

The Week

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS
Vol. 7. No. 22. June 1st, 1967

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**BEAT
THE
WAGE
STOP**

JOHNSON'S GESTURE

71, Onslow Gardens, London, N.10.

Subscription: £2 per annum and pro rata

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Johnson's Gesture and the Middle East crisis

With a great flourish the world's capitalist press has leaked the story that Johnson has taken Hanoi and Haiphong off his target list. This action is linked with the Middle East crisis and Johnson's alleged desire to avoid war. Meanwhile Mr. Wilson's Government pursues a craven policy of supporting every American move in complete detail. No wonder many on the left describe Sandy Shaw's Eurovision prize-winning song - "Puppet on a string" - as the Wilson song.

The Vietnamese are treating Johnson's gesture with the contempt that it deserves. The parallel between Johnson's double-talk and the actions of Hitler during the war is almost uncanny. Hitler, too, with a great flourish, announced many times that he was giving Britain a chance to negotiate by relieving the pressure by making an almost worthless gesture. But there are more significant reasons for Johnson's behaviour: his action shows the basic weakness of his position. He wants at all costs to avoid a second front. This in turn is striking confirmation of Che's thesis that the best way to help Vietnam is to start up other fronts. It is striking confirmation, too, of what people like Russell and Sartre have said: namely, that the Soviet Union could, and should, provide cover for national liberation struggles.

We, in Britain, must stand firm against the wave of jingoism which is being whipped up against the Arab countries. To take this position is not to take Nasser's side. We must patiently point out that the picture of "poor little Israel" being threatened by "big bad Egypt" is completely at variance with facts. It was Israel which, egged on by British and French imperialism, attacked Egypt in 1956. It was Israel which was threatening military action to topple the left nationalist Government of Syria. The state of Israel as it exists at present is an imperialist enclave designed to exert pressure on the anti-imperialist Arab peoples of the Middle East. The aspirations of the Jewish people - tragic victims of the nazis - are being cynically manipulated by the very people who have rearmed their tormentors. Britain and the United States regard Western Germany, led by an ex-Nazi, as a bastion of freedom. The left must stand firm against all imperialist manoeuvres no matter how cunningly they are presented, to jingoism we must counterpose unity of the working people: Arab, Jewish and West European. We must play our role in this if we are to remain socialists.

POVERTY IN BRITAIN

Most readers of The Week will have read in the press of the shocking disclosures arising from the social survey carried out in a working class area of Nottingham. One fact alone is sufficient to damn the existing set up: nearly half the children in the area live below poverty level. We are proud that one of our founding editors - Ken Coates - was one of the initiators of this survey. It is time the trade union movement and local Labour Parties took up this scandal. The TGWU is to be commended for publicising the Child Poverty Action Group's activities and arguments. Others should follow this example. We are going to throw open the columns of The Week for a discussion on how best such a campaign can be organised.

ANTI-WAGE STOP CAMPAIGN from TGWU Record (JUNE 1967)

At least half a million children, according to official estimates, live in poverty. Most are in families where the father is in full-time work. This is a situation which the Child Poverty Action Group is campaigning to get Government action upon. Higher earnings for low-paid workers and higher family allowances are both needed. To draw attention to this situation the Group is launching an intensive campaign against one source of poverty--- the Wage Stop. This is the rule which enables the Ministry of Social Security to pay less than the basic Supplementary Benefit rate when a man is sick or unemployed. This deliberately keeps the family in poverty, says the Campaign, "Some 30,000 families suffer under this vicious rule, including over 100,000 children."

"These families cannot fight the wage stop unaided. Social workers, trade unionists and other can help in a number of ways," including

- asking the local office of the Ministry how an allowance is calculated if you suspect it is lower than normal.

- advise families to appeal and help them by going along

- if the appeal fails take it up with Minister, or M.P. , supply details of cases to local press (omitting any details that would identify family).

- Protest about the whole question to the Minister of Social Security.

In order to assist members who may wish to give attention to this problem, we reprint in the following pages extracts from the Group's "Guide to the Wage Stop--and How to Beat It." The wage stop is intended to prevent a person who is receiving a supplementary allowance (formerly National Assistance) from being better off than if he were "in full-time work in his normal occupation." It applies mainly to the unemployed but may also operate in cases of temporary sickness. The Supplementary Benefits Commission ascertains from the Ministry of Labour how much the person (nearly always a man) would be able to earn if he were now in full-time work. This can only be a rough estimate. It may be much less than his actual previous earnings, especially if he was previously working overtime or is now disabled or only fit for "light work".

