

SOCIALIST REVIEW

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW, BUT INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

FORTNIGHTLY
FOR
INDUSTRIAL MILITANT
AND
INTERNATIONAL
SOCIALISM

8th YEAR No 4

MID-FEBRUARY, 1958

SIXPENCE

DEMOCRACY in our MOVEMENT

WITHOUT DEMOCRACY, our Movement is a blunt instrument. The short report of the London bus workers' Delegate Conference to be found in our industrial pages within, is a lesson not to be forgotten. The biased constitution, the set of rules weighted against changing opinions of the rank-and-file, was a major factor in swinging the decision from strike to arbitration, from dragging the Tories to their knees to arguing about things that need no discussion.

Our Movement is nothing without the millions in factory and mine in every place of work; it is nothing without their conscious participation in its affairs, unhampered and uninhibited. Those that shout "apathy" to justify manipulation and slick committee work have no place in our Movement, no place in history—apathy is born where interest and action have met with no result, where the committee men have smothered rank-and-file initiative. And when this happens, our Movement is in danger.

The fight against the Tories and the bosses cannot be manipulated, nor negotiated. It is ours, wherever we work and talk, wherever we picket and march. It is our fight, and being ours, it is ours to direct, to plan, and to execute. Decisions must rest in our hands, securely. They must be democratically arrived at. There can be no separation—the fight against the Tories and the fight for democracy within our Movement are one.

Nor can we have any truck with the Wyatts and Haxells of this world. The men who pick up democracy like an addled egg to hurl at their opponents. Can a Wyatt, who sees dictatorship rampant in the ETU, but remains blind to bureaucracy's activities in other unions and blind to his own activities on the "Daily Sketch," make the word do anything but stink in our nostrils when he uses it? Can Haxell and his ilk represent democracy in the Movement after gerrymandering the elections in their union to stifle opposition? Who are they to accuse each other of lying, deceit and malpractice? As long as the Movement suffers anti-democratic practices in its midst, so long will it harbour a malignant tumor of its conscience—a source of weakness.

TRANSPORT WORKERS

turn to pages 2 & 3

The struggle against missile bases, against nuclear madness, for peace and socialism, goes on. We are happy to be able to print the resolution passed unanimously by the Labour controlled Dalkeith Town Council and the important speech made by Cllr. David Smith in moving it. We believe that his example should be followed as widely as possible, that this is the way in which the organs of government can be used as tribunes of the people, as platforms for socialist propaganda and as levers for a mass movement for peace.—Editor.

MOVE FOR PEACE !

by Cllr David Smith, Dalkeith

I formally move "That Dalkeith Town Council strongly condemns the proposal to establish missile bases in Scotland, believing that the implementation of this policy will heighten world tension, hasten the drift to armed conflict and render this country vulnerable to total annihilation."

How to save the peace is the most vital and urgent problem facing mankind today. The prospect of a third world war dwarfs everything else into insignificance. Those who remain indifferent to world politics abdicate their responsibilities to the human race, and if war comes it will be the consequence of that indifference.

A calm and reasoned approach to the question of war or peace is no easy matter. All the propaganda weapons of the modern state machine are utilised not to educate public opinion, but to manufacture it. Not to enlighten the human mind, but to poison it. Not to elevate human dignity, but to debase it. Thus ignorance prevails over knowledge, and prejudice over reason.

The doctrine of "my country right or wrong" is used as a cloak to cover up the most inhuman of deeds and, invariably, the isolated critic of conventional outlook is labelled either as a social misfit or a Communist . . . and no further argument is necessary. Meanwhile, the so-called statesmen pursue the same old policies which for centuries have been proved to be fallacious and disastrous, and, if not halted by the common people, will destroy this planet altogether.

If you want peace, prepare for war; if you want to put out the fire, shovel on more coal. Each power block strives for a preponderance of military strength, supposedly to deter the other side. An arms race is set into motion, more and ever more weapons of death and destruction are poured out of the factories, military alliances are created only to deepen

an existing mutual distrust, suspicion and hatred. Finally, the bombs explode . . . each side accusing the other of aggression and both claiming to possess right on its side. This is the lesson of history.

£40 billion a year

For how much longer are we to ignore it? The world is spending £40,000,000,000 a year on armaments . . . yet two-thirds of humanity are engaged in a desperate battle to procure the bare means of life. Millions of people all over the earth are crying out for food . . . and we offer them hydrogen bombs!

We have been told for nearly 13 years that unless we arm ourselves to the teeth, Red rain will descend upon us and the Russians will steal away our liberties. Yet Churchill himself once said that if the Russians had attacked shortly after the end of the war they would have been at the Channel in a week.

German re-armament

I remember the great debate three years ago over the question of re-arming the Germans. We were told that that was a matter of extreme urgency in case the Russians were preparing to attack. A fully equipped German Army hasn't yet come into being but still there has been no Russian attack. Now we are told that rocket bases are necessary in Scotland for the same reason.

Let us assume that the Kremlin is intent upon world conquest. Would the Kremlin leaders not realize that a successful war could only be waged provided they struck first and destroyed all those bases before they could be used? It is a fair argument that within the first hour of war the Russians would direct rockets against all military bases in the Western Alliance and Scotland

(turn to back page)

INDUSTRIAL MERSEYSIDE : DOCKERS CHOOSE THE "BLUES"

LIKE A FESTERING SORE which badly needs attention, the Mersey dockland continuously erupts into strike action: strike action which has as its aim the recognition of the co-called "Blue Union," the NASD.

It is precisely this question which was behind the recent strike which involved over 6,000 Mersey dockers. An attempt was made by T&GWU officials to recruit for the unloading of bulk sugar only members of that union. This immediately led to a withdrawal of labour.

Solid rank-and-file

The important thing to note is that the strike was at no time confined to Blue Union members. T&G men were also out, once again showing how solidly united the dockers are, despite differences of union membership. Although many of the older dockers have remained members of the White Union, they have tremendous sympathy with the Blue members. Many of them retained their membership of the White because of benefits accruing over many years, and not due to complete endorsement of T&G policy. That is why, when discriminating action is taken against Blue members, all dockers respond.

The central problem is recognition. Statements like those by Ald. P. J. O'Hare, the T&G Dockers District Secretary, that the Blue doesn't exist on Merseyside, don't help, besides being quite untrue. The answer, in fact, was given in the recent strike, and it was Blue officials who finally persuaded the men (both Blue and White) to return, pending the proposed meetings to be held between the NASD, Ministry of Labour, and TUC etc., at national level.

TUC sabotage

The attitude of the TUC is far from helpful. After a court case, they were forced to recognize that those dockers who had joined the Blue must be allowed to remain in the NASD, despite the Bridlington Agreement. They will not however agree to support the NASD appeal for recognition in the Northern ports. In fact at recent Congress meetings successful attempts have been made to avoid serious discussion of the issue. Presumably, it was anticipated that the Blue would fall to pieces in the Northern ports if recognition were withheld. They have not reckoned with the deep feelings of the men. These men have struck work many times to uphold the right to be in the Blue Union, and on one occasion, held out for six weeks. They did this because of a serious principle, and in fact had no chance of monetary gain.

