

# The Newsletter

WEEKLY JOURNAL OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

Vol. 6, No. 230

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6, 1962

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## Ernie Roberts Turned Down

By OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE NEC decision to refuse endorsement to Ernie Roberts as a Labour candidate is a further threat to democracy in the Labour Party. The Horsham Constituency Party had selected Roberts, who has stood as a candidate in the past.

But his name was rejected by the Organization Sub-Committee, now under the chairmanship of George Brown. No reason was given.

### RIGHT WINGERS ONLY

The political meaning of the decision is quite clear, of course. While men like Wyatt and Mayhew are quite acceptable, Ernie Roberts, who is active in CND and is a member of the Victory for Socialism Executive, is turned down.

Thus the separation of the Parliamentary Party from control by the local organizations of the Labour movement is widened. Only safe Right wingers, or those sufficiently intent on a career to keep their mouths shut, are to be allowed to come forward as Parliamentary candidates.

### UNION LEADER

Mr. Roberts is Assistant General Secretary of the A.E.U.

Horsham CLP is fighting for the right to pick their own candidate, as laid down in the Party Constitution. Other sections of the Labour Party and the unions must support them in every way possible.

It is not known what was done by the so-called 'Lefts' on the NEC to reverse the Organization Sub-Committee's recommendation on Roberts. As far as is known, Greenwood and Castle did not oppose the Right wing on this issue.

# BYRNE VERSUS ETU

## New Rules Set Aside

by John Barker

THERE should be no surprise about the first actions of the new Right-wing Executive of the Electrical Trades Union. These are not acts of revenge, but part of a carefully planned policy to reorganize the union.

The Rules Revision Conference of 1961 greatly strengthened the control of the rank and file over the union leadership. These have now been set aside because of what is alleged to be a breach of the rules. Nobody in his right senses believes this. If there is anything which the Right wing wish to avoid, it is to have to give an accounting to the membership.

Over the past three years, they have prepared their policies, not at the conference of the union—where not one member of the present ETU leadership has ever made a decisive policy statement—but rather in the solicitor's offices far removed from the scene of everyday union affairs.

### SHAM

Their campaign for democracy in the union was a sham. John Thomas Byrne, the present general secretary, is an old hand at union administration and there are plenty of rank-and-file electricians who will no doubt have something to say when the time comes, about the sort of administration for which he was responsible as past secretary of the Confederation of Engineering Unions in Glasgow. So impressive was his contribution that on occasion he lost even the support of his own branch.

Every ETU member knows that the stock-in-trade of Cannon and Chapple has consisted of vicious anti-Communist Right-wing propaganda. Religious influences in the union have

been exploited to the full. But there has been no clear policy statement. For the Right wing to set aside the rules revision decisions was therefore to be expected.

The sacking of Bob McLennan, the assistant secretary, when all those sitting on the executive know the circumstances of how he was elected to that post, is simply an anti-Communist act. McLennan happens to be a member of the Communist Party and we are unable, because of a legal action to comment any further on his case.

Just look at what the capitalist press had to say about the first meeting of the new executive. 'Byrne's Clean Sweep', says the 'Daily Herald'; 'Byrne Rides Again', says the Daily Express; 'Communist ousted from ETU post', says the 'Daily Telegraph'; 'Byrne Hits Back', says the 'Daily Mail' and 'Two Big Blows to ETU Communists', says the 'Financial Times'.

### JOY

Here are declarations of joy which should leave no doubt about the politics of the present executive. Fleet Street treats the work-to-rule case of the postmen with hostility and the actions of the ETU leaders with applause.

The first meeting of the executive has emphasized once more the very real need for the rank and file Campaign Committee to extend its activities as widely as possible in the ranks. The present Right-wing leadership is not yet a consolidated body of opinion. They have no

## Tories Ignore Monopolies Commission

AS predicted by Colin Chance (Newsletter, December 30) the Imperial Tobacco Company is to be allowed to keep its £40 million holding in Gallahers, which gives them effective control of 95 per cent of the cigarette market.

The recommendation of the Monopoly Commission sought to bring this monopoly to an end, but the Tory government has thumbed its nose at their findings and with buckets of whitewash has declared that such a monopoly 'did not and might not be expected to operate against the public interest'. No one, however, can accuse the Tories of not having a sense of humour. For it is to enforce the termination of bonus agreements under which Imperial

Tobacco secure advertising facilities from customers in return for a cash consideration based on turnover.

