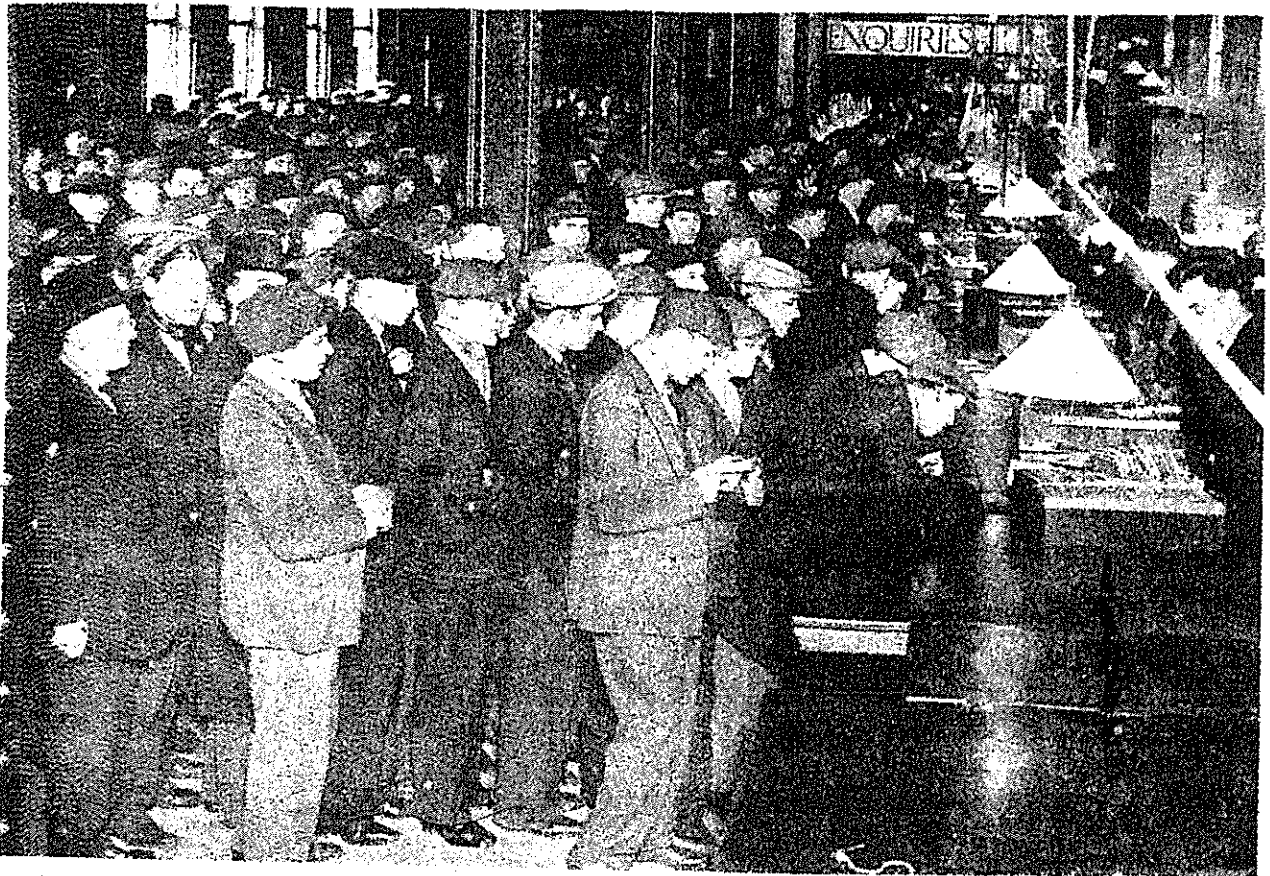


# WORKERS' FIGHT

**No. 2 Dec. 1967 Price 6d.**



**BACK TO THE**

**DOLE :**

**??**

**How Many**

# Kiss of Death for Miners

by Brian Marsden.

"The miners have been betrayed by their own Labour Government" said a spokesman for one of the Durham miners lodges, Silkworth. Miners up and down the country emphatically agree with him. A bitter wave of anger and anguished disillusionment has swept across the mining areas as the shocking details of coming pit closures have been made known.

Even the most solid, stolid traditional Labour strongholds are up in revolt against the callous plans of the cynical scoundrels at Westminster to dismantle in the next decade an industry now employing nearly 400,000 men in areas with scant alternative employment or none at all.

Some miners' lodges have demanded that the NUM call a National strike. Calls to withdraw from the political levy to Wilson's Party have become widespread in the NUM - hitherto a phalanx of votes for the Right in the Labour Party, even on such things as Incomes Policy. Others including right wingers like Gormley in Lancashire, have called for a new Trade Union Party.

In this way the Labour Government's faithful service to the needs of capitalism plays havoc with the traditional base of the Labour Party.

The miners have been the backbone of the LP for over fifty years - even today 30 Labour M.P.s depend on the solid miners' vote for Labour. Thus the Government's policy as outlined in the recent White Paper amounts to a betrayal of its own most stalwart supporters on a scale approaching the grandiose treacheries of 1926 and 1931. Already pit closures, as we go through the worst winter for unemployment since the war, amount to about one every week!

## AN INDUSTRIAL MASSACRE

The statistics of this impending industrial massacre provide remarkable reading for their sheer cold brutality. Against a background of increasing technological



unemployment, as more and more workers from the traditional industries such as ship-building, railways, textiles and docks are hived off, the numbers of miners will be speedily reduced from the present 387,000 to an estimated 65,000 by 1980. IN ONLY THE NEXT 2 TO 3 YEARS 135,000 MINERS WILL BE SHED! Coal production will be down from the present 175m. tons to 80m. tons in 1980. From 400,000 jobs to 70,000 in just 12 years! Not counting all those whose jobs depend on processing or transporting coal.

For the future of the pits this will mean two things. One, that the industry will be concentrated in the most prosperous and mechanised pits, with the lowest ratio of men to machines - mainly in the Midlands. Two - the rate of exploitation of those miners who survive will sharply increase.

## RISING PRODUCTIVITY AND UNEMPLOYMENT

In recent years productivity per man-shift has risen from 32 cwt. to 2 tons. Latest estimates suggest that output per

man-shift will increase further to 4 tons by 1970, and will push 6 tons by 1980 - providing a background of sharp ruthless exploitation to the forthcoming pit closures and redundancies. The latter, Marsh, the Minister of Power, attempts to explain away by talking about "natural wastage". Such talk is, of course, patent rubbish! For what these terms mean under any circumstances is that there are jobs less for miners. Where do those who would have become miners between now and 1970 work? Under capitalism they become "redeployed" - to the local Labour Exchange, to join those laid off already. The inability of the system to provide jobs for school-leavers this summer is just a warning.

In effect the miners are being offered up as a sacrifice to mammon. It is they, decree the bankers, who must suffer for our crimes. The financiers scream: "The Coal Board maketh a loss - let us therefore blame the miners". Hence the propaganda about the NCB's losses to justify a ruthless policy of closures. In its last financial year the NCB lost £25m. What the capitalist Labour Government omits to reveal is that in the same year £28m. was paid out in interest charges. This fact more than any other gives the lie to any allegations made against the mineworkers. It is the financial monopolists who have sucked the blood from the industry - not the miners. But the Labour Government does not attack these parasites. It attacks the miners instead.

#### BROKEN PLEDGES

In 1964 Labour pledged an annual output of 200m. tons. But the sudden emergence of North Sea Gas as a cheap fuel, added to the stiff competition from oil, and the possibilities of nuclear energy, undermined this policy completely and it collapsed.