The man's supplementary allowance is then adjusted so that, together with any part-time earnings and any other income payable only while he is off work (e.g. sick pay), it does not exceed his potential net earnings. A family whose needs, according to the supplementary benefit scale, amount to £15-£20 a week can easily get only £10-£12. Unemployed men are normally required to register at the employment exchange as a condition of receiving a supplementary allowance. The Ministry of Social Security Act provides that the wage stop rule shall apply to persons required to register at the employment exchange, unless there are exceptional circumstances, in practice, therefore, the unemployed are wage-stopped almost automatically if their income when in work is estimated to be below the normal supplementary benefit scale; "exceptional circumstances" are extremely rare.

For the sick, the application of the wage stop is discretionary. A man who is off work through sickness is not required to register at the employment

exchange, but he may still be wage-stopped if his illness is only temporary. In practice, the sick are usually wage-stopped for the first six months. Authority must be obtained from Headquarters if a sick person is to be wage-stopped for longer than this. The decision to wage-stop a sick person, however, does not depend on how long he has been sick but on whether the sickness is "temporary." Those who suffer most from the wage stop are often physically or mentally handicapped and disabled men who, despite their disabilities, are regarded as "available for work." Their potential earnings are assessed at a very low figure. The exact number of disabled men affected is not known, but it is significant that one-third of all unemployed men affected by the wage stop are classified as "light labourers." In September 1966, according to Ministry of Labour figures, there were 111 unemployed light labourers for every vacancy in this category (in Scotland there were nearly 1,200 unemployed for each vacancy). In these conditions, the chances of finding a job are negligible. Over half the wage-stopped unemployed in September 1965 had been out of work for over a year. To reduce a man's supplementary allowance in order to encourage him to seek work where none is available seems futile as well as unjust.

It is possible to calculate roughly what a family's normal entitlement would be, using the following scale of needs. Remember that the rent must be added and that part of the total needs will be met by family allowances.

	£	s.	d.
Husband and wife.....	6	13	0
Children-under 5.....	1	3	6
5-10	1	8	0
11-15	1	15	0
16-17	2	7	0

But, for many reasons, this calculation will only be rough guide. One clear indication that the wage stop is operating is the fact that the family's supplementary allowance is not increased when, for example, one of the children passes into a higher age group or the rent goes up.

Whenever you have any grounds for thinking that the family may not be getting its normal entitlement, it is important to ask for a written explanation of how the supplementary allowance was computed. If the written explanation shows that the allowance is reduced by the wage stop, there are a number of possible grounds of appeal:

1. The wage stop needs not be applied if there are "exceptional circumstances." These might include, for example,
 - (a) disablement;
 - (b) improbability of obtaining employment (especially for those classified as "light labourer");
 - (c) any special needs of the family;
 - (d) evidence that the family cannot manage on their present income (e.g. they are going short of necessities or getting into debt).
2. The man's potential earnings may have been under-estimated. It is useful to find out what the local authority is paying for labouring jobs.
3. The estimate of potential earnings may not have been based on the man's normal occupation, as required by the Act. It is particularly important to ensure that the normal occupation is taken into account if the man has worked temporarily in a lower-paid job or has been offered such work.
4. It may be possible to argue that the man is so unlikely to find work

that he should not be required to register for work (he could still do so voluntarily). There would then be no need to apply the wage stop. For this purpose, information about local employment prospects will be useful.

1. The wage stop is permissive for the sick - i.e. the Supplementary Benefits Commission is not obliged to impose it. It is therefore always possible to appeal on the grounds that the family is being caused unnecessary hardship and that any possible disincentive effect of paying him more than his potential earnings is irrelevant so long as he is physically unable to work.
2. It can be claimed that his potential earnings have been underestimated.
3. The wage stop can only be applied in cases of temporary sickness. If the illness is clearly of a long-term nature this may be an additional ground for appealing. Further copies can be obtained from the Group at 1, Macklin St., London, W. C. 2.

WILSON'S WAGE FREEZE = WAGE CUT from an industrial correspondent.

Workers in four big industries have suffered a wage shrink, according to a Ministry of Labour inquiry. In the period between June '66 (when the freeze began) and January '67 the engineering industry showed shrinkages from 12/5d to 20/0d a week for different categories of workers. (3.3% to 6.0% decline)

On the other hand average hourly earnings, excluding overtime premium, rose for skilled timeworkers by 0.7%, and for labourers on timework by 0.6%, although they dropped by 0.1% for semi-skilled timeworkers. The same applied to payment-by-result men, with increases of 1.1% for the skilled and 0.3% for labourers and a drop of 1.7% for the semi-skilled.