Since Imperial dominate tobacco marketing anyway, these bonus payments do not help to secure additional sales. Advertising methods have completely changed in the last ten years due to the advent of television.

The bonus payments are a hangover from the early days when there were lots of smaller companies involved in the manufacture of cigarettes. The abolition of these deferred discounts will simply mean that Imperial's profits will be greater in the future.

Great expectations for the holders of Imperial or Gallaher

shares are indicated by the way in which the prices of them have shot up after the government announcement.

Although bonuses are forbidden, 'gift' schemes are permissible. Now that Gallaher have taken over the Kensitas concern, it will be interesting to see whether their gift scheme continues. Why give incentives to the public to buy a particular brand of cigarette if all brands are manufactured or controlled by one big monopoly?

It is perfectly clear that whatever influence the Monopoly Commission had—which was never very great—is to come to an end.

Although since its establishment the investigations carried out have been few and have

shortcomings of the Communist Party-dominated executive committee, at least they did set the pace for a serious attempt to tackle these problems. They are associated with some of the best policy statements of the union.

The Campaign Committee should boldly defend these policy decisions. It must unite all those who want action taken on policy. The Right wing will seek to overturn policy decisions as they have overturned the rules revision decisions. The Campaign Committee has no time to lose. It must go into action as the leadership of a united socialist policy movement inside the ETU.

With this latest rap over the knuckles from the government, the end of the Commission cannot be long delayed.

The entry into the Common Market necessitates the formation of powerful cartels, national and international, as part of the plan to reduce labour costs.

The existence of the Monopolies Commission in these circumstances is an embarrassment to the government, which represents the interests of big business.

### The Newsletter

January 6, 1962

### Words and Deeds

GEORGE WOODCOCK is right! The GPO workers are fighting for all of Britain's wage earners. When they take action in support of their wage claim, they deserve the backing of the whole Trades Union and Labour Movement.

It is a long time since a TUC General Secretary spoke on these lines. But now Woodcock must match words with deeds.

Just what does he propose to do to harness the power of organized labour in the battle against the wage pause? How is he going to mobilize the movement against the Tory Government? What action has he advised the Parliamentary Labour Party to take in support of the postmen?

A whole series of wage struggles are now coming along. Millions of workers will be involved in battles against the employers and their government.

Soon 140,000 civil servants will join the 160,000 Post Office workers in working to rule. Half a million railwaymen will be pressing for a 'substantial increase'.

The claim for 300,000 day wage mineworkers comes to a head soon. The engineers, 3 million of them, will also be on the move.

While the cost of living continues to rise, production falls. The possibility of beating the Tories' attack is a reality, but only if the movement prepares seriously for the conflicts ahead.

Woodcock's speech is correct. But what will he do about it?

# Indian 'Communist' Party Backs

## Nehru against China

by Cliff Slaughter

AJOY GHOSH, General Secretary of the Communist Party of India, recently made a press statement on the disputed northern border between India and China. He promised Premier Nehru that the Communist Party would support the Indian Government 'with all its powers' in the event of the 'faintest possibility' of violation of the MacMahon line by China.

At an election meeting in Calcutta on December 10, he pledged this support at the same time against the Chinese and against any 'Portuguese aggression' against Indian territory.

The Indian Communist Party leaders have also attacked a recent political statement by the Chinese government, in which Nehru's foreign policy was said to be a reflection of his growing dependence on US economic aid. Z. A. Ahmed, member of Parliament and of the Central Secretariat of the CP of India, said that the Chinese statement showed 'a lack of understanding of the real feelings of the Indian people' and that it was 'absurd to believe that the lure of the dollar was the decisive element in determining India's foreign policy or her attitude towards China'.

Ajoy Ghosh expanded on this theme, saying that the Chinese were wrong to suppose that Nehru's government had almost gone over to the camp of imperialism. He reaffirmed Ahmed's statement of December 13 that the CP of India supports Nehru's foreign policy 'because we consider that it strengthens the independence of our country.'