One of the very first acts of the new Government in 1964 was to concede the exploitation of the new gas resources to private monopolists. Thereby they passed up even the reformist goal of an integrated, planned fuel system. Government development of the gas industry would have made planning possible - and if gas proved cheaper the integrated fuel ind-

ustry would have allowed slow phazing of the changeover, with profit from gas to finance reorganisation of the mining areas. All this even without Government takeover of the oil industry as well. But even such modest reformism was beyond Wilson's "planners" and "modernisers": - their service to the capitalists is very cheaply given, delivered entirely on the capitalists' own terms. Having turned profitable new fuel resources over for private monopoly exploitation, they now proceed under the capitalists' pressure to dismantle the coal industry, in the interests of the gas and oil monopolists and of a "cheap fuel" policy - the cost of which is reckoned without counting the cost to the miners and their families.

#### MINERS MUST MOBILISE!

What militants and socialists everywhere must ask themselves is: What is the alternative to this? WORKERS' FIGHT says that the answer lies in mobilisation of those sections of the working class under attack against the policies of Wilson. Those now feeling the average pit-man's disgust with Wilsonism must realise that there is no other way to prevent the desolation of their areas. Anger must lead to action around a series of demands to stop the Govt. in its tracks and open up the road to socialist advance. The miners have ready-made allies in the railwaymen, whose own problems can only be made worse by the closures (one quarter of all rail freight is coal). The next period, with inevitable attacks on the broad layers of the working class, will provide others to back up the miners as part of their own self-defence. The miners must mobilise!

The only long-term answer to the problem of the mines is a planned, rational socialist economy, under the control of the workers in whose hands all power must reside. Then modernisation and automation will provide no problems - whereas now under the inhuman capitalist system, they strike at the basic conditions and living standards of the working class. The attempts to make ~~the miners~~ bear the weight of this irrational system must be vigorously opposed - as must the sys-

tem itself and its Labour lackeys.

### WE SAY :

- ☆ Oppose all pit closures! Support the calls for a national strike now, while the miners still have the strength to fight. Alternatively, stay-down strikes should be considered as a means of dramatising the miners' plight before the whole working class.
- ☆ Where travelling distances make it possible, in coal-fields where pits are due to close immediately, miners must demand sharing of existing work, on a sliding scale of hours without any reduction in wages.
- ☆ Raise the demand for WORK OR FULL MAINTENANCE - on FULL wages.
- ☆ Stop all compensation payments immediately.
- ☆ Reorganise the industry to serve the workers: miners must fight for direct workers' control in the pits.

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- ☆ Nationalise the whole fuel industry under the control of the working class.
  - ☆ Nationalise all basic industries under workers' control.

Throw out the Right Wing Labour leaders and the NUM leaders who drag their feet. Eventually a new mass workers' party will have to be built - but it is premature now for the NUM alone to withdraw from the Labour Party: it must turn around and use its strength in the Labour Party to make the Labour 'leaders' pay for their services to capitalism. Miners must take the fight to the Wilsonites on their own home ground. Turn the Constituency Labour Parties in mining areas into strongholds against Wilsonism and for socialist solutions to the problems of the miners and the whole working class! The backbone of the Labour Party must make itself felt in opposition to career politicians at Westminster.

## A Bad Joke Gone Sour

The vicious 18 months jail sentence on Michael Malik is an outrage. It is also an apt comment on the hypocrisy of the official "anti-racialism" of the authorities that one of the first to suffer under the race law should be black - one of those for whose protection, we were assured, it was intended.

The negro and other immigrant sections of the working class in Britain suffer every day from job discrimination. They suffer from housing discrimination. They suffer and have suffered persecution from Fleet Street rags like the Daily Mirror and The People which splash even slight scandals involving people who are coloured in what amounts to virtual incitement against the immigrant population. They suffer the thousand-and-one manifestations of prejudice and ignorant hostility directed, often casually, against them. They face persecution and systematic racist violence from backward thugs in police uniform. They undergo

all this and more, and in face of it the race laws have been a bad, bad joke.

Now the joke turns sour when it legally victimises someone reacting against the permanent victimisation, the insidious bruising and alienation imposed by capitalist society on the coloured population of Britain.

One does not have to agree with the ideas of Michael Malik and the Universal Coloured Peoples' Association. We don't. From what we can gather these are, not to put too fine a point on it, somewhat cranky. And it is not possible to deny the reactionary character of black racist ideas; nor that they are a barrier in the way of an effective fight against racialism (and capitalism) in Britain. The Black Power movement in the USA is a deep-going revolt of an oppressed and subjugated people whose suppression is deeply rooted in American history and society and who form a hig-

hly distinct sub-nation within the USA. To this elemental movement of the negro masses we give critical support, while maintaining that the liberation these masses call 'Black Power' could only become a reality as the power of the workers, black and white.

In Britain conditions are very different and the roots of the problem are far less deep. Black and white workers' united action takes place continuously. Here unlike the USA racialism is not a major element in the way of life: Britain kept her equivalent of deep-South racialism overseas in the colonies and only a reflection of it exists in England, albeit a serious reflection. The only viable answer to racialism is the closest possible integration of immigrant and native workers in joint class action. To propose any course other than working class unity is entirely reactionary.

Nevertheless white militants cannot simply equate the exploitation of racial divisions by reactionaries to divide the working class against itself, with the attitudes of people like Malik and his followers - oppressed people whose reaction against the permanent affront to the sensibilities of the negroes and against the monstrous history of crimes

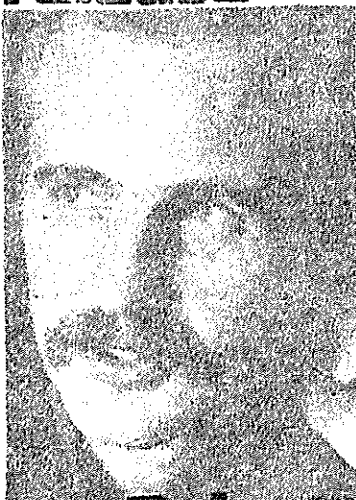
committed against the negro people by official "white" society over four centuries, takes a racist form. It is up to the white labour movement to show patient sympathy and solidarity with the feelings of those who are exceptionally oppressed by the system. It would be scandalous to pretend that this sort of extreme negro reaction - or over reaction - is morally the same as the vile features of our society which produce it. The way to combat its harmful effects is likewise different from our attitude to white racialism. The answer must be in the active concern of the whole labour movement against any discrimination against its coloured members.

That is why the Labour movement must protest the sentence on Malik - trade union and Labour Party branches must demand his immediate release.

What a comment this episode is on the illusions of the pseudo-lefts who think it is possible to use the bourgeois state to deal justly and impartially with problems which bourgeois society creates and exploits. Whatever difficulties it may involve, it is clear that only the active intervention of the Labour movement can eradicate racialism - white and black.

J. C.

**release**



**Debray**

The Barrientos regime in Bolivia is just about as bloody and butcherous as they come. Adding to its record of shooting down miners' families en masse and hideously torturing its prisoners it has, with its triumphal murder of Che Guevara, earned the dubious title of the most hated regime in all Latin America. Aided in all this by the CIA, it felt confident enough to pass jail sentences of 30 years each on Régis Debray and Ciro Bustos. Debray, a Castroite with some highly optimistic views on the possibilities for guerilla struggle in South America, had gone to Bolivia to interview Guevara. He was on his way back when he found himself arrested, followed by torture and the threat of being quietly disposed of. Growing publicity forced a trial, which turned out to be a classic of non-justice. Throughout, Debray behaved as a revolutionary, and changed his plea to include a full declaration of solidarity with the guerillas when he heard of Guevara's death. All efforts should now be made to secure the release of Debray and Bustos.

