal to provide washing facilities.

A Health Ministry report on conditions of meat handling in the London docks this week is an indictment of the employers not the dockers.

Bosses' demands

The main demands of the employers under the umbrella of decasualisation have been a reduction in manning scales, an end to the continuity rule, full mobility of labour and flexibility, shift working round the clock, a contract system which would leave recruitment in the hands of individual employers and make strikes illegal, and compulsory overtime.

In return they have offered a pension scheme on retirement of 10s. a week for those with 10 years in the industry, a sick pay scheme, operating for eight weeks, a weekly wage of £11 in London and £9 10s. in Merseyside.

The 'new deal' for Merseyside which was rejected by every union branch on the docks last March, despite the efforts of Transport and General Workers' Union officials to secure its

The Newsletter

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A matter of principle

THE overwhelming majority of Young Socialists have now expressed themselves over the recent incident at Wandsworth Constituency Labour Party. They condemn without equivocation the support which S. Mani, a self-styled Trotskyist, gave to the right wing in order to expel supporters of the Socialist Labour League.

Many of those who condemn this political scab do not agree with our policies, but they recognise that what is involved is a socialist principle.

We repeat once more, that it is not a question of agreement or disagreement with the policies of the Socialist Labour League. No one who calls himself a socialist can possibly vote with the right wing who at the same time call in the police to do their dirty work when it comes to the expulsion of our supporters from the Labour Party. In the last few days Mr. Mani

has issued a statement denouncing the youth concerned as 'hooligans'. This is a slander and a lie from beginning to end. Those who do not want to understand the problems of youth and are anxious to force young people to conform to the conditions imposed by the right wing establishment find it easy to resort to the language of the gutter press.

By describing the youth of Wandsworth who wanted to join the Young Socialists as hooligans, Mani simply reveals that he supports the forces of 'law and order' which are the police, the establishment and the right wing of the Labour Party.

Unfortunately, we do not yet have a clear answer from the United Secretariat in Paris as to what their attitude is towards his man. We feel, however, that they may well condemn him since it is now clearly established what happened. Such an unequivocal condemnation would not pass unnoticed.

Collapse of opposition in Nigeria

From Our Special Correspondent

THE electoral boycott in Nigeria by the Progressive Alliance (UGPA) has resulted in nothing but an almost complete victory for the ruling National Alliance.

This party, which represents the most reactionary feudal, Muslim rulers of the North, has been able to form a new government—a coalition, of which they hold 13 of the 17 ministers.

In return, they have merely given a vague promise that the elections would be held again in the South of the country 'in the future'. This contrasts with the very definite anti-working class measure taken by the new government, banning all meetings and demonstrations in the Western region for two months.

This collapse of the opposition followed an election in which, even 'The Times' admits, 'the electoral offences of the triumphant north were rank and provocative'. The press contained many reports of imprisonments, beatings-up and so on.

The so-called 'Progressives' from the south, who are in fact the prosperous new businessmen from that area, had no answer to the warning that their opposition

to the National Alliance could unleash the forces of the working class.

Faced with this threat, the Progressive Alliance backed down and accepted the 'compromise'. Although they oppose the northern rulers, whom they see as obstacles to the capitalist development of Nigeria, they fear the working class more.

'The Times' comments that this agreement was 'a very considerable achievement', at a time when the 'national safety hung in the balance'.

The Nigerian working class can expect nothing from the 'Progressive Alliance', or any other 'progressive' businessmen or employers.

The election fiasco, following close on the heels of the imprisonment of Dr. Allen and the three Nigerian trade unionists, which was condoned by the same men who have accepted the prime minister's terms, is proof that only independent working-class politics will win anything for the working class.

In Britain many trade union branches and Trades Councils have passed resolutions demanding the release of Dr. Allen and the Nigerian trade unionists.

all strikes. It is a fact well remembered still, that the General Strike ushered in the longest period of peace within living memory.

The employers obviously believe the best time for such a showdown is now ripe. The attack on the dockers in the national press is designed to coerce both Lord Devlin and the Labour government into imposing such schemes on the dockers—something they could not achieve under a Tory government.

It becomes more than ever important that dockers should maintain the solidarity and determination they displayed in Glasgow, Merseyside and London when they rejected these schemes last year.

Dockers' control

If decasualisation and modernisation of the docks is to benefit the workers in that industry then it must be done under the control of the dockers through their unions.

