

# The Week

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS  
VOL. 6 No. 23. 22nd Dec. 1966.

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**Hull Plan  
for the  
Fishing  
Industry**

# THE AXE FALLS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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8 Roland Gardens, London, S.W.7.

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6p

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS  
JUNE 6 1964

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3 Roland Gardens, London, S.W.7



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### PEACE TALK AND ESCALATION

Once again the Americans have simultaneously launched a peace offensive and an escalation of the Vietnam war. Once again the British Labour Government has covered up for this hypocrisy and refused to condemn the escalation. Brown and Crossman deny the facts of the case - yet, as we show on page 12 there is no doubt that the Americans have bombed civilian centres in Hanoi. The only answer is for all sections of the movement to renew their activities to put pressure on the Government. But we need to note that those who soft-peddled opposition on the Vietnam question have been shown to be wrong in practice. This Government will go as far right as we allow it!

### THE ZINOVIEV LETTER

The Zinoviev letter affair was clearly a conspiracy against the people of Britain perpetrated with connivance of Foreign Office officials and leaders of the Tory Party. As such the Labour Government should order an investigation and those who are still around who took part in this conspiracy should be brought to trial. This Government which acts so tough towards trade unionists should surely take a strong line on this question.

### THE REAL ROLE OF NATO

Dean Rusk, U.S. Secretary of State, revealed a curious interpretation of the NATO Treaty to his partners at a recent meeting of Ministers in Paris. He reminded them of Article 5 which states "an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all." He went on to point out that in the event of an attack on the U.S. West Coast by China all the NATO countries would be involved. The implications of this are that Rusk wants to get the West European countries involved in its Asian adventures. The nonsense about a possible Chinese attack on the U.S. is merely a smoke-screen to cover up Johnson's own plans in that direction. Could it be that having failed to involve its NATO partners directly in Vietnam, the U.S. Government will try to do so through the backdoor of the NATO treaty? We should re-double our effort to get Britain out of NATO.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE MUST COME DOWN!

Anthony Greenwood sounded remarkably like Baldwin when he told the House of Commons that local government expenditure must come down "because the country can't afford the present level. The major factor in the big rise in local government expenditure is, as Anthony Greenwood knows very well, the increase in interest charges. This arises entirely from Government policy, so it is in effect blaming the local authorities for a situation which it has brought about itself. This coming year promises to see lots of Labour-controlled councils lost to the Conservatives. They will be caught in the vice of rising rates on the one side and declining social services on the other. The local council Labour groups are thus being made to pay for their refusal to oppose Government policy. They should start a campaign now before it is too late.



The Government decision last Friday, to extend and aggravate the freeze still further, calls for more than denunciation. It is becoming perfectly clear that while the unions merely complain, the depredations of Mr. Gunter and Mr. Stewart will continue to escalate.

Of course, complaint is abundantly justified, Mr. Gunter's Christmas bonus, which has deferred the Confed. settlement, of 4 to 5 shillings a week, which was to affect three million engineering workers from March onwards; which has shunted the proposals of the Agricultural Wages Board and the Retail Drapery Wages Council into the office of Mr. Aubrey Jones; and which threatens a settlement affecting 55,000 electrical contracting workers, has already stung union spokesmen to vigorous opposition. Pay increases to all these groups of workers are overdue: continued price rises throughout the period of the freeze have inflicted serious cuts in their standard of living, which are now to be pushed even further and deeper. "A quite unjustified and massive extension of the freeze which will delay badly needed increases for some of the lower paid workers", said Frank Cousins, when he was asked to characterise this latest blow. Quite rightly, he continued "Many trade unionists who have previously accepted Government policy will join the wave of indignation against the way things are going." Hugh Scanlon, pointed out that "this shows the invalidity of the Government to predict the state of the economy under capitalism for six months, let alone three years." Naturally one side-effect of the ministers' ruling will be inoculate trade unionists against the blandishments of long-term agreements, and Mr. Scanlon did not draw back from implying a strong criticism of his union's President: "this is a warning not to repeat the mistake of the much-criticised package deal," he said. (The engineers' package deal, of course, was Sir William Carron's very own original contribution to "a new pattern of industrial relations.")