# WORKERS' FIGHT

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## DEVALUATION and AFTER

In spite of the massive loans negotiated over the last three years, a thousand million pounds of which are still to be paid back; in spite of the attacks on workers' living standards through wage-freezing while prices continued to rise; in spite of massive gifts to businessmen through the Industrial Reorganisation Corporation and other agencies; in spite of assurances from Callaghan and others over the last three years that things were getting better: the balance of payments crisis continued, international bankers' confidence in the pound fell, the speculators got richer and..."at the eleventh hour, having gone to the limit and beyond to defend what was no longer defensible" devaluation was taken as the last resort. Together with it came another £3,000m. loan from the all-powerful Gnomes of Zurich.

It was the fifth year running of a major balance of payments deficit, reflecting at base the backwardness of British industry and its inability to keep pace with its rivals on the world market. Over the last ten years Britain's export prices have risen by 20%. Compared with this Germany's have risen by 14%, USA 11%, France 4% - while Japan's costs have actually fallen. Britain's has been an almost achlerosed economy losing the battle for productivity of labour because of the incompetence and the short-sighted 'investment' policy of its dominant capitalists. The role of the pound as the world's second reserve currency, subject to the mercurial fluctuations of speculative 'hot money' had served to exacerbate and accentuate the trading imbalance. The drain on resources demanded by military overexpenditure combined with the rest to make an impossible situation. The squeeze, creation of unemployment to pressurise those in work, laws against the Unions - all had been directed towards keeping down living standards and costs at home so as to give a little competitive edge to exports and dampen imports. All to no avail. The situation was getting worse.

And so with the prior agreement, possibly on the urging, of the ten main world bankers, who promised not to follow suit and devalue, 14% was lopped off the international stature of the Pound. Imports will now rise in costs as foreign currencies are worth more in relation to the Pound. Provided events allow the major countries to keep their pledge not to devalue too, and no restrictions are placed on British exports, the result should be an improvement in the balance of payments: though this will not necessarily solve the main problem of the economy - the need to modernise. Nevertheless quick profits will accrue to a handful of bosses, and according to the mechanics of a crazy system the speculators will get fatter.

### THE WORKERS

And the workers? This is the other side of the coin. Devaluation 'works', if it does work, by an incisive cut in the living standards of the people. It is estimated that 5% at least will be added to the cost of living in the next year, as essential imports rise in price. That is the frank purpose of devaluation. Callaghan himself only a few weeks ago made a speech explaining that devaluation would be an attack on the workers' living standards. In addition to food and clothing and other consumer goods price hikes, a much wider range of commodities



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will rise in price as the increase in raw material costs is passed on throughout the economy (also, of course, entering into and slowing down the export drive).

Relatively low productivity, leading to high costs, was the centrepiece of the balance of payments problem. The wage freeze and squeeze were ways of attempting to raise international competitiveness by lowering the workers' share in the National product. Devaluation on the other hand represents a straight old-fashioned cut-back in standards. As such for the capitalists to hold on to the competitive boost it gives them they must exert enough pressure to keep the ratio of wages at the post devaluation level. The workers must be made to accept the cut, and if they can't be persuaded then they must be pinioned as the water of rising prices inches steadily up to their necks and even beyond.

This is the fundamental issue now: Can the employers and their government make the devalued standards stick? Can they force the workers to pay the bills accruing from the bosses' profligacy and the paucity of investments during the boom years? Can they contain wages?

Here it becomes a question of the relationship of forces and of struggle. The working class has no reason at all to accept wage freeze, nor that capitalist moderation of this incompetent capitalist system should be at our expense. If they can't make the system tailored to their needs work efficiently without cutting on standards - then they must get off our backs and let us build a different system tailored not to profit but to the human needs of the working people. Clearly the masses of the workers will not stand for it. Already, even before devaluation, the left shift reflected in the AEU vote for Scanlon has shown the Government what to expect.

Employers' spokesmen have emphasised that the corollary of devaluation must be a stiffer wages policy to keep wages down to the new level. In the next year a stiffening of tension on this front will be the main feature. In opposition to the resistance of the workers will be exerted the various types of pressure open to the employers and a new level in state intervention. The report of the Commission of Trade Unions will probably be the signal for new legal constrictions on the unions. The Government and employers look to the George Woodcocks of the movement to aid them in what can only be a general all-round sharpening of the struggle. The next budget early next year will be deflationary to damp down the home market and in hope (under capitalism it is always a hope!) of an export boom to follow: just in time for the next election!

### UNEMPLOYMENT

A major task of this deflation will be to maintain, and possibly to add to, the present unemployment level, which is the highest for normal times for over a quarter of a century. This has now clearly been accepted by this "socialist" Government as a major technique for controlling wages in the immediate future. Not only the conjunctural unemployment of deflation, but the structural unemployment arising from an accelerated run-down in the old basic industries, the axing of a hundred thousand railway workers in the next five years, the trimming of the docks labour force, the sharp increase in mining redundancies, etc, etc.

The Governor of the Bank of England Sir Leslie O'Brien merely let a rather obvious cat out of the bankers' bag when he talked of the "courageous determination" of the Government "in principle to keep what we regard as a desirable margin of unused manpower and resources". He explained further: "It is impossible to manage a large industrial economy with the very small margin of unused manpower and resources that characterised the British economy in the 1940s and 1950s." It is

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accepted to mean an average  $2\frac{1}{2}/3\%$  unemployment 'for the next few years' - i.e. a regular 750,000 to 1,000,000 unemployed. It is expected to grow even if there is an expansion: "Given the 3% annual rise in productivity now predicted a corresponding growth of demand and output will not lead to any fall in the trend of unemployment. And if the Prime Minister's large claims for the, at present far from conclusive, evidence of an exceptional rise in productivity as a result of the 'shakeout' should prove well founded, then unemployment may go on climbing even with a 3% rise in output..." (The TIMES Business News, 7.11.67).

Two main prongs then to make devaluation of living standards stick: probable tightening of State intervention; and a new stress on unemployment, from recession or "shakeout", as a wage-control technique. Even if one result of devaluation is to slow the growth of unemployment in export industries in the immediate period ahead the very success of devaluation as understood by its advocates and architects, demands a planned growth and maintenance of the highest level of unemployment since 1940. Pressure is also building up for 'economies' by more application of "selectivity" in the social services.

### THE LEFT

One of the strangest things seen for a long time has been the reaction of the official Labour Left to Devaluation. They tell us that devaluation is allegedly 'better than deflation' (though in fact it is now accompanied by deflation, with more to come) and they hint it is something resembling a victory for 'The Left'. The Foots and other Political Peter Pans, who appeared to be moving ever so gently towards opposition to Wilson, have found in Devaluation a formula for retreat and capitulation. The Orator Foot sprang to the defence of Wilson against Macleod! Keeping its mind determinedly within capitalist alternatives - and partly mythical ones, at that - TRIBUNE supports Wilson with muted criticism, virtually ignores the attack on the workers' standards, and winds up advocating a version of what used to be called "War Capitalism". 'Socialism' isn't in the picture at all!

But here the process is complicated. While the Foots move right, the Unions are moving left. It is now a question of demanding that the lefts in the unions go on to really organise actual resistance to the attack on living standards, to back up their left declarations. It is also a question of strengthening the responsive organs of the rank and file, so as to be independent of the bureaucrats. But the evident shift to the left in the basic organisations is decisive; the left M.P.s are merely the tops. No doubt as the movement shakes itself awake in struggle they will once again move 'left'.

Here we see the superiority of the Marxist class struggle conceptions over "socialist reformism". For the TRIBUNE reformists the issue is posed as a choice of capitalist courses: they are too busy worshipping the pomp and ceremony of capitalism even to notice the effects on the working class. Their socialism is a thing of air without the possibility of material embodiment or form - without even a road-map. In times of crisis it aids the Establishment. For Marxists, it is fundamentally a question of aiding our class prepare defence, and of raising demands for socialist solutions. We stand with the one force which is inseparable from socialism - the working class - in its struggle.