The scandal of the docks results from the 'medley of individual interests, each concerned with extracting what profit it can' ('The Times'). It is the employers who are responsible for the medievalism and low technique of the industry.

In answer to the decasualisation proposals of the employers workers must take up the demands put forward in this week's page one article.

Only under these conditions can there be any possibility of safeguarding conditions and modernising the industry. This will be possible only with the nationalization of the industry.

This programme of demands cannot be won without the support of all trade unionists. All workers must demand the support for this programme of the trade union and Labour government.

Showdown

It is now clear that the employers are determined to force through schemes on this pattern in the near future, and are preparing for a showdown with the dockers. Merseyside dockers have not forgotten the sentiments expressed by a leading spokesman for the port employers in the 'Docks and Harbour' magazine a few years ago.

He said then: 'There is much to be said for a strike to end

Stalinists cover up for Labour's betrayal

By Peter Arnold

BERT RAMELSON, Yorkshire organiser for the Communist Party, outlined the Stalinist policy of covering up for the Labour government, at a meeting of the Executive Committee, last weekend.

To this end, Ramelson attempted to create the illusion that the Labour government was struggling hard to 'carry out policies in the interests of the people', though hard pressed by the capitalists who were using 'every sort of pressure . . . to force the Labour government to pursue Big Business policies'.

Consequently, Ramelson calls for a mass movement as 'the indispensable weapon of a Labour government' in this

Why we called the pensions lobby

From page 1

witch-hunt organised by the right wing and carried out by full-time agents of the Labour Party has given the young people a real experience in struggling against the right wing.

'This is more than you can say for the 'lefts' around 'Tribune' who are now anxious to forget all about the old people.'

We asked Ashby what support the lobby was receiving in different regions.

He stated that there was wide support for the lobby. In every area Young Socialists were holding factory-gate meetings, contacting shop stewards, lobbying Labour Party meetings, organising local demonstrations, taking collections in factories and around the pubs, visiting old age pensioners clubs and generally working in every way possible to make the lobby a big success.

Lie

'This campaign is already giving the lie, he went on, 'to those who accuse us of being "sectarian". In fact, we are getting a tremendous response from a large number of older workers.'

Those "lefts" who ask us not to "rock the boat" certainly don't speak for these workers, who are angry and bitter at the betrayals of the Wilson government.

'The ability to win the support of older workers is also giving fresh confidence to Young Socialists,' he stated.

Ashby told The Newsletter how inspired he had been by the way that Young Socialists had refused to be intimidated by the witch-hunt.

He had every confidence that the Young Socialists would grow rapidly in influence and would be leading the major working-class struggles that the policies of the Labour government would provoke.

'If the Labour government does not pursue policies in the interests of working people,' he declared, 'we shall have absolutely no hesitation in campaigning to expose it.'

'I would like to stress that, although the lobby is receiving tremendous response, there can be no room for complacency on an issue of this nature.'

'We want every section of the British labour movement represented on the lobby in the greatest possible numbers.'

so-called struggle and presents proposals for the solving of the crisis. That is, instead of calling on the government to fight for the workers, he calls upon the workers to fight for the government in this task of strengthening capital.

Ramelson's views continue the opportunist line laid down by John Gollan, general secretary of the Communist Party, at the Party's Executive Committee meeting last November.

Gollan said: 'We want the Labour government to survive and win victory for the people,' and that, to this end, 'any criticism we make will be to strengthen the government and its standing with the people.'

But the Communist Party was founded 44 years ago in order to wrest the leadership of the working class from the Labour leaders who inevitably would betray the working class in struggle, to keep them under the bondage of capital.

Yet today, Gollan wants to strengthen the hold that these people have over the working class. Such are the fruits of Stalinism.

Nowhere in Ramelson's contribution, as reported in Monday's 'Daily Worker', does he examine the crisis in British capitalism and the Labour government from the point of view of the working class.

Radical

Ramelson expected 'a radical departure from Tory policy in tackling some of the major problems facing this country'. But this was precisely what 'The Times' expected of the Labour government.

Gollan had outlined these problems fully at the November meeting:

'The new government has inherited sharp social, political and economic problems from the Tories—the acute balance of payments crisis (and here the key issue is military expenditure abroad); the need to modernise the economy (involving automation and consequent social issues); the acute problems of housing, rents, pensions, education; the ending of colonial wars and the general directing of foreign policy.'