Yet justified as these sharp comments are, they are not enough. It is becoming quite obvious that the Government is perfectly prepared to defy Labour Party and trade union opinion: the Conference motion on worksharing has been set aside by Mr. Wilson, none of the promised cuts in arms expenditure have materialised, and now the freeze is to be carried over without as much as a by-your-leave to the trade unions who placed all those who impose such unsufferable burdens on their members in their present elevated posts.

It is becoming imperative that the unions begin to meet these attacks with a co-ordinated answer. A clear alternative policy is needed, which can mobilise the whole movement for a policy of socialist reforms and economic growth. Among the ideas being canvassed in the TGWU, the five technicians' unions and elsewhere, there is a hard core of proposals which can unify the movement and give it the programmatic strength to oppose and overcome the present drift of Government action. But these proposals must be quickly elaborated, agreed, and brought before the public eye. This surely requires that there should be a conference of all those unions which oppose the freeze - called with the sole objective of co-ordinating the struggle. Armed with such a common programme, the opposition could quickly win the movement for its policies. The present Government has gone back on so many of its firm election commitments, that there are already very large numbers of people who are waiting for a lead. Such a lead, if it came from the progressive unions in time, could save the Labour movement.



planned by December 1967, to have two simultaneous berthing facilities for ocean-going ships. In 1963 the Americans conducted me over the port of Kismayu which they are improving.

"It does little service to peace when distinguished politicians like Sir Alec and distinguished journalists like Mr. Beeston boom around the globe the highland hysteria of a moribund Empire.

Lytton  
House of Lords."

There was no editorial comment nor a retort by Richard Beeston. It is a pity that this reproof to Sir Alec's anti-Soviet hysteria had to come from the House of Lords.

LABOUR'S NORTH SEA GAS SELL-OUT from a Hull reader

As the Guardian commented recently, in a most incisive editorial (Nov 23) on the politics of the North Sea natural gas, Richard Marsh, the Minister of Power, is involved in some crucial financial deals with the oil companies over the price of North Sea gas. Needless to say, the oil companies are doing all they can to get a high price fixed. The Guardian continued: "The argument has now developed to a point at which the Gas Council is challenging the oil companies - in effect - to justify their high price policy by disclosing the amount in their investment..." Mr. David Barran, deputy chairman of Shell, whose company, Shell/Esso, has made one of the largest finds of gas in the North Sea, "published for the first time two essential figures which make it possible to assess how much Shell/Esso can expect to make out of their North Sea enterprise. He estimated that the total output of the Shell/Esso field as the equivalent of 1,000 million cubic feet a day for 15 years. And he said that his estimate of the total cost (operating costs plus capital invested) was £100 millions, of which £25 millions would be invested next year. What Mr. Barran did not say - although this can be quickly calculated - is that these figures suggest that a landed price of 2d a therm would give Shell/Esso a return on their investment of well over 100.%" (Emphasis added.) As the Guardian comments: "By any ordinary business standard this is a very large return indeed, particularly as a part at least of the £100 million will be recoverable as an investment grant from the Board of Trade."

According to a Financial Times report (December 12), the Gas Council "has now formulated its proposals for the price of North Sea gas. Amoco, its partner in the venture has been officially informed and the Shell/Esso partnership is aware of what Amoco has been told. The Council wants a scale which will enable it to pay 3d a therm for the first tranche of 100 million cubic feet a day from the field. This works out at 1.8d a therm for 500 million cubic feet a day, and both Amoco, a subsidiary of Standard Oil of Indiana, and the Shell/Esso partnership are believed to be interested in selling quantities in excess of that figure.

The Financial Times continues ominously: "some hard bargaining will be necessary before an agreement can be reached." We all know that Mr. Marsh does not include nationalisation of Britain's natural gas on his agenda. He has gone out of his way to say so publicly. Nevertheless, the case for the Gas Council taking over Britain's North Sea gas resources is overwhelming; Mr. Marsh's only alternative is to guarantee the international oil cartels that they can go ahead and make their vast profit out of the British people.



