

# The Newsletter

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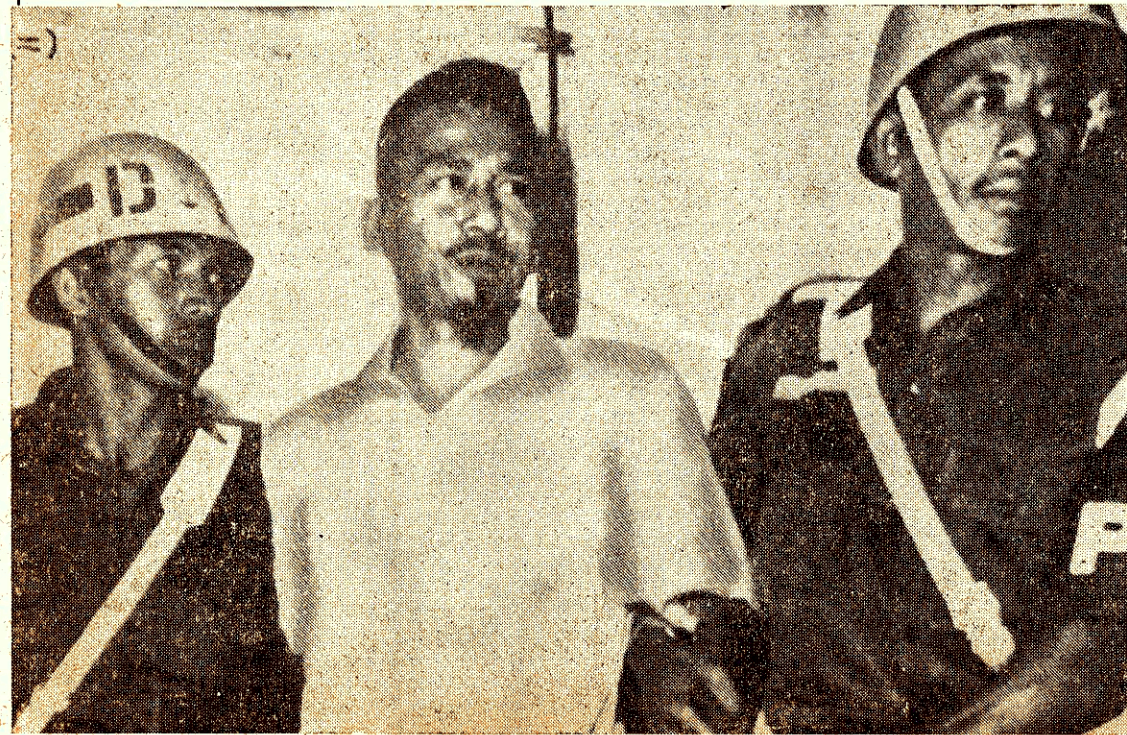
LIVERPOOL TRADES COUNCIL BACKS RENT FIGHT

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**SLL CENTRAL COMMITTEE CALL**

# ALL OUT AGAINST ANTI-UNION BILL

## Death sentence for Njono



Indonesian trade unionist and member of the Communist Party, Njono, being taken to the military tribunal.

## Cynical praise from Sukarno for CP

Newsletter Correspondent

**A**S Indonesian communist and trade union leader, 43-year-old Njono bin Sastroedjo was sentenced to death by a special military court in Jakarta, President Sukarno cynically praised the communists for 'sacrificing' so much for the country. He announced the erection of a monument to those who died for the country.

This follows the massacre of at least half a million workers and peasants—followers and supporters of the Indonesian Communist Party—since the abortive September 30 coup, during which Njono was said to have been responsible for the deaths of six army generals.

To heap insult on infamy the Indonesian Army leaders have now leaked to the press what is obviously a fabricated confession of Aidit. The sole purpose of this execrable forgery is to justify the massacres and to absolve Sukarno from any part in Colonel Untung's abortive coup. The 'confession' is supposed to have been made by Aidit before his execution.

### UNNOTICED

This bloody emasculation of the largest Communist Party outside the Soviet Union and China by Moslems and the right-wing generals in Jakarta has gone almost unnoticed by the British Communist Party.

Last week's Newsletter challenged CP general secretary, John Gollan, to make clear the position of his party on the question of Njono.

He waited until Wednesday's 'Daily Worker', two days after Njono was sentenced, to finally protest.

But why has the British Communist Party been silent for so long about the killings in Indonesia and the role of the Party there: the actions of the late Party leader, Aidit—himself a victim of reaction—in currying favour with the almost schizophrenic Sukarno?

### UNITE WITH MOSLEMS!

And now, after the biggest bloodbath in the history of the communist movement, how can Gollan call for unity between nationalists, communists... and Moslems!—the very people who have been running amok beheading all those suspected of sympathising with the Party—in what he calls the 'cause of Indonesian national independence'?

Surely this is the same Stalinist mistake made by Aidit? With a fraternal gesture to Njono and what is left of the

(Continued on back page)

## MINERS' LOBBY SHOWS NEED FOR REAL FIGHT

By JACK GALE

**T**HE miners' lobby of parliament on February 17 has not shaken the government in its purpose—the closure of 150 pits in the next two years, involving 120,000 men, is to go ahead.

Just how calmly the Labour leaders took the lobby was made clear in 'The Guardian' report of February 18:

'The whole demonstration was processed so efficiently by the police and at the House of Commons by the Minister of Power that the emotional impact that might have been expected from miners marching on parliament to demand more pay and to protest against pit closures was largely missing. The police took the whole thing in their stride and... at the House the various contingents were fed smoothly through the lobby and committee rooms and by the time they found themselves outside on the pavement again, many seemed to feel that the government, too, was taking their grievances very much in its stride.'

A marked contrast with the January 26 lobby against anti-trade union laws which threw the Labour MPs into hopeless panic! But the fact is that the January 26 lobby was planned for the maximum effect, whereas the National Union of Mineworkers' leaders took great care to keep

their demonstration as quiet as possible. No call was issued to any pit to stop work.

### SELECTED DELEGATES

As a result only 1,000 carefully selected delegates took part in the march, whereas a real leadership could have called out the miners in their tens of thousands. A real campaign in the coalfields could have done this—but the alliance of right-wingers and Communist Party leaders in the NUM took care that there was no such campaign.

This is because these leaders are themselves unable to put up any struggle against pit closures. Just look at the record.

In 1961—32 pits closed involving 8,000 men; 1962—52 pits closed, 25,000 men; 1963—37 pits closed, 16,000 men; 1964—37 pits, 17,000 men; and now a further 150 pits involving 120,000 men.

While more and more pits close, the NUM leaders go on bleating about 'directing industry'.

At last week's lobby all the leadership's demands aimed at appealing to the government to ease the hardship of the men who will lose their jobs—at least

(Continued on back page)

## For a one-day strike and a lobby of Parliament

**T**HE Labour government of Harold Wilson and George Brown is going ahead with legislation against the trade unions. The publication of the White Paper shows that they mean business. If Labour wins the General Election, they intend to make it law, and all trade unionists who fight for wage increases can be heavily fined, and if unable to pay, they face imprisonment.

The rank and file of the labour movement can and must defeat the proposed legislation. Once it becomes law, under conditions where a Tory government can use it, then the employers will be able to do as they please so far as wages are concerned.

Those trade union leaders, such as George Woodcock, the general secretary of the TUC, who claim that the Bill is so vague it is almost innocuous, are deceiving their members.

The government White Paper is very clear—all those who fight for more wages other than that which is decided by the employers' government will be breaking the law.

Once the Bill becomes law, the procedure for collective bargaining between trade unions and the employers' organisations will be gone for good.

Every working-class man, woman and child will be affected by these far-reaching proposals. The standard of living is going to be forced down by law—something which has always been dreamed about by the Tory Party, but which they have never been strong enough to carry into practice by themselves.

Now it is being done by a Labour government under conditions where the working class is being deliberately mis-informed about what is going on. During the past four months when the contents of the White Paper were being discussed behind the scenes, several so-called 'left' MPs denied that there was going to be any such legislation.

They, together with the leaders of the Communist Party, organised a deliberate boycott of the very successful Lambeth Trades Council parliamentary lobby and demonstration, which was held on January 26.

Thus, months of valuable preparation time was lost because these people wanted to avoid an all-out effective struggle against the right wing.

The Socialist Labour League has always fought for such a struggle. We welcome the decision of the Communist Party to support a lobby of parliament on March 1. But this is by no means all that is required.