'We work out our policy and implement it taking into account the true interests of the Indian nation,' he said. Ghosh had been reported the previous day as saying that in the coming elections the CP hoped for the victory of Mr. Krishna Menon, present Defence Minister, in North Bombay, and indicating that the CP would avoid splitting Menon's vote against Right wing opponents.

It would be absolutely insufficient just to condemn the Indian CP leaders' statements as unprincipled compromises in preparation for the forthcoming General Election. They are that, of course, but they are much more. It can now be clearly seen that the present anti-Chinese line of the dominant Khrushchev clique in world Stalinism is not just a dispute over doctrine, but reflects the latest step in the process of degeneration of Stalinism.

An understanding with imperialism in order to preserve the narrow interests of a bureaucracy; a covering of this with a theory of 'Socialism in one country'—this has always been the essence of the logical end of Stalinism. Ghosh's last statement was made during the State visit to India of the Soviet President, Brezhnev. Nehru, laying on banquets for Brezhnev one minute, prays for US aid the next, like Nkrumah and many another one.

In 1914, Lenin commenced to make a conclusive break with the old type of Socialist, however 'Marxist' those Social-Democrats claimed to be. What decided him was one single action that revealed the full extent of their class betrayal: the leaders of European Socialism in almost every country gave support to their own ruling class in making war against other nations; they helped the capitalists to mobilise millions of workers to don uniforms and systematically exterminate their brothers. Lenin proceeded to brand these leaders as agents of imperialism in the labour movement.

What can a Leninist say about the statement of Ajoy Ghosh? He pledges support for

'national' policy, not even against another bourgeois government—but against a workers' state in China! Perhaps his line is that Nehru's is not a bourgeois government, but leads what the recent 'Statement of the 81 Communist Parties' called a 'national democracy'.

But Ghosh in his election speech on December 10, canvassing votes in the General Election, said that Nehru's government had a domestic policy of 'economic repression'!

Communist policies? There is not the slightest trace of anything remotely connected with Marx and Lenin in the Indian CP policy: according to them the Indian government has a

more progressive foreign policy than a workers' state and yet carries out economic repression at home!

All this confusion and betrayal springs from the Stalinist destruction of Trotsky and the Bolshevik opposition. In the backward countries such as India, the task of a real Communist Party would be to lead the mass movement of workers and peasants to form their own organs of power against the bourgeois government of Nehru and his type. 'National' was against imperialists like the Portuguese in Goa are a completely different question from the relation between the Indian working people and the Peoples' Republic of China.

Nehru and his type are the

only hope of imperialism in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The mass movement against imperialism all over these continents threatens the collapse and ruin of the whole system unless the imperialists can find faithful allies among the native middle classes, allies who can at the same time delude the masses into thinking that they are democratic, nationalist leaders.

The Stalinist parties, by helping to swing the masses who listen to them behind Nehru and Co., give strength and stability to these agents of imperialism. The Soviet bureaucracy, above all wanting peace to solve its own problems and preserve its privileges, insists on this very line in the international communist movement. Recent articles in the Soviet press attack the Albanians, who had suggested that too much aid was going to governments like those of Nasser and Nehru. The Albanians (and, by implication, the Chinese) were attacked for not realising that such aid 'broadens the anti-imperialist front'.

## A Letter to the Cuban Embassy

December 29, 1961

*The Charge d' Affaires and Madame Stolik, Cuban Embassy, 22 Mount Street, London, W.1*

Sir and Madam,

We thank you for the invitation to attend the reception in honour of the Cuban Revolution on Monday, January 1, 1962, extended to our weekly paper The Newsletter.

As you are aware, The Newsletter is a Trotskyist newspaper which has from the beginning supported the Cuban Revolution. In November 1960, we organized a demonstration through the West End of London protesting against the threat of American imperialist intervention in Cuba. When the intervention came in April 1961, our members did everything possible to rouse the British Labour movement against this cowardly attack upon the Cuban people. We rejoiced with all those friends of the revolution when the imperialist invaders were repulsed.

You can rest assured that our paper will continue its vigilance in defence of the Cuban Revolution.