## QUINTIN HOGG'S CULTURAL REVOLUTION by Geoff Coggan

Quintin Hogg was at his most culturally revolting in last week's "Sunday Express". Addressing himself with well placed confidence to the readership of that newspaper, he launched a frontal attack on the opera, ballet, the BBC and the National Theatre, which "are paid for, to the extent necessary, by those who do not patronise these cultural delights, through Miss Jennie Lee, the new Lady Bountiful of artistic taste."

Such an argument is rich indeed, coming from a Tory front bench speaker on education and one of the most immoderate defenders of the grammar schools. What else is the concept of a privileged education - or for that matter the whole basis of the class system on which the Tory Party rests, - but the payment, in money or in the work which produces money, for not merely cultural but many other forms of "delights" by large sections of the community which have never had the opportunity of patronising them.

From a socialist viewpoint there is much to criticise in the Government's cultural policy - its parsimony for one thing: the narrowness of its application for another, and, above all, the superficial manner in which it is spread like icing on a cake which has no inner richness. The arts may be being extended, for those who can reach them, but there is all too little being done, in housing, education or working conditions, to widen the extent of the grasp. But the Tory policy of attacking even this minimum programme is bleak indeed.

## NORTH VIETNAMESE CHARGES "ACCURATE" - FRENCH JOURNALIST IN HANOI

When asked to make a clear statement about the bombing of the civilian population in Hanoi by Mr. Dickens, M.P., "our" Foreign Secretary, George Brown, replied: "I do not believe that the American Government has done any such thing...." There can be no doubt that the Foreign Office gets the Sunday Times, so Mr. Brown can have read for himself a despatch from Hanoi by Jacques Moalie. Dated Saturday, December 17th, the report backed up the Hanoi charges of the bombing of metropolitan centres. The article was quite precise mentioning actual streets which had been bombed. Very significantly, he pointed out that three delegation chiefs of the International Control Commission had been allowed to visit the scene of six bomb or rockets hits in and near the capital. What is more newspaper correspondents were allowed to see three of these sites too. Mr. Moalie's conclusion is quite clear: "From these visits it is plain enough that the official North Vietnamese assessment of the damage can be taken as accurate."

## NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY - NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY - NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

All readers of The Week are invited to a party to be held at 6, Aycliffe Rd., London W. 12 on Saturday, December 31st. To reach Aycliffe one catches a 12 or 207 bus and gets off at Wormholt Rd., Aycliffe Rd. is the second on the left. The party, which starts at 8.00 p.m., is a bring-your-own bottle affair and all proceeds will be going towards Week funds.

If you are in any doubt as to how to get to Aycliffe Rd. ring Charlie Van Gelderen at She 5791. It will be helpful if readers can bring as many people as possible. Our last party was both a social and financial success. This being new year's eve should be even more successful.



Racism in Ashford, Middlesex (continued)

is reported to have said: "I was disgusted. We had made arrangements and I was ready to hand over the money once the house was completed. Then I was told that the deal was off because of colour prejudice. I rang Mr. Westlake and asked why. He was a bit vague at first and beat about the bush. Then he said it was because the purchaser was coloured."

In explanation, Mr. Westlake - of Stinton and Westlake, of Staines - has since said: "I have no colour prejudice, but what else could I do? The house is one of a pair and it is obvious that I would have great difficulty selling the adjoining one if the neighbours were coloured. I admit that I have a prospective purchaser for the other house who would not mind coloured neighbours, but that sale depends on whether he can sell his own house in time, which is doubtful."