To halt the anti-trade union legislation is to organise a fight against the right-wing Labour government. Mere protests are not enough. The whole industrial strength of the working class must be mobilised in a way that will force the government to retreat and abandon the Bill.

Such an action has to be adequately prepared well in advance. The admission by circles close to the government that a General Election will be held early in March means that if Labour wins, it will proceed with its legislation against the trade unions soon after the Easter parliamentary recess, towards the end of April.

### 'Declare position'

During the immediate period before the election every Labour candidate must be asked to declare his or her position on the legislation.

This attack on the trade unions must be made an election issue. Local demonstrations and lobbies of prospective candidates must become a permanent feature of the campaign in all areas.

The Central Committee of the Socialist Labour League is convinced that the way to halt the legislation is through a national one-day strike which will bring tens of thousands of workers to parliament after the Easter recess. Make the voice of Labour heard and felt among Labour MPs in a way that will force them to return to original policies for which the Labour Party was founded, that is to defend the trade unions.

The Young Socialists are already well ahead with their plans for the campaign. Their sixth annual conference, which will be held at Morecambe, Lancashire, on April 2 and 3, is organising a special session to discuss the effects of this legislation and to draw up plans on how to defeat it. Leading adult shop stewards and trade unionists have already agreed to participate in the discussion.

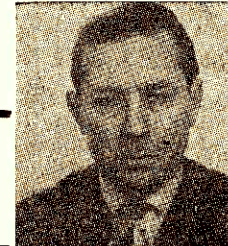
The Young Socialists conference can become the main arena for the organisation of effective opposition to the government's anti-trade union Bill.

We welcome the decision of all

those trade unions who have decided to stand firm against the Bill. We say, don't just protest, mobilise your members and fight back.

The Central Committee of the Socialist Labour League calls upon all trade unionists to stand firm and fight for a national one-day strike, a monster demonstration in London and a lobby of parliament.

## Cases freed from jail



FROM OUR SPANISH CORRESPONDENT

**J**OSE CASES ALFONSO, a Spanish militant, who was jailed by the Franco regime after the first trial against alleged members of the Workers' Trade Union Alliance (ASO), has been freed.

Cases was jailed for five years along with Francisco Calle (six years), and Mariano Pascual (three years). Only Calle is now in jail.

Cases has been restricted to the area of Valencia by the Franco authorities.

It was alleged at the trial in February 1964, that Cases, a printer, had been responsible for producing ASO leaflets and documents. An appeal by the three men in January 1965 was dismissed by the Supreme Court in Madrid.

Both Cases' parents were shot by the Franco regime.

## Thousands defy Franco police to honour Spanish poet

**W**HILE Soviet leaders were jailing the living representatives of a new literary revolt in the USSR, Franco was trying desperately to suppress the memory of one of Spain's leading poets—Antonio Machado Ruiz—who has been dead for 27 years.

Machado, who was a bitter opponent of fascism, died in exile on February 21, 1939, in the fishing village of Colliure, near Perpignan, France, where his body now lies.

### Newsletter Correspondent

On the 27th anniversary of his death, thousands of Spanish intellectuals, students and workers descended on the Andalusian town of Baeza, where Machado was born, to pay homage to the poet—and to demonstrate their mute defiance of the bloody Franco regime.

Police barred the way of the mourners and, when they tried to file past a monument to the poet,

## ARMY TAKE-OVER IN GHANA AND SYRIA

By MICHAEL BANDA

**E**ARLY Thursday morning the army and police in Ghana staged a coup in Accra while Osagyefo (The Redeemer) Nkrumah was in Peking, en route to Hanoi. All ministers have been sacked and the Convention People's Party, the ruling party in Ghana, has been dissolved.

Unlike the abortive coup in Nigeria, the coup in Ghana seems to be inspired by the more reactionary sections of the Ghanaian ruling class who have found Nkrumah's policy of playing to the public gallery in a time of severe crisis an embarrassment to its own desires for a strong government.

Moreover, Nkrumah's policy of so-called non-alignment and his support—purely verbal—of Pan-Africanism has antagonised U.S. imperialism which is casting a greedy eye on the bauxite, gold and diamonds of Ghana.

Recently the U.S. refused to deliver food shipments to Ghana because of Nkrumah's foreign policy and the International Monetary Fund demanded severe retrenchment as a pre-condition for any loans to restore Ghana's flagging economy. The fall in cocoa prices has driven Nkrumah closer to U.S. imperialism—but the U.S. seeks complete political and economic domination, not collaboration.

### No surprise

Nobody should be surprised therefore if the CIA is found to be the instigator of this coup.

With Nkrumah goes the myth of 'African Socialism' which was nothing more than a camouflage for the close collaboration between Ghana and world imperialism.

In Syria too a coup engineered by army officers of the ruling Ba'ath Party overthrew the three-year-old regime of Amin An Hafez. The coup was led by members of the Ba'ath who had recently been expelled from the party.

The founder of the Ba'ath Party and chief propagandist of Arab Unity, Michel Aflak, was also arrested by the rebel officers. Fighting is reported in Damascus and elsewhere.

### Economic crisis

Recently the government undertook a series of nationalizations because the economic crisis seriously undermined Syria's currency.

Political instability—eight coups in 17 years—has aggravated the crisis by deterring foreign investment. In all probability this coup will do little or nothing to alter the situation for the vast majority of workers and fellaheen.

they were baton charged. Twelve people were taken into custody and fined up to 25,000 pesetas each (approximately £150). Machado, together with Galdoes, Unamuno, Baroja, Valle-Inclan, and Azorin, became a leader in the school of social criticism known as the 'Generation of '98'. Their activities and writings between 1898 and 1914 left deep and indelible traces in the literary history of modern Spain.

# The Taff Vale Case

## and the Labour Party

**I**N the campaign for the independence of the trade unions from the capitalist state, the revolutionary movement has to struggle against those who, for the time being, express the needs of the capitalist class most ably—the leaders of the Labour Party.

The Labour Party, however, was itself born 60 years ago out of struggles against this self-same capitalist state.

Marxists are compelled to explain this contradiction. It is not sufficient to speak of the corruption or buying off of a leadership. We must lay bare the material causes, the class forces that underlie this qualitative transformation. Particular attention must be paid to the origins of the Labour Party.

It is often said that the Labour Party 'grew out of' the trade unions. This terminology does not correctly describe the real process and implies a gradual and peaceful evolution.

### Sharp struggle

In fact the movement for an independent working-class party required a sharp struggle against the established trade union leadership and their opportunist links with the employers' Liberal Party.

The outcome of this fight was largely determined by the intervention of the working class in big class actions which developed and the movement for an independent party of Labour far beyond the modest aspirations of its initiators.

The massive Liberal victory in the 1906 General Election was a sign not of the vitality of Liberalism, but a contradictory expression of the growing political strength of the working class.

Commenting on the Liberal landslide, Tory leader Balfour shrewdly observed: 'If I read the signs aright, what has occurred has nothing to do with any of the things we have been squabbling about over the last few years. Campbell-Bannerman is a mere cork dancing on a torrent which he cannot control and what is going on here is an echo of the same movement which has produced massacres in St. Petersburg, riots in Vienna and socialist processions in Berlin.'

Later attempts to contain this

electoral support of the working class sucked in one or two of the more opportunist trade unionists like John Burns, but only compromised the Liberals in the eyes of discriminating imperialists and pushed them closer towards the Tories.

The contradictions building up within the Liberal Party split it asunder.

Side by side with the policy of exporting capital, the employers were forced to halt the growth in real wages\* that had occurred in the last two decades of the 19th century.

(In that period, prices had fallen and workers' living standards had advanced appreciably, despite the increase in unemployment.)

### Assault on unions

They began a fierce drive to lower wages and speed up production, especially in the engineering industry. Above all they began an assault on the trade union movement which had gained strength from the organisation of the dockers and unskilled workers in the 1890s.

This employers' offensive exploded like a powder keg under the conciliatory sections of the trade union bureaucracy who upheld alliances with the Liberals as the best medium for influencing parliament.

The emerging labour bureaucracy, owing to its privileged position to imperialism, stumbled and groped its way towards an independent Labour Party. The ruling class reacted similarly towards this new development, now lashing out, now conceding. But the empirical methods of both these were identical.