One of the disquieting features of the Merseyside Dock situation is the growth of non-unionism amongst the more backward

workers. The Blue Union District Committee, over twelve months ago, proposed to the T&G to jointly tackle this problem, but received no answer. Too many people are behaving like ostriches

What next

The Blue is here to stay in the Northern ports, and must eventually gain recognition. Despite the fact that the T&G has made concessions to the rank-and-file dockers, and has even discussed the question of organizing Shop-stewards in order to lessen the bureaucratic tendencies, those who have stayed with the Blue will continue at all costs.

On Monday, January 27th, the men returned to work. At the moment of writing, an uneasy peace lies over the docks. **Now, facts must be squarely faced, by all sections of the movement, and recognition, with full negotiating rights must be granted. Every trade union member, who is concerned with the future of the movement, must support the men's plea for recognition, and support every action they take to secure it. They must equally condemn such provocative statements as that of O'Hare, when he said "all who are not in the T&GWU are non-unionists as far as we are concerned"—a statement reported in the Liverpool ECHO, and not denied. The practice of discrimination must be ended, and all trade union dockers, irrespective of union, must have equal opportunity for work available. Also, attempts to stop promotion etc., because a man is in the Blue, must cease. The Garston episode must not be allowed to occur again.**

Support is needed

There is much discussion amongst the dockers that to solve the problems, the need is to reform the unofficial rank-and-file committees as existed for many years after the war. This may well be the way forward, but only the dockers themselves can decide.

In conclusion, let me say that in Liverpool, the dockers are held by the mass of the workers in high esteem, and their solidarity in a strike is a great object-lesson to all. Esteem is not enough—they must be given full and unqualified support. Their fight is truly ours.

RICHARD WILLIAMS
Liverpool

These pages have been set aside for a socialist review of the industrial struggle. Help to make them complete by sending in news and comments

At a recent ballot held to elect two representatives of the Merseyside dockers on the local Dock Labour Board, two ballots were held: one organized by the T&GWU which featured T&G candidates only (the 'Closed Shop' ballot) and the other by the NASD which featured NASD candidates plus the T&G list. The total vote cast for all seven T&G candidates in the 'Closed Shop' ballot was 1,478, which was less than the number of votes cast for either of the NASD candidates in the 'Open Ballot,' J. Benbow (1,854) and G. Green (1,729).

SR Industrial Reporter from Liverpool records THE LATEST DOCKLAND STRIKE

RECENT WEEKS have seen eruptions of rivalry between the Transport and General Workers' Union and the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers in the northern ports, notably on the Merseyside. On this occasion, the issue has centred around the right of a registered docker to secure employment on either side of the river.

As is well known in dockland, after having been duly registered men are allocated to a control point and, if employment is available, are sent to a particular ship to discharge or load cargo until the job is completed.

"Whites" only

On January 20, men were required to discharge a sugar cargo. They were sent in the usual manner from a control point. On arrival at the job, they were met by officials of the T&GWU who demanded a card inspection. They found that two of the men hired were members of NASD. The T&GWU officials immediately ordered them back to the control point, where their books were returned to them.

When this action on the part of T&GWU officials became known, the men immediately stopped the job. Later in the morning a meeting of the men concerned held and addressed by Bro. W. Johnson, Area Organizer of the NASD, and others, who advised a return to work pending further talks. This was agreed to by the men.

However, on the Thursday,

January 23, a similar incident occurred and the job stopped once more. **It became evident to all concerned that these incidents were part of a deliberate policy engaged in by the T&GWU officials, and the stoppage spread. A large number of other ships were affected, and there is little doubt that had the strike continued for any length of time, the Merseyside port would have been at a complete standstill.**

Local NASD officials had meanwhile got into touch with headquarters in London and agreed to advise a return to work pending discussions at the highest level. As was understood later, this meant that National Officials of the NASD would have consultations with the National Dock Labour Board, the Ministry of Labour (this is the first time that the Ministry have intervened in the dispute between the two unions) and the TUC.

Free choice of union

The mass meeting of strikers to which the above was reported agreed to return to work unanimously pending the talks which are awaited with considerable interest.

The claim made by the T&GWU (Dockers' Section) that they, and they alone, represent the Merseyside dockers is entirely false. Figures issued by the local Dock Labour Board show that over 7,000 men were on strike.

This problem has to be solved. It can only be solved by giving the men the right to decide which union they wish to be in.

MINES — Lawrence

THANK YOU for reprinting my Forum article. You are right to say it bypasses crucial issues. That is because Forum asked me to deal with the problem of democracy within the Scottish Area of the NUM in 1,000 words. So I concentrated on that single crucial issue. And in doing so, I condemned those miners who force their lower-paid mates to make sacrifices without the democratic right of consultation and without the least attempt at negotiation to avoid unnecessary sacrifice. Such actions do not "raise the political consciousness of the working-class and prepare them for revolutionary action" (James D.

Young). They create disunity. When they are undertaken by men who never (or very seldom) attend a trade union lodge meeting, it is doubly ridiculous to describe such men as "front-line fighters" or "militant miners."

You are wrong in suggesting that I say "unofficial strikes are bad as such." In the very month that Forum published my article, I led a highly successful unofficial strike—not for the first time. But unofficial strikes of the kind I described are very bad, for they create resentment between miners, and make a bad impression

(continued on next page)

GOFF STEVENS Presents THE CABMEN'S DEMANDS— FAIR WAGES, END CADGING

ONE of the most familiar sights in the centre of London is the taxi, the little black beetles which go scurrying around between the big red monsters—the buses, and the rest of the traffic; at times to everybody's consternation.

But despite the familiarity of the vehicles, probably less is known about the working conditions of the drivers than any other public transport worker. Both cabs and drivers are controlled by the Public Carriage Office, a department of the Metropolitan Police, and therefore subject to the Home Office.

Before a man can receive a Metropolitan Police licence he has to satisfy the PCO as to his character, knowledge of London and driving ability. The knowledge of London examinations are spread over a period of about twelve months. The possession of a driving licence is not a sufficient guarantee of driving ability; a special test has to be passed.

Having satisfied these requirements the man is presented with a Metropolitan Police licence and a copy, and a large antiquated

garages, which will operate from 40 to 300 cabs, he will find that there is a Union Steward and Committee and he will be expected to join the Union. In many garages he will not be allowed to work unless he does. He is now one of 9,000 drivers who drive the 6,000 cabs which operate in London.

Odd customers

He now goes to work subject to the Hackney Carriage Laws, some of which date back 110 years, and is completely reliant on the generosity of the public for a large part of his income. He gets a fraction—over a third of the fare shown on the clock—in commission, plus tips. Unless the journey is over six miles, when he has the right to make a bargain, he has no say in what his proportion of the fare, i.e. including tips, shall be.

Once he goes onto the road he will be faced with a variety of clients, such as probably no other individual worker comes into contact with, from some irascible old gentleman out of

the terrific mental strain and frustration imposed by present-day traffic conditions in Central London.