HALF A MILLION CHILDREN IN BRITAIN LIVE BELOW MINIMUM HEALTH STANDARDS

from a special correspondent

At an "Abolishing Poverty" teach-in, arranged by the Child Party Action Group at the Friends' House, London, last Saturday, successive speakers described the increased poverty which had been growing up in Britain since 1960. Professor Abel-Smith, Professor of Social Administration at the London School of Economics, said that the growing number of large families were responsible for the rise. To put the problem in perspective, he pointed out that it could be effectively remedied by an expenditure of 0.1 per cent of the national income, or roughly the amount that it costs to run the fire service.

Dr. Harriett Wilson, a Birmingham University sociologist, emphasised the environmental effects. Poor children, she said, were more likely to be premature and lighter at birth. Their mortality rate was three or four times that of the children of the professional classes, and the results of their infant infections were liable to be more serious. "Often they have no toys, and when they come to a nursery we have to show them how to play. They have no daily routine, no personal possessions, no private property." Dr. Wilson was describing her research amongst families whose incomes were below the Ministry's poverty line. "Mothers of such families were often tense, worried and overburdened, and sometimes they could not send their children to school because they had no shoes and clothes. They were unable to give their children a treat without raiding the rent money, and many said they smoked in order to cut down their own appetite and reduce food consumption."

Professor Peter Townsend, of the University of Essex, said that we were only just beginning to see the need for an attack on poverty. "The Labour Government faces an inescapable test of its own moral integrity, now that Ministers have learned from a special study that half a million children live below the poverty line." The Professor hoped that a decision could be reached before Christmas.

NALSO CONFERENCE ..... A NOTICE TO ALL NALSO STUDENTS (January 3rd and 4th)

An Interim Policy Conference is to be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, the 3rd and 4th of January, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day, at the London School of Economics, Old Buildings, Room 237. Will all members of Labour Clubs, Socialist Societies and Unions do their best to attend this important conference.



In an attempt to outdo Harold Wilson in "East of Suezism", Sir Alec Douglas Home has raised a hue and cry about Soviet penetration of the Middle East. He has been aided in this scare by a combination of hack jouranalists and such figures as King Hussein of Jordan, who desperately wants American aid to keep his tottering Kingdom together. However, Sir Alec has received a rebuff from an unexpected source-- the House of Lords! Moreover, the rebuttal is absolutely devastating insofar as it completely demolishes Sir Alec's main bogey: the spectre of Soviet arms "pouring into Somalia." This rap over the knuckles took the form of a letter in the Daily Telgraph as follows:

"Under the heading "Soviet Arms Pouring into Somalia" Richard Beeston says that "if French Somaliland votes for independence the Emperor of Ethiopia is convinced that Somalia will attempt a military take-over of the colony. The supply of Soviet arms to Somalia is in pursuance of an agreement made by the Somali Government with the Soviet Union early in 1964. The appeal to Moscow was made after similar appeals to Washington, London, Roma and Bonn had met with paltry offers of military aid. The occasion for these urgent appeals was the intrusion of Ethiopian military forces into the territory of the Somali Republic (including bombs on Hargeisa) in 1963/64.

"The emperor has never withdrawn his wholly unfounded claim that Somalia was always an integral part of Ethiopia and that Ethiopia, while desiring nothing that belongs to others, will never give up what belongs to her. He made the claim in 1941 and again in 1960 and a member of his Embassy repeated it in a Delhi newspaper in 1963. Precisely the same claim, a claim as groundless as ever, has lately been made by the Emperor in respect of French Somaliland in his "part and parcel" speech. The Emperor has already created tension in the Horn by refusing self-determination to the large part of the Somali nation which lies dismembered across the borders of Somalia in Ethiopian-governed territory, and also by persuading Kenya to do the same thing with another Somali desert region about the size of England.

"His threat to annex French Somaliland contrasts with the Somali statement "We only want to see them free and independent in unity under one flag of their own choice"; this statement is in line with the recent resolution of the Organisation of African Unity at its summit meeting in the Emperor's own capital; the O.A.U. adds the most relevant and vital consideration of all, namely that the referendum in question should be conducted "on an entirely free, democratic and impartial basis." The Russians have no operational base of any kind in Somalia, and the primitive port of Berbera (allegedly "converted by the Russians into a modern port") over which the Somalis and Russians conducted me last July has at present no berthing facilities at all; it is

continued over/



In a White Paper published on December 14th explaining the grants system under the new Local Government Act, it was announced that local authorities estimated expenditure over the next two years was considered to be too high "under current economic conditions". It has therefore been decided that proposed grants will be cut by £23m. in 1967/68 and £47m. in 1968/69.