Significantly, the crucial developments took place in the mines and railways. These industries with their antiquated and exhausted equipment, multiplicity of small firms, and duplication of routes, symbolised the accumulating disadvantages of Britain's early development.

This process was exemplified by the Taff Vale Railway Company which obtained 70 per cent of its revenues from coal.

The decline of Britain's coal industry marked by a series of coal strikes 1893-1898 seriously affected these revenues. Consequently, many railway companies cut costs and sacked workers.

The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants had now to seriously reconsider its position

\* 'How the Labour Party Began', Brian Pearce, a Socialist Labour League pamphlet.

towards the Liberal Party of the mine owners and railway directors.

MPs like Samuel Morley and P. McIver had played a leading role in the union in the past and all four general secretaries in the 19th century had a policy of lobbying the Liberal Party.

Even so, the pressuring of the Liberals had always been less satisfactory to rail union leaders than it was to leaders of miners and cotton spinners who lived in big concentrations and whose electoral strength was therefore a useful bargaining counter in the union leaders' dealings with Lib-Lab MPs.

As early as 1891, the ASRS had sought to get its general secretary as a direct representative in parliament.

In 1898, the annual general meeting of the ASRS called for representation to parliament by Richard Bell, the general secretary, 'independent of either political party'.

Bell, who was a radical liberal, was angry about this provision. So were Beatrice and Sidney Webb and the Fabians, those celebrated worshippers of the accomplished fact.

It upset their electoral agreements with the Liberals to secure the return of 'progressive' candidates.

When Bell approached the Liberals to find a seat, he was reprimanded by the executive committee of the ASRS who went on to pass a resolution, forwarded to the TUC Plymouth Congress in September 1899, proposing the establishment of a Labour Representation Committee and an election fund for independent Labour MPs.

### Fight begins

The proposal moved by J. Holmes of South Wales ASRS was passed narrowly amid jubilant scenes. Years of uphill struggle had brought the first success.

On February 27 and 28, 1900, the Labour Representation Committee met at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street. But the fight to establish the Labour Party was only beginning. Many union leaders remained aloof. Only one-third of the unions sent delegates.

The Taff Vale strike changed all this.

During the coal strike, dividends of the Taff Vale Railway Company dropped sharply. To reduce costs, the company sacked workers. At the same time the cost of living soared, due to the South African war.

Due to inept union leadership,



Richard Bell, rail union secretary during the case

The Taff Vale men were excluded from a new agreement covering South Wales railwaymen and at a mass meeting in Pontypridd, in July 1900, the men called for a strike for a 2s. a week increase, and re-instatement of a signalman.

Workers handed in strike notices en masse before the union executive committee had endorsed the decision. The strike took place from August 19 to 31. It was the most complete stoppage in railway history.

### Scabs thwarted

The executive committee made it official, but rebuked the workers for their action. Bell arrived in Wales on the morning it started determined to end it. But workers and management were adamant.

The company brought in scabs from William Collison's 'national free labour force', based in London. They evicted the railwaymen's families from their cottages.

Their attempts to break the strike were thwarted by the strikers. Fog signals were used to warn the pickets of train loads of scabs approaching and strikers greased the tracks so that the trains slid to a standstill and they could uncouple the trucks, which slid back down the tracks. The engines were then effectively immobilised.

The union leaders issued a leaflet to deter the scabs, but on August 30 they called the strike off to 'open negotiations'—on condition that scabs would be sacked and all legal proceedings

planned by the company would be dropped.

It was a sell-out. The following February the scabs were still working and the employers' offensive continued.

On September 5, 1900, Mr. Justice Farwell who had granted an interim injunction restricting picket rights said:

'Has the legislature authorised the creation of numerous bodies of men, capable of owning great wealth and acting by agents with absolutely no responsibility for the wrongs they do to other persons by the use of that wealth? I do not think so.'

The executive committee lodged an appeal and instructed the general secretary to get financial aid from the newly-created parliamentary committee of the TUC, and to warn all other unions of the dangers of this ruling.

### Damages claim

The appeal was upheld and Mr. Justice Farwell's decision reversed, but the following year an appeal to the Lords gave the decision to the company.

On December 13, 1901, a claim for damages was lodged by the company.

The case was heard in the King's Bench Division and the union lost. A cheque for £23,000 was handed over by the union for damages caused to the company by the Taff Vale strike. The total cost to the union was £42,000.

### READ

## How the Labour Party began

by BRIAN PEARCE

Price 6d.

Obtainable from

186a Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4

## Soviet Union implicated in Ben Barka case?

By JOHN CRAWFORD

**Y**ET another aspect of the Ben Barka murder is pointed out by a report in 'The Guardian' of February 17.

In this Patrick Keatley explains the interest of the Soviet authorities in the removal of the Moroccan opposition leader. (The possible connection with the Central Intelligence Agency of the USA has already been noted in The Newsletter.)

### Conference preparation

Ben Barka spent the last few months of his life preparing for the Havana Tri-continental Conference. He was chairman of the organising committee which met last September in Cairo and would probably have been secretary general of the full conference, if he had not been kidnapped on October 29 and murdered.

In the fierce struggle between the Soviet and Peking supporters for control of the conference, Ben Barka is known to have been a firm adherent of the Chinese line.

George Figon, the gunman who was a witness to the kidnapping and murder of Ben Barka was in Cairo at the time of the committee meeting in September.

Ben Barka's political supporters say that three attempts were made on his life at that time.

Relevant to these allegations is the report that the 11 pro-Chinese Communist Party members now on trial in Cairo were denounced to Nasser's police by Russian intelligence agents.

It is also noteworthy that at the Havana conference, hardly any mention was made of Ben Barka, despite the important part he had played in the preparatory work.

Instead, Castro spent his time attacking the Chinese and slandering 'Trotskyism'.

At the very least, Stalinist circles in Paris must have had some knowledge of the plot to abduct Ben Barka—and kept it to themselves.

### Examples

But they may well have been more actively involved. The history of Stalinism is itself full of examples of kidnapping and murder as methods of dealing with political opposition.

Thus the murder of Ben Barka spotlights the coincidence of the requirements of US imperialism and the actions of the Soviet bureaucracy today.

In this context, the damage done to de Gaulle, 'friend of Peking' and 'enemy of Washington', incidentally is seen to be secondary.

**D**URING the Korean war, the US military and political leaders were forced to make an agonizing re-appraisal of the prospects of the war and the insoluble strategic and logistical problems involved. Finally, their dilemma was succinctly summed up by General Omar Bradley, the chief of staff of the US armed forces. He said:

'We are fighting the wrong war, in the wrong time in the wrong place.'

Now, once again, US imperialism is in a dilemma over Vietnam war, but, unlike 1953, it is a dilemma of such greater magnitude and with far grimmer prospects.

### JOHNSON'S DILEMMA

Stated simply Johnson's dilemma is this: either to hurl everything at the Vietcong, escalate to the point of no return and risk a major nuclear war with China, or confine the war to South Vietnam and gradually 'pacify' the country.

In fact his present policy is a diagonal drawn between these two prospects.

One group of big businessmen would like the US to bomb Vietnam back to the Stone Age. This is Goldwater's strategy, and is supported by certain sections of the top brass in the Pentagon.

At the other end of the spectrum, ex-General James Gavin, one-time chief strategist for Kennedy, and ex-diplomat George Kennan, chief exponent of the 'containment strategy', argue in favour of a 'restrained and flexible response' to the Vietcong.

### GAVIN'S TESTIMONY

Testifying to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last week, Gavin argued against escalation of the war:

'My concern for Vietnam first became aroused when I found us cutting back on our global commitments in the realm of economics, for I began to suspect that the escalation in south-east Asia would begin to hurt our strategy position....'

## Cost of Vietnam war worries U.S. leaders

By MICHAEL BANDA

'If I were a businessman and looking at a potential market and found such a miscalculation, I would have to do something about it. I would not long survive....'

Commenting on the astronomical cost of the war, he continued:

'I was startled (sic) to find in the budget request figures for fiscal year 1967 that we are going into 10.5 billion dollars.... Is Vietnam at this point worth this investment of our national resources...? Are we not becoming too mesmerized with this...?'

Kennan went even further and advocated a phased withdrawal on the grounds of expediency:

'I think it should be our government's aim to liquidate this involvement just as soon as this can be done.... And to attempt to crush North Vietnamese strength... would certainly... have the effect of... involving us in a military conflict with Communist China in one of the most unfavourable theatres of hostility that we could possibly choose.'