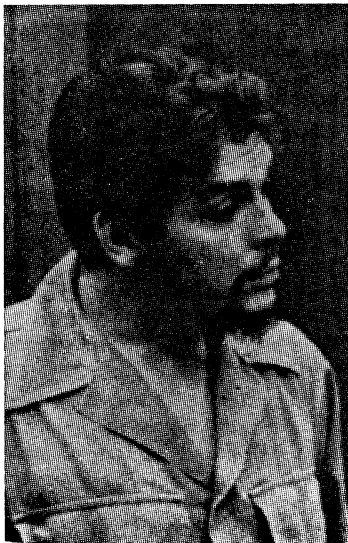
During the past few months, however, we have been profoundly shocked by the intolerance which the Castro government has shown towards our co-thinkers in Cuba.

The August 15, 1961, issue of 'Ultima Hora', a Santiago de Chile daily newspaper, published a two-page spread reporting questions and answers in a press interview granted by Che Guevara at the Punta del Este Conference. The question of Trotskyism came up in the following way:

**Question:** 'Can you tell me the reasons for depriving the Trotskyists of Cuba of their means of expression—their press has been confiscated?'

**Answer:** 'The Trotskyists? Well, there was a small print-shop that published a weekly which gave us some problems, and we took some administrative measures because they did not have any paper nor permission to use paper, or a press,

or anything; and, briefly, we resolved that it was not prudent to let Trotskyism continue to call for subversion. Because, among other things, sir—since you ask me this—it turns out that there is a very interesting antecedent. We have had some relations with the Trotskyists. One of the members of the '26 of July' who was very close to Trotskyism, David Salvador,



Che Guevara

was the one who caused the death of our people on April 9 by refusing to carry out a united action with the mass parties in the strike and attempting to carry out a strike of a putschist type which was simply destroyed by Batista.

'Naturally, Batista also knew that the strike was going to be carried out because it was a clandestine strike which scarcely got under way and a great number of our comrades were killed.

'After this,' Guevara added, 'Trotskyism was born in Guantanamo. It is a strange coincidence but it was born in Guantanamo and has its forces there. Guantanamo is a city only a few minutes from the naval base at Guantanamo, and we suspect that there could be a certain relationship in this "geographical proximity". Because of this we took certain measures since these people who

represented nothing and who got their money, we don't know from where, were continuing from extreme leftish positions to interfere with the development of our revolution.'

This is nothing more than a brazen lie reminiscent of what the late tyrant Stalin used to say about Trotsky and the Trotskyists in the Soviet Union. It is interesting to note that your government, at least for the time being, enjoys the full support of the Cuban Stalinists in their denunciation of Trotskyism. These gentlemen endorsed all the crimes of Stalin and at one period extended support to the hated Batista regime since such a policy coincided with the interests of Stalin's foreign policy in Latin America.

The international Labour movement is now fully aware from the revelations at the 20th and 22nd Congresses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, that the Trotskyists were the innocent victims of Stalinist oppression.

For Che Guevara to imply that our co-thinkers in Cuba are agents of American imperialism is nothing more than a scurrilous repetition of slanders which have already been powerfully disproved by events.

We demand that you urge your government to immediately repudiate these lies and grant the Trotskyists democratic rights as a political tendency within the new party now being formed in Cuba. This must include full freedom to print their newspaper and publish the books and writings of Trotsky so that the Cuban Labour movement may benefit and strengthen itself in the fight against United States imperialism.

Until we have this assurance, we regret we are unable to participate in your reception. If no assurance is forthcoming and our co-thinkers continue to be persecuted and maligned, we shall combine our defence of the Cuban Revolution with the strongest possible denunciation of such anti-working class methods because we believe they will in the end weaken the Cuban Revolution.

Yours faithfully,

G. HEALY,  
National Secretary,  
Socialist Labour League

Vital lessons have to be learned from this series of events and disputes. To understand fully the Russian-Chinese dispute between two Stalinist factions, we shall require a thorough, overall analysis of the present crisis of imperialism, the specific class forces on which it depends, and the relation of the working class and of its Stalinist misleaders to these forces. The Indian example gives us a clear pointer to what is involved. We are in a period when the Stalinist domination of the working class exposes the mass movement to the gravest dangers. But capitalism cannot abolish its contradictions, cannot achieve stability, and revolutionaries have a strong objective basis for optimism.

