

# THE WEEK

71 Onslow gardens London n.10.

VOLUME 9. Number 6.

February 8th, 1968

## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The majority of the production team of The Week has been busy in the last few days with other technical work. Rather than cause an excessive delay in this week's issue we decided to bring out a four-page issue. By way of compensation we are sending all subscribers copies of the latest VSC Bulletin. This is also important to keep our readers completely informed about preparations for March 17. We will also do more pages over the next few issues to cover the accumulation of articles.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN VIETNAM?

Just how the present battles will go in Vietnam is difficult to say. However, certain things have emerged: the relationship of forces has changed in favour of the National Liberation Front and there has been a certain measure of disintegration of the South Vietnamese puppet forces. The fact that the Americans have had to withdraw forces from the jungles areas to try to clear Saigon and other towns is significant in itself. The NLF representative in Moscow has given a very impressive list of towns that the liberation forces have taken over. He also announced that sections of the puppet army had gone over to the NLF.

These factors have significance for our fight in Britain. Despite the nonsense being put about by such people as Bernard Levin there is a much greater understanding, now, of how isolated the Americans are. It has been demonstrated beyond a doubt that they have been lying about the military and political situation in Vietnam - that is very clear. It is no accident <sup>that</sup> more M.P.s have signed a motion calling upon Wilson to ~~to~~ change his Vietnam policy than ever before. Once again, the heroism and skill of the Vietnamese people has assisted our struggle. We must do a little to level the score by making the March 17 demonstration as big and as militant as possible. The demonstration will almost certainly be very timely: by then the Americans will have had to make their choice; either to recognise their inability to win in Vietnam or seek to settle accounts by some massive escalation.

## THE HULL TRAWLER TRAGEDIES

Once again, the essential hypocrisy of the British press and establishment has been demonstrated. The newspapers, which have been shedding gallons of tears over the lost three trawlers would be the first to denounce a strike to impose better safety conditions. Wilson was going to present the Silver Cod trophy before the employers thought it wise to cancel the ceremony (this award is given to the skipper making the biggest catch; it is a symbol of the system which makes men risk their lives in the interests of bigger catches.) Fortunately the left has a programme for the fishing industry which would provide the best answer to such disasters. Entitled "Its Men's Lives", it argues the case for socialisation and workers' control, it can be obtained from Janet Blackman, 42, Pearson Park, Hull, costing 1/9d post paid. Its ideas should be fought for through the movement.

## DEFEND TRADE UNION FREEDOM!

by Dave Windsor

The Trades Union Congress has distributed a letter signed by George Woodcock to member unions and trades council warning them against supporting trade union defence committees. This unprecedented piece of witch-hunting is, apparently, designed to reduce support for the National Liaison Committee for Defence of Trade Unions and the Oxford Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions. The latter body organised a national conference last week end in Birmingham attended by 400-500 people - it is widely considered to be under the influence of the Socialist Labour League and, indeed, the bulk of the audience was made up of Keep Left Young Socialists supporters, although there was an important trade union representation. The National one is organising a meeting in London on February 17th and is regarded as being an expression of Communist Party supporters.

The TUC action is scandalous and should be rejected by all trade unionists. Apart from any other matter it is entirely a matter for the trade unionists concerned to support, or not to support, such conferences or organisations. Moreover, the TUC turns a blind eye to most right wing activity (witness the support given to the essentially anti-trade union "I'm backing Britain Campaign"). If rank and file trade unionists support such activities it is because they feel, quite rightly, that the existing official machinery is inadequate to defend their interests. And how could it be otherwise when the TUC and most trade union leaders have worked hand in glove with Wilson to reduce the standards of the British people?

George Woodcock rejected Gunter's "winter of discontent" reds-under-the-beds speech, but this latest action is in line with the Minister of Labour's attempt to whip up a witch-hunt. The difference being that this time, the TUC feels that someone is poaching on their preserve and perhaps even acting in such a way to make it redundant.

It is up to trade unionists at all levels to protest against the Woodcock letter. Any attempt to victimise unionists for taking part in these organisations or conferences must be vigorously fought. Fortunately, the mood is different from that of the 1946-52 period when under the pressure of cold war hysteria many witch-hunting actions pushed through. On the contrary all active trade unionists should be campaigning for the removal of the last vestiges of these years. Far from accepting George Woodcock's strictures, we should all demand and fight for an end to all bans and proscriptions in the labour movement. Journals like The Week should campaign against any tendency to split the labour movement and for the united front.

## GORDON WALKER SHOULD RESIGN SAYS HORNCHURCH from a special correspondent

Hornchurch Constituency Labour Party discussed the cuts and the imposition of prescription charges at its last meeting on February 5th. The meeting was particularly incensed by the decision to defer the raising of the school-leaving age. It stated its opinion, in a resolution, that Mr. Patrick Gordon Walker, the Minister for education, should press for alternative Government economies or resign.

The resolution went on to say that "We consider that more effective economies could have been made in the Treasury itself and by earlier defence cuts."