### GNAWING FEAR

As Kennan indicates, what worries considerable sections of the American ruling class is not any humanitarian regard for the thousands of Vietnamese who are being maimed, burned, killed or rendered homeless by US imperialism.

On the contrary, what pushes them into conflict with their buddy Johnson is a gnawing fear that the economic burdens of the war will not bring victory but instead will radicalise millions of American voters into voting against both parties.

Kennan in a less guarded

moment, admitted as much when he said:

'If we had been able to do better in Vietnam, I would have been delighted....' (sic).

But Kennan and a host of others know that this is not so. Johnson in his State of the Union message made plain his determination to continue this genocidal war and make the American workers pay for it. He has allocated 5,800 million dollars this year and intends to ask for more appropriations as the war escalates.

### DRAFT BOOSTED

He has boosted the monthly draft calls to 80,000—the highest since the Korean war. But even this is insufficient and so US garrisons in Europe are to be depleted and their troops assigned to Vietnam.

An unprecedented expansion of naval and air bases in South Vietnam and Thailand has been started. And more ominous still are the undisclosed plans for invading Laos.

All this, of course, must be paid for by the American workers whose tax burden is the highest even today: 32 per cent of the individual income.

Johnson's glib talk of the 'Great Society' and his promise of a 1.8 million dollar deficit for 1966-1967 are about as real as a seven-dollar bill.

In fact purchasing power of the workers is falling in direct proportion to the escalation of the war, and the deficit is growing like a Texas pumpkin.

Says 'Newsweek':

'The Vietnamese war is easily the most expensive "small" war that the US has ever fought.'

'Even the Pentagon computers can't pinpoint a dollar figure, but financial experts estimate that the direct cost of the war will come to five billion dollars in fiscal 1966, and 10 billion dollars in fiscal 1967.'

'If military pay and indirect costs are counted though, some figure the cost this year will approach 15 billion dollars.'

'On that basis, the total cost of the US involvement in Vietnam has already surpassed the expense of the four-year Korean war, which the Pentagon officially estimates cost 18 billion dollars.'

[World War Two cost 387 billion dollars.]

### \$52,000 PER ENEMY

'Moreover, the war in Vietnam is by far the costliest in price per enemy soldier killed. That figure, assuming the current rate of 4,000 Vietcong fatalities a month, is 52,000 dollars.'

What 'Newsweek' omitted to state is that it is not only the costliest, but the bloodiest and dirtiest war ever waged by an imperialist power against a colonial people.

Nevertheless millions of American workers and students are beginning to recognise the reactionary character of the war and millions more are beginning for the first time to see the connection between the crippling burdens of taxation and high prices and the spurious promises of Johnson.

As another president of the United States once remarked: 'You can't fool all the people all of the time.'

### LETTER

## The Sinyavsky and Daniel trial

I WONDER what are 'The Newsletter's grounds, in its note on the writers' trial in Moscow, for stating that Sinyavsky and Daniel 'were undoubtedly right-wing critics of the Soviet regime'?

Has your contributor read 'The Trial Begins' by 'Abram Tertz', which Sinyavsky was accused of writing, and appears not to have been denied?

The character in this book obviously most admired by the author is a boy who tries to organise an underground group on the basis of a programme explicitly described, with some justification, as Trotskyist.

The only character who appears to have 'right-wing' views is a teacher, depicted as a selfish and cowardly informer, who turns the oppositionists into the GPU to save his skin.

Has your contributor perhaps taken the word of the Stalinist prosecutors at its face value? Of course, they would depict any left critics as right wing—indeed the rightist Valeri Tarsis is released to prove it.

Unless you have some non-Stalinist evidence to prove it, perhaps you should withdraw your characterisation of Sinyavsky and Daniel as right-wingers.

If Gollan hopes (vainly) to make himself acceptable to the Labour Party right, he has to appear to condemn all literary trials, be the victims left or right opponents.

A. Young, Ilford

● THE NEWSLETTER characterised Sinyavsky and Daniel as being 'right-wing critics' of the Soviet regime because of the support which they received from the undoubted rightist Valeri Tarsis during the trial.

At his press conferences in London during the days when the trial was in progress he described them as people fighting for the same things as himself.

However, on reflection, we share the opinion of Comrade A. Young that our description of Daniel and Sinyavsky was wrong.

His information about their previous writings is correct and it appears that the background of the trial reflects a major turn of the Soviet bureaucracy who prosecuted the two writers to the right.

There is little doubt in our mind that Gollan, the secretary of the British Communist Party, protested about their sentence because he is currying favour with the Labour Party right wing. Marxists everywhere must demand that he now makes his position clear on the Moscow trials.

We are grateful to A. Young for his timely correction.

### READ

#### No Laws Against Trade Unions

by G. Healy Price 3d

This should be read with: A Socialist Policy for the Crisis

Price 3d

They can be ordered together for 8d (including postage) from: The Socialist Labour League, 186a Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4

# What is behind

by CLIFF SLAUGHTER

## Castro's



## slanders?

**F**OR a number of years, Castro's every word has been reprinted, without criticism, by many 'Marxists', and especially by the supporters of the 'United Secretariat' in Paris and the Socialist Workers' Party in the USA, both misleadingly calling themselves 'Trotskyist'.

These groups, after hailing Castro as a 'natural Marxist' and an obvious successor to Lenin and Trotsky, now find themselves less enthusiastic about republishing the last part of Fidel Castro's speech at the Havana Tri-Continental Conference, translated in this issue of the Newsletter.

Castro, hailed by these so-called Trotskyists as a great fighter against bureaucracy and someone who insisted on 'the truth', has now viciously attacked Trotskyism. His words, condemning Trotskyists as 'agents of imperialism', are taken directly from the speeches of Joseph Stalin in 1937 to justify the Moscow trials and subsequent liquidation of opposition throughout the USSR.

Such is the fate of revisionists, of those who abandon Marxist method for impressions and enthusiasm for surface events, and who abandoned the construction of independent working class parties for the worship of Castro and 'Castroism'.

The Newsletter, February 5, 'Castro Slanders Trotskyism', February 12, 'Whither Castro', and February 19, 'Statement of the International Committee' has presented a Marxist analysis of Castro's service to the Stalinist bureaucracy, and of the pathetic response of Joseph Hansen and the 'United Secretariat'. They suggest that 'Fidel' may have been 'irritated by the statements of the ultra-left Posadas tendency', itself a breakaway from the revisionists, or that Castro attacked

Trotskyism in order to deceive the Soviet bureaucracy into thinking he was an anti-Trotskyist.

Since 1961, the Socialist Labour League and the International Committee have continuously exposed the departure from the Marxist method of these revisionists. They are no longer able to approach political developments from the point of view of the international class struggle. Instead, they present 'interpretations' of the motives of individuals, and impressions of 'how things are going' in different parts of the world.

Castro's speech, when seen in full, gives us the opportunity to deepen our understanding of what he really represents and of the urgency of our own tasks, completing the fight against revisionism in practice as well as in theory.

When Castro makes his attack on Trotskyism, followed only two weeks later by his public attack on China, he does so as part of a world development in Stalinism.

The recent arrest of Trotskyists and left oppositionists in Poland and the repressions now reported in Hungary, following militant actions by the factory workers, together with the ruthless campaign of the Russian Communist Party to isolate the Chinese Revolution, are similar indicators of this fundamental rightward turn of Stalinism.

### STALINISM TURNS RIGHTWARDS

Inside the advanced capitalist countries, the Stalinist parties have launched a campaign of 'Popular Front' or 'left unity' proposals which amount to the virtual liquidation of the Communist Parties and are accompanied by attacks on Trotskyism.

In Vietnam, the Russian Communist Party leaders continue to press for a deal with the United States imperialists. Kossygin does his best, at Tashkent, to resolve the difference between the ruling classes in India and Pakistan, shoring them up against the social and political tensions which threaten to blow sky high the insecure base of United States imperialism in Asia.

All over the colonial and semi-colonial world, from India and Indonesia to Algeria, Nigeria and Latin America, social and political conflict is rapidly intensifying, posing afresh the question of the leadership and programme of the anti-imperialist struggle.

Behind all this is the deepening crisis of imperialism, made all the more severe by the crisis of the Stalinist bureaucracy, upon whose betrayals of working class leaderships imperialism has been dependent in every serious crisis since 1926.