What this means in real terms was indicated by Mr. J.M. Whittaker, chairman of the Local Finance Committee, when he addressed the executive of the County Councils Association. He said that there will "either be a reduction in the services or a heavy increase in the rates". In relation to education services Sir William Alexander, secretary of the Association of Education Committees, said "Education accounts for more than half the total expenditure of counties and county boroughs. The great bulk of education spending is irreducible - teachers salaries, loan charges, etc. Where are the cuts to be made?" Sir William went on to point out that with the present programme for the expansion of education, particularly under the new Industrial Training Act, rates would have to be increased by as much as 10 per cent.

This decision is going to make the local elections in May of next year a difficult time for the Labour Party. Already the Tories have announced a drive to capture control of more boroughs. It would seem that the Ministry of Housing and Local Government is providing them with plenty of ammunition. There needs to be a vigorous campaign of protest at this latest series of cuts that threaten all local services. Only a few years ago the labour movement was protesting at Tory parsimony towards local authorities. Because Tony Greenwood now presides over these cuts it does not make them any the more acceptable.

SUPPORT THE LOCOMEN!

from a rails' correspondent

The decision of the executive of ASLEF to call a work to rule and a ban on rest day working from January 16th is one that all sections of the labour movement should support. The dispute with the Railway Board centres around an incentive scheme for short-haul freight trains crews - the union is insisting that no man made surplus by the introduction of the incentive scheme should be displaced from his grade or depot. The Board's answer is significant: "Such an undertaking would be contrary to the requirements of the Prices and Incomes Board's recent report on productivity and pay during the period of severe restraint." Thus the locomen are not merely fighting the Board: they are up against the Government's whole incomes policy.

This dispute promises to be the first large scale conflict between the Government and the unions in 1967. In previous struggles - the seamen's strike, for instance - there has been a complete lack of solidarity by other unions. This mistake must not be repeated this time. We must fight for complete unity between the railway unions and for solidarity action by all sections of the movement, trade union and political, which oppose the Government's wages policy.

Every struggle against the Government becomes a political one - every dispute becomes a general one. The only way to make the Government stop its gallop to the right or even to hesitate a little is to defeat it in struggle. Thus we all have a vested interest in the success of the locomen's struggle.



## RACISM IN EUROPE .....

Writing in the American magazine "Holiday", the American Negro author John A. Williams discusses the extent of racism, which, he says, "is growing like a weed in nearly all European nations." "The only difference between United States and European racism is in the degree. The hard truth about European racism is that it has always been part of the scene: a close and constant relative of nationalism."

Mr. Williams relates the degree of discrimination directly to "the number of black strangers in each country" and gives a depressing account of his experiences in various European countries:

- Britain - "England is a place where the hot sun of racial hatred is rising with ungodly haste .... The British people are just as bigoted as anyone else and probably more so."
- France - "I have had some very good times in Paris, but .... it is becoming increasingly difficult (to live there). 'Sales Negres' is as common in France as its translation 'dirty Nigger' is in the States."
- Italy - "I remember most of all the night a mob surrounded me while I was walking to a delicatessen with a white secretary. In 1961, during the Congo eruptions, Roman mobs attacked Africans and American Negroes in the streets."
- Germany - "My first day in Germany left me with a bad taste in my mouth. In Munich, my wife and I were refused rooms in three hotels .... Black students find it difficult to obtain rooms."
- Greece - "I was jeered and hooted at on the main street in Athens by celebrators in blackface (at the Spring Festival three years ago.)"
- Sweden - "I found a great deal of hostility in Stockholm and the other Swedish cities I visited ....., The Swedish-American who returns for a visit reveals a bigotry not unlike the Southern white."