Here again the major 'problems' for Gollan are those which concern the employers while those of the working class are relegated to the end of the list—the greatest problem of all that confronts the working class, the misery that will accompany automation on the employers' terms (and these are the terms accepted by Wilson) is relegated to a brief mention in brackets and dismissed as 'social issues'!

Economy danger

In his turn, Ramelson speaks of 'tackling the balance of payments crisis' and again of 'the heavy deficit in overseas expenditure'. He further warns against 'the great danger now . . . (of) . . . a "stop" phase developing in the economy.'

Even when some of the working-class problems more or less force their way into his speech, Ramelson covers up for the Wilsonites.

'Thousands of pensioners will die before next March without having benefited from Labour's pledge to improve their lot,' he says. But the point is that thousands of pensioners will die because the Labour Government has not only refused to 'improve their lot' but has actually worsened it through the price rises which followed the import surcharge and the increased petrol tax.

Where he does criticise the government, Ramelson again makes it clear which side he is on. 'Labour staked heavily on an incomes policy, but Mr. Selwyn Lloyd's pay pause did not extricate us from our difficulties but aggravated them.'

So the only thing that is wrong with an incomes policy is that it does not extricate us

from our difficulties. What contempt Ramelson expresses here for the workers fighting against the pay pause, which they know is in effect a drop in wages and which is an attempt to make them pay for the difficulties of capitalism.

The problems of exploiting labour, Mr. Ramelson, are not our problems at all, they are the problems of the employers. Our problems, the problems of the working class and of the Marxist party, are those of how to end the exploitation of workers, and overthrow capitalism and its crises for ever.

Neither Ramelson nor Gollan mention the question of racialism, and the trend towards fascism as capitalism discovers that the Labour government is unable to deal with the 'problems' of automation.

Despicable

In their attempt to save Britain for social-democracy, these despicable self-styled communists cover up here too, thus aiding the attempt to prepare the working class for the most reactionary rule that capitalism can muster.

In the December issue of 'Marxism Today', the monthly journal of the Communist Party, an article by Reuben Falber claimed that 'the Labour Party, of course, firmly opposed racialism'. Where? When?

Have they repealed the Immigration Act? Have they not brought in legislation to 'test immigrants medically'. What about the famous attempt to counter the 'nigger for a neighbour' campaign, with 'tell them that the Tories brought the niggers over here'?

Is not Smethwick and the Birmingham area a stronghold for Wilson's supporters? Have not those Young Socialists who have fought racialism been expelled from the Labour Party?

The Communist Party has no answer to any of these questions.

Throughout, Ramelson and his colleagues attempt to tie the labour movement closer to the Wilsonite bureaucracy, to make the task of rebuilding British capitalism easier.

It has no policy for building any movement to oppose this process—its only proposal is for a mass movement to support Wilson.

This opportunism and this failure to train cadres to oppose the Labour bureaucracy has led the Communist Party into crisis after crisis as the class moves into action.

As the militant youth desert the Communist Party to join the Socialist Labour League, the bureaucracy itself splits and fights in its own circles.

The resignation of the Party's national organiser for health reasons is followed by the resignation from the party of more than 20 Electrical Trades Union officials faced with the right-wing witch-hunt.

'Regret'

Ramelson 'regrets' this, but hopes that they will 'continue to play a militant role'. 'Continue' is a strange word to use in the circumstances.

But what else had the Communist Party prepared them for? Had it trained them any more than it trained Paynter—who actually went so far as to oppose a Communist Party candidate in the general election.

Ramelson's speech, combined with the hatred the Communist Party has expressed for the young militants in the Young Socialists and their applause of Transport House's expelling the 'disrupters', together with their appeals for support to the 'Left' in the government and among the MPs, as Ramelson put it—that same 'left' around 'Tribune' which also enthusiastically backs Wilson in his witch-hunt of 'Keep Left', shows that the working class have nothing to expect except betrayal from the Stalinist leadership.

Malaysia-Indonesia: Troops now 50,000 strong

CHRISTOPHER MAYHEW, Britain's Navy Minister, speaking in Vancouver on Wednesday said a military build-up in Malaysia to 'ward off threatened attacks by Indonesia' was necessary.

This illustrates, once again, the imperialist policy of the Wilson government which, soon after breaking its election pledge over sending aircraft to South Africa, turns to gunboat diplomacy in South-East Asia.