This analysis of the linked crises of imperialism and of the Stalinist bureaucracy is the basis of the 1966 Conference of the International Committee of

the Fourth International, upon which the reconstruction of the Fourth International will be carried out.

In the 'underdeveloped' countries, the consequences of this crisis are especially severe. Faced by their 'liquidity crisis', the advanced metropolitan countries have tried to stave off their difficulties by increasing the exploitation of the backward countries.

The world market prices of the products of these countries fall farther and farther behind those of the products of the industrial countries.

Consequently, it becomes impossible for the 'left nationalist' leaders, like Sukarno, Ben Bella, Castro and others, to maintain 'national fronts' of workers, peasants and capitalists.

In countries where direct imperialist agents remain in power (as in Latin America) the programme of a bloc with the national capitalists gets less and less 'realistic' and tendencies appear which advocate a socialist programme behind working class leadership.

The Stalinist bureaucracy faces a similar problem 'at home'. The contradictions of the economy of Russia, Eastern Europe and China can be resolved only by their industry and agriculture being integrated with the resources and advanced means of production of the imperialist countries. Having betrayed the international proletarian revolution which alone can accomplish this historically necessary task, the Stalinist bureaucrats have adopted the strategy of co-operation with imperialism.

### WHAT THE TURN MEANS

But the resurgence of the workers' own struggle in Poland, Hungary and the 'Soviet bloc', threatens them from one side, while the revolutionary struggles of the workers against imperialism threatens the bosses to whom they make their approaches.

Thus international Stalinism is called upon once again to carry out its role as the principal counter-revolutionary force, the grave digger of the revolution on the international scene.

The approach towards a 'rehabilitation' of Stalin and the warning given to the Soviet intelligentsia by the writers' trial in Moscow are part of the same development as the arrests in Poland and Hungary.

Everywhere it is a question above all of striking blows against the development of alternative leadership which can provide a programme of struggle for workers' power in the conditions of deepening crisis.

Fidel Castro and the Tri-Continental Conference were an instrument of this international campaign. The delegations to that Conference were carefully hand-picked to exclude those suspected of 'Trotskyism'.

An impression was created of the Communist Parties of Latin America and elsewhere having been converted to the prospect of 'armed struggle'. But this was only a cover for the real business of the Conference, to restrain the national liberation struggles within the framework of peaceful co-existence.

Castro's speech against Trotskyism was in fact not a last-minute afterthought, but the surest indication of the actual politics of the Conference and of Castro himself.

### REVISIONISM AND CASTROISM

Hansen and his friends of the United Secretariat have interpreted the Havana Conference, apart from the mysterious blurb of Castro's anti-Trotskyist outburst, as an important, even 'historic' move to the left. They accept the demagogic talk of 'armed rebellion', as a sign that 'Castroism', and the 'genuinely revolutionary trend', has defeated the 'peaceful roads' line of the Stalinist parties.

As we have seen, however, the truth is the exact opposite! Castro has carried out a special assignment in preparing international repressions against the real revolutionary programme and leadership, in line with the needs of Stalinism. The talk of armed rebellion is the cover for this move.

To accept it as the reality is to reveal the unbelievable depths to which revisionism has sunk. Not only were the revisionists unable to defend Posadas' supporters in Havana, or later Ché Guevara, they remain blind to the Stalinist threat to themselves and to Trotskyism.

This is only the inevitable consequence of their attitude to Castro and to the international revolutionary struggle over years. Their journals have been spattered with fulsome praise of Castro for years. For example, Joseph Hansen wrote in 'World

**Outlook' for May 8, 1964: 'The Cuban Revolution is headed by independent figures who have displayed political talent and a moral stature not matched since the days of the Bolsheviks.'**

Hansen, who now points out that Castro 'knows better' than to tell vicious lies about Trotskyism, apparently feels no responsibility to answer for his commendation of Castro's 'moral stature', not to mention his 'independence'. When The Newsletter warned consistently of Castro's actual role, Hansen referred to our 'thickheadedness', and insisted that our 'primary concern was simply to preserve certain ultra-left dogmas'.

But Hansen's singing of the praises of Castro's political independence in May 1964 did not have to await the Havana Conference in order to be exposed. Hansen himself had to comment in January 1964, i.e., five months before his words of adulation, on the sugar agreement and declaration published after Castro's visit to Moscow.

Instead of warning his readers of the dangers to the Cuban and Latin American revolutions of Castro's agreement with Khrushchev, Hansen, performed the most exquisite political acrobatics.

### HANSEN COVERS UP

Thus, although Castro signed a joint statement condemning 'factional and sectarian activities in the ranks of the Communist and workers' parties and in the international Communist movement', Hansen, far from recognising a trend which set course for the Havana anti-Trotskyist speech, wrote:

'There are, nevertheless, strong indications that Castro did not make all the concessions that Khrushchev would have liked to have.'

In addition, there is striking restraint in relation to the Chinese. In none of these statements does the gross, open condemnation of the Chinese appear which Khrushchev has demanded up to now from those who have capitulated to his pressure.'

**L**ET us see, first of all, who have been the leading spokesmen of the imperialist campaign of lies and intrigue against Cuba over the case of Comrade Guevara. There are, in particular, certain elements which have constantly been used over the last few decades to attack the revolutionary movement. Just a moment, I want to take one particularly interesting fact, from a whole lot of material.

Yes here it is (laughter and applause). A cable from the UPI of December 6, 1965, saying: 'Ernesto Guevara was assassinated by Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro (shouts) on the orders of the USSR (shouts)—declared Felipe Albaguante, head of the Mexican Trotskyists, in a statement to "El Universal".' He makes out that Ché was liquidated for insisting that Cuba should support the Chinese line (shouts). This naturally reached a pitch in a campaign unleashed simultaneously by the Trotskyists in all countries.

Thus on October 22, in the weekly 'Marcha', an article by the well-known Trotskyist theoretician Adolfo Gilly was published. He asserted that Ché left Cuba due to differences with Fidel over the Sino-Soviet dispute and that Ché was unable to carry his point of view in the leadership.

He says that the Cuban leadership is divided between the conservative wing, comprising the old leaders of the PSP and the supporters of Ché, and Fidel and his group, who take an intermediary position of centrist and conciliatory positions.

He says that Ché left Cuba because he was unable to express himself freely and that Fidel was afraid to face the masses and explain the Ché affair.

The same Trotskyist 'theoretician' on October 31, 1965, as a reporter of 'Nuevo Mundo', an Italian periodical, wrote an article in which he described the Cuban leadership as pro-Soviet, and he accused Fidel of having given no political explanation to the people about what had happened to Ché.

He says that Commander Guevara was defeated by the PSP and the Castroite group; he criticises Ché for not going to the masses to fight for his line. He concludes by saying that the Cuban state, paralysed by its political position, did not support the Dominican Revolution. I will deal with this last point more extensively later.

The October 1965 issue of the Spanish Trotskyist journal, 'La Batalla', declared that the mystery surrounding the Guevara affair

# Excerpt from Castro's speech to the Tri-Continental Conference

should be cleared up. It says that friends of Ché suspect that the letter produced by Castro is a forgery and it wonders whether the Cuban leadership has begun to submit to the Kremlin bureaucracy.

**A**T about the same time, the official organ of the Argentine Trotskyist paper published an article in which it was asserted that Ché was either dead or imprisoned in Cuba.

It says that 'he fought with Fidel Castro over the functioning of the trade unions and the organisation of the militia'.

It added that Ché opposed the introduction into the CC of Castro's protégés, especially the army officers, who were followers of the Moscow right wing.

But the filthiest, crudest and most indecent piece of writing is one by the leader of the Latin American Political Bureau of the Fourth International in the Italian journal 'Lucha Operaria'. I am only going to read three paragraphs of this very long article. It begins:

'One aspect of the aggravation of the international crisis of the bureaucracy—the expulsion of Guevara. Guevara has been expelled now and not eight months ago. These eight months of discussion were not passed drinking coffee; the participants fought bitterly and may be there were deaths: may be the discussion was carried on by gunfire. We cannot say whether they have killed Guevara or not, but we have the right to suspect they have. Why does Guevara not appear? They have not shown him in Havana because the fear of the consequences, the reaction of the people. But by hiding him they produced the same effect; the people ask why Guevara is not to be seen. There has been no political accusation; instead there are political eulogies of him. Why then was Guevara not present? Why has he not spoken? How is it that one of the founders of the Cuban workers' state, who until a little time ago was touring the world in the name of the workers'

Translated from 'El Mundo', a Mexican newspaper

state, suddenly announces: I am tired of the Cuban revolution. I am going away to make a revolution somewhere else? On the other hand they do not say where he went and he does not appear. If there is no split, why does he not appear? The whole Cuban people understand that there has been a big struggle and that this struggle is far from finished.