During the same period two further stages of the long term agreement between the Engineering Employers Federation came into operation representing weekly increases of 12/11d & 10/0d for those timeworkers who were paid the lowest district rate. Average weekly earnings, including overtime premium, also fell for most shipbuilding and ship-repairing workers. The decreases ranged from 4s 11d for semi-skilled payment-by-results workers to 16s 6d for skilled timeworkers. Only the semi-skilled timeworkers managed to earn more, 2s 1d or 0.6%.

The chemical industry showed a similar picture: average weekly earnings (including overtime) were down, the decrease ranging from 8s 9d (or 2.1%) for general workers on timework, to 24s 8d (or 5.1%) for payment-by-results craftsmen. Except for general workers on timework, whose average hourly earnings, excluding overtime went up by 2.8d, these earnings also declined, by between 0.2 and 1.3%.

The inquiry found that most workers in iron and steel manufacture shared the reduced earnings of their mates in the other industries: average weekly earnings for all but maintenance workers on timework fell by 3s 11d for payment-by-result service workers, and by 24s 2d for production workers. The maintenance workers were better off by 14s 3d.

This report indicates the widening credibility gap between the actuality of wage restraint and the National Interest platitude of the "planned Growth of income". When the message gets home that the only "planned growth of income" is occurring in the city of London-at the workers expense- the old saying about the "Mills of the gods grinds slow - but exceedingly fine" will find its parallel in the Labour movement.

Richard Cooper's reply to my letter to the Week of 1st May, 1967, on the Common Market is much more restrained than his original article in its references to those who take the view which I do and there is much on which I agree with him. I object as much as he does to making working people bear the cost of the rise in food prices and to a possible cut of £1 a week in real wages. However, he gives only one side of the picture.

If Britain remains outside E.E.C. things will not stay more or less as they are at present. On the contrary, the chances are that with increasing competition from overseas capitalist rivals many British firms will in any case be driven to rationalise and to seek investment funds from wherever they are available. These firms, either under their present management or, if they are taken over by foreign concerns, under new management, will seek to increase the pressure on their workers. E.N.V. and Roberts Arundel are two examples which spring readily to mind in which this has occurred, and there are many others. Furthermore, the Government will become increasingly involved in backing up curbs on wages, etc., as it has already been doing during the course of the last few years, at times when the weakness of British capitalism is reflected in an adverse trade balance and pressure on sterling.

To speak of cuts in real wages fairly, one must recognise that these have taken place before British entry into the Common Market and we can be sure that they can well occur again if Britain remains outside. Whether we go in or stay out, the real issues which will determine the future are the cutting back of overseas military commitments and defence cuts **in general**; the extension of public ownership and socialist economic planning, etc.

I personally believe that on balance in the long run the possibilities of socialist development within the Community are greater than those outside, particularly as I believe that, outside, dependence on the U.S.A. will grow. If we become more and more a part of what is being called the Atlantic Community rather than part of Europe, we shall have no real control over our own affairs in Britain.

The case of those socialists who oppose an application to join E.E.C. rests on the argument that there are better opportunities, given the present political and economic outlook in Britain, of building socialism if we remain aloof. This case was well argued by Michael Barrett Brown and John Hughes in 1961 (NLR Pamphlet) but it has not been made in 1966/67. The reasons in my view, are obvious. Few who really know believe in these opportunities, and those who oppose entry into Europe do so on the basis of a blind faith that something will turn up. In these circumstances I remain of the opinion that the struggle for socialism is a long haul and that we shall have to organise on a wider basis than Britain alone to achieve it. For this reason on balance I support Britain's entry into Europe, despite the contrary arguments.

V.S.C. ANNOUNCES LONDON MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS MEETING JUNE 5TH 8 PM.

There will be a meeting of all London members and supporters of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign on Monday June 5th, 8 pm, at UNITY THEATRE, Goldington St., (near King's cross station). There will be a report on the first session of the International War Crimes Tribunal by Geoff Coggan, press officer of the Tribunal, who was present in Stockholm during the entire sitting of this session. There will also be a short film. There will also be discussion on activities to be undertaken by the campaign in the summer months.

LANCASHIRE'S LARGEST COLLIERY TO CLOSE? by Raymond Challinor.