There are now over 50,000 British servicemen with 70 warships and numerous aircraft (V Bombers based in Singapore and Australia) assembled in and around Malaysia—the largest British force in the area since the Korean war.

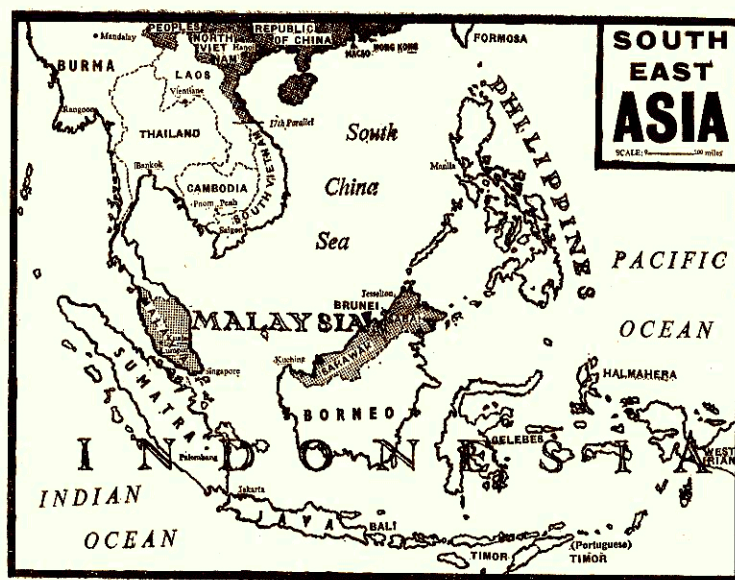
The 10,000 British servicemen already in the Borneo territories of Malaysia are being reinforced by Gurkhas from Hong Kong while 120 British and Malaysian gunners have been sent to the Sarawak territory from Singapore.

'No war'

President Sukarno of Indonesia has announced he will not declare war on Malaysia, but would strike back if attacked.

Malaysia, a federation of Malaya, Sarawak and Sabah (North Borneo), was formed in September 1963 in order to maintain the British imperialist base and protect the vast tin and rubber reserves in the area. Annual income in tin is around £45 million and about £175 million for rubber.

The people of Malaysia are mainly Chinese, Indians or Malays. The ruling class, centred around Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, has used cultural and communal differences in pitting one section of the working-class community against another—in July



Gunboat diplomacy by Labour

By P. Desai

1964 communal riots broke out.

In fact, the federation has created division rather than unity. This has enabled the Chinese bourgeoisie to share 40 per cent of the wealth, the Indian bourgeoisie 20 per cent and foreign capitalist concerns 40 per cent.

The Opposition Socialist Front has failed to make any headway in its struggle to rally the masses against the premier Tunku Abdul Rahman.

While many Socialist Front votes come from larger towns, only half come from the North

Malay 'majority' states. The Pan Malayan Island Party has utilised the ill-feeling among the exploited and discontent rural peasantry there to capture nine seats.

In a vote last year on military registration, 57 per cent of the electorate either abstained or voted against Rahman's Alliance ruling party.

The Socialist Front has only itself to blame that only a quarter of the anti-Alliance vote went to them.

Recently the United States sent a delegation to Kuala

Lumpur for talks about military aid, but no agreement has been made as the Malaysians found the U.S. interest rates too high. But the Americans are still utilizing the differences between the Indonesians and Malaysians. Between 1950 and 1962, U.S. 'aid' for President Sukarno of Indonesia has, apart from £350 million arms aid, amounted to something like £500 million!

Taking this into account, we can now guess who would be the chief beneficiaries if this part of South East Asia were consumed in war.

Within Indonesia, Sukarno, now in his middle sixties, is a bourgeois nationalist who draws around him a broad front of Communists, nationalists (NASACOM) and a religious faction.

Withdrawal

He has now withdrawn his country from the United Nations over the manoeuvring of Malaysia on to the Security Council. This has had some impact, since Indonesia is the first country to withdraw from the UN in its 19 year history.

The Western press is claiming that because Sukarno's 'Crush Malaysia' campaign had not succeeded, as he said, before the first cock crow of the New Year, the UN withdrawal is a face-saving diversion which will enable some sort of committee to be formed to mediate a settlement.

'The Guardian' also reported on Thursday that the feeling in Whitehall was that the confrontation would not blow up into a full-scale conventional war.