Traffic conditions—this is perhaps the biggest bugbear facing the cab-driver. Remember, no wages, commission only, so that if traffic congestion means that he can only take three fares in the time he should have been able to take four, that means money lost to the driver. Because the number of private cars is double pre-war and because of the criminal indiscriminate parking of these cars the cabs can no longer slip through the "back doubles" as they were able to do before the last war. Indeed, one is scared to turn into side streets now, for fear that in a street wide enough to take three lines of traffic, cars are parked on both sides and a vehicle appears travelling in the opposite direction—then there is a complete deadlock.

The question of traffic conditions is one that cannot be answered by the cab trade alone, but there are problems facing the

GOFF STEVENS, author of this article, knows what he is talking about. He is Chairman of the Cab Trade Committee of the Transport and General Workers' Union and is a cab driver of long standing.—Editor.

badge with his number on it, which has to be worn on every occasion that he is doing anything in connection with cab driving. Once licensed the driver is regarded as something between a qualified cadger and a licensed buccaneer.

The next step is to get a cab to drive—he has two alternatives—to drive for a company or an owner-driver or "go mushing," i.e. buy his own cab. If he is fortunate enough to have the necessary deposit, around £300, and is prepared to face heavy repayments over a period of five years he can become what some people regard as the elite of the cab-trade—an Owner-Driver. He has the choice of joining the Cab Section of the Transport and General Workers Union, which caters mainly for journeymen drivers (although a number of owner-drivers also belong to it), or an organization which caters for owner-drivers only.

If he goes to one of the larger

the Carlton Club to somebody living in a back street in Bermondsey or Bethnal Green. Very often the rider from Bermondsey or Bethnal Green will be more generous than the old gent from the Carlton Club.

He will be expected by most of his clients to know not only the street in which they live but exactly where their houses or flat is situated, he will be expected to carry anything from a box of kippers from Billingsgate to a pregnant woman in a hurry to get to Queen Charlotte's Hospital; and withal to be courteous and pleasant to everybody; drive safely and speedily; and to take the shortest route to every destination.

Traffic and conditions

I think you will agree that this is a fairly tall order to fulfill, and if sometimes a driver falls down on one or other of these expectations it is hardly to be wondered at, having regard to

trade which have to, and can be, solved by the workers in the trade themselves. I mentioned earlier that once he receives his licence a driver is regarded as something between a licensed cadger and a buccaneer and I am convinced that this attitude stems from the fact that he has to rely on charity for so large a part of his income. The giving of charity tends to create a feeling of contempt for the receiver. The tradition of tipping in the cab trade is such an old custom, dating from the days of sedan-chairs, that many drivers cannot see any possibility of it ever changing. However, everything must change and I believe that the sooner we start the better.

I am convinced that an economic fare and the abolition of tips would lead to drivers being held in higher esteem by the general public. Many people, who are frightened of riding in taxis because they are never sure how much they are expected to pay, would do so, if they knew that the amount shown on the meter was the total and nothing extra was expected.

How do we solve this problem? In finality, of course, a basic wage and, perhaps, a small commission, this however frightens many drivers because they feel that would lead to a loss of freedom and the imposition of discipline by the Proprietors—this cannot at present be imposed because they do not pay wages. However, by the imposition of an economic fare and a much higher rate of commission the reliance on tips could be eliminated, and thus pave the way for further progress in the control of the trade and working conditions of the drivers.

leaders from the *Manchester Guardian*. He has put words into my mouth that are not mine. He has "watched" many unofficial strikes. I have participated in them; and on that practical experience do I base my conclusions.

Yours fraternally,

LAWRENCE DALY,

Ballingry, Fife.

**MORE LETTERS
on back page**

Daly replies

on millions of fellow trade unionists. Slogans about "class struggle" will never change these facts.

Graham Acott's proposals are commonplace in Scottish NUM circles, except for the **emphasis** on workers' control. But **emphasis** without elaboration is not helpful. I am in favour of experimentation with workers' control. But what form it would take, what powers a workers' committee will have, its relation to the trade-union, and a host of other problems must be seriously considered.

Unlike James D. Young, I don't take my opinions about trade-union

LONDON BUSMEN miss their bus

SO IT IS ARBITRATION. Despite the fact that the Trade Group Committee of London's busmen decided 12 to 1 abstention that they would ask the delegate conference (held on February 3) to seek plenary powers to seek satisfaction of their wage claim and to convene a National Conference of all busworkers in the country—private, municipal and London—Conference turned it down.

And the result—arbitration. Another session with the Ministry of Labour, with the London Transport Executive; maybe an Industrial Court; maybe another rejection of the justified wage-claim. Who knows? One thing is certain: London busmen have missed the bus. They are not at the wheel where they should be.

What happened? After four hours of debate, the Trade Group Committee decided in favour of what can only be understood as strike action. **They decided to appeal to their comrades throughout the country for support. They believed they would get this support and also settle once and for all the difficult question of differentials between London and Provincial rates. In this way they would answer the bosses' constant charge of "leapfrogging." An excellent resolution, by all accounts.**

But it upset what one delegate called "their Lordships," those delegates who consider the London differential so important that they are not willing even to discuss the matter with their Provincial comrades. They amended the resolution to read "plenary powers" and deleted all reference to a National Conference.

Thereafter confusion reigned, ably helped by the biased, anti-democratic ruling that all major resolutions must be carried by a two-thirds majority.

Of course, the amendment was lost; it didn't get two-thirds. Those militants who trusted their Provincial comrades' sense of solidarity and militancy voted against. But the resolution itself was also lost; it too did not get two-thirds. Those who attached too much importance to differentials and feared a National Conference voted against.

Unholy alliance

This confused the delegates and gave the General Secretary the opportunity to move a resolution calling for arbitration and a National Conference. Of course it was defeated by the militants, the 'differentialists' (their Lordships) and the two-thirds ruling.

So what remained? Arbitration alone. Carried by two votes above the two-thirds. Carried by confusion, tiredness, a non-democratic voting rule and mistrust of our comrades.

We have missed a glorious chance—to lead the organized workers in battle against the Tory Government, to melt their wage freeze, to knit the public transport workers into a single fighting organization. But we shall come again. It is not for nothing that London's bus workers are known for their militancy.

SR Industrial Report
London

LABOUR PARTY

Commentary By Ron Lewis

VICTORY FOR SOCIALISM was founded in 1944. It was one of those organizations which spring up from time to time in the Labour Movement, such as the Constituencies Association, the Socialist League, and more recently, Socialist Fellowship. Such organizations are a manifestation of the radical socialist spirit of the active members of the Party, but they are also used by careerists as springboards to promotion. Because their leadership tends to fall into the hands of M.P.s, the course of such organizations is often chequered. VFS, however, was led very largely by ordinary rank-and-file members, which accounts for its comparatively long life.

But towards the end of January, the smoothies moved in, dismantled the leadership and, though the name is to go on, the character of the organization is dead.

The new leaders are convinced that the reason the Left has failed to make progress within the Party is because it is not organized on 'sound business lines.' Accordingly, the new VFS is to be organized into lots of committees which will be staffed with certificated 'thinkers' (graduates in Policy-making Engineering?) These committees will produce alternative policy statements to those of the National Executive of the Party, and hey presto, the battle is won.