In response to the attacks on that class, which the Labour Government and the employers will now try to drive home, every effort must be made to organise the resistance. There must be NO wage freeze! In face of unemployment we demand: WORK OR FULL MAINTENANCE !

The rank and file of the unions and Labour Party must now organise and form



link-ups between themselves and with each other, so as to fight in unity against the united front of the Government and the bosses. The Union bureaucrats must be told: Fight or get out of the way! It is now, as above, a question of the relationship of forces, of a struggle. They may have devalued to cut wages - but they have still to make it stick. They will not be able to. Not by a long chalk!

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## Ourselves

The response to WORKERS' FIGHT has been tremendously encouraging in every respect. We sold twice as many copies as we had expected to - including those we intended sending as samples in the post. We have had responses and encouragement from quite a number of people who share our commitment to the Trotskyist Programme and traditions, but like us are disenchanted with the Manana Trotskyists and the Exclusive Brethren who misrepresent Trotskyism in Britain today.

When planning the paper we estimated that it would have to be irregular, probably bi-monthly, for the first few issues, until we had built up sufficient support to establish it monthly. The response to No.1 made a monthly an immediate possibility - and it was our own lack of prior preparation and efficient organisation, together with the existence of other commitments which couldn't be just dropped, that prevented us going on to a monthly immediately. This situation has now been cleared up and we believe we are on a more efficient basis. Beginning on January 1st. the paper will come out monthly, with slightly less pages.

The reaction to our Editorial FOR A TROTSKYIST REGROUPMENT was positive in the number of contacts it called forth - but very lean in printable contributions for discussion. We have found one misconception about our position, namely that we propose a Regroupment League of Lost Souls, made up exclusively of accredited ex-members of the various left groups. This is not true at all. Nothing could be more sterile than such an approach. It will be the heat of the class struggle that will burn away the sectarian extravagances and the Labour Party dross from the nominally revolutionary groups and fuse the healthy elements into a new nucleus on a higher level. The first principle of existence for us must be the closest possible involvement in that struggle, and through it the recruitment of fresh individuals to the Trotskyist Programme. The possibilities for this are growing daily, and WORKERS' FIGHT has attracted the support of a number of such people. We hope to continue to do so.

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## LETTERS

Dear Comrade, in ancient Rome people cut off the heads of messengers who brought bad news, and it would have been easy at the recent meeting of miners in S. Shields to shout for the heads of our local MP and the Agent from the Durham area NUM. But these were not the people miners wanted to "get at". It was those who had sent the message from Westminster, this death sentence for their industry and social death for many of them, in an area where already the percentage of unemployed is persistently double the National average. They felt that the decisions themselves and the manner of their disclosure were further examples of the arrogant attitudes of people put there by the efforts and financial resources of the miners. How could they "get at" these people and let them know exactly how bitter, frustrated and disillusioned they felt? They shouted at the platform; overturned tables; muttered ominous threats; and

(contd. on back page)

# WINTER CONGRESS OF DISCONTENT

OPEN LETTER TO A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, from a Communist Party supporter of Workers' Fight who, for obvious reasons, wishes to remain anonymous.

Dear Comrade,

You will have seen the reports of the 30th. Congress of the Party in the capitalist press. An ageing, sick party, slowly dying on its feet was the general opinion - and they didn't bother to pretend sadness. For three years running - and what years! - membership has been falling. Oct. '65 - 33,539. Oct '66 - 32,708. Oct '67 - 32,562. These years have seen social democracy, tied to the wagon of crisis-ridden capitalism, discredit itself more and more before the working class. They were precisely the years when an effective socialist alternative party with a fighting class programme, rather than the unctuous Sunday socialism which today is the stock-in-trade of our Party, could have gained - and should have gained - the support of workers for its programme of socialist change.

McLennan at the Congress said "disillusion with Wilson and the Labour Government is widespread." Yes. But alas the disillusion with the Communist Party, to which the figures testify, seems to be keeping pace with it. The revamped 'Morning Star' has entirely failed to advance, despite lavish spending and despite - or possibly because of - its shamefaced change of name to eliminate the red-sounding word Worker: trying to compete with the popular press on its own ground it has lost support. Its price will soon be 5d., and a further circulation decline will surely follow.

Even the YCL, at a time of growing youth involvement in struggle on Vietnam and unemployment, has failed resoundingly to reach its 10,000 target, despite the expenditure of £3,000 on a recruiting campaign. The new Challenge, flirting unnaturally with young Liberals, Christians & such shows how useless mere tech-

nical changes are on their own. Parallel with the loss of members by the Party, is the sad experience of electioneering. At Gorton recently Comrade Eddisford got less than 450 votes. There were almost as many comrades from the Lancs/Cheshire area canvassing him as there were workers to vote for him.

A spectacle to make the capitalists giggle contemptuously, and the social democrat renegades feel secure in their unmerciful work of tending a sick capitalism at the expense of the working class. But for Marxist socialists and revolutionaries in the Party and YCL it is an intolerable sight. All the more intolerable on this 50th. anniversary of the great October Revolution! For those Party members who take seriously the fight for a British October, such obvious ill-health, ineffectiveness - sheer irrelevance - must be the starting point for certain conclusions. Try as one likes, these are inescapable.

Comrade - you, like myself, joined the Party or YCL looking for a way out of capitalism: from war, exploitation, economic uncertainty, poverty, the slow sucking away of life by an inhuman system and its stifling atmosphere, the double and triple exploitation and oppression of youth. You wanted an organisation with a clear programme which accurately summed up reality in order the better to change it. An organisation which knitted together different strands of the struggle in a general movement against the system as a whole - which could link the industrial struggle with politics, politics with the organic economic conflict, the struggle against war with the battle against the system of which it is an inescapable expression. You wanted a Party with clean hands, an honest Party, a democratic Party.

Possibly you, like myself, were not very precise about all this to begin with. You moved in repulsion from capitalism and its treacherous labour and trade union henchmen. You saw the Party through the mirror of the sensationalist capitalist press, which does more than any other single force to help the Party leadership keep up a militant image.

Perhaps you were shocked - I was! - at the reality. Closer knowledge opened up for me the question: were its politics fundamentally different from those of left social democracy? At best even Party leaders only claim that they are harder, more consistent, more independent organisationally than the Labour left, with whom they propose to unify in a "Common Front". They accept, indeed they aggressively advocate, a Parliamentary road to socialism. This is a road travelled by many, including the 'left' of Wilson's Cabinet. Whatever it leads to, it certainly isn't socialism! Our leaders place ever less emphasis on the industrial struggle, and instead stress petty electioneering campaigns for reforms such as kindergartens, libraries and even street corner telephones! Their socialism is no longer the socialism of Marx, flowing logically from the class struggle and inseparable from it. It will now come peacefully, from successful preaching of some nice ideas, spurred by the difficulties of capitalism and beckoned on by propaganda about the Soviet Union and its libraries and kindergartens.

In the Unions, where once the Communist saw his role as an organiser of rank and file struggle in opposition to those custodians of capitalism's interests, the bureaucracy, the official Party emphasis today is on capturing positions -- very often at the expense of the struggle. Communist union officials are indistinguishable from their brethren of nominally different political colour - only witness the attacks on the miners of "communist" Will Paynter.