But no one should be fooled by this talk. The build-up of a 50,000-strong force in the area does not mean that even the Wilson government would not take matters so far to save the infant federation and all its assets.

Once again, members of the British labour and trade union movement must demand that the Wilson government withdraw all troops from overseas and close all bases.

'Package deal' = 3 year wage freeze for engineers

By BILL HUNTER

THE big engineering employers have achieved their 'package deal' with the unions which came into force last week. Union leaders didn't see fit, or didn't care to put it fully before their members with the result that many shop stewards' committees had the experience of being called to the management's offices to discuss an agreement signed in their name, about which they knew very little.

The employers have given engineering workers a 40-hour week and two days' extra holiday. In return, union leaders have given them what is virtually a three-year wage freeze—if Carron and company carry it through.

MISERABLE RISES

Also skilled men get two miserable rises of 5s. each in 1966 and 1967; semi-skilled men get two rises of only 4s. 6d.; labourers and women's rises are 4s.; and apprentices' pay is to be raised in July to 80 per cent of the skilled fitter's rate at the age of 20.

The worst and most significant part of this deal is that employers and union leaders have agreed to an embargo on local claims for pay-raises.

Engineering wages everywhere have been raised by local action in the past. That is why only a small percentage of engineers benefitted by the raising of the

national minimum rate under the new deal.

Now the employers and union leaders have agreed to deliberately stop the strength of individual factories and areas from pushing up wages.

Shipbuilding workers should take urgent warning. The Executive of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions has decided to put in a claim for a 'substantial increase' for shipbuilding workers.

How substantial is their idea of an increase in pay can be seen by the fact that they have set the package deal in engineering as their model.

ATTRACTED

Ted Hill of the Boilermakers' Society declares he is attracted to the package deal because it gives the engineers a guaranteed week of 40 hours. He puts it before shipbuilding workers as a step towards decasualisation of the industry.

However, among engineers on the Tyne—as certainly elsewhere—there are sarcastic comments on the guaranteed week, which the employers have been able to suspend in the past when they wanted.

The present package deal ties engineers to a guaranteed week with more provisos. These include one that the guaranteed week will be suspended in the event of work being held up through shortage of parts owing to a strike, not only in the firm concerned, but in any Federated establishment.

In shipbuilding and ship repair, the workers are subject to an hour's notice. The employers have bluntly refused to agree to giving three day's notice. Discussing Hill's statement, Tyneside boilermakers have asked: 'How can he get a guaranteed week with retention of labour when he cannot even get three day's notice?'

SIDETRACK

Union leaders have no intention of organising a struggle for any measure of decasualisation. They hope to sidetrack the very real feeling for 'retention of labour' into support for a piece of slick negotiation that will end by assisting the employers.

The employers aim to reorganise shipbuilding and ship repair. They have been demanding 'flexibility of labour'. They have other demands for speed-up.

The fulfilment of some of those demands, plus the same virtual wage freeze as in engineering will be the content of any package deal in shipbuilding. To get that, the employers may grant a few hours' extra notice as a meagre concession.

The package deal was imposed on the engineers without organised struggle against the plans of Sir William Carron and company.

MOBILISE

More than protests from district committees or branches are needed. In the past year, organisation and mobilisation of the rank and file by those opponents of the deal have been lacking. That is why Sir William Carron has got away with it.

Union leaders have foisted onto the engineers an agreement that can only build up explosive collisions between the rank and file and right-wing officialdom.

With prices rising rapidly, local factories and areas are going to be forced into struggle to raise wages and conditions.

The task is to link these wage fights together to create a leader-

ship able to plan the fight against the employers and their collaborators in the unions.

There can be a united struggle against the wage freeze, a struggle for a real substantial increase and a sliding scale to meet rising prices.

Willesden engineers back pensions fight

AT ENV, the Willesden, London, engineering factory, the workers are supporting the campaign to backdate the pensions increase.

Convenor Geoff Mitchell told a Newsletter reporter that the shop stewards' committee has decided to circulate a petition in the factory and will be backing the February 4 lobby of MPs called by the Young Socialists.

LETTER

COMRADE W. Hunter is correct when he says (Newsletter, January 9): 'We are unconditionally on the side of the Congolese people . . .'

'We support and do not lay conditions on the national liberation struggle of oppressed peoples.'