Mr. Williams, who graduated from Syracuse University, has been an author, newspaper reporter and social worker. In trying to find a cause for the unexpected post-war rise in racism in Europe, he says that "the shifting patterns of war, and then of peace, have disrupted the historically rigid social structure on the Continent." The 5 million people from poorer southern European nations - Spaniards, Portuguese, Greeks, Italians, Yugoslavs, Turks and Algerians - have flowed northwards "in such numbers that some countries have begun to restrict immigration." "These people," writes Mr. Williams, "are the 'Niggers' of Europe. .... Whenever I talked with Europeans about the racial impasse at home, they in turn talked about Italians, Spaniards, Greeks who had come to their lands. .... But these people can be absorbed into the majority in his new country because they are 'white'! Even the most naive black man living in Europe - African or American - soon comes to know this. .... The real Europe, still shot through with nationalism that often includes racism, can be stark indeed."

## ..... AND IN ASHFORD, MIDDLESEX

A Mr. Sidney Westlake, a builder in Ashford, Middlesex, has cancelled a cash sale for one of his £6,000 houses on the grounds that his would-be purchaser is coloured. Hussein Jaffer and his sister, Guizar, were told that the sale was off after they had chosen the decorations and after they had received the contract. Miss Jaffer, who is a 24-year-old African born B.O.A.C. employee,



DO IT YOURSELF WORKERS CONTROL from a Coventry Reader.

The Coventry factory of Pressed Steel Fisher was shut down for the fourth Friday running on 16th December. This arose because thirty tin smiths are following their union policy and only working four days per week until eleven sheet metal workers, sacked in November, are found jobs, either with Fisher's or with other firms.

The union involved is the Birmingham and District Sheet Metal Workers'. Negotiations with the management about the eleven men ended in deadlock and since then the tin-smiths have imposed their own version of work sharing. This action is one that could have been usefully adopted by other workers faced with similar situations.

WORKS STUDY DISPUTE IN WEDNESBURY From our Industrial Correspondent

The works convenor, his deputy and officials of the shop stewards committee were amongst those suspended until further notice, without pay, by Steel Nut and Joseph Hampton of Wednesbury, Staffs, due to a dispute over time and motion methods. Those suspended refused to co-operate in a new works study scheme. A spokesman of the T.G.W.U. said on the 15th December that "It is an attempt to smash the union set up at the factory. Nightshift workers who also refused to fill in forms have not been penalised. Only people connected with the union organisation have been hit".

This is another example of employers taking advantage of the present economic situation to try to impose speed up and attack union organisation on the shop floor. It seems that Wilson's shakeout and redeployment is merely a euphemism for an attempt to break shop stewards organisation in the factories.

TORY APOLOGISTS FOR APARTHEID - THE GRIM REALITY by Marion Jarvis

Mr. Patrick Wall, Tory M.P. for Haltemprice, in a recent letter to The Guardian (Dec.19th) tries to prove how well off the African workers are in South Africa. He quotes approvingly the minimum wage of £5. per week that the Africans 'enjoy' and contrasts this with other African countries. He goes on to say - "This is no doubt the reason why so many Africans enter South Africa each year to enjoy the higher standard of living..."

What this 'gentleman' fails to mention is, of course, the appalling poverty that this £5. per week condemns the majority in South Africa to live in. Nor does he mention the fantastic disparity between the wages of the White and African workers, or indeed between the white population as a whole and the African's. Some idea of this can be gleaned from the following. In the gold mines of South Africa at present 44,000 White workers are employed, and in 1965 the total European wage bill came to £68m. 375,000 non-European workers are also employed, and for 1965 the total wage bill for these came to £33m. i.e. While they number nearly nine times as many as the Europeans they draw less than half the amount in wages. This super-exploitation is something that most apologists of Apartheid (and the Smith regime in Rhodesia) like to hide.