Control of VFS was seized by a combination of infiltration, seduction, and crude appeals to the necessity for the 'unity of the Left.' If anything, the people now in the saddle have as bad, if not worse, ethics than the Right-wing bureaucrats. **But none-the-less, militant socialists would be unwise at this stage to content themselves with denouncing the methods of this group. For there is a real will towards organization among the active rank and file of the party.** A will that the old committee of VFS had recognized, for, long before these new boys came on the scene, steps had been taken to build a national organization.

The first results of those measures convince me that notwithstanding the restricted and reformist character of the new leadership, if they keep their word and continue with our program of building local branches, there will be a large membership within a few months. But if such

an organization is to be anything more than a cheering section for the ambitions of certain people, then its membership will need to be laced with a good number of militant socialists.

■ ■ ■

CONGRATULATION to Holborn and South St. Pancras Labour Party for reminding us again of the injustice which is still being done to Tom Braddock. First by call-

ing upon the National Executive to remove Woodrow Wyatt from the panel of Parliamentary Candidates, and secondly by nominating Tom as a candidate for the LCC elections. The refusal of the NEC to agree to the first, while it refuses to endorse Tom should serve only to reawaken a campaign for the rehabilitation of Braddock (whose only crimes are consistency of socialist principle and a fearless refusal to suck up to the smooth boys).

SUCCESS STORY is the title of the latest pamphlet issued by Transport House. It is a defence of the record of the nationalized industries. Within its limits it is a good pamphlet, though I often wonder who reads this stuff. It seeks to answer the type of criticism made by bank directors, city editors and other high priests of capitalism, that is that nationalization is organizationally inefficient. It does this job quite well, **but that the Party need bother itself with the blatherings of Sir Oscar Hobson and his mates is a reflection of the mood of the leadership who see themselves now merely in the role of competitors with the Tories in the running of capitalism.**

VICTORY FOR SOCIALISM ?

Very Fishy Situation ! writes WOODBEE WYATT

ANEURIN BEVAN'S H-BOMB SPEECH at Brighton last year confronted that motley collection of camp followers known as the Bevanites with their moment of truth. It was impossible even for the most sycophantic of them to delude themselves any longer that they could influence the policy and actions of the Messiah.

Some of them had been smart enough to see this situation coming and they had moved into the Gaitskell camp even before Bevan; the remainder were disconcerted and disappointed. They began to cast about for some other means of exerting their influence upon the Party, and at last they decided that the thing to do was to organize the workers.

The seven

Seven of them got together and called a meeting of 'safe' MPs, candidates, and one or two miscellaneous personalities. This meeting² was invited to elect the Seven as a committee of the meeting empowered to co-opt other members and proceed with the establishment of a new Left-wing society within the Labour Party. In addition, the Seven were empowered to make approaches to Victory For Socialism with a view to amalgamating the two groups.

In the meantime, quite a number of the lesser known Bevanites

1. Ian Mikardo, MP, Michael Foot, Ald. Jo Richardson, Sir Leslie Plummer, MP, Fred Lee, MP, Lyn Mostyn and Ted Bedford.

2. This 'House of Commons Meeting of Forty' and the subsequent manoeuvrings leaked into the *News Chronicle*, January 2, 1958.

turned up to the AGM of VFS and were elected on to its committee. In the negotiations which followed these people constituted a Trojan horse.

The open negotiations consisted of a number of demands which amounted to the resignation of the VFS committee, its replacement by the Seven, the summoning of a Special General Meeting of VFS at which a resolution suspending the constitution was to be moved.

... and the five

These demands were presented to a committee meeting without prior notice; i.e. they were not on the agenda. The suddenness of the proposals, coupled with vagueness concerning the plans of the Seven, naturally gave rise to some opposition at the meeting.

But the fact that there existed this Trojan Horse of members who were not merely privy to the plans of the Seven, but even assured of places on the committee, enabled the Chairman, Secretary and Vice-Chairman (who were also assured of their place in the sun) to steer this rather difficult motion through the meeting with only 'appearance' concessions. One of these was that VFS should elect five of its committee to serve with the seven in the selection of the new executive. Of the five,³ four were already wedded to the idea of the destruction of the old VFS.

At the meeting of Twelve a list of personnel proposals were presented by the Seven which was agreed to virtually without amendment. The odd man out moved one or two names of the old VFS committee without success.

At the next meeting of the VFS committee, the proposals of the Twelve came under considerable attack on the grounds that non-professional workers and old members of the VFS committee were conspicuous by their absence. The meeting resulted in two main proposals. That Hugh Jenkins, Chairman of VFS should be a second vice-chairman, and that five other names (old VFS

members)⁴ should be added to the new committee.⁵ In addition, the committee was persuaded to carry by one vote a resolution which pledged it to unqualified support of the Seven, whether the new proposals were accepted or not.

Following the communication of these proposals to the Seven a war of nerves commenced. The secretary of the Seven advised the Officers of VFS that the time was after all perhaps not opportune for a merger and that they had decided to proceed alone. This threw the Chairman, Secretary and Vice-Chairman into a panic and they went down on their hands and knees and begged the Seven to proceed. And the night before the Special General Meeting of VFS, the Seven agreed to take over the name of VFS if the resolution suspending its constitution was carried.

The meeting itself, held in the House of Commons was possibly one of the most singular of its kind that has ever taken place. For in spite of the fact that the resolution before the meeting declared that after having heard an outline of the proposed membership of the new committee it was resolved . . . and so forth, no names other than the Seven were mentioned! The reason given for this was that there might be a press leak.

The meeting itself was largely a close-the-ranks orgy, virtually every other word uttered by the platform was unity. And though a lot of people outside the discussions which led to the meeting voted for the resolution, many of them expressed their missgivings about the way things had been done.

Of course, the committee which has now been set up is only a provisional committee. There will, the meeting was promised, be free elections in September. **But members or prospective members of this organization will be well advised to be vigilant. For the organizers of this coup d'etat make the CP look like amateurs.**

4. Cllr. Philip Bassett, Cllr. John Bloom, Sheila Larchett, Norman Mikardo, Cllr. Wally Russell.

5. The size of the new committee as we go to press is about 50, but whether all those invited (?) have accepted, is not yet known.

3. Hugh Jenkins, Eric Messer, Walter Wolfgang, Clive Jenkins and—Ron Lewis.

SOCIALIST REVIEW SUBSCRIPTION FORM

I enclose 16s. subscription for 1 year's issue of
8s. 6 months'
4s. 3 months' SOCIALIST REVIEW.

Name.....

Address.....

Send to SOCIALIST REVIEW,
35B Priory Terrace, London, NW6.

YOUNG SOCIALIST

NOW
TWICE
MONTHLY

NUMBER 6

MID-FEBRUARY, 1958

FIGHT FOR IDEAS

There are some ideas so deeply rooted in our condition, so part of our lives that no amount of suppression, of distortion, brainwashing and propaganda can wipe them out. Every human problem, every social situation appeals to these ideas as a key to understanding, commands that we take notice of these ideas as a guide. Such ideas are the ideas of scientific socialism. They live on, sometimes in cellars and hideouts; in the minds of a few, in the phrase of many; waiting to burst out and engulf the consciousness of the masses whenever conditions allow. In this way they become a palpable, material force. The ideas become embodied in the conscious activity of the mass of workers and oppressed peoples. They make history.