'Guevara was not on his own, neither is he on his own now. They take these measures against Guevara because there is a big tendency, a very big tendency, which supports him. And more than an enormous tendency, there is a deep concern among the people.'

'A little time ago the Cuban government issued a rather severe decree: all weapons had to be returned to the state. At that time the question was a little confused, now it is clear what the aim of this decree was. It was directed against Guevara's tendency. They feared an uprising.'

**A**NOTHER paragraph: 'Why have they moved to silence Guevara? The Fourth International must lead a public campaign with the line of calling for the appearance of Guevara, the right of Guevara to defend himself and discuss, to make an appeal to the masses for no confidence in the measures taken by the Cuban government because these are bureaucratic measures and perhaps even criminal measures.'

'They eliminated Guevara in order to silence his struggle, they acted to silence Guevara. They did this because, although his position was not logical from the revolutionary point of view, he was tending to come closer to the position of the revolutionary tendency.'

Further on he says: 'This demonstrates, not the strength

of Guevara, or of a Guevarist group in Cuba, but the ripeness of the conditions in the rest of the workers' states: that in a brief time these positions mature. The bureaucracy has no concern with truth in carrying out these manoeuvres and measures.'

'For the bureaucracy the elimination of Guevara is an attempt to liquidate the base of a possible regroupment of revolutionary tendencies who continue to spread the world revolution. This is the real reason for the liquidation of Guevara, not just because of the danger he represents in Cuba, but in the whole of the Latin American revolution.'

'Next to Cuba is Guatemala with the programme of the socialist revolution and, despite the power and the reasonings of the great leader Fidel Castro, he has not been able to prevent the November 13 Movement becoming a revolutionary-socialist movement which fights directly for socialism.'

**I**T is definitely not by chance that this gentleman, leader of the Fourth International, mentions here proudly the example of Guatemala and the November 13 Movement; because precisely in relation to this movement has Yankee imperialism used one of its most subtle tactics in order to liquidate a revolutionary movement, a tactic which consisted of infiltrating into the movement agents of the Fourth International who—because of the ignorance, the political ignorance, of the main leader of the movement (Yon Sosa)—got the movement to adopt nothing less than that discredited thing, that anti-historical thing, that fraudulent thing emanating from elements notoriously in

the service of Yankee imperialism, the programme of the Fourth International.

How did this happen? Yon Sosa was without any doubt a patriotic leader. He headed the movement of a group of army officers—in this grouping the mercenaries who afterwards invaded Giron took part without any doubts—and through the intermediary of an individual, a businessman, placed in charge of the political side of the movement, the Fourth International arranged it so that the leader (Yon Sosa), ignorant as he was of politics and of the history of revolutionary thought, permitted this agent of Trotskyism—which for all of us is without the slightest doubt an agent of imperialism—to edit a journal which copied word for word the programme of the Fourth International. The Fourth International has committed a veritable crime against the revolutionary movement by isolating it from the people and from the masses, by contaminating it with stupidities, in bringing upon it the discredit connected with the repugnant and nauseating thing which Trotskyism represents in the political world today. (Applause.) Because if, at a certain period, Trotskyism represented a position, certainly a wrong position, but all the same a position coming into the domain of political ideas, Trotskyism later became a vulgar instrument of imperialism and reaction.

The method of thinking of these gentlemen is such, for example, that on the question of South Vietnam, where a broad revolutionary front unites the immense majority of the population and closely unites district sections of the population around the liberation movement in the fight against imperialism, the Trotskyists find this absurd and counter-revolutionary. These gentlemen have the audacity, the insolent audacity, faced with the facts and realities of history and of the revolutionary movement, to express themselves in this way. Fortunately, the revolutionary

movement in Guatemala was saved. It was saved thanks to the clear vision of one of the officers who had formed the revolutionary movement with Sosa. He understood this idiosyncrasy and stupidity and broke with the November 13 Movement along with other progressives and revolutionaries and organised the Rebel Armed Forces of Guatemala. (Applause.) And this young officer who had such a clear understanding of the situation is the representative of the Guatemalan revolutionary movement at this conference, Commander Turcios (prolonged applause).

There is no doubt that it is only in the interests of reaction and of imperialism to discredit the Cuban revolution, to destroy the confidence of revolutionary movements in the Cuban revolution, to destroy the confidence of the peoples of Latin America in the Cuban revolution, to destroy their faith.

And to do this job, they have not hesitated to use the filthiest and most indecent weapons.

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And finally:

'One may best describe Fidel as the heartbeat of the revolution. Fidel commands more popular affection and trust than any other political figure today.'

Thus did the spokesman of revisionism, to the very last minute and even beyond, in Hansen's and Pierre Frank's pleas to Castro to correct his error (Pablo himself makes a similar appeal), prepare their followers for Castro's open counter-revolutionary attacks on Trotskyism.

Castro's evolution is by no means finished. But time is running out for those in the ranks of the revisionists who do not learn quickly to reject the whole course of the United Secretariat.

We are confident that many of them, especially in the ranks of the SWP, will take this opportunity of returning to the genuinely revolutionary road of reconstruction of the Fourth International.

There surely is now not the

slightest doubt that that decision, taken in the knowledge that Canadian Trotskyists shared the organising of the trip, was a prelude to the Havana outburst of January 1966.

And yet one of these Canadian students, writing on the basis of his 1964 visit, before the ban, committed himself to print in the Canadian 'Young Socialist Forum' identified with 'Workers Vanguard' and the American 'Militant' supporters of the politics of the United Secretariat, in the following sickening terms, as late as the January-February 1966 issue:

'By channelling the best, the most idealistic, the most hard-working rank and file into the party, a cadre will be built which, by pooling its experiences, and making its decisions democratically, can safeguard the forward movement of the revolution.'

Castro's move against Escalante, an old-guard Stalinist, is written up thus:

'The effect of Fidel's speech rang through the island like thunder; it is said (!) that people came out in the streets and danced. Anibal Escalante, the party secretary, and several others were instantly dismissed, the party was thoroughly reorganised and new elections were held.'

'Fidel's role in the battle against bureaucratism has been a ruthless one.'

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### COMMANDER TURCIOS

**C**has the merit of not only being one of the standard-bearers of the armed struggle for the liberation of his oppressed people, but also the merit of having saved the Guatemalan revolutionary movement from one of the most subtle and perfidious stratagems of Yankee imperialism. He raised the revolutionary banner of Guatemala and its anti-imperialist movement, seizing it from the filthy hands of the mercenaries in the service of Yankee imperialism.

And we hope that Yon Sosa, whose patriotic intent at the beginning of the struggle, and whose reputation as an honest man was in no doubt—even though we have major reservations about his ability as a revolutionary leader—will not delay in breaking from these elements and come over to unite with the revolutionary movement of Guatemala, this time under a different leadership, under a different guide who had shown at such times as this, the clarity and true attitude of a revolutionary leader. (Applause.)

The Trotskyist position is exactly the same as that adopted by the newspapers and publicity agencies of Yankee imperialism in relation to the case of comrade Guevara, the same as the whole

US imperialist press, its telegraph agencies, the counter-revolutionary Cuban press, the bourgeois press throughout the whole continent and in the rest of the world.

In other words, in this campaign of lies and intrigue against the Cuba revolution in relation to the case of comrade Guevara, the Trotskyists joined precisely with all the reactionary imperialist and bourgeois layers, with all the liars and plotters against the Cuban revolution.

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And to do this job, they have not hesitated to use the filthiest and most indecent weapons.

**T**HE same Mr. Gilly, who, from time to time poses among other North American intellectuals in the American 'Monthly Review', had the audacity to write the following paragraph about the Santo Domingo crisis, which is well worth analysing.

'A final point of the crisis created by the Dominican revolution was that the Cuban workers' state remained paralysed by its own policy and did not openly support the revolution while at the same time there was tremendous pressure within Cuba for the line of active support...'

This gentleman has the dishonesty to accuse the Cuban revolution of failing to give active support to the Dominican revolution. And while the imperialists condemn Cuba and use it as a pretext for intervention; that they say leftist and communist elements trained in Cuba were at the head of the uprising; that the revolution was not an internal matter, but created by outside intervention; while the imperialists say this, this gentleman accuses the revolution of not having given active support.