The struggle against war too is on a level of crass bourgeois pacifism. Everything hinges on negotiations, deals and power politics, with the role of the la-

bour movement that of chorus or pressure group. The record of the Party in the peace movement on which it spends so much time, shows the futility of the tail-ending rightism of the leadership. The Party lagged behind even such limited movements as CND, denouncing unilateralism as too 'extreme', and only jumping on the bandwagon at the end, when the 'extremists' attracted mass support. On Vietnam the Party - despite the Oh so safe talk at Congress about organising volunteers - resists the slogan Victory to the NLF. The great demonstration in London on this slogan on October 22nd. was not only ignored by the Party leaders: an attempt was made to sabotage the 'extremists' by holding a demonstration the previous day. Possibly you, like myself, were one of those who ignored this base manoeuvring and joined the demonstration of genuine solidarity on the 22nd. You would have seen the contrast: the response to the Party's splitting tactics on the 21st was almost laughable whilst Oct. 22nd witnessed - despite the Party - a great turn out of militants!

This is the reality of the Party. On meeting it one's first reaction is bewilderment - as when one realises that the Union Jack figures more prominently at meetings than the Red Flag: both literally and metaphorically. Eventually one is faced with a choice - to accept, and fall in line with the left social democratic outlook of the Party leadership; or to learn to look at the Party critically, in the light of the communism to be found, say, in the writings of Lenin. Examined in this light the 30th. Congress has a lot to teach us.

Reid at one point said that the process of integration of state power with monopoly capitalism, behind a facade of Parliament, had accelerated in the last decade. Unbelievably, he said this not to oppose the new draft of the British Road programme of 1951 - but in the process of moving it!!

What this policy advocates in practice is a Parliamentary left front, or Popular Front. The last elections in France were fought by the CP on this basis. They

completely confined themselves to mild reformist slogans as the basis of this alliance, without even a mention of socialism. In France where the CP is the big workers' party, this policy has led to complete submission to right social democracy. In Britain, with our tiny Party having little to offer in the way of numbers, it leads to tailing after the so-called 'left' MPs who, alas, have their own 'alliance' already - with the Labour Party Right.

The basic misconception of the Party leadership, underlying everything else, is the abandonment of the Marxist conception of the State and the struggle for socialism, in favour of a belated, warmed up Fabianism.

Everything else about the practices of the Party, as you and I know it, flows from this reformist orientation, though of course the leading Party clique have disadvantages over and above those of the straight left reformists. They carry their stalinist record like an irremovable pack strapped to their backs. Their notorious loyalty to whichever group happens by whatever means to have secured control in the Kremlin, their contortions under the batons of the changing conductors with their changing lines, have done more than anything else to discredit them before the masses of the workers.

The Congress now places emphasis on the 'independence' of each national CP, - but only because this very ploy is the Moscow line for warding off interference from Peking in its territory. Their own lines of communication are already so well established that this tactic poses no threat of them being broken. They are also careful to ward off militant influences from Cuba. Jack Woddis' speech contained a hidden first shot as part of a campaign started in Pravda recently by leaders of reactionary Latin American CPs, against Cuba. The attack of the Cubans at the OLAS conference on these CPs (remember that the old Cuban CP supported Batista almost up to the point of Castro's victory! These continue the same politics.) and on Russian aid to the reactionary dictatorships of the area, are

replied to with the nationalistic injunction - "mind your own business".

One speaker at the Congress boasted about the leadership in certain struggles by members of the Party - people like Dash and Lou Lewis. He forgot to mention that this was entirely on an individual basis, that the Party organisation as such played no part.

One of the most glaring features of this Congress was the lack of a real communist democracy. For Marxists there are no omniscient leaders - the correct line can only be arrived at by open internal discussion, with full rights for organised opposition to the leadership's position. This was the Bolshevik way. It was the way of our own Party before it caught the fatal disease of Stalinism which has reduced it to its present state.

But despite the ferment in the world Communist movement, the various positions put forward by China and Cuba in opposition to Moscow, despite the growing interest within the Party in the positions of Trotskyism - there were no organised opponents of the leading clique with fully defined platforms at the Congress. In the period before the Congress many had been expelled from the Party and YCL - for 'unorthodox' views.

This is both a symptom of the general ill-health, and also helps to perpetuate it. The problems of a sick movement - and the CPGB is sick - will never be solved so long as the discredited clique who have brought the Party so low remain inviolable, unchallengeable.

Comrade - if we are ever to go forward against the employers and their Labour henchmen; if those like you and me and all who joined the Party sincerely thinking it stood for the politics of Lenin, are to break through the present social democratic cobwebs which stifle the Party, then this clique must be challenged. They must be challenged, exposed, and their stalinist-Menshevik politics expurgated from the labour movement.

I said above that one has two choices -

either go with those within our movement who peddle neo-Fabianism, or go back to Lenin and understand that this Party is not Communist. This second-string left social-democratic party, with the added disadvantages of a stalinist history which discredits it, is fading and dying on its feet. There is no need at all for a second, even left, social-democratic party - the one which now controls Parliament is enough. We need a

genuine communist alternative -- a party based on the programme and methods of Lenin and Trotsky. I sincerely urge you to choose this road, in response to the present state of the Party as revealed at the 30th Congress. Contact WORKERS' FIGHT - help us in laying part of the foundations for a rejuvenated Marxist movement.

A North of England CP member.

# DOCKERS

## WHO WON?



6,000 dockers at the West India and Royal Group in London have returned to work after nearly 8 weeks' continuous strike. The employers, backed by the Government and both docks unions (including 'left' Frank Cousins) virtually refused to budge in maintaining their "rights" under the decasualisation scheme to ignore the old continuity rule and work the men like shuttlecocks. At stake for them was more than just the continuity rule - though that, affecting the question of their degree of control over the dockers, has far-reaching consequences. Also at stake was their determined need to decisively defeat, discredit and eliminate the unofficial leadership in London - the Liaison Committee led by Dash and Barrett. Now that the workers have failed to win this strike, the port employers will ask for more disciplinary powers under the new scheme.

Less than 3 months after the introduction of the new scheme, the situation throughout the country has settled down. It has not, of course, settled down on

the cash terms first "negotiated" for decasualisation - the bitter struggle of Liverpool and London forced some real concessions on wages from the port employers. And in the other area of the docks struggle, Manchester, a series of one-day lightning strikes has gained similar wage concessions.

Apart from London it would seem that there has been a general victory. But there are snags. On balance the employers have made the decisive gains - they have got decisive control - mobility, power of discipline. They now have the possibility of putting on the productivity squeeze, of tightening discipline, of more and more mechanisation on their terms, under their planning and their control, with the dockers pushed backwards in terms of freedom to pre-1947. This issue of control is one of the main reasons for the determination in London to resist the men's demands on the continuity rule. The larger bill they can afford - they could not afford to make concessions to the London men because they

challenged an essential element in their scheme. For Manchester and Liverpool it can prove to be a somewhat hollow victory.

THE DEVLIN PLAN : WHY ?

The explanation is simple. Throughout the world, with the growth of giant ports like Rotterdam, new mechanised techniques of cargo handling have developed. Container ships whose bulk cargo can be rolled on and off by a tiny fraction of the present labour force, are setting the pace. An average berth in Britain today handles an annual 100,000 tons. In the USA, the figure is five times that much. And it is estimated that if all other connected transports worked as efficiently as this, a single berth could handle 4 million tons a year!

When these conditions exist, even the present work force would increase its productivity by 40 times! But with Britain's 900 berths, and with them the number of dockers, reduced to a handful, this would of course create a further, astronomic, increase in productivity per worker and profit per boss. With these possibilities in mind, a few extra pounds a week wages is chicken feed to the big port employers.