Lancashire's largest colliery, Mosley Common, is threatened with closure. The NCB have stated that, unless output exceeds 20,000 tons of saleable coal a week, it will shut in six months time. For that to happen would be unique. In the past, whenever the NCB closed a colliery, it justified its action by saying the reserves were worked out, or were insufficient to justify modernisation, or the coal could be better extracted from an up-to-date colliery nearby. But with Mosley Common this is not so. It has a 100 years' reserves of coal, modern machinery, a good layout. The NCB's case is based solely on economic grounds.

The colliery's closure would entail tremendous hardship to the men. In previous instances, the NCB has guaranteed displaced miners jobs elsewhere. But this time, it has told the 2,850 men that their only chance of getting fresh employment was if labour wastage occurred in other pits. The prospect for most of them is consequently grim. Moreover, should Mosley Common close, it would bring into question the whole existence of the Lancashire coalfield. With the ending of the biggest pit, the winding gear at other collieries are soon likely to be still forever. The union's reaction to this threat has been to fight to keep Mosley Common open. It hopes to achieve this by demonstrating that the NCB's output target can be achieved during the next six months. The most vocal exponents of this line are Jim Hammond, an ex-CPer, who is the miners' agent, and Mick Weaver, the union secretary, who is also communist candidate for Wigan. They do a lot of talking about the need to achieve greater productivity, to end abstenteeism, and to promote the maximum cooperation between management and men. In their opinion, everything has to be subordinated to getting out of the red.

At a recent public meeting, Hammond spent much of his time attacking a leaflet published by Labour Worker supporters. He said that their reference to the NCB's desire to increase exploitation "was just damn nonsense". What this leaflet had said was: "Under the threat of closure, the NCB believes it can secure greater effort, greater output, greater exploitation. With the fear of unemployment in Lancashire pits as well as textile mills, employers will be able to control workers better---to get more work for the same pay---and that is what the Government wants." When union officials act as unpaid foremen for the Coal Board, this only serves to justify our contention. It also argued that the Hammond-Weaver solution was, in fact, no solution at all. If, for the sake of argument, we assume output at Mosley Common was miraculously doubled, this might solve the problem for Mosley Common, but at the expense of collieries in other parts of the country. For the Government has set a ceiling for coal output of 170m. tons. The more of that total which is produced at Mosley Common leaves less to be got elsewhere. Others would be faced with the prospect of closure. And doubtless the Jim Hammonds there in South Wales or Durham, would respond in precisely the same way: with appeals to the men to increase productivity.

Nobody should delude themselves of what is involved in increasing productivity, about which there is so much glib talk. Mining has always been a dangerous occupation: coal has always been besplattered with blood. As modern machinery replaces the old pick and shovel method, it has become more ---not less--- hazardous. Since 1953-6 the casualty rate (deaths and serious injuries) has increased by 35%. Also, the toll of dust diseases has risen as dramatically as productivity. The Hammond-Weaver line involves accepting the basic concepts of capitalist orthodoxy. It permits them to have common ground with Joe Gormley,

right-wing secretary of the Lancashire miners and member of the Labour Party NEC. No attempt is made to challenge the underlying principles on which the NCB made its decision. Yet, it has been clearly ~~been~~ shown in the Derbyshire NUM pamphlet, A Plan for the Miners (p.36-7), that the Coal Board juggles with figures, twists them to suit its own convenience, whenever it contemplates a closure. Yet, union officials have not raised the elementary demand: Open the books to trade union inspection.

An examination of the books would give them a powerful weapon. Not only would they be able to document the actual cost of mismanagement, but also to show to what extent the provision of cheap coal for private industry, a hidden capitalist subsidy, and compensation to former owners have helped to contribute to the present deficit. The union should also raise the demand for workers' control---the mines for the miners. NUM spokesmen make scathing attacks on NCB incompetence. A cage, thought to cost £100,000, lies rotting in the colliery yard; a 2,500yd tunnel was made, then just discontinued; an expansive crusher was bought and left virtually unused. Each of these constitute powerful arguments for changing the whole structure of colliery organisation.

In "The Miners' Next Step", published by South Wales colliers in 1912, the demand for workers' control was first raised. It helped to transform the entire industrial scene, creating militancy among the miners and the Labour Movement generally. The same could occur today. It is in the interest of all workers to see Mosley Common doesn't close. If it did, the coal under the colliery---a vast quantity of subterranean wealth---would be lost to the country forever. Also, most of the £10m to £12m of public money spent on developing the colliery would have to be written off. So let us dispute the NCB's right to squander so much of the community's wealth and resources. If the NCB is incapable of running the colliery properly, then let them hand it over to workers who are. Let our cry be: The mines for the miners.

NORTH VIETNAM MINING VISIT by a Nottinghamshire correspondent.