What is meant by active support? It is perhaps that in Cuba, whose resources and weapons are well known, could and should prevent the landing of North American troops in Santo Domingo. Cuba possesses arms in order to defend herself. They are defensive arms, which are infinitely inferior to those of the imperialists. . . .

# LIVERPOOL TRADES COUNCIL

# BACKS RENT FIGHT



By Reg Perry

**D**ELEGATES to last week's meeting of the Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party dealt a heavy blow against the right-wing Labour councillors who have voted to increase rents of council houses by amounts of up to 5s by voting for definite action against the rises.

They also halted the retreat among the centrists on the council who, although opposing the increases, have failed to organise a fight against them.

The trades council's decisions to oppose the increases at two previous meetings had been ignored by the majority of Labour councillors, and by the executive committee of the Trades Council.

The committee had also refused to implement the decision of its January meeting to call meetings of tenants to oppose the increases.

Although 23 Labour councillors broke the whip at the council meeting and opposed the rent rises, they had failed during the past few weeks to organise tenants or to join with those tenants' committees which have already been set up (see last week's Newsletter).

At one of the largest meetings for some time, delegates at the trades council voted overwhelmingly to support a resolution from the AUBTW No. 3 branch which called for the election of a special committee from the delegates to continue the fight which the executive committee was refusing to lead.

### Committee

As a result, the committee elected includes some of the councillors who have opposed the increases, as well as delegates from the trade unions.

The trades council meeting also opposed the decision of the Labour group which had called on Alderman Hugh Dalton to resign his position as chairman of the housing committee. (He was one of those who voted against the increases.)

What was significant about the discussion was the refusal of delegates to be frightened by right-wing charges that such a campaign would endanger the Labour government and the Labour Party in the locality, particularly at the municipal elections.

One speaker was warmly supported when he said that it was Wilson, Brown, Callaghan and the Labour government who were damaging the Labour Party and attacking the working class, and it was the right-wing Labour councillors who had voted to increase the rents and rates of working families who would pave the way for Tory successes at the local elections.

The resolution called for the campaign to be directed to make the government suspend all interest payments to the financiers and moneylenders.

### Resignation

On the day following the meeting, the president of the trades council, Alderman Brian Crookes, publicly resigned.

In a statement to the local papers, he said he found himself in disagreement with the trades council's decisions in recent months and he therefore had no alternative but to resign.

The 'Liverpool Daily Post' in an editorial, praised him for this 'honourable decision'.

Only a few years ago, Crookes was writing articles on rents which said local councils faced with problems of balancing their housing accounts should go into debt rather than impose the burdens on tenants.

He is now one of the majority on the Labour Council which has voted increased rents of up to 15s and rate increases of 2s 4d. (It was reported at the trades council that some rents have in fact gone up by over £1 2s.)

The decision of the trades council now poses seriously the responsibility of organising a real force among tenants in a fight to get the increases withdrawn.

Already in the factories and building sites, which came out in support of the January 26 lobby

against anti-trade union legislation, there is a feeling for industrial action to strengthen the tenants' fight.

Certainly the sop offered by Wilson last weekend to subsidise councils like Liverpool with big slum clearance problems should fool no one. The 'Liverpool Daily Post' claims that this subsidy will amount to only 14d on the rates.

The trades council should fight this to the end and unite with other trades councils who are fighting on similar lines.

## MINERS

From page 1

60,000 of whom will be unable to find alternative work in the mines within travelling distance of their present homes.

At a delegate conference last week the NUM leaders also urged the government to ensure that dual-fired electricity generating stations use more coal and less oil; to phase the gas industry's reduced demand for coal over a longer period; to maintain a protective tax on fuel oil; and to press local authorities and government departments to extend their preference for solid fuel.

These petty-fogging appeals cut no ice with Minister of Power Fred Lee, who blandly assured the lobbyists that there was no need for dependency in the mining districts!

The only policy that can safeguard the miners today is the demand that there be no pit closures without the agreement of committees of miners, and that where closures are necessary for genuine reasons, all displaced men must be guaranteed suitable alternative work without loss of pay.

All the books of the industry must be open to inspection by miners and experts nominated by them.

### NATIONALIZATION

A full programme of nationalization, not only of the coal distribution industry, but of all industries using coal and connected with mining in any way.

This must go together with a real fight for decent wages in the industry.

The Coal Board has rejected the present wage claim out of hand, confident that they need fear nothing from a leadership which, in 1964, led a campaign against fighting for the full 15s claim for day-wage men.

The ban on overtime now called for by the NUM leaders is another attempt to hold back the struggle within safe limits as it would take some time before such a ban caused any serious disruption.

The crux of the matter is that the latest developments in productive techniques, plus the perilous position of British capitalism, demand a concentration of production in a small number of highly profitable pits. This means an inevitable attack on the miners.

### INCAPABLE

Leaders whose political outlook ties them to capitalism—as is the case with both the reformist right wingers and the Communist Party officials who believe in peaceful co-existence with capitalism and parliamentary roads to socialism—are incapable of giving leadership in such conditions.

The struggle of the miners therefore can be successful only as part of a struggle for a new leadership. For this they must overcome all the efforts of their leadership to limit their demonstrations and to keep them separate from other workers.

It is urgent that more and more miners take part in the campaign against anti-trade-union legislation and join the struggle for socialist policies waged by the Socialist Labour League and the Young Socialists.

The local branch of the NUM must give support to these workers and see that their demands are carried out.

## Possible rent strike in Wallasey

By Newsletter Reporter

**O**NE hundred and fifty council tenants from the Leasowe estate, Wallasey, near Birkenhead, crowded into a meeting room on Thursday (February 17). Dozens of tenants were left outside unable to get into the room.

The Tory council of Wallasey is proposing to increase rents by 32 per cent on April 4. Angry tenants spoke against the increase. A tenants' committee of 12 people was elected and 20 volunteers came forward to distribute leaflets and publicise the next meeting to be held on Wednesday (February 23) in a bigger hall.

At the Council meeting where the increase was discussed, one Labour councillor declared: 'The Labour Party is not dead set against any increase at all, but it should be reasonable.'

### 'Play hell'

However, another councillor said: 'Tenants are going to come to the town hall and play hell. All members on this side of the house will encourage them. They may even take extra-constitutional steps to get their just rights.'

The Labour councillors who want to support such 'extra-constitutional' steps will have their chance. The next meeting of Wallasey tenants is to discuss a proposal that the tenants refuse to pay the increase. This proposal was widely supported at the last meeting.

The tenants' movement in Wallasey was initiated by two of the tenants with the assistance of the Young Socialists who distributed leaflets and toured the estate with a loudspeaker van.

## Lessons at Rootes Pressings

# Speed-up and union law the same fight

By Bob Shaw

**I**N protest against the increase in production schedules, 160 track workers struck work last week at Pressed Steel, Linwood, Scotland, which was recently acquired by the Rootes Company.

The management agreed that the schedules of car body production had been increased for this section from 15 to 18 per hour but claimed that more men were allocated to the section. The men claim that the track is never fully manned and that they are being forced to turn out the increased production with the same number of men.

The 160 men returned to work under a two-day standstill agreement to be followed by consultation and work study.

### COMMISSION EVIDENCE

Lord Rootes is one employer who believes in fining unofficial strikers. Published in the memorandum of evidence given to the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations is a statement by him that the employers 'favoured a system which provides for a deduction from wages for an unofficial stoppage'.

When questioned by Lord Donovan, the chairman of the commission, who asked: 'If the employers could summons employees and take them before a court, would you be willing to do that?', Lord Rootes said 'I think we would, sir'.

If Lord Rootes had his way, then the 160 men who struck work over the production speed-up, would be summonsed before a court and fined.

He knows that Wilson is preparing such a law to aid the employers and attack the trade unions so he feels confident in challenging car workers in this fashion.

### TAKE UP CHALLENGE

The shop stewards at Rootes and Rootes Pressings, the new name for the Pressed Steel Linwood factory, should take up the challenge and lead the campaign in the area against Wilson's anti-trade union legislation.