## IS SARAH ON THE TRAIL?

asks Charles van Gelderen

Is Sarah Barker taking her team of bloodhounds down to Pembroke? If not, why not? No one can dispute that the Member of Parliament for Pembroke, Desmond Donnelly, has arraigned himself openly against everything the Labour Party stands for. He is against nationalisation; enthusiastic about prescription charges; supports Ian Smith in Rhodesia; wants Britain to continue her imperialist role east of Suez. At every opportunity he attacks the Labour Government and Harold Wilson.

True, he has resigned the Labour Whip. This puts him outside the Parliamentary Labour Party - perhaps the one gain from the mess in which Wilson's policy has landed the Party. But he is still a member of the Labour Party. What is more, he claims that his Constituency Party supports him. We know that this is not true of the Dockers of Pembroke, who have passed a resolution not to re-adopt him as parliamentary candidate and may well not be true of the rest of the Constituency Party. But shouldn't Sarah Barker be on her way to Pembroke to find out?

For far less than this, indeed, for defending the traditional socialist position, Ken Coates of Nottingham was expelled from the Party. Sarah spent weeks investigating the Nottingham Labour parties, smelling out disaffection. Similarly, some members of North Hammersmith and Barons Court Labour Parties were subjected to hours of grilling because they dared to demonstrate against the Government's pro-American Vietnam policy in front of the premises of the Fulham Labour Party whose MP, Michael Stewart, was at that time Foreign Secretary.

Donnelly - and there are others - has, over a long period now, put forward a consistently Tory policy and no action has been taken by the witch-hunters of Transport House. Now he is going to address the extreme rightist Monday Club, surely a 'banned organisation' if ever there was one.

We have no objection to various points of view being put inside the Labour Party, but what is sauce for the right-wing goose must also be sauce for the left-wing gander. The Labour Party was from the start a compromise between the varied sections of the Labour Movement. Socialists joined it and continued to work in it because they wished to associate themselves with the main stream of the British working class. They hoped, in time, to win the movement to a socialist policy. They are prepared to meet the Donnelly's on equal terms and to put forward socialist solutions for the troubles which afflict Britain.

This is their right and their duty. They will not be silenced by a discipline which applies only to the Left, while the Right-wing reactionaries go scot free.

## SOCIALISTS HIT OUT AT WILSON

from a West Middlesex reader

Four officials of Ruislip-Northwood Labour Party, including the party secretary, have called for the resignation of the Prime Minister in an open letter published in local papers.

The four: Mr. Reg Taylor (secretary), Mr. R. Lynn (youth officer), Mr. E. Wyatt (trades union officer) and Mr. P. Wrighton (Young Socialist chairman) say the time has come to say in public what they have been saying at private Labour meetings for some time.

'Through trade union branches, local wards and general management committee meetings, right up to the annual conference of the Labour Party, we have tried to change the treacherous course the Labour leadership has been taking' they write. 'Now we can no longer stand quietly by while political careerists smash this great political movement of ours. There are a great many people within the party who have refused to criticise the Government and by their silence have condoned their actions. Neither do we exclude from blame the group of so-called left-wing MP's who have not the guts to oppose Wilson and Co., to whom they are just a slight irritant. They have played a useful role in prolonging the loyalties of the left-wing members who felt that while these MP's were about there was a cause for hope.....'

'We call on all socialists to oppose the latest cuts in social services, demand a programme of nationalisation of industry and finance and a break in the military alliances with the USA. We call for the resignation of Wilson and his Cabinet and its replacement by socialists who will implement the policies outlined above.'

'The Labour controlled Borough of Hillingdon has imposed rent increases on all council houses and it has failed to provide the health centre, the comprehensive education or the library in South Ruislip which it promised. They have not been completely at fault in this because they have been hindered at every turn by national Government policies. This should have caused them to lead local agitation against the Government's policies instead of covering up for Wilson and Co., as they have done. We make no apologies for this statement coming as it does just before a Borough election, as we feel that Harold Wilson and the Government has, by its national policies, already sealed the fate of the local council.'

## COME TO THE EMERGENCY PUBLIC MEETING HULL'S UNEMPLOYMENT CRISIS

FRIDAY 16 FEBRUARY, Bevin House, George Street at 7.30 p.m. organised by the Hull Unemployed Workers Committee

Speakers invited include: K. McNamara, MP; J. Johnson, MP; Cmdr. H. Pursey, MP; Mr. D. Shenton T.C. GWU Regional Secretary; Mr. W. Joester, AEU District Secretary; Mr. T. Waddington NUR Docks Branch Secretary; Mr. C. Lancaster, AUETW; Mr. S. McCluskey, NUS Secretary; Mr. R. Wade, Hull Trades Council Secretary; Mr. T. Watkinson, NUR; Mr. T. Topham; Mr. A. Rooney.

COME AND HEAR WHAT THEY SAY ..... LET US HEAR WHAT YOU SAY.....