Criticism strengthens our support by demanding prompt rectification within the context of the class struggle. My analysis errs in the omission of this point.

P. Desai

Trade unions in the epoch of imperialist decay

By Leon Trotsky

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The second of **FRANK WILLIAMS'** three articles on **E. Germain** will appear in next week's Newsletter

Manchester busmen may strike



Express national feeling

MANCHESTER bus drivers and conductors are preparing to strike on Saturday unless their claims for a 40-hour week, a rise in the basic rate and a bonus scheme are met immediately by Manchester Corporation Transport Committee.

More than 1,000 men at two of the Corporation's seven depots have adopted resolutions calling for a strike and their delegates pressed for this action at a meeting on Tuesday of representatives from all the depots.

Local officials of the Transport and General Workers' Union are worried by the militancy which is developing amongst the bus workers.

The pay claim is a national one and the Minister of Labour, Mr. Ray Gunter, appointed a three-man tribunal on January 1, under Professor D. J. Robertson of Glasgow University to sort out the dispute.

'The Guardian' of January 2 commented: 'The union's decision to put their claim to a tribunal is a further illustration of renewed confidence by trade unionists in arbitration machinery.'

Eyewash

This is just so much eyewash. Union leaders may be prepared to go to arbitration but bus workers throughout the country are demonstrating by means of strikes and overtime bans that they have no confidence whatsoever in these government-appointed bodies, whose sole purpose is to

impose the wage freeze proposed by the Labour government and required by the bosses.

Manchester Corporation Transport Department has introduced experimentally an electronic bus conductor on a new type of single-deck bus operating on the East Didsbury rush-hour express service.

Tickets are bought beforehand and are put into the machine on boarding the bus. The machine cancels a metal oblong on the ticket so that it cannot be used again.

A bell rings in the driver's cab if anyone puts a non-metallic card in the slot.

If, at the end of the experiment, the Corporation decide to introduce these machines on a wide scale, then it is obvious that they will then make thousands of conductors redundant.

A big struggle would take place and such a struggle could only be won if the bus workers had succeeded in developing a leadership independent of the TGWU bureaucracy.

The time to begin building such a leadership is now, as bus workers throughout the country begin to flex their muscles and prepare for a fight on the wage claim.

Pay rise Council rapped

ROCHDALE council, who gave their bus workers an interim increase of 8s. 9d. per week in order to avoid a strike over the Christmas holiday period, have been warned that their continued membership of the National Federation and two national councils for the Road Passenger Transport Industry has been placed in 'serious jeopardy' as a result of this action.

This warning could have an important effect in stopping Manchester and other corporations from granting interim payments, pending the national settlement, and if this happens, then a number of strikes are likely to take place.

Glasgow Pensions Lobby

CONVENORS AND YS QUESTION MP

By ALEC McLARTY

A DEPUTATION of 12, comprising shop stewards from Albion Motors and Harland & Wolff factories, Scotstoun, Glasgow, together with Young Socialists argued for one and a half hours with the local Labour MP, W. Small last week that the government should increase the old age pensions immediately and that the increases be backdated.

On behalf of the Albion Motor workers, convenor R. Bewick expressed the anxiety of workers about the plight of the pensioners during the winter period, at a time when fuel and food costs have risen.

In reply, Small quoted the argument that administrative and economic difficulties prevented Labour granting the increase before March.

'Honour'

When asked by an Albion shop steward whether he would be prepared to ask the government to freeze the substantial yearly compensation payments to ex-shareholders of the mines and railways and divert this money to the pensioners, Small said no. 'The Labour government must honour its contracts re these payments,' he said.

The convenor at Harland & Wolffs, along with other delegates, told Small that the Labour government should honour its contract to those people who put it in office. To retreat before the banks and the bosses would only worsen the position of the working people and retired

Busmen's leaders guilty of compromise

Day and night picket to prevent eviction

For several months, the Streatham Tenants' and Residents' Association have been struggling to prevent an Indian family from being evicted from a house where previously an Irish family had been forced out. Here is the latest report from a member of the Association.

MR. and Mrs. Swole, upstairs at 104 Sternhold Avenue, Streatham Hill, were delighted last Saturday to receive a letter from the landlord's solicitor to the effect that the landlord would not evict them, except on a court order.

Even then, and although the Protection from Eviction Act of December 17 makes it illegal to carry out an eviction without going to court, Streatham Tenants' Association are still taking no chances, after seeing what happened in December.