The Nottingham Guardian Journal reports an interesting dispute. The N.U.M. branch president at Wormonde Colliery-- Heanor, has described plans to send a mining delegation to North Vietnam as "an insult to the Labour Government". The area executive of the N.U.M. decided on the basis of a democratic vote to accept the invitation of the Vietnam Miners Union, and felt that the visit could lead to a useful interchange of information about mining in different parts of the world.

The former area vice president and present Wormonde Colliery branch secretary, said on May 21st 1967. "It is obviously a communist inspired propaganda move. It is significant that the only areas sending members on the trip are communist dominated ones". The arrogance of this kind of little labour person, who defends the government, right or wrong, with red baiting and complaints of insults, shows no bounds.

YOUNG COMMUNISTS SHOW THE REAL MEANING OF 'OPIUM OF THE PEOPLE'

The new Y.C.L. publication Cogito criticises the foreward to the Russian edition of Marx and Engels on Religion. It describes as " a very misleading estimation " the foreward's claim that Marx's famous phrase " the opium of the People " is the cornerstone of the Marxist outlook on Religion. Cogito interprets the passage as meaning "that in the suffering of this world, some kind of consolation escape or drug fulfils a need that people have." (!!)

THE NEW LEFT ADVANCES

by Ken Coates

The New Left May-day Manifesto, which has sold out and reprinted already in less than one month, and which is triggering off a national series of meetings, is not only a timely declaration of socialist independence from the increasingly disgraceful politics of Wilsonism. At a time when even the Observer can editorialise against the complicity of the Cabinet in apartheid, appealing desperately, and of course, vainly, for one member of the administration to lay down his office in protest against the South African policies, it is not new for socialists to express their dismay at, and revulsion against, the Government's behaviour. If this were all it did, the New Left Manifesto would be a welcome but unexciting addition to a growing literature of disillusionment.

It is more important than that. At the same time that it takes issue with the Government, the Manifesto also reworks the original ground occupied by the New Left, and produces a striking and adventurous reevaluation. In class terms, many of the old postures of the independent left are analysed and found wanting. For this reason it is extremely important that the discussion on the Manifesto should be extended, and be made as inclusive and exacting as possible.

The essential themes of the pamphlet cover five main issues: neo-capitalism and the Labour Government; poverty, welfare and inequality; modern imperialism; war and peace; and the socialist outlook. In each of these fields there has been a systemisation and development of the thought of the New Left, a tightening of its conceptual apparatus, heightening its sense of reality.

The sections on neo-capitalism and the managerial ploys of the Wilson team, and on poverty and welfare, will win immediate support from readers of The Week. That on welfare owes a great deal to the fabian researchers, Townsend, Abel-Smith, and Titmuss, on which we have already commented enthusiastically. When one turns to the section on neo-imperialism, one is bound to register the fact that this represents a marked advance. The old, unfortunately too glib, assumptions about 'positive neutralism' have taken a fierce knock from the CIA, during the past three years. The frightful Indonesian bloodbath, the overthrow of Nkrumah, the subversion in Nigeria, the US intervention in Dominica, and the constantly intensified horror of Vietnam, all speak out sharply for the need to take sides, to identify and separate victim and aggressor, and to engage in the most direct and effective possible struggle for the hungry against the strong. All this is sharply implied in the Manifesto, with its clear recognition of the United States influence at the centre of the Western bloc, and with its hard-headed analysis of the mechanism of imperial exploitation, which depends not only on brutal extortion, but also, and indeed primarily, on the mechanism of the world market. All those devices yet discovered and launched upon the world as "aid" for underdeveloped lands have, as yet, only served to intensify their plight. In this context, the "cold war" has increasingly become a colonial war, for liberation on the one side, of punitive, forced integration into capitalism on the other. No man can be "non-aligned" in such a battle. We have our sharp commitment against the authorities who both dominate our own lives and torment the peoples of the Third World.

The New Left Advances continued

As the Manifesto puts it:

"The fight against imperialism on an issue like Vietnam is substantially linked with the fight against direction of our own economic and political policies, not only by the Americans, but specifically by the international institutions of monopoly capital which include elements of our own society. In fighting anywhere, we are fighting everywhere."

This restatement of the imperative need for solidarity with the colonial revolution will be of profound importance for the future of the left. For too long the recognition of this need has been confined to isolated and weak groupings, and has been able only to promote partial, if significant, responses. But the fact that this Manifesto is selling thousands of copies, taking these vital arguments to thousands of young people all over the country, will bring powerful new forces into the battle.