Youth is often the channel for such ideas. Still studying, still dealing with the raw materials of ideology; as yet uncorrupted by safe specialism and the soft option to sacrifice principle for material security, youth has often played a glorious role in the history of

social revolution. In our time, the Hungarian youth—from work-bench and school-desk—have stood at the forefront of the struggle for national freedom and socialism. We can learn their heroism, study their example. We may need it yet.

But the Hungarian youth are not alone. Twenty years of beatings, prisons, murder have not succeeded in smashing the socialist youth movement in Spain. Fascist repression, paid by the landlords, blessed by the Church, armed by the US capitalists could not, and cannot still their struggle. Once again, youth is taking a leading role, its rightful place as the heir to a future of peace, plenty and the fulfilment of man.

We are happy to print the following letter from Spain, the first, we hope, of many. We wish our Spanish comrades courage in their struggle against dictatorship, darkness and oppression.

SPAIN: YOUTH against FRANCO

IT IS TWO YEARS since the students demonstrated against Falangist terror and Franco's military dictatorship in the University of Madrid. The Catalan upsurge, in Barcelona, started just one year ago, when the whole people broke the famous **Franco's peace** for two weeks. In spite of overwhelming military and police forces, the students continued the strike against the indignity of Franco's regime, maintained since 1939 only by force of arms.

The UDE (Students' Democratic Union), a secret students' organization, drew up a manifesto in the last days of 1957. Here are some excerpts from it:

"We do not wish the University to continue at a mediocre level of thought devoid of any consideration of national problems in a country which is suffering from repression throughout the academic year 1957-1958. The University should not only be a centre for scientific and humanistic studies but also a highly sensitive political catalyst—a voice giving expression to the aspirations of the nation. To make it such is our most important task during the academic year: to complete the political penetration of the University in order to transform it into a weapon in the hands of young Spaniards **against the dictatorship.**"

The following is the program of action for University students which the UDE recommends to fellow students throughout the country:

"1. Progressive democratization of University organizations and the calling of a meeting of the Free Congress of Students representing the body of students on a democratic basis.

"2. Strengthening and development of united action on the part of University opposition groups—Christian-Socialists, Christian-Democrats, Liberals, Syndicalists and Socialists—for the purpose of laying down basic aims in the

struggle against the regime, furthering a knowledge of this struggle among the student body, and attracting those sections of opinion at present undecided and who may have cherished the hope—now no longer tenable—that the regime was capable of being reformed. This unity of action at the University level will be the first step towards the unification of all democratic parties throughout the country in a future National Democratic Front.

"3. United action and solidarity with the people in the struggle against the dictatorship as expressed last year by means of demonstrations in force carried out peacefully and in good order; seeing that a common front of University **students and the workers** is the most effective means of ensuring victory over the present regime, of convincing the world at large of the justice of our demands, cultural, social, political and economic, and of ensuring the peaceful existence of all social classes within the community in the days to come.

"The UDE is resuming its activities and makes known to all University students, to the academic authorities, the government, and all democratic bodies throughout the world that the principles which inspire its members in their struggle are as follows:

"a. An independent and democratic national organization of students.

"b. The union in the struggle against the dictatorship of all groups and sections in the University having a democratic character.

"c. Fraternal solidarity with the Spanish people and its aspirations for justice and redistribution of resources.

"d. Opposition to all anti-democratic theories which fail to respect the decisions of the majority or the liberty of minorities.

"e. The overthrow of the present regime, the liquidation and renunciation of the spirit of the Civil War, and a return to a peaceful national life within the framework of political forms freely chosen by the Spanish people.

"f. The introduction of a national program of reforms in the social-economic field which would make all Spaniards truly

one, united in common effort and common gain.

"g. The country's independence of international ties except those freely entered into by the express will of the people."

The manifesto concludes with an appeal for "a ceaseless struggle for truth and liberty."

BERNAT DESCAMS

Madrid, January 1958.

The two instalments from **Michael Kidron's** forthcoming pamphlet—**The Fight for Socialism**—which we have already published, argued that capitalism has always to fear over-production, gluts and crises; that its old insurance policies against these ailments have greatly depreciated in value; and that its main alternative to slump today is arms production and preparation for war.

The Fight for Socialism - 3

How does arms production get round the problem of over-production? After all, even the Merchants of Death spend less on wages, salaries and their own personal budgets than the value of their products. Where can they find a buyer who will spend more than his income?

There is only one such client—the State. The State can print money—in 1956 the British Government printed £125 million. The State can borrow money—in 1954 it borrowed some £160 million. We are interested in the latter.

Debt and Destruction

When the State borrows money, it gives in exchange IOUs of various kinds. The most important are called Consols, which bear interest of about 7 percent per year (currently) **for ever**. There are also National Savings Certificates, Savings Stamps and other types. They all amount to the same thing: the State takes over the savings of the people who can afford to save, spends it and promises to repay in the form of interest. The accumulated borrowing is called the National Debt. Before the Second World War the National Debt was about £5,000 million. After it, it stood at £24,500 million—more than four times as much. Clearly war and the National Debt are inseparable. (Even the pre-war figure was largely the result of the first World War and the wars preceding it right from the days of the Napoleonic Wars.)

[turn to page seven]

FORUM *Eric Heffer presents the case for* THE INDUSTRIAL UNION — 2

What is true of USA is, although different in context, true of the Soviet Union. All unions in the Soviet Union are industrial in character, but they are in fact organs of the State, manipulated by the bureaucratic caste, which owns and controls Soviet industry.

That is why Soviet trade unions become the spearhead in production drives, administer State insurance schemes, and only regulate wages and conditions, instead of formulating independent policies on these questions. This is recognized to some extent in the No. 3, 1957, issue of "Soviet Trade Unions" (*Soviet-skie Profsoyuzi*), which says Soviet unions "have in many respects lost their independent character. They are staffed principally with paid personnel. Trade union activity is replete with formalism and red tape which distract trade union organizations from real activity, prevent them from paying due attention to production, and from a businesslike attitude towards the problem of competition."

Further, the role of the trade unions as a weapon in the production drives is clearly shown in an article in *Pravda* (April 10, 1957), where it says (speaking of the new role of union committees): "They will get the possibility of looking deeper into the question of production planning, into the problem of increasing productivity of labour, and will exert influence in the productivity of enterprises and construction sites."

Pioneers on the State

Again we can see how far this is from the pioneers' conception of what Industrial Unionism should be. These pioneers were basically opposed to a state of any kind, believing that the workers, acting independently through their industrial organizations, could own and control industry themselves. They would be appalled to see unions that had become mere appendages of the state apparatus, used against the workers instead of for them.

I would like to quote, at this stage, the views of James Connolly, as I feel he has a most important message on the question of organization principles and the control of industry. It must be remembered that Connolly was a keen supporter of the Industrial Union, which therefore gives added point to his observation.