Then, Mr. and Mrs. O'Halloran were living in the ground floor flat for six months, with their three small children.

Eviction has kept pickets at No. 104 night and day to prevent the landlord and his men from evicting the family. At the same time a great deal has been done to press the council housing department to take action, to obtain legal advice and get the police to recognise the implications of the Act.

A petition is circulating among local residents and members of labour organisations, asking the Borough council for a compulsory purchase order on the house, so that the Swoles may have security of tenure and the council regain a flat for the one they gave the O'Hallorans.

Loscoe tenants face increasing hardship

MR. and Mrs. Cresswell and their daughters, of 13 Argyle Street, are still existing in Loscoe, Yorkshire, though only just. Mr. Cresswell has been too ill to work for 18 months and is a disabled registered person.

Even the National Assistance Officer seemed to consider the state of the house deplorable.

Their youngest daughter has not been well enough for school for three months, due, the doctor says, to the conditions the family live in. The child cannot sleep because of damp and cold.

Her mother says she has to move her head on the pillow to avoid the rain, then they have to get up and move the beds and buckets about. No clothes or bedding is dry.

Already Mr. Cresswell sleeps on the settee in the kitchen and the bedroom ceiling cannot last long. Where will Mrs. Cresswell and her two daughters sleep when it collapses?

They paid £6 10s. a week rent and spent all they could on decorating the flat. Then the landlord, John O'Hara, gave them notice to quit.

The National Association of Tenants and Residents called a street meeting and made plans to protect the family, but on November 23 Mr. O'Hara with four men and two women succeeded in forcing an entry, evicting Mrs. O'Halloran and the children and putting the furniture into the back yard. The police took no action.

Spurred on by the Tenants' Association, the Wandsworth Borough Council rehoused the family the same day.

NOTICE

Mr. O'Hara then gave four weeks' notice to Mr. and Mrs. Swole, who live upstairs with their two little boys; Mrs. Swole's sister and family are living with them, including an invalid girl of 12. They claim they had a year's agreement on the flat.

On the Monday after Christmas they allege landlord O'Hara walked into their kitchenette and removed the gas cooker while they were out. He turned off the gas, leaving an open-ended pipe and no gas in the bathroom geyser.

The notice to quit did not expire until January 2, but fortunately the new Act was passed on December 17. (A group of women from the neighbourhood had visited the House of Commons on December 4 to demand that the Bill be rushed through and if possible made retrospective.)

Under this legislation the landlord's alleged interference was illegal, and Mr. Swole was later able to summons O'Hara for it.

At a meeting in a school hall on December 15 a Streatham Tenants' and Residents' Association was formed and a committee elected. Members of the committee succeeded in getting gas rings installed and the gas turned on again so that the Swoles could boil a kettle. From January 2 the Asso-

SCOPE

As soon as the Streatham Association was formed, tenants began to bring their problems of eviction notices, fantastic rents and impossible living conditions. One thing at least is quite clear—there is plenty of scope in Streatham.

The committee—four men and five women—has Dick O'Halloran as chairman and is a keen representative group, including a mother of six children and a treasurer, Jean Dodson, who is flat-hunting.

Most of the members live near to 104 Sternhold, and many other neighbours are co-operating and signing the petition.

Young people in the district, including the Young Socialists, have helped to picket and demonstrate. The Streatham Association hopes to build up this support and continue in a wider field, taking up problems of residents such as rates, amenities and transport, as well as publishing information about the rights and liabilities of tenants and landlords, and giving support wherever there is a threat of eviction or rent racketeering.

Opposition to Clara Vale pit closures

AMONG the 500 men who work at Clara Vale colliery, near Newcastle, there are bitter comments about the Coal Board's decision to close their pit.

A meeting of the men decided to oppose the closure and discussions are taking place between union officials and the Coal Board.

Miners allege that the reason for the closure is because the Coal Board wants men in the pits on the Durham coast. A number of men from pits that have already closed in the area work at South Shields. This means travelling nearly 20 miles to work and 20 miles back.

More Coal

Fred Hardy, the Clara Vale lodge secretary, expressed the opinion of the men when he said there was a lot of coal in the colliery. Even last June, the miners were told that it would be some time before the colliery closed.

The Coal Board has said there are jobs in other pits for 292 men. The miners declare that there are no jobs offered to surface men.