This optimism will be justified only if Marxists make the necessary advances in theory and build revolutionary parties in every country which can find a road to the mass movement. The gross and cynical betrayals of the Stalinist bureaucracy conflict more and more with the interests of the mass of working people all over the world; and revolutionary initiative can bring out of the present crisis a great leap forward towards the international socialist revolution.



'It was not accidental that for decades we had no works on political economy philosophy or history of any worthwhile significance.'

Ilyichov, at CPSU 22nd Congress October 24, 1961

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# BELGIUM

## one year after

By TOM KEMP

THE Belgian general strike of a year ago was one of the major events in post-war working class history. Its course and outcome contain lessons of great importance for the international movement. Here, in microcosm, all the main problems which have faced the working class in recent decades came rapidly to the fore.

The strike blew sky-high the myth of working class apathy so sedulously cultivated in some pseudo-Left circles. This was not a movement of starvelings, but of comparatively well-paid workers. It was not only a reaction to an attempt by the Belgian government to place on their shoulders the problems of capitalism, it was also clearly a movement against capitalism as such.

Instinctively the whole working class in Wallonia, and parts of the Flemish North, placed themselves against the state and its minions and moved towards staking out their own claim to

struggle offer opportunities for preparation, not occasions for defeatism and despondency. The fact that the preparatory work in Belgium had not been correctly carried out removed the possibility of taking advantage of the opportunities which presented themselves. The class-conscious vanguard found itself in the tow of centrist demagogues who had no intention of making a serious fight either against Belgian capitalism or its agents in the labour movement.

It now has to be recorded that the great majority of the delegates to the recent Congress of the Socialist Party celebrated the anniversary of the strike by approving increased appropriations for the arming of the gendarmerie—the main strike-breaking force—to include tanks.

At the same time, taking advantage of the Walloon centrists' immersion in the federalist movement (for an autonomous Wallonia), the Right wing has been able to intensify its attack on the Left. The latter is now definitely on the defensive in the party and is having to fight to preserve its right to expression as a tendency within its ranks.

What it is unable to see is that this difficult position flows directly from the incorrect policies pursued during the strike—and subsequently—which have, in practice, played into the hands of the Right wing in much the same way as



rule and to create a new social order free from exploitation.

When everything has been said about the peculiarities of the Belgian scene, it remains true that the million workers who took part in this strike were fundamentally no different from their comrades in the other European countries. What happened last year in Belgium could, in fact, take place with equal intensity and unexpectedness in France, Germany or Britain.

The fact remains that the sacrifices and heroism of the Belgian strikers were not crowned with success. The Socialist Party leaders, visibly embarrassed by the strength of the movement and effaced while it was at its height, have now secured for themselves ministerial seats and pursue a policy in line with the needs of Belgian capital.

Many workers who took part in the strike have since been beating out overtime and consoling themselves with beer and the telly. For a moment they sensed their class power and caught a glimpse of the future. Lacking were the programme and leadership to make that power effective. The betrayal of the Socialist and Communist Party leaders was to be expected: the absence of an alternative was the key to the failure of the strike.

Periods of calm in the class

the 'Tribune' centrists have done in Britain.

It would be a mistake to conclude, therefore, that the lessons of the strike have been learned by the Left wing in Belgium. Behind the formally correct conclusion that 'next time' we must be better prepared, remains a complete unwillingness to examine in a critical way the full experience of the strike and to assess, objectively, the role of Renard and of those who submissively went along with him.

And yet it is obvious that the Right wing has emerged strengthened from the trial of strength, that Belgian capitalism—pushed to the wall a year ago—has secured a temporary new lease of life and that the great class upsurge of a year ago has subsided into widespread indifference.

Serious people should make a serious estimation of the causal factors in this situation and not place their own responsibility out of the range of criticism.

Our role in Britain is not to give advice from afar or to declare that, of course, we should have done better. It is rather to ensure that our preparatory work is solidly done, without looseness on principled matters or compromises which, for the sake of short-term advantages, sacrifice the possibility of independent and effective intervention in the future.



The supreme military council—1937. Above, l. to r.: Chief Commissar Gamarnik (suicide); Marshal Tukhachevsky (shot); Marshal Yegorov (shot); General Khalepsky (disappeared); Admiral Orlov (shot); General Yakir (shot), General Kamanev (died); Commissar Ordzonikidze (suicide); Marshal Budyenny (alive); General Alksnis (shot); Admiral Muklevich (disappeared); General Eideman (shot) and General Ubovich (shot).