The real battle—control

In that brilliant little pamphlet, *The Axe to the Root, and Old Wine in New Bottles*, he says: "The real battle is the battle being fought out every day for the power to control industry, and the gauge of the progress of that battle is not to be found in the number of voters making a cross

beneath the symbol of a political party, but in the number of workers who enrol themselves in an industrial organization with the definite purpose of making themselves masters of the industrial equipment of society in general."

But further on he makes the point: "It is therefore absolutely indispensable for the efficient training of the working class along correct lines that action at the ballot box should accompany action in the workshop."

On organization he has this to say (a lesson we can all learn): "I believe that the development of the fighting spirit is of more importance than the creation of a theoretically perfect organization; that indeed, the most theoretically perfect organization may, because of its very perfection and vastness, be of the greatest possible danger to the revolutionary movement if it tends, or is used, to repress and curb the fighting spirit of comradeship in the rank and file."

Fighting spirit and organization

My last quotation from Connolly, also deals with the vital question of the fighting spirit or perfection in organization. He says: "In my opinion we must recognize that the only solution of that problem is the choice of officers, local or national, from the standpoint of their responsiveness to the call for solidarity, and having got such officials, to retain them only as long as they can show results in the amelioration of the condition of their members and the development of their unions as a weapon of class warfare."

"If we develop on those lines, then the creation of a great Industrial Union, such as I have rudely sketched in my opening reminiscence, or the formation of those much more clumsy federations and amalgamations now being formed, will be of immense revolutionary value to the working class; if on the contrary, we allow officials of the old, narrow, sectional kind to infuse their spirit into the new organizations, and to strangle these with rules suited only to a somnolent working class, then the Greater Unionism will but serve to load us with great fetters. It will be to real Industrial Unionism what the Servile State would be to our ideal Co-operative Commonwealth."

Connolly's foresight is quite remarkable; it is as if he could foresee the Soviet Union and the CIO!

Trade unions can only play a limited role. They are primarily economic organizations and therefore cannot be expected to go beyond that conception. Therefore the Industrial Trade Unions of the future must have in addition to a watchful militant rank and file, also a definite Socialist consciousness, a consciousness that will link the unions

with the overall struggle for workers' power.

At this point I feel a quotation from Leon Trotsky is appropriate; where he says in his pamphlet *Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay*: "The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can

increasingly penetrating the consciousness of the United States workers, as opposed to their "leaders." And lastly,

(6) Industrial Unions would make the place of work the focal point of organization, and therefore lessen the remoteness of the leadership from the rank and file, which is greatly pronounced today.

These factors, coupled with the democratization of the organization, could give us the fighting

In his first article on the subject (SR, February 1), ERIC HEFFER showed the importance of industrial unionism as a working-class weapon in modern conditions. He pointed out that technical progress has forced many small craft unions into Federations and will push towards further amalgamations in the future. He underlined the importance of industrial unionism in the tradition of socialist thinking and ended by comparing the pioneers' vision with the experience of this form of industrial organization in the US.

In this concluding article he investigates industrial unionism in Russia, considers the importance of trade-union organization in the fight for socialism, argues the case for organization on industrial-union lines and poses the difficulties that arise in practice.

Eric Heffer is well placed to write on this thorny issue: he is on the EC of the Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party and on the EC of the Lancashire Federation of Trades Councils.—Editor.

become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat."

Having quoted with approval the various views which show the limitations of Industrial Unions together with other types of unions, and the dangers which can quickly develop, I wish to make it clear that I am very much in favour of Industrial Unions and below I outline why I feel they are the next stage in union development, and why I think it is necessary to fight for them.

The reasons for

I support them for six main reasons:

(1) Because the changing nature of industry requires greater trade union unity and solidarity,

(2) Because Industrial Unions make it easier to organize in all factories, on all jobs, sites and mines, etc.,

(3) Because united strength in an establishment can lead to speedier united action against the employers, and

(4) Because it will help to lessen demarcation disputes, which cause disunity, bad feeling, and which play into the hands of the employers. It would also stop the frittering away of the union strength on such issues.

(5) I am sure it would heighten the general class consciousness of the workers and would bring out in greater relief the true class relations in industry. Sectional interest would not be able to mask the position as at present.

In Britain, I am certain that Industrial Unions would raise the question of the control of industry, something which is

organs the workers require. Linked locally in Trades Councils, they could be really formidable, and could quickly lay the basis for the new society.

Difficulties

Naturally there are many arguments against Industrial Unions, and many genuine difficulties. The difficulties to those workers who are mobile and who move from industry to industry. There is also the problem of the small, scattered industries, where concentration or mobility makes it impossible to build a branch at factory level, e.g., building, ship-repairing, etc. Also, of course, the very real problem of craft differences and sectional interests.

However, I am convinced such problems can be overcome, firstly by a system of free transfers from one union to another, and the recognition of each other's cards (where workers of a particular craft are interchangeable). Secondly, branches would have to be formed independently of the place of work; such flexibility would necessarily be great in certain industries. On the third problem, it is my opinion that in the first stages, craft sections would still be required within the same union. It is impossible to go beyond the stage reached in men's consciousness. Machinery within the Industrial Union would need to be established to overcome demarcation questions.

It is necessary to recognize that under Capitalism it would be impossible to wipe out sectional differences completely. This can only be done when the workers control their own destinies through a socialized econ-

[continued next page]

omy, and know that full employment is here to stay.

Everyone I meet says he is in favour of Industrial Unions—in principle—but arguments are always put forward as to why they cannot be established now. The Labour Party ignores the question, and the Communist Party largely does the same.

The ILP has it in its program, but is so ineffectual that it cannot do anything concrete about it.

Union leaders' stand

Most union leaders are opposed to the idea of the industrial union and meet it with fierce opposition. If we take building as an example we have a sorry tale to tell. The idea is not new in the trade. The NFBTO itself is in fact a product of earlier struggles, and in 1930 at Chester the General Council of the Federation was instructed to draw up a constitution for one Building Union. The scheme was voted upon in 1931, and was defeated. On the surface it would appear as if the leaders were in advance of the members. This, however, would be deceptive, and the idea was defeated precisely because of the vested interest of some "leaders" and the play they made on the craft prejudices among the rank and file. My own union, the ASW turned the scheme down by a 2 to 1 majority, again after much confusion had been created.

CP attitude

The situation is most interesting in relation to the Communist Party. This so-called revolutionary body showed clearly where it stood on the question of industrial unionism when it supported the T&GWU leadership against the NASDU and the rank and file of the northern dockers who made a serious attempt to create the industrial union. The CP line over many years has been, and still is, unity in words and conservatism in practice. Their policy is entirely pragmatic, serving always their immediate needs: it did not advocate industrial unions in its 1942 Program on Trade Unions, although measures of greater unity were proclaimed.

Socialist program

In my opinion a real fight is required to get the concept of industrial unionism accepted, a fight which must begin now. I am convinced that the need is a real one, and is a matter of life and death for the movement. **We should agitate around the following program, and should demand steps to be taken:**

(1) in all the nationalized industries, by demanding conferences of the unions in those industries with the object of one union for the industries concerned, and

(2) amalgamation where Federations already exist.