At the same time, the work done by The Week, The Voice, and CSE in the field of agitation for workers' control has been warmly accepted into the heart of the new Manifesto. Indeed, the whole section on the need for a renewed British Socialist Movement is the most difficult, most tentative part of the New Left programme. Few answers are agreed, and much work has necessarily to be done. It is therefore significant that the demands for the Trade Unions are among the sharpest, most crystal of its prescriptions. Some work has been done already to lasting effect.

The sooner that the New Left, with all its strands, can coalesce again into an inclusive movement, able to not only put forward this vital discussion, but to begin to engage the enemy directly, the sooner we shall break out of the present frozen impasse of betrayal surrounded in apathy, and apathy bouyed up by betrayal. For this reason all of us should take part, in the keenest way, to distribute this call, to organise discussion of it, and to assist in the mobilisation to which it can lead.

* * * THE NEW LEFT MAY DAY MANIFESTO * * *

is available, price 2 shillings and sixpence (plus 6d postage)
from PIONEER BOOK SERVICE, 8, Toynbee Street, London, E.1.

1967 WORKERS' CONTROL CONFERENCE An Announcement

There will be a stall set aside at the Coventry Conference for literature on Workers' Control and related matters. Anyone wishing to have literature on this stall should either bring it to the Conference, or send it in good time to Mike Martin, 88, Park Street, Springbank, Hull, stating any necessary details of price, etc.

VIC ALLEN'S DEFENCE LAWYER DEAD

We have received the following letter from Baba Oluwide:

This is with deep sorrow that we have to announce the death of the Nigerian Marxist, leader of workers and peasants, J.O.B. Omotosho who died instantaneously at the age of 48 in a motor accident on the Ibadan-Lagos road on Saturday, 20th March 1967.

His funeral will be witnessed by a large number of farmers, workers, and representatives of people's organizations on Saturday, 27th May at Ipoti-Ekiti where he was inspirer and organizer of a gigantic collective farm and development project because as he said: "We must build our basis in the countryside", and his programme of peasant organization was just gathering momentum in the Western Region.... J.O.B. Omotosho was an attorney by profession; always to be found defending poor peasants, workers, and those under the attack of State forces. He was an advocate for Dr. Victor Allen and others against sedition and treason and was the attorney who saved the life of the Cameroun U.P.C. fighter, Celestine Bassong, who would have been sent to a firing squad in the Camerouns Republic.

J.O.B. Omotosho was, before his return to Nigeria, in the Pan-African Movement and in the anti-colonial struggle in the West African Students Union and was associated with the then Daily Worker. In Nigeria, he had for two decades, been a principal financier of left and progressive causes and a philanthropist to many youths from pauperised homes, who were anxious for an education. J.O.B., as we fondly knew him, was a founder and first editor of Advance, the Nigerian workers' newspaper. He was on the editorial board of Nigerian Socialist. He was President of the Nigerian Union of Democratic Journalists; legal adviser to many trade unions, the Nigerian Tenants Association and other people's organizations; a member of the Nigerian Academy of Scientific and Technical Workers. His last paper for the bourgeois Seminar of Law Teachers, under the auspices of the Attorney General, was a brilliant piece of Marxist's attitude to law in developing nations.

J.O.B.'s death was a tragic loss to the peoples and socialists movements whose place as theoretician and organizer in the field, will be hard to fill. Publications about the life and death of this singular West African fighter should be sent to me at the following address:

P.O. Box 151,
Ibadan,
WEST NIGERIA.

IRISH UNIONS REJECT WAGE FREEZE

Delegates at Ireland's Congress of Trade Unions condemned - at Portrush Co. Antrim, the Government's incomes policy. They passed a resolution tabled by ASSET which ran:

"Congress wholeheartedly opposes any form of wage freeze or wage restraint upon the workers, as frozen wages are lost, but frozen dividends are merely stored to be shared out after the freeze is over. Congress declares its complete opposition to this form of discrimination. "

Readers of The Week will remember the report of the formation of the Hammersmith Vietnam Solidarity Committee. The new committee issued a press statement to local papers and the following report appeared in the West London Observer of May 25th:

LABOUR OFFICIALS BACK VIETCONG

VOLUNTEERS WANTED TO HELP THE NORTH

TEN Labour Party officials in West London—including three Hammersmith councillors—have caused a political rumpus by backing a new committee which hopes to send volunteers to North Vietnam to help in the "struggle against American imperialism."

This strong support for the Vietcong, and total condemnation of the Americans, has infuriated certain senior Labour Party officers in the area. They fear it might seriously harm the party image.