## Now Izvestia Rehabilitates Tukhachevsky

'IZVESTIA' of December 28 paid tribute to Marshal Tukhachevsky, one of the officers shot during the great purge organized by Stalin in 1937. 'Izvestia' said:

'The party and people have today re-established the good fame and memory of the outstanding fighters for communism—among them the name of Mikhail Tukhachevsky. . . .

'As a leading military thinker, Marshal Tukhachevsky was already calling for the construction of rockets in November, 1932. He was able to see into the future. Between 1932 and 1936, when Tukhachevsky was Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, many new types of military equipment were developed, which proved later very successful during the years of the Second World War.'

On December 24 the Soviet press also paid tribute to Iyeronim Ubovich, shot in 1937.

Tukhachevsky was executed in May 1937 along with 9 others for high treason against the Soviet Government and plotting to overthrow Stalin. Gamarnik, chief of the Political Administration of the Army shot himself before he could be arrested. Then, the signatories to their death warrants were in turn executed and a wave of executions swept through the armed

forces. (See Newsletter of November 4, 1961.)

Thus perished Yakir, former Commander-in-Chief of the Ukraine Military District; Ubovich, Red Army Commander in the campaigns against Denikin and Wrangel, and Supreme Commander of the Far East 1921-22; Primakov, Cavalry Commander in the Civil War, afterwards in charge of the Kremlin Commander School and Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Ukraine military district; Putna, civil war veteran and divisional commander in the Polish campaign; Alksnis, red air pioneer; Orlov, chief of the fleet, and a host of others.

☆

Piatakov and Smilga, old Bolsheviks who served on the military councils of war were shot in January of the same year. Smirnov died in jail.

More than 20,000 officers were arrested after June 1937, several thousands were shot.

At their 'trial', behind closed doors, the accusation was made that 'the military group led by Tukhachevsky and Gamarnik were inveigled into the conspiracy by Piatakov on Trotsky's behalf at the end of 1933'.

At the later trial of Bukharin and others, Rosengoltz confessed to plotting with Tukha-

chevsky. This trial has still not been mentioned by Khrushchev, although its falsity is now quite blatant.

Complete silence is now maintained by Khrushchev and the leaders of the British Communist Party on the co-operation which existed between Trotsky and Tukhachevsky during the Civil War when they turned defeat on the Southern front into a resounding victory.

With Kolchak and Denikin defeated, Tukhachevsky led the Red Army on to Warsaw. In the official history of the Soviet Union by Popov, these victories were ascribed to Stalin. Whilst Khrushchev has denounced much of this history as false, a new history has not yet been written.

As early as 1925 Tukhachevsky was singled out for reprisal and was relegated to a post in the provinces by his opponents of the Civil War period, Voroshilov and Stalin.

Tukhachevsky and the other Red Army personnel murdered by Stalin will only be vindicated, along with the members of the Left Opposition and Leon Trotsky, when Soviet democracy has been restored and the extension of the socialist revolutionary struggle on an international plane once more becomes the keynote for the defence of the Soviet Union.



## City Slants by colin chance

### Assured Success

When the friendly man from the Pru' visits you to sell insurance you might consider how uplifting it is to be associated with such a wealthy company.

Insurance companies, like the banks, seem least to be affected by falling profit margins and current economic difficulties.

Due to a large number of amalgamations and mergers in recent years there are now, perhaps, 20 companies who dominate this field of private enterprise.

Headed by the Prudential and Royal, the insurance companies have combined assets of some £7,000 million. So rich are these companies that they pay in dividends to their shareholders millions of pounds and yet add to their reserves over £500 million annually.

How do the insurance companies employ their vast resources? The Cambridge Department of Applied Economics published statistics four years ago which showed that the estimated insurance holdings amounted to

8 per cent of all equities (ordinary shares in public companies). If allowance is made for the rapid growth in holdings since then, the probable percentage is now nearer 10 per cent.

Research into the holdings in a sample 100 of the large industrial companies has revealed that almost 50 per cent of them have insurance companies amongst the top 20 investors. Since they are usually the largest individual holders, effective control is virtually in their hands.