Nevertheless, despite the flowery phrases and double talk the grim reality breaks through daily. If other African countries lag behind in income, this should not be used as an excuse for Apartheid, rather it should be a very good reason for looking closely at the stranglehold imperialism still has on these countries.



## DECLINE IN INVESTMENT IN ENGINEERING INDUSTRY

from our Economic Correspondent.

At its meeting on 18th November, the Mechanical Engineering Economic Development Council was presented with a survey of capital investment intentions for 1967 in the industry for the coming year. The survey, carried out in October, covers about one tenth of all manufacturing industry.

The survey reveals that total capital expenditure will decline by about 7.6 per cent below the level of 1966. However, this total is somewhat misleading. The cutback is concentrated on buildings, it being down 28.9 per cent, while investment on plant and machinery is to increase slightly by 1.2 per cent.

The main reasons for the decline in total investment is, predictably, given as reductions in home demand and restriction of cash flow. An unusual feature revealed by the survey was that it is mainly medium and large sized firms that are cutting back. In previous recessions since the war it has usually been the smaller firms that have made adjustments in their investment plans. The significance of this is that many of the large firms are key units, and the repercussions of their cutbacks will be felt in the economy for some time to come. It is a further indication of a loss of confidence of the employers in the future of the economy.

Perhaps even more significant from the point of view of the trade unions is the maintenance of investment in plant and machinery. This would suggest that the present recession is being used to introduce more labour saving machinery at the expense of workers.

## BUILDING SITES MILITANTS UNDER ATTACK by a Fulham Reader.

The National Federation of Building Trades Operatives have withdrawn the credentials from three London shop stewards for their part in the London Building Workers Joint Sites Committee. The three stewards are Bob Gordon, Max Bayer and Bill Thompson. The withdrawal of their stewards credentials arose over the December 7th demonstration called by the Joint Sites Committee to protest at the freezing of the pay award due to be paid to building workers on that date.

This move is one calculated to damp down the rising militancy of the London building workers. This militancy has been evident in a number of strikes on various sites in London recently. The Myton and Sunley disputes are evidence of the calculated attempts of the employers to destroy site organisation and of the determination of the men to resist this.

Another move by the NFBTO also has implications for such developments in the future. It was decided at a meeting on December 14th that representatives of all affiliated unions should meet before declaring any strike official from now on. This decision originates in the friction between the TGWU and the ASW over the Myton Barbican site dispute. It is possible under the present arrangement that more strikes will be unofficial than previously, and no doubt lead to a swelling of the chorus from the employers about 'irresponsible elements'. The real question is who is being irresponsible in the present situation, those who fight to defend site organisation or those who obstruct this? The Myton and Sunley disputes give the rank and file's answer.



"It's no fish ye're buying, it's men's lives", said the fishwife in Sir Walter Scott's The Anticary. IT'S MEN'S LIVES is the title of Humberside Voice's latest Industrial Series pamphlet. Prepared and written by three ex-Ruskin mature students, it exposes the network of monopoly, public subsidy and featherbedding which makes up the system of ownership and control of the industry. The penetration of Ross Group and Associated Fisheries into a dominating position, the assistance they receive from a friendly state (through the White Fish Authority) and the extending control which these firms exercise in processing and distribution are laid bare. The primitive and disgraceful conditions of the fishermen are described, and the conclusion drawn that they require much greater control over their working lives. The industry itself, the pamphlet argues, is ripe for nationalisation, in which the fishermen again should extend their controls considerably. The foreword to the pamphlet has been written by Jack Ashwell, who is the Hull fishing officer for the Transport and General Workers' Union, and who is currently campaigning vigorously against the grossly excessive hours of work of the fishermen, and for extended worker control over safety regulations at sea. (He was previously a bus-driver on the Hull corporation buses, and whilst chairman of his branch, wrote the Voice pamphlet Four Steps for Progress on the democratisation of the management of the transport system in Hull. That pamphlet has recently received renewed attention in the light of the EYMS busmen's strike and the growing understanding of the facts of monopoly control of the private section of the bus industry.)