One said this week: "This sort of thing can do us nothing but harm. It just tends to divide the party on a very explosive issue."

"We all want the war to end. But my colleagues won't achieve this by giving outright and active support to the Vietcong."

The new organisation, the Hammersmith Vietnam Solidarity Committee, was formed this month to replace the local branch of the Council for Peace in Vietnam.

"The Peace Council was not achieving its aims, in my opinion," said its former secretary, Mr. Alan Nielson, a trade union official.

"So it was disbanded and the Solidarity Committee was formed. We will be associated with the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, whose president is Bertrand Russell."

The committee hopes to send "specialist volunteers" to aid the North. Explaining the phrase, Mr. Nielson said: "It does not mean soldiers or anything like that."

"We are referring to such people as skilled technicians -

workers, who can help rebuild the country. Our new committee supports just the one side."

Referring to backing from local Labour Party officials, Mr. Nielson said: "We have strong support from North Hammersmith and Barons Court constituencies."

So far no officials from Fulham are among those who back the movement.

Mr. Nielson revealed that six North Hammersmith Labour Party officials—including three councillors—have pledged themselves to support the Solidarity Committee. They are:

Cllr. Alan Breeze, constituency treasurer; Cllr. Melvyn Silverman, member of executive committee, and secretary of College Park and Old Oak Ward; Cllr. Charles Van Gelderen, member of executive committee.

Cllr. Geoff Goggin, member of the constituency's general management committee, Alan Martin, executive committee member and secretary of Starch Green Ward, Pat Jordan, member of

general management committee.

The other four Labour Party officials named by Mr. Nielson are officials in Barons Court. They are:

Ron Burne, executive committee member and secretary of Grove Ward; George Colhinson, constituency financial secretary, and secretary of Young Socialists; Mary Hutchison, executive committee member, and secretary of Avonmore Ward; Alan Kinchin, constituency treasurer, and chairman of Grove Ward.

In an attempt to gain support, the local Solidarity Committee plans to circularise churches, youth organisations, trade union branches, the Co-operative movement, and political parties.

Mr. Nielson outlined the aims of the Solidarity Campaign:

- Solidarity with the National Liberation Front and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in their resistance to American imperialism.

- The defeat of this vicious aggression.

- The withdrawal of American forces, weapons and bases and the triumph of the National Liberation Front and the Democratic Republic over their oppressors.

Shortly after this report appeared (which is thought by local activists to have had the aim of stimulating a witch-hunt) the chairman and acting secretary of the Hammersmith North C.L.P. issued a press statement dissociating the party from the new committee. They stated that the policy of the V.S.C. is not only against the Labour Party policy but against the North Hammersmith's policy also. Supporters of Hammersmith V.S.C. report that since its formation many new supporters - individuals and organisations - have been gained.

Victory for ASSET

Ray Gunter has written to Thorn Electrical Industries giving his consent to a 5% pay increase for supervisors from April 3, and a further 5% from May 2. The General Secretary of ASSET, Clive Jenkins, said, "This means that he has effectively lifted the first Order made under Part Four of the Prices and Incomes Act following the successful case in the name of our member, Leonard Allen in September, 1966. As a result of the Order, and this further consent, our members have lost only six months of their back pay instead of the nine months demanded by the Prime Minister's speech of July 20."

Employer Attacks Pay Freeze.

There is still stalemate in the pay freeze dispute involving 450 Midlands car delivery drivers following talks lasting nearly two hours at the Department of Economic Affairs on May 30th. Drivers employed by the Longbridge Group of Delivery Agents embarked on a policy of non-co-operation, including refusal to bring imported cars back to the Birmingham area on return trips, after a wage increase was frozen by the Government two months ago. The union claims that the men are within their rights in refusing to do work for which they are no longer paid.

L.G.D.A. is demanding a straight answer from the Government on the legality of this ban and has threatened to pay the increase if it does not get satisfactory action.

£27 MINIMUM APPROVED BY GOVERNMENT

Following agreement with the unions Samuel Williams and Sons, a subsidiary of the Williams Hudson group, has begun a productivity deal for its 300 dock workers at Dagenham. It gives them a minimum guaranteed wage of £27 for a 40-hour week, including a minimum incentive payment for production of £2 a week. The scheme abolishes piecework, which resulted in wide variations in pay, and for the management it brings complete flexibility in the use of labour. The agreement, which has been approved by the Government, will not result in higher costs for customers.