If Britain is to have even any prospect of maintaining her position, modernisation of the all-but 19th. century ports must take place - fast. Mechanisation has already reduced the docks labour force by 20,000 in the last decade, while doubling productivity. But this is inadequate. The colossal and rising profits of the last period were drained straight out of the industry, leaving it hopelessly backward. From the Autumn of 1966 the Government began giving grants of 20% to port employers for any port investment, and things are now beginning to move. The Seaforth and Tilbury schemes are a prelude, and planners are beginning to think in terms of vast pleasure gardens by the Thames where the docks are now situated.

But first and foremost the planners of mechanisation needed to change the system of labour in preparation for large scale reductions coupled with introduction of factory-type discipline, super-

mobility and complete employers' control over the diminishing labour force. Hence the Devlin reorganisation, increasing employers' power and virtually abolishing - in effect - the joint Union-Employer control by pushing it into the background as a court of last resort. The problem was how to bamboozle the dockers into acceptance. One way was the fraudulent wage rise they at first offered. Another was their incessant propaganda: one of the lowest species of rutting animal, Ray Gunter, actually talked about the need to give dignity to the docker! More than all these things they relied on the collusion of both unions - and in fact the T&GWU accepted automatically (which surprised nobody on the docks!).

In the situation, what was needed for the dockers' defence was an alternative working class programme of reorganisation to spearhead the resistance expected by everyone, and practical preparation of a national ports link-up - this necessarily at a rank and file level, given the open treachery of both unions. The central question posed was that of control - who controls the industry? Faced with this government and employers' drive towards reorganisation in response to remorseless international competition, effective resistance demanded an alternative programme of reorganisation. The old status quo of joint Union/Employers control through the NDLEB on the basis of backwardness, was not a viable slogan to rally the men for a struggle against this massive attack. A working class alternative programme was the only effective answer - which put forward a perspective of immediate nationalisation under the complete control of the dockers, who would themselves decide, democratically, whether any compensation should be paid to the former exploiters, who would inspect all the books of port employers and shipping companies so as to know all the facts, and who would have complete control over all hiring and firing, and over all work rules and conditions. They could modernise to the nth. degree, but benefit themselves with shorter hours and work-sharing.

From the dawning of the Labour movement, workers found that, in face of new tech-



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niques, it was no use grimly hanging on to the past like the Luddites. It could only be in the interest of the workers to demand the future - but for themselves. But in this case to put forward such a programme in one industry, even one where the conditions were momentarily so exceptional as to allow revolutionary solutions to be raised, needed people with a perspective of eventual control by the workers of industry and society as a whole, and men who could see the connection between this socialist struggle and the docks issue. Instead, many of the dockers' leaders simply counterposed the old capitalism to the new capitalism, with pep-talks to the workers about 'not being Luddites'.

But without such a working class programme there was no possibility of self-defence for the dockers. Despite the wage gains, even the magnificent militancy of London and Liverpool did not prevent the employers achieving their main objective. The Liverpool and Manchester men fought for a better price, and in London though Devlin itself was challenged, it was on a defensive basis, without the all important workers' alternative. And as a result, it must be frankly faced that the employers have carried out their main purpose - they have jumped the main hurdle in their plans for modernising the industry at our expense. Already even the course of the movement since September 18th, shows the effects of this absence of both programme and preparation. (And perhaps, as we have tried to suggest, the lack of the first was partly the cause of the lack of the second.)

#### WHERE WAS THE PROGRAMME ?

The only national organisation which subscribed in words to such a programme was the Socialist Labour League, which has some support on the Liverpool docks. Unfortunately their sectarian conceptions and behaviour (they are known in the Left as the Exclusive Brethren) cut them off from any collaboration with rank and file groups who were striving for national preparation for struggle, including rank and file CP members.

This behaviour springs from a highly un-

realistic conception of the situation in Britain. Instead of the Bolshevik tactic of unity in action, retaining freedom of criticism, they have a classic abstentionist line of denouncing imperfections and inadequacies of those who are struggling, opposing essentially passive propaganda to the task of forging unity in action. For them Lenin's writings and Bolshevism's experience in struggle against ultra-leftism, might never have existed; and Trotsky's commentaries on the 'Third Period' of Stalinism are studiously avoided by these "Trotskyists". They now attack Dash and Co. - who often deserve criticism - for calling off the strike in London when it was obviously in a blind alley. And this blind alley, resulting from the failure to bring together the necessary programme and preparation, was far more the responsibility of the SLL than of the people they blame.

It is their own sectarianism they should denounce, rather than the failure of the syndicalist bedrock of the CP to arrive at spontaneous Trotskyism. The onus was on the SLL, as the so-called "Trotskyists", to find a road to these elements who have, despite incidental confusion, shown a real willingness to fight on this issue.

The most treacherous role was as usual played by the "Communist" Party, which of the self-styled revolutionaries commands the largest forces. Despite the militant role played in London by its rank and file activists, the Party as such made no effort even to organise the practical struggle, let alone provide a revolutionary programme. They long ago abandoned all thought of such a thing. A few "critical" articles in the Morning Star was as far as they went. The one CP member 'of rank' (Danny Lyons, an EC member) who attended the national link-up meetings before September 18th, was one of the most vocal for being "practical" and confining the demands to a good price for dockers letting the bosses reorganise them. It is no secret that on the docks for at least 15 years one goal has guided the CP leadership - the desire to get the Black Circular of the T&GWU lifted. For the sake of joining the ranks of some of the best-hated men on the docks, they capitulate all down the line

to the T&G bureaucracy.

Attempts at practical preparation of resistance were belated, and rather feeble. Two national meetings took place. Advocacy of the anti-Devlin programme by supporters of Workers' Fight led to nothing in conditions of weak contact at the eleventh hour, under the pressure of being overtaken by unforeseen events as they unfolded.

After the first meeting even the idea of opposing Devlin as such collapsed, in face of the signing of the new employment forms in many ports by dockers who had not been adequately warned about Devlin. Finally only a minimum price for acceptance was fixed. An attempt to organise a rank and file paper to help prepare (THE DOCKWORKER) wasn't very successful, and never even put forward a clear programme of relevant demands or of action. The scene was thus set for what followed.

Nowhere was the lack of co-ordination, even amongst the ports which struck, more disastrous than in the zig zag at the end of September when London, Liverpool and Manchester had all been out one week. London returned. Manchester returned. Liverpool stayed out, despite the strike committee's recommendation to return. Something over a week later, the Royal and West India men came out again, in solidarity with the continuing strike in Liverpool, and having experienced the effects of the ending of the 'continuity rule. At the same time Manchester started a series of one-day strikes. After 6 weeks out Liverpool, granted some concessions on pay, decided to return. London continued to strike. Manchester then was granted concessions similar to Liverpool and the one-day strikes were called off. London stuck it out ten days longer, alone fighting - if not in the best way - on what should have been nationally the central issue; the new conditions of the Devlin scheme.

One thing is indisputable - the failure was in no way due to lack of militancy or fighting spirit on the part of the men. In Liverpool it was they and not the strike committee, who kept the strike

going, and in both London and Liverpool even the final return decision was resisted by a large minority among the younger dockers. This is the vital lesson here - militancy is not enough, when even the elected leadership either drags its feet or cannot go beyond the militancy by bringing to the struggle the kind of socialist programme that would have answered the questions posed to the dockers by the objective situation. The fact is that in this case the would-be revolutionaries have been shown to lag behind the spontaneous militancy - for various reasons but with the same deadly results.

The grim warning contained in this experience applies generally, not only on the docks. That situation is merely an extreme example. In the period we have now entered there will be many others. The lessons must be learned.

Militancy is not enough, and neither is it sufficient to simply accept militancy on its own spontaneous level and accommodate to it, abdicating the revolutionary responsibility to fuse the programme of workers' control with the actual workers struggle.