These I feel are minimum demands. At the same time we must raise the question of increased democracy by insisting on

(1) elections at all levels,
(2) officials' wages equivalent to the wage ruling in the industry,
(3) officials to have a period back in industry, and

(4) all national conferences to be on the basis of rank and file representation, officials to be there for consultation, without voting power.

PARLIAMENT

THE HOUSE has re-assembled in the prospect of a very full and interesting session which makes it all the more remarkable that the Prime Minister has departed upon what is, so far as can be seen, a completely unnecessary tour of the Commonwealth. Perhaps he thinks it is his last chance.

There has been some muddled debate on the economic situation. Mr. Thorneycroft, the retiring Chancellor, made a good speech on the general position; Mr. Robens, the "Shadow" Labour Minister, made a bad one on the London busmen's pay claim.

The central part of Mr. Thorneycroft's speech is worth quoting in full; it is an admirable summary of the difficulties facing capitalist Britain.

"The point I want to make is a simple one. It is that for over 12 years we have been attempting to do more than our resources can manage. In the process we have gravely weakened ourselves. We have been trying to do a number of things at the same time.

"First, we have sought to be a nuclear Power, to match missile for missile and anti-missile for anti-missile, and with large conventional forces in the Far East, Middle East, and Atlantic . . . At the same time we have sought to maintain a welfare state of as high a level, and sometimes higher, than the United States.

"We have tried to do that against the background of having to repay debts abroad during the next eight years at a total equal to the whole of our existing resources, against the background of having to repay monetary debts in this country next year at as high a level as this year, against the background of seeking to conduct a great international banking business, and of having to sustain our position as one of the world's major overseas investors."

There is only one possible answer, under capitalism, to this; we must, as the popular ministerial saying has it, "cut our coat to suit our cloth"; in other words, reduce the living standards of the great mass of the population.

Cabinet and shadow

Since, however, our living standards cannot be moved up and down as quickly as the value of shares there are disagreements on the best short-term methods. One school of thought believes in unemployment, the reduction of investment in British industries and an increase of investment overseas—in short, the "stable pound." The other believes in full employment and full investment at home and thus (presumably) in the rapid increase of real physical resources.

This seems, to this column, to be the difference between the actual and shadow cabinets. Neither is socialism, although the second is undoubtedly much the more attractive to socialists. Indeed, it provides a much more satisfactory base on which socialism may be founded and goes some way towards meeting the immediate economic demands of the working class, in that it is better to work and lose a large part of the value of the product than not to work at all.

All this, however, would have given little comfort to any bus worker who read the debates on his pay claim.

The tactics of the Labour leaders were the same as when the Health Service workers' pay claim was refused. All they said, in effect, was that it was wicked of the Minister of Labour to refuse to appoint Committees of Inquiry and to interfere with arbitration and such. Whereupon the Minister of Labour stands up and says that the decision is up to him; he has made up his mind, with the assistance—possibly insistence—of the rest of the cabinet and that was that.

In our study of the debate (which is open to correction) not one Labour Member said that these workers had a case for a

wage increase, let alone arguing it. That, surely, is sufficient to show that the L.P. is not a workers' party, as it should be, yet. The present attacks upon our living standards are possible because of the weakness and timidity of the Labour leadership.

MICHAEL MILLETT

*"Whiter than the whitewash on the wall,
Whiter than the whitewash on the wall,
Wash me in the water,
Where you wash your dirty daughter
And I shall be whiter
Than the whitewash on the wall."*

Army song which has nothing at all to do with the report of the Bank Rate Tribunal.

YOUNG SOCIALIST

FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM — continued

What does the State pay with? Taxes. And taxes are levied on the whole of the public. In the case of the worker and the lower white-collar worker, they are deducted from wages and salaries before pay day.

Now we can see how capitalism gets rid of its surpluses. The State taxes everybody and buys the arms for current wars (the British arms budget is now £1,441 million). When that isn't sufficient it borrows the accumulated surpluses of the capitalists and spends that on arms too and then taxes everybody to pay back its capitalist creditors (at the rate, now, of £878 million a year). If we allow the capitalist system to continue much longer our children will be paying back money to the capitalists that sent us to be killed in order to get rid of their surpluses!

The Government budget for 1957-58 shows the position clearly. Out of a total of £5,289 million, £1,441 million is going on the arms budget for current and future wars and £878 million on paying back the money squandered in past wars. This is equivalent to saying that of every £1 that passed through the Government's hand, 8/- is going on financing wars—past, present and future—while only 7/7 is for social services (including health, education, food subsidies, family allowances, and so on).

This, then, is all that capitalism can offer. Either a slump in which the workers starve while they wait for the goods to rot or a war in which they pay with their blood and their money as the goods go up in smoke.

This is what we must learn: **it is only because the capitalists are responsible to no one but themselves that they can turn production on and off, and produce guns when they find that they sell better than hot cakes. Only because they compete amongst themselves have they got to stretch beyond the live market of consumers into the horrors of production for war destruction—whether they like it or not.**

Our job is, thus, two-fold. First, workers' control of production so that the whole of society—not a small, independent section—is responsible for it. Second, full nationalisation and central planning to abolish competition.

Notebook

YOUTH SUMMER SCHOOL

"Labour's National Youth Summer School will be held from the 5th to the 12th July at Collington Rise, Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex, a very attractive guest house with a large recreational hall, equipped with a stage, dining room, library and lounge.

"It stands in seven acres of playing fields with an open air swimming pool and is only ten minutes walk from the sea.

"The cost, exclusive of travel, will be £6 10s. per student, and application forms may be obtained from the National Youth Officer, The Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, London, SW1.

"Students, who must be individual members of the Labour Party, between 16 and 25 years

of age, will study 'International Affairs' and 'Home Policy'."

Comrades will notice the usual Transport House priorities in this hand-out, with politics coming last. However, the National Summer School is the nearest thing we have at the moment to a national conference, and we should make use of it to put politics FIRST.

* * *

ABOUT 70 members of Youth Sections in the London area attended a week-end school at Beatrice Webb, House, on February 8/9; lectures were given by Dr. Horace King, MP, on Education, Alan Williams on the Labour Party's Approach to Youth and Bob Mellish, MP, on Trade Unions and the Labour Party. A report of the lectures and discussions will appear in our next issue.

PEACE — contd.

would be completely destroyed in the process.

The Scandinavian countries have refused to be used as front line targets, but the British Government is surrendering to American pressure. The building of the bases will be directed by the Americans; they will be operated by the Americans, but it will be the British people who will have to pay the cost of £40,000,000. The bases are not intended to defend the Scottish people but to protect the interests of American capitalism.

Government policy]

The policy of the Government is a policy of war. Not a single constructive peace proposal has come from the Government. The ruling class of Britain know no other answer to the basic problems of mankind than the hydrogen bomb and rocket bases. If our leaders cannot lead them the time has surely come for the ordinary people to accept the mantle of leadership. The greatest force for peace in the world is the working class. No Government on earth could commit the nation

to war without the support of the workers in the factories.

The British people must organize nation-wide demonstrations for a complete change of foreign policy. The Scottish Council of the Labour Party has called upon the National Executive to launch a campaign. 60 Labour M.P.'s have signed a resolution in the House of Commons protesting against the missile bases. I make no apology for using the Council Chamber for a similar purpose. A Town Council is an organized expression of the will of the people and the greater the volume of protest the more effective it will become.