The above agreement should encourage dock workers throughout the country to fight for a guaranteed wage which is realistic in the present era of constantly rising prices. The National Docks Modernisation Committee has forecast that 62,000 men will be put on permanent employment next autumn. Their complete plan on decasualisation will be presented to Ray Gunter on July 1st. The plan, which would mean raising the minimum weekly wage for dockers to £15, with an extra £1 for London men, will then be discussed by Gunter and Michael Stewart to decide whether it meets the demands of the Government's incomes policy.

1,500 IN CLOSURE PROTEST.

Nearly 1,500 engineering workers marched through the centre of Oldham last weekend in protest against threatened redundancies at the Stone-Platt group of factories. One of the factories, Wallwork Gears, is to close down making 600 men jobless. Total redundancies could reach 1,000. Any closure of such an important engineering plant in this already hard-hit textiles belt would severely affect living standards in the area.

MILITANT TRADE UNIONISM

**"The Week" presents this
forum at CAXTON HALL
on FRIDAY - JUNE 2nd - 7-30**

This promises to be an extremely interesting and important discussion. Vic Allen, author of the book: Militant Trade Unionism, has done a pioneering job of giving a theoretical underpinning to the question of Militant Trade Unionism. His book covers new ground in considering the actual role of trade unionism in a modern capitalist society.

speaker: vic allen

WORKERS' CONTROL

The Centre for Socialist Education (Councils Branch) announces the 2nd national conference on

The Centre for Socialist Education (Coventry Branch) announces the 5th national conference on

WORKERS' CONTROL

at Transport House (T.G.W.U. Hall), Much Park Street, London Road, Coventry

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, JUNE 10th-11th 1967

SPONSORED BY: "Voice of the Unions", Scunthorpe Society for Industrial Democracy, "Humberside Voice", "Engineering Voice" and "Labour's Voice", Coventry Trades Council, Bristol Siddeley Engines shop-stewards (Coventry), Bedworth Labour Party, Woodlands Labour Party, Standards T.G.W.U. No. 2, Coventry Radiator T.G.W.U. branch.

SUPPORTED BY: "Tribune" and "The Week."

To be held at **TRANSPORT HOUSE (T. & G.W.U. Hall)**, Much Park Street, London Road, Coventry, on June 10th and 11th, 1967.

The conference is open to individuals and delegates from all sections of the labour movement. Since the first conference of this series (held in Nottingham in 1964), the movement for industrial democracy and workers' control has gathered great strength and influence. This will be reflected in the fact that this year the conference will be able to examine important concessions gained—e.g., in the Steel Nationalisation Bill, in Labour Party study group reports on docks nationalisation, and on industrial democracy in general, T.U.C. evidence to the Royal Commission, etc. The purpose of the conference is to enable trade unionists and their allies to meet together to thrash out a programme for the defence and advance of trade union powers and controls in industry.

The growing support for such demands will we believe also be reflected in the attendance at Conference.

The Chairman of the conference will be **BILL JONES**—London busmen's leader and vice-president of the Transport & General Workers' Union.

Amongst the speakers who have so far indicated their willingness to participation in the proceedings are:—

VIC ALLEN (author of Militant Trade Unionism);

HUGH SCANLON (A.E.U. National Executive Committee);

ERNIE ROBERTS (A.E.U. Assistant General Secretary);

MICHAEL BARRATT-BROWN (author of "After Imperialism");

JACK ASHWELL (T. & G.W.U. Hull fishing officer, former busman and author of "Four Steps for Progress");

PHIL HIGGS (shop-stewards' convener, Bristol Siddeley Engines);

WALTER KENDALL (Co-Editor of "Voice of the Unions");

KEN COATES (national convener of C.S.E.);

TONY TOPHAM (Editorial Board of "Humberside Voice");

TERRY LACEY (Radical Student Alliance) and **RICHARD CLEMENTS** (Editor of "Tribune").

Labour M.P.s and trade unionists in many industries are interested, and we shall announce further lists of participants as we receive them.

The conference will consist of plenary sessions on the general problem of workers' control strategy, and of seminars on a number of industry topics: e.g., steel, mining, engineering, aircraft, cars, chemicals, public services, docks, and the student movement for democracy in educational institutions.

THERE WILL BE A DISCUSSION ABOUT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE LONDON CONTINGENT AT THE WEEK FORUM ON JUNE 2nd.

IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO REGISTER AT THIS MEETING AND TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE WORKED OUT BECAUSE A NUMBER OF PEOPLE FROM LONDON ARE GOING IN CARS.

PLEASE COME TO THE FORUM IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE WORKERS' CONTROL CAMPAIGN