The Shop Stewards' Committee at Rootes Pressings passed a resolution giving support to the January 26 lobby of parliament called by the Lambeth Trades Council, which was a powerful

## Union support for Northolt tenants

Newsletter Correspondent

**A**LARGE increase in council house rents in Ealing Borough, which covers Northolt, Southall, Acton, Ealing and Greenford, has provoked much hostility inside some of the tenants' associations in the area.

This rise is up to £2, including a lodger's rent of £1 for every person over the age of 15.

The Labour-controlled council said it had to raise the rents to re-pay loans at high interest rates.

### Empty offices

Meanwhile between 10 to 12 huge office blocks lay empty in Southall where the Residents' Association, with its anti-immigrant and anti-labour policies, controls most of the tenants' associations in the area.

Northolt is an important exception. Here, tenants have called for a mass meeting to fight the rise and plans a lobby at Ealing town hall.

The south west Middlesex Federation of Young Socialists has made a call for support for the tenants inside local trade union branches. The North Greenford No. 1 AEU branch has already supported them.

The Young Socialists are demanding the nationalization of the building and building materials industries; equal rights for all workers to have a home, regardless of race; the conversion of office blocks into emergency flats; and support for the campaign against anti-union laws.

## PIECE RATE DOWN BY A THIRD

Lucas workers told

By Newsletter Reporter

**A** MASS meeting of 1,500 workers, locked out by the CAV-Lucas management, Fazakerly, Liverpool, for refusing to work piece work, decided by an overwhelming majority to reject a resolution of the Amalgamated Engineering Union district committee. This called upon these workers to return to work on a piece-work basis while negotiations proceeded.

The meeting carried a resolution declaring that they would return pending negotiations on condition that the management gave an interim pay rise of £1 a week.

Officials of the district committee were given a stormy reception. Workers expressed the feeling that the committee resolution was a sell out of union members fighting to prevent Merseyside workers being used as cheap labour.

### Cut by third

A previous meeting heard a report of a visit to the shop stewards' committee of CAV Acton. One of the two convenors at the Fazakerly works—Ernie Johnson—gave comparable figures of piece-work rates at the two factories. These revealed that those in Fazakerly had been slashed by almost a third.

'There can be no doubt', he said, 'that the site here was opened with the deliberate policy of having factories where rates are cut from those paid elsewhere.'

'We can't be party to anything designed to undercut trade unionists in another part of the country.'

This meeting decided on a policy of minimum conditions recommended by the stewards for a return to work. These were:

A return on day rates while negotiations took place. An interim award in the meantime. No one to be dismissed for rejecting what they consider an inadequate piece-work price.

## SUKARNO

From page 1

Indonesian Communist party, Gollan evades the question of an independent, revolutionary party being built in Indonesia, and merely lays these people open to further repressions.

### STRENGTHEN REACTION

Through their policy of peaceful co-existence and parliamentary transition to power, the Stalinists internationally pave the way for such tremendous defeats and for the strengthening of Sukarno, the reactionary clique of generals around him, and the Moslem youth now rioting in Jakarta against his re-shuffling of the generals.

We add our voice to all those protests against the trial and sentence of Njono. We call on all members of the labour movement to take every opportunity to oppose these actions. Immediately they can send telegrams to the Indonesian Embassy in Britain and also directly to Sukarno in Jakarta.

## JOIN THE SLL - ORDER THE NEWSLETTER

- The Socialist Labour League is the only organisation within the labour movement which fully supported the national lobby of parliament, organised by the Lambeth Trades Council.
- Our paper, The Newsletter, had, since last October, campaigned each week for the success of the lobby.
- The Newsletter was the only paper to protest over the suspension of the Lambeth Trades Council by the TUC.
- Both the Socialist Labour League and The Newsletter pledge themselves to continue with the struggle until the right-wing Labour and trade union leaders are forced to abandon their proposals for anti-trade union legislation.
- We ask all our readers, old and new, to pledge themselves to support us in this fight. If you want to receive The Newsletter regularly, why not become a regular subscriber: 9s for 12 issues (including postage). If you want to know more about the Socialist Labour League, fill in the form below.

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### HULL DOCKS

# Devlin plan for stewards rejected

By JACK GALE

**T**HE election of shop stewards by Transport and General Workers' Union branches—a recommendation of the Devlin Report—would be opposed in Hull docks.

This was clear after Tim O'Leary, secretary of the union's docks group, and Jack Jones, acting assistant general secretary of the union, visited the Yorkshire port last week following the seventh one-day strike by 3,500 dockers.

The men have also banned overtime and weekend working in support of their claim for a 70 per cent increase in fall-back pay—from £2 1s. 8d. to £3 12s.—and improvements in piece rates.

Having lost the initiative to the Unofficial Port Workers' Committee (whose 23 members belong to either the T&GWU or the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers, the 'Blue' union), T&GWU officials suggested that shop stewards be introduced, beginning with the Albert Dock, in the hope of improving liaison between the union and the workers.

that the government and employers are determined to crush any opposition to its plans for modernisation and streamlining. Newspapers and television programmes have repeated stories of 'intimidation' and 'violence'—without a shred of evidence.

## Crossman in-workers walk out

**W**HEN Housing Minister, Richard Crossman, came to inspect a nearly completed block of flats in Runcorn, Cheshire, last Friday, building workers on the site stopped work.

About 60 workers picketed the site with large placards declaring: 'Nationalize the building industry to lower rents and rates', 'No legislation against the unions', and 'Labour only means no compensation for accident or death'.

The day before, 30 joiners including the federation steward, had been sacked. The federation steward approached Crossman who declared he had no time to discuss with him. He wanted to raise the question of legislation, of 'labour only' contractors and of the victimisation of militant trade unionists.

Before Crossman went into the flats he was stopped by the pickets and met with shouts of 'Why don't you oppose the laws against the unions?'

His reply was: 'You don't know what's in the Bill. Why don't you wait and complain when you do.'

'Why don't you tell us?' said some of the men. Afterwards, Ron Grieve, one of the redundant joiners, declared: 'Instead of socialist policies, this government legislates against the workers. Whether we've read the Bill or not, we know what it means.'

Ron McCormick, the Federation steward said:

'These Labour leaders are covering up what's in these laws. It's a conspiracy against the workers. Our members here think that these sackings and the way I was sacked is an indication of what to expect in future if this legislation goes through.'

# ATROCIOUS CONDITIONS IN 'DISOWNED' STREET

**D**ISOWNED by three local councils, Faith-street, Kirkby, near Leeds, 'isn't fit for human beings to live in' according to tenants—many of them miners.

Tenants told our reporters of rotting woodwork, caved in ceilings, an open sewer and rat-infested yards.

Mrs. Smithurst said that the walls in her house were so damp the wallpaper simply fell off the walls. The whole family sleeps in one bedroom because the other one is inhabitable and the attic ceiling has fallen in. There is no bath and no hot water in the house.

### Floor sunk

When she moved in two years ago, the floor of the downstairs room had sunk 12 inches at the centre, and furniture had to be propped up with pieces of wood to stop it falling over. Another tenant, Mrs. Roberts, told the Newsletter that a few weeks ago her pantry door fell off its hinges knocking her out.

By Our Own Correspondent

'If it had happened to one of the children, he could have been killed,' she pointed out.

Workmen who came to repair the door said the framework was rotten, but their instructions were to 'patch it up', so they screwed the door back into the rotten wood. It has since come off again.

Mrs. Roberts is a state registered nurse. She told our reporters that her children, like many others in the street, suffer from bronchitis as a result of the conditions in which they live.

Her doctor has told her that the children will not thrive unless the family moves—but the council will not re-house them!

Tenants in the street recently had to pay £21 for the installation of electric light. Some old age pensioners, who could not raise the money, still have gas. Many of the toilets are badly in need of repair, but the tenants claim, the landlord has refused to carry out repairs on the grounds that the rents are not high enough—each family

pays 26s 4d a week for these 'dwellings'.

An open stream runs along the back of the houses carrying filthy-smelling water from the local pit to a sewage pipe nearby. Each time it rains, the stream floods.

### Health hazards

This is a health hazard to children who are constantly in danger of falling in the stream or becoming stuck in a nearby field described by Mrs. Roberts as a 'filthy swamp'.

Tenants are demanding that the stream be covered in.

Rats infest the back yards every night.

In this pathetic situation, the three local councils, at South Elmsall, North Elmsall and Kirkby, refuse to act in any way. The tenants must take action now to demand that the council force the landlord to carry out repairs and that the stream is covered over.

The local branch of the NUM must give support to these workers and see that their demands are carried out.