By 1960 some £1,500 million had been invested by the big insurance companies in big business. This represents nearly a quarter of the total assets.

This control is sometimes manifested by wielding sufficient votes to appoint a nominee to the Board of Directors of the controlled company.

After the July restrictions, several property companies announced that they have arranged adequate finance through the generosity of one or other of the big insurance companies. The 'squeeze' does not apply to them!

Some 10 per cent of the insur-

ance companies' assets are invested in property. Property yielding high rents is a very attractive investment, and tenants paying their industrial life contributions may not realise that part of the rents they pay are also indirectly destined for the insurance company's coffers.

One source of premium income much increased recently arises through the beneficence of the Tory government. Their graduated pensions scheme, which shows such a poor return on the contributions paid, has forced people into private pension schemes. The vast sums of money collected by the insurance companies from this source will go to swell existing investment in big business.

Those investments are not held in trust for contributors and policy-holders. They are held so that the shareholders can receive dividends to the tune of some £40 million yearly.

In five years, for instance, the Prudential has increased dividends by 110 per cent. Remember that when you see that friendly man from the Pru'.

# Industrial Newsletter

## Bus and Tube Threat

By A LONDON BUSMAN

THE decision of the December Bus Delegates Conference to join the token strikes of the tube crews starting from January 29 is an important step towards winning the wage claims so far rejected by the LTE for both tube and busmen.

But resolutions by themselves are never enough unless followed by serious preparations for action. The Central Bus Committee that meets in January is a different body from the committee that met last year. On it this year are new and younger men.

No longer will certain 'militants' be able to excuse their inaction over the years by the fact that the committee was Right-wing dominated. The defeat of Tom Fitzpatrick, well-known Gaitskell supporter, in the recent elections, gives the 'militants' a clear deck for winning the wage claim.



Between now and January 29 much work needs to be done. The LTE are to answer the pay demands sometime in January. With a threatened bus and tube strike in the offing, which will undoubtedly paralyse London, the LTE will come forward with some attempt to buy one or both sections off.

In 1958, during the seven weeks' bus strike, the tubemen were bought off with a 3 per cent increase. This made the bus strike extremely difficult. To repeat the same mistake in 1962 would be tragic and inexcusable. The CBC must make it clear to the LTE that it is not interested in anything short of the full claim either for the busmen or the tubemen. To ensure that the negotiations are followed right through

the CBC must make immediate contact with the London District Committee of the NUR and ASLEF.

If the CBC does not do this the LTE will take advantage of the lack of liaison between buses and trains and isolate them from each other. But also of importance is the need for the CBC to carry the decision of the conference into the bus garages themselves and win the bus crews to the decision.



If the issues are really explained to the rank and file, full support will follow on January 29. It must be explained that the bus wage claim has been rejected by the LTE. The only way to win the claim is to unite with the tube men, who also have a claim in, in common action to defeat the LTE.

Every bus union branch should endorse the conference decision and send resolutions backing the stoppage to the CBC and the local tube depots. Liaison Committees of tube and busmen should be formed to bring the rank and file together, to draw up strike plans, common picket lines, propaganda and financial collections, etc. Serious activity between now and January 29 will show the LTE that the ranks are solid.



It's up to the CBC now, with its majority claiming to be militants, to lead. Any manoeuvres and 'deals' or half-heartedness will play into the hands of the LTE. Such bus leaders as Bill Jones, Sid Wale, Stevens and Smith will have a big responsibility for the outcome of January 29, and this time they have no 'Right' wing to blame for any mistakes.

## Equity and ITV

By AN ENTERTAINMENT WORKER

THE dispute between actors' Equity and the commercial television companies is almost impossible for most trade unionists to understand. This is owing to features that also make it one of the most interesting conflicts between workers (actors are workers whether you or they like it or not) and capitalists, who are extracting as much surplus value as almost any in history.

In most disputes the capitalist can put up at least some sort of pretence that he is unable to pay what is claimed. In an industry where one operator admitted that to be in commercial television was like having a licence to print your own money (he must be sorry he ever said it), incapacity to pay cannot be pleaded.