I also take this opportunity to protest against the continuation of hydrogen bomb tests. Responsible scientific opinion has testified to the serious danger which radio active dust holds for the present and future generations. Only a few weeks ago a committee of twelve scientists, acting under the auspices of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, reported that the fall-out of Strontium 90 will substantially increase the number of deaths from leukaemia of the blood and bone cancer. Children are the most

likely to accumulate the effects of the radiation. It is not only the areas where the tests take place which are affected but the whole of this planet. Unless the man in the street becomes more conscious of the issues involved, he faces the prospect of the whole human race committing suicide.

Kremlin crimes

In making this protest, I do not whitewash the Kremlin from its share of the responsibility. I have not forgotten the murderous action of the Soviet Government in Hungary. There the most heroic struggle in history for the right to organize a democratic form of life was brutally suppressed. We have little control over the affairs of the Russian Government, but we have over our own.

Let us put an end to the insane policies being operated by the British Government, and it is only a question of time before the Russian workers and peasants settle accounts with their rulers. The upsurge will be the establishment of international socialism which alone can bring a lasting peace to mankind.

Dalkeith, January 13

LETTERS

What sort of paper?

IF THE TORIES are "hammering home the need for class politics," then we need a Socialist Review that will be tolerably readable and attractive to working people who are active in the Labour movement, but who are not yet dedicated Socialists. Beyond certain limits, it is not possible to build up the circulation of a paper which seems to be written for professional revolutionaries. Is the Editorial Board really so incredibly out of touch with the reading habits and attitudes of its potential readership, as it seems after reading the paper? Compared with other Left Wing papers Socialist Review reads like a junior version of the Financial Times. Even for "egg heads" like us it's an effort to get through it. Is the Editorial Board really so complacent? If the fortnightly is to survive, a wider readership, a broader foundation is essential.

What is wanted—and quickly—is a heavyweight Marxist version of Tribune. This can be achieved without increasing our production costs (though the present large format is somewhat outmoded and unattractive). Contributors can be attracted when they see what the editors are really trying to make of the paper. If Socialist Review is to become a political force, the following changes in editorial policy are essential.

1. A more attractive and up to date layout, especially to break up the longer features, even though this means an apparently less economical use of space. This means taking

newspaper design seriously; the old rule-of-thumb methods just won't do today.

2. More popular, topical items, such as are found in other Left-wing papers, are needed. The odd concession to this principle pleases no one. This does not mean a Marxist Daily Mirror. Briefly, it means being a bit more human, getting closer to the readers, getting beyond the present cramping, rigid ideas about class struggle and class attitudes, however correct these may be. Socialists do not stop being Socialists when they talk about books or holidays or sport or read short stories. We want a paper that shows by its interests that Socialism is a real brotherhood and way of life, not a paper confined to a narrow political compartment for round-the-clock activists. Whatever abuses involved, British CP journalism is way ahead in this respect.

As for the direct political stuff, a witty columnist, with an anecdote about the antics at the last GMC or Union Branch meeting, laced with racy workshop humour, can often get over a worthwhile political idea more successfully than a frightening 'theoretically correct' analysis, lumbering across four tedious columns of close black print, and written in a style fit for a book or learned journal not a fortnightly Socialist paper.

3. Keep the long, heavyweight stuff down to one or two items: then they will get the attention they deserve. In such articles try to explain abstractions in simple, concrete terms taken from workers' everyday experiences. Then the article will live and will be remembered. If you write about Workers' Control of Industry, and you have to say "Participation in the control of management would restore dignity to labour," at least remind the readers what you mean by 'dignity of labour' by specific reference to any of the countless daily incidents in factory and mine in which the 'dignity of labour' is flouted almost as a matter of course.

These, we believe, are the main problems facing the fortnightly, and

the key to its future. An open discussion in the columns of the paper, followed by definite decisions about what the paper should look like and read like, is urgently necessary.

L. J. ATKINS KEN JONES
C. BARBER MOIRA JONES
D. BARBER J. MOORE
B. R. CLARK E. MORRIS
V. J. CLARK B. METSON
Harlow.

Are we so out of touch as the comrades seem to think? We are proud to state that since September last year, that is, in the space of only 6 months, 25 new contributors have written for SR; we are also proud to state that circulation has not dropped at all despite our increasing the frequency of publication by more than double. These facts certainly disprove the allegation of being out of touch.

There is, of course, an explanation for the growing interest in SR. Whatever its technical shortcomings—and there are many, we know—it provides a political service and has a political appeal that militant socialists cannot fail to appreciate. What other paper in Britain presents such a clear, consistent socialist program? (What other paper, indeed, dares tie itself down by printing what it stands for?). What other paper raises so insistently problems of socialist thought and socialist practice?

Our readers are attracted to what we say, to our content. If they find that of sufficient importance, they will forgive a certain amount of looseness in form.

Not that we like our technical incompetence. We are very conscious of it and are doing our best to overcome it. But deal with us patiently. Our resources are limited, very limited. Readers can help by writing, criticizing and building the paper.

One final point. We are happy to print the letter from our comrades in Harlow. We hope it will stimulate discussion amongst, and correspondence from, comrades elsewhere. The paper is yours, Comrades. It is yours to fashion as you see fit.—Editor.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

The SOCIALIST REVIEW stands for international Socialist democracy. Only the mass mobilisation of the working class in the industrial and political arena can lead to the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of Socialism.

The SOCIALIST REVIEW believes that a really consistent Labour Government must be brought to power on the basis of the following programme:

- The complete nationalisation of heavy industry, the banks, insurance and the land with compensation payments based on a means test. Renationalisation of all denationalised industries without compensation.—The nationalised industries to form an integral part of an overall economic plan and not to be used in the interests of private profit.
- Workers' control in all nationalised industries, i.e., a majority of workers' representatives on all national and area boards, subject to frequent election, immediate recall and receiving the average skilled wage ruling in the industry.
- The inclusion of workers' representatives on the boards of all private firms employing more than 20 people. These representatives to have free access to all documents.
- The establishment of workers' committees in all concerns to control hiring, firing and working conditions.
- The establishment of the principle of work or full maintenance.
- The extension of the social services by the payment of adequate pensions, linked to a realistic cost-of-living index, the abolition of all payments for the National Health Service and the development of an industrial health service.
- The expansion of the housing programme by granting interest free loans to local authorities and the right to requisition privately held land.
- Free State education up to 18. Abolition of fee paying schools. For comprehensive schools and adequate maintenance grants—without a means test—for all university students.
- Opposition to all forms of racial discrimination. Equal rights and trade union protection to all workers whatever their country of origin. Freedom of migration for all workers to and from Britain.
- Freedom from political and economic oppression to all colonies. The offer of technical and economic assistance to the people of the underdeveloped countries.
- The unification of an independent Ireland.
- The abolition of conscription and the withdrawal of all British troops from overseas. The abolition of all weapons of mass destruction.
- A Socialist foreign policy independent of both Washington and Moscow.