On the docks the fight continues - now in the form of resistance to implementation of the employers' Programme. Even at this late stage we must put forward a dockers' programme as the focal point of the resistance; particularly now with continuing talk of nationalisation. If the Government is forced in the interests of really modernising the industry to go ahead and nationalise - this will again beg the question: Who Controls The Docks? This must be combined with a drive to organise a solid National Liaison Committee.

Harold Youd - T. & G.W.U.  
Sean Matgamna - T. & G.W.U.

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# RIPENING SEEDS of a NEW OCTOBER

Recent open hostilities in Czechoslovakia between the Stalinist State and the intellectuals, brings to mind that it took only six months of 1956 for the Hungarian Petofi Circle to grow from demanding merely academic freedom to demanding freedom from the Bureaucracy for the whole of society. In the turbulent days leading up to the October Rising its meetings attracted thousands of people. Its paper, the Literary Gazette, rapidly shed its purely literary concern and before long found its way into the factories.

When the workers demanded control of the factories it took up the demand. It was at the Petofi Circle that the call was made for a genuine rehabilitation of Laszlo Rajk - whose re-burial brought some 200,000 people out on the streets on October 6th. And it was the Petofi Circle which called the mass demonstration on October 23 "to express the deep sympathy and solidarity with our Polish brothers" - in the event, the demonstration proved the beginning of events that went further and deeper by far than those in Poland.

While the Petofi Circle can hardly be said to have either created or led the Hungarian revolution, it certainly played a major role in the ferment that led up to it. And while history never exactly repeats itself, every bureaucracy in the vicinity has spent the last ten years nervously looking over its shoulder at the activities of the writers and intellectuals.

## CZECH WRITERS UNDAUNTED

Many intellectual circles exist in Russia and Eastern Europe whose criticisms of the censor are only one jump away (if that) from an attack on the whole bureaucratic superstructure. How far will these go? And can they alone challenge the Bureaucracy?

The most energetic of these movements is that of Czechoslovakia. There the weekly paper published by the Writers' Union, Literarny Noviny, had a circulation of 140,000, and it is believed that it was read by half a million people. A stand-up row developed at the Writers' Union Congress in June between 3 of its staff and the Party's ideological hatchet-man, Jiry Hendrych, who had tried to delete their names from the list of nominees to the Union's new 45 man Board. In an attempt to intimidate the rebels, the Party bosses retaliated by passing a savage sentence on the young dramatist Jan Benes at his semi-secret trial a few weeks later. Simultaneously, President Novotny (one of the remaining Old Guard Stalinists) began a campaign in which he attempted to brand them with "national socialism, reactionary clericalism, right wing social democracy or other political ideas"!

A likely story! They will have a hard time making that one stick - they are still hard at it trying to turn the Hungarian workers' Revolution into a fascist counter-revolution. Now they are dealing with people who are most of them known to have been socialists, and/or supporters of the Communist Party, for most of their lives. Their main demand is for a complete end to censorship, for an open debate, and for a say in the country's political life. Their demands have not yet reached the stage of their Hungarian counterparts of 1956, for workers' councils and proletarian democracy. But they call for an end to inefficiency and corruption, an end to an officialdom which is not answerable for its actions, and a limit to the bureaucracy's power. At the Writers' Congress Ludvik Vaculik, one of the leaders of the movement, said that "Over 20 years no solution has been found in this country for any of the human problems, starting with primary needs such as housing, schools and economic prosperity, and ranging up to more subtle

needs which the non-democratic systems of the world are incapable of solving". The Congress passed a resolution stating that "The essential feature of socialist culture does not lie in the delineation of a certain canonised set of ready truths, but rather in a search for the greater freedom of man", and "Present Czechoslovak culture once again tackles the classical question of its history: whether the pride of victory will go to the great experience of democracy and creative dialogue between different aesthetic tendencies or to the idea of manipulated and fictitious unity". Fascist? Reactionary Clerical?

In September three of the leaders of the rebellious writers were expelled from the Party, and others demoted. Literarny Noviny, which had long managed to retain a great deal of autonomy in face of bureaucratic harrassment, was taken over by the Ministry of Culture and Information, and all but its name changed. Immediately a stream of solidarity protests began pouring in. Now the writers have been joined by students and Communist Youth, who have come out onto the streets and clashed with police in three major centres to express a variety of grievances. As a result of the police brutality during these clashes, the students are now demanding an inquiry into the position in society of the Security Police, and are threatening, if their demands are not made public, to go to the factories and themselves tell the workers.

What will happen next remains to be seen. Certainly the attempt to clamp down will not now be successful. Whether the intellectuals who have so far led this ferment will succeed in consolidating their present advantage will depend on whether they continue to press forward with new demands, or are satisfied with a surface reorganisation of the bureaucratic setup. This in turn will depend on their ability to link up with the movement of the workers for democracy, and co-ordinate the action with them.

#### RUSSIA

In Russia, dissent in the field of the arts appears to take place on three cle-

arly defined levels. At each level the bureaucracy is aware of the dangers, and reacts in a different way, so that the picture is one of constant pressures and counter-pressures. The aim of the bureaucracy seems to be to keep the three main levels or 'groupings' - the mass of the people acting as 'consumers' of culture; the established and successful writers belonging to the Writers' Union; and the younger underground groups - apart from each other, and thus to avoid the vacillations and 'mixed treatment' which have proved so explosive in Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

Thus when the working masses demand the opportunity to know and understand such subjects as sociology or Freudian psychology, they are not all locked up. Instead, the bureaucracy has developed a new technique (though well used by bourgeois propagandists) of giving out selected, sifted and pre-digested resumes of all the ideas and books which are not made available in the original. A little thinking is now permitted, but only when carefully controlled and channelled to prevent the kind of real discussion and understanding that would challenge these usurpers of the workers' power. Such old and tabu subjects as the struggle between Stalinism and Trotskyism are now being fed to the workers, but not by publishing, for instance, The Platform of the Left Opposition! Instead, a 'novel' is offered, in which a 'Trotskyist' asks questions of his fellow workers, and is given all the right answers, such as "Precisely and clearly Stalin expresses the thoughts of our Party. He stands for the ideas of Lenin and crushes every attempt to depart from these views"!!!

Perhaps the most cynical of these manoeuvres is the move by the bureaucracy to introduce the mindless commercial distractions so effectively employed by capitalism to drug the workers. In response to the increasing lack of interest in 'utilitarian films' and the desire of the people for some relaxation and entertainment; the State Committee on Cinema has begun to import "the least talented western spectacular" (TIMES 28.2.67) and at the same time to place the Soviet film industry on a similar commercial

footing to that of capitalist countries, This, without needing censorship, effectively kills any large-scale experimentation and reduces many of the productions to the same state of mediocrity as that of the bureaucratic arts of Russia, if lacking their sickly puritanism! Thus, while appearing to give way to the pressure and allow a 'liberalisation', the bureaucracy simply heads off the pressure and the end product is as little real freedom as before for the Russian film makers.

### THE WRITERS' UNION

The second 'arena' is that of the Writers' Union - or rather, within it. Those writers who are members of the Union are already established, successful, and to a large extent privileged. They are provided with a guaranteed salary, a flat and a dacha, and have a good chance of getting their work published unless it outrages the C.C.; mildly critical works have such outlets as the magazine Novy Mir. Thus most of these writers are kept within controllable limits, in a position where they have the possibility of letting off steam a little, and the threat, if they are expelled from the Union, of their comfortable livelihood being forfeited and being unable to publish their work openly. The Bureaucracy is able to manipulate the situation, and play off the left Novy Mir against the ultra-orthodox magazine Oktyabr. Thus Pravda has this year attacked Novy Mir for publishing what has for decades been euphemistically known as "the seamy side of Soviet life"; and simultaneously it has attacked Oktyabr for being "grey and superficial" in its style, crude and untalented. (How Pravda wishes that those with talent could be orthodox as well!).