The majority of surface men are disabled miners—victims of dust and accidents. Fred Hardy gave the number of disabled men as 60. There is hardly any other industry in the area.

The men expect the other two collieries nearby to close down soon. The Clara Vale pit pumps water out of all three pits and the miners say that once the Coal Board closes their colliery this would be used as an excuse to close the other two.

Youth must organise in USDAW to win demands

By a Newsletter Correspondent

THE Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, Britain's fifth largest union, votes next month for a new President.

In a growing industry of over 2,000,000 workers, the membership of 350,000, which has not increased since 1947, dropped by 4,000 in the first nine months of 1964.

The right-wing 'election-arranging' organisation, The Labour Progressive group has split over these elections and both Sidney Watts, Executive Committee Member from Birmingham, and Rodney Hanes, Executive Committee Member from London, are standing.

This division on the vote for president may well result in the election of the third candidate, Dick Seabrook from Norwich.

The Southern and Eastern division for which Seabrook is Executive Committee Member and full-time organiser, is one of the few areas where there has been any growth of membership in recent years.

Increasing pressure from the employers in distribution to keep the shops open six days a week (instead of five and a half days) and to extend late night opening of shops, has been bolstered by the right-wing leadership's acceptance of a number of agreements in the last few years.

SHIFTS

This has resulted in shop workers getting, on paper, a five-day week by working shifts, while the shop is open five and a half days.

The employers now want to use the same system to keep their shops open for six or even seven days a week.

In some cases the shop workers have fought for and won a two-day closing of shops, but the fall in the union's membership reflects the inability of the leadership to raise the question of shop conditions and low wages of young workers.

Wages of under £2 a week at 17 are common amongst hairdressers and £3 to £4 is the rule for many young girls, on their feet behind a counter for five and a half days a week.

Even when the doors are shut the workers are still expected to stay behind for half an hour putting stock back on the shelves.

After the shops closed on Christmas Eve the windows had to be changed and prices remarked ready for the sales. Because Christmas Day fell on a Saturday the Shop Act allowed employers to stay open on the usual early closing day as well.

The election of Dick Seabrook and the defeat of the right wing in this election will not be enough to put an end to such conditions.

For a real fight against long hours, late night opening and low rates, young workmen must be organised in the shops warehouses and in the packing plants.

FIGHT

That these young shop workers can and will fight was shown by the strike of Woolworth's girls in Wales three years ago.

The average age of the strikers was 18 and at the end of one week's stoppage the claims for £1 a week increase and full organising rights were met in full.

Whilst all the presidential candidates speak in their election addresses of increasing

membership, the right wing are thought to be preparing to present a report for the next May annual delegate meeting to change the set-up in the union to defend their present position in London.

The membership is down again this year with the result that the vote in his own branch to nominate him was very close.

The organisation of the young people in distribution into USDAW and a real fight to organise the industry to take some of the very good profits the employers have been making would also mean the end of the right wing in USDAW.

Council cutting back services following 48-hour week victory

—Leeds firemen claim

By JACK GALE

AFTER a long struggle last year, Leeds Labour-controlled council finally agreed to grant the city's firemen a 48-hour week. This came into effect on Sunday, January 3 this year.

However, the firemen are still far from satisfied with their conditions. They claim that rather than pay men overtime,

the committee is understaffing the apparatus.

In particular, they say that turntable ladders have been withdrawn from service—so that in some cases, if a fire broke out in a high block of flats, it could now take as long as 20 minutes before the necessary equipment could be got there.

The firemen also claim that the Fire Brigades Committee is trying to 'get at' them for winning a 48-hour week.

The state that the amount of drill and 'bull' in the stations has been trebled and that their annual leave has, in effect been reduced.

When on a 56-hour week, they worked three days, then three nights, with three days off. The usual arrangement was that the three days off came immediately before and immediately after their annual leave.

The Fire Brigades Committee is now claiming that this was a 'concession' and has cancelled the arrangement, which has stood for six years. The first three days are now counted as part of the annual leave.

Many Leeds firemen believe that the Leeds Fire Brigades Committee is more concerned with saving money than with providing an efficient fire-fighting service, and that some Labour councillors bitterly resent the men's struggle for better working conditions.

It is reported that firemen in one Leeds station are threatening to stop paying union dues because they are dissatisfied with the fight the union is putting up. The Newsletter disagrees with this action. These men should stay in the union and fight for militant action.

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