The fishing pamphlet is most timely in its appearance, for feeling is running very high - amongst fishermen, their union, and the Hull Labour Parties - at the news that Harold Wilson is to present the Silver Cod trophy next March. This bauble is awarded every year by the fishing vessel owners to the skipper of the trawler which catches the highest tonnage in the year. It is a great publicity stunt for the owners, but to the fishermen the trophy symbolises the terrible system of work, with its attendant dangers and excessive hours. (Eighty hours a week is common whilst a trawler is at the fishing grounds!) In chasing the trophy, skippers are tempted into even greater risks than are normal, and may be induced as a result to fish in dangerous weather conditions (ice-formation and gales).

The fishermen's accident and fatality rate is higher than any other industry, not excluding mining. No doubt Wilson sees the trophy as another example of his "productivity drive." In pursuit of this, he is prepared to be associated with the most hated symbol of exploitation in the most dangerous trade in our country. The fishermen, the union, and the labour parties (all shades of opinion are united in their view of the Silver Cod) will be campaigning against Wilson's participation in the ceremony, and Hull Labour M.P.s, Kevin McNamara and Jim Johnson can be in no doubt about the feeling on this matter. It is a good time to buy and read "It's Men's Lives."\*

\* Available from Janet Blackman, 42, Pearson Park, Hull. 2/- post paid.

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In the notice about Isaac Deutscher's pamphlet on the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1/9d post paid), the address of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation Publishing Department was given as 11, Wormwood St., London EC2 - it should be 11a, Wormwood St.



## ANOTHER AMERICAN OWNED FIRM ATTEMPTS TO SMASH UNION ORGANISATION

by Ken Tarbuck.

Following on from the ENV management's decision to close down their works comes a move by the U.S. owned Roberts Arundel of Stockport to smash union organisation. There has been a dispute at the factory for four weeks now. This arose over the recruitment of five women workers after 45 men had been declared redundant.

The strike at the factory has been declared official by the A.E.U. and has received widespread support in the north-west. On Monday of this week - 19th December - there was a mass picket of over 300 including representatives from Manchester Shipbuilding and Engineering Confederation, and various shop stewards committees in the area. The managing director had to force his way through a storm of boing when he entered the factory.

Following attempts by Confederation Officials to get the Engineering Employers to put pressure on the firm to abide by national agreements, the firm has left the employers' organisation, and declared that it will not abide by the agreements. It has also declared that it will not recognise trade unions or shop floor organisation, and will recruit non-union labour. In its attempt to smash the strike it has sacked all those who are involved in the dispute.

This present dispute follows a definite pattern for firms that are taken over as U.S. subsidiaries. Local and national agreements are observed for a time, then the management starts complaining about 'restrictive practices' or 'obstruction'. There follow attempts to weed out militants on the shop floor and weaken factory organisation. Closely associated with this are demands for revisions in agreements and in the case of ENV a threatened shut down when these are not conceded. At Roberts Arundel, probably because of the local labour position, they have resorted to mass sackings. The firm no doubt hopes to intimidate any labour they recruit from trying to organise.

So far they have been very unsuccessful in their attempts to recruit scab labour, only 26 people having crossed the picket lines. There have been reports that the police have been active in trying to intimidate pickets by their usual technique of warning against 'violence'. However, none of the measures so far seem to have affected the spirit and solidarity of the strikers.

The importance of this dispute cannot be stressed too much. On numerous occasions in recent months it has become clear that employers are using the present recession to attack workshop organisation and so pave the way to lower living standards. It becomes very clear that the 'sacred' national agreements, that are constantly invoked against shop stewards when required, can be thrown into the waste paper basket when it suits the employers.

The London building disputes (mentioned elsewhere) and this dispute all follow the same pattern. This is why it is necessary for all workers to support these individual strikes by a massive show of solidarity.

Donations to the strike fund should be sent to:-

The Treasurer, A.E.U. Office, 125 Wellington Rd. South, Stockport,  
Cheshire.

They should be marked clearly for the Arundel dispute.