In this situation, protests are mild and generally permitted. Letters are written appealing against any re-introduction of the absolute repression of old, (such as the one last January signed by 20 intellectuals including the composer Shostakovich); or appealing for an end to censorship (such as the letter circulated to delegates at the Writers' Congress by Alexander Solzhenitsyn); or protesting

the trial and sentences of Daniel and Sinyavsky; or petitioning in favour of the case made in these letters.

There has recently been a bit of a stir around the brilliant young poet Andrei Voznesensky, who was angered by the lies and manoeuvring of the Writers' Union officials to the point of writing an accusing letter to Pravda, a copy of which found its way to LE MONDE. In it he asks "How long are we going to pour filth over ourselves? How long will such methods be used in the Writers' Union? .... They are real chameleons, full of tricks. All around are lies, lies, off-handedness and lies." This was a little too much, and as a result he has been subjected to a campaign of slander in which he was compared with Svetlana Stalin and told (by the hacks of the CPUSA in The Worker) that he was "a follower of Kolchak, ruler of spivs, servant of jazz (!!!) the Tsar and the CIA". In defence, Voznesensky wrote -  
"My aim is to rub clear and eradicate  
Any shadow or hairsbreadth blemish  
From Russia's windshield  
And to make her journey brighter".

This seems to sum up the extent of the dissidence to be expected from these members of the Writers' Union.

### UNDERGROUND

There are very few members of the Union under the age of 30. Writers outside of it are likely to be hauled in for hard labour sentences as 'dangerous parasites' as happened to the talented young lyric poet Josef Brodsky. They are largely unknown and therefore unprotected. In these circles exists the kind of underground whose boldness, anger and courage could become a possible threat to the bureaucracy. With these young people there is no question of gentle manoeuvring; they are not sufficiently known for slander campaigns to be worthwhile - indeed the authorities go to great lengths to keep their very existence a secret. They are people who cannot be threatened with poverty, disgrace and loss of freedom, for they know them well. It is, in fact, their 'underworld' with which people like Voznesensky can be threaten-

ed, and into which Daniel and Sinyavsky crossed when they 'broke the rules'. While the 'respectable' writers send letters, these young writers and students organise demonstrations and circulate manifestos. In their view they regard "even Andrei Voznesensky as an establishment figure, a tame poet trotted out to show how much freedom of dissent there was." (Takashi Oka, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR 22.11.67).

battle, but you will still lose the war, the war for democracy in Russia".

With people like these, the bureaucracy takes no chances. The magazine Phoenix circulates in many illegal student groups in all the university towns and cities which meet to discuss the question of resisting the further growth of bureaucratic police power, and the possibilities of fighting for, in the main, greater freedom of expression. The editors soon disappeared into prisons and were kept without trial. Since, there have been a whole series of demonstrations, arrests and trials: three organisers of a demonstration last January in Moscow's Pushkin Square to defend Galanskov and Dobrolovsky were tried in September and given 3 years hard labour. And 25 others who were arrested then and since are still being held: 11 are in lunatic asylums, and 14 are to be tried shortly, under conditions of strict secrecy, on charges of organising a political conspiracy. No doubt others will organise in

These young people have shown extraordinary resilience and determination in face of the most savage repression since the Beria days. Some have spent years in and out of prisons, hard labour camps or mental hospitals. The first magazine, Syntax (1959) was edited by Alexander Ginsberg, who is now being held without trial in the Lefortovo prison after his work in publicising the Daniel and Sinyavsky trial. The editors of the illegal compilation of forbidden and unorthodox writing, Phoenix 1966, are Galanskov and Dobrolovsky, both prison veterans still



Left to right: Yuri Galanskov; Daniel & Sinyavsky; Alexander Ginsberg; Voznesensky.

in their twenties with no illusions about simply reforming the bureaucracy away. In response to newly made amendments to the Criminal Code (providing for a maximum of three years in prison for criticising the Soviet system --i.e. the ruling clique - by word of mouth or in writing; and for any "organisation and/or participation in group activities affecting public order or defying authority") Galanskov wrote in his introduction: - "All right, go ahead. You may win this

their defence, and the struggle will go on. Some of these young writers have been known to set about, on their release, engaging in activities on behalf of their comrades - which they know will put them straight back inside again.

K.G.B.

These courageous young fighters stand directly facing the might of the KGB - a KGB which in the last year has gone a long way towards regaining the power it



had in the days of Beria. In May its top post was taken over by a member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and a right-hand man of Brezhnev - Yuri Andropov. Nobody of his importance and standing has had the job for many years now, and the signs are that the KGB has received a new lease of life: it has even gained control of its rival, the GRU (military Intelligence). Indications are that this is all part of a tightening up, an attempt to return to what is now so smugly called the 'cult of personality period' (what will they call it next time?).

Proletarian democracy will not be easily won in Russia. The idea of some people that, without a clear and conscious struggle, even without a revolutionary party, the workers will one day just wake up and take power, it patently derived from the realm of cloud cuckoo land. It completely underestimates both the tasks ahead of the workers and the power of the bureaucracy to manoeuvre, to alternate judiciously between savage repression & apparent liberalism. The kind of incidents that the panacea-seekers hope will 'spark off an explosion' have not been unknown in the last decade or so, which has seen anything ranging from street riots to full scale rebellions. There were riots in Tbilisi and other Georgian cities in 1956; 1962 saw disturbances caused by rising prices, in cities as far apart as Grozny, Yaroslavl, Donetsk, Krasnodar, Gorky, Zhdanov and Moscow itself; one of these at Novochoerkassk went on for some days, and the unreliable troops had to be replaced by KGB units. Hundreds were killed. 1963 saw similar events in a number of cities including Odessa, Baku and Omsk. The number of strikes (illegal, of course) cannot be innumeraled here. And in June this year a crowd of workers in Chimkent burnt to the ground two police stations in response to the beating to death of a work-

mate, and would have gone on to release all the inmates of the local gaol had they not been mown down by tanks and armoured cars.

This pattern of events should also be a warning to those who think in terms of a gradual reform towards workers' power in Russia and Eastern Europe. The bureaucracy is perfectly capable of playing along with those who merely ask favours of it. The people it finds necessary to put down are those who go further and challenge its very rights in the matter. No doubt these bureaucrats are in a less happy position than our ruling class. But the tendency to think that the more repressive a regime, the more easily it is overthrown, is absolutely false.

The intellectuals can certainly play their part in building the kind of party that will once again lead the Russian workers to power. Here where writers have a long tradition of political commitment, where the standard of education of the mass of the workers is about the highest in the world, there should be a somewhat narrower gulf between the intellectuals and the workers. Voznesensky, for example, has a mass following of tens of thousands of admirers. But those whose activities go beyond the purely literary sphere must already know that mere spontaneity, scattered and uncoordinated acts of defiance, produce little more than a Narodnik self-martyrdom. If the lesson of Hungary is that intellectuals can play a major role in these states, it is also that this role is necessarily limited. Not only Russian tanks defeated the Hungarian Revolution, but indecision and ideological uncertainty at that crucial point where a Bolshevik party would have sought not only to consolidate the gains, but to extend the Revolution.

Rachel Lever.

(From page 8) and finally walked out in a body. And then the fatal words were said: "To hell with them! We'll withdraw our political levies from the Labour Party." Just imagine! Miners of all people, the backbone of the Labour Party, withdrawing their political levies! They know now that if the Government does not slow up the run-down of their industry, the Labour Government and Party can look elsewhere for support, for, in the opinion of vast numbers of miners and their families, they have been tried and found wanting.

Yours Fraternally, Ald. E.W. Mackley (NUM).