Most unions can be content with establishing a minimum wage which usually becomes standard—very few workers get more. But those actors who depend on infrequent engagements would starve if they got only the minimum, which may be satisfactory for the continuously employed. Equity have a responsibility to

devise a system of payment that will help all, not only those on the minimum, to get more.

Another difficulty faced by actors in their dispute is not widely understood. When an engineer strikes he is not replaced by his ghost standing at the bench working as effectively as he did. But the same actors that have ceased to perform 'live' for television may continue to be seen, in films that were made years ago and programmes recorded fairly recently.

There are many unions involved in television. We wonder what they think about the situation—but they won't talk. It seems they are also not anxious to act. Was the 'Daily Express' right in stating that Equity preferred to act alone, since they might otherwise have an application to strike in support of other workers?

Had there been blank screens for a few nights Equity would have won long ago. They may still win, even going it alone. But Equity and the other unions must know that they would do even better by acting together to get a fair deal out of the biggest commercial racket of all time.

# GPO THREATS ANGER POSTMEN

by Alan West

THE post office employers have launched a counter-attack against the 16,000 postmen who started an official work-to-rule on Monday in protest against the refusal to grant them a pay increase while the wage pause continues. In an attempt to wipe out the effects of the work-to-rule, the employers cancelled tea breaks and other 'privileges' and ordered compulsory overtime in some areas.

This move has angered the postmen—who are unanimously supporting the Union of Post Office Workers' decision—and many of them now consider that stronger action against the GPO chiefs and the government is necessary.

Reaction to the employers' orders was swift—many offices immediately refused to do overtime and informed their union officials of their decision.

England, Wales and Northern Ireland are already feeling the effects of the work-to-rule, the union claims, with delayed mail and long waits for telephone calls. GPO officials state that the delays are entirely due to the arctic weather gripping the country, but this is emphatically denied by the union. An official spokesman said naturally the weather had some effects on mail deliveries but after the thaw people would really see the results of the postmen's action.

### 100%

Scottish postmen followed the union decision from midnight on Wednesday, making the 'mail pause' 100 per cent effective throughout the country. But at the same time the feeling that only a national strike could force a real showdown was spreading.

One London postman told the Newsletter that this feeling was coming mainly from younger workers; he felt that older men, nearing pension time, might have doubts. 'We won't be pushed around,' is the phrase on the lips of the younger men and they are getting enthusiastic support from many coloured postmen in London.

### CRITICAL

The spokesman, however, was critical of union organization among postmen and he felt it would have to be strengthened considerably before strike action could be taken.

A post office telegraphist who was present at the UPW rally in the Albert Hall at which TUC leader George Woodcock spoke, told our reporter:

'There are few illusions as to the real reasons for that meeting. It was to head off and smother any forceful action on the part of more militant UPW members.'

'November 30, 1961, witnessed one of the many impressive demonstrations carried

out by national branches of the union. Six hundred demonstrators paraded outside Post Office HQ in support of the union's executive council which was to meet the Postmaster General on the wage claim.

'Their slogans were right to the point—"London Central say Action!"; "Eastern District Officers say: all grades—unite for action!"; "Stockport: pledge strength, Ron!"'

### SHOWDOWN

'In other words, they wanted a showdown. Forty years of conscientious objection to industrial battles is something not all post office workers are proud of. A 16 per cent lag in pay is something Ron Smith should be ashamed of.'

'What has been the result? A work to rule. This is a snivelling, pussy-footed and typically bureaucratic method of bringing pressure to bear!'

This may be rather a harsh judgment. General Secretary, Ron Smith, with no experience of industrial action and the angry rank-and-file breathing down his neck, no doubt considers that his work to rule is quite a considerable gesture for a 'respectable' union to make.

### NO TEA PARTY

But, as was pointed out in last week's Newsletter, events are calling for more positive action from the workers. The employers are not preparing for a vicarage tea-party as they fight to implement the pay pause, with its cut-back in wages and conditions.

The Post Office Engineering Union, which has threatened a half-day strike, has been told by the GPO that in doing so they would break their service and would therefore lose all pension rights.

This is an open threat. All workers employed by the post office should rally for a united front to counter these attacks and threats, and should immediately plan for widespread action.

### RALLY

A national strike by the post office workers would virtually paralyse important sections of the country. It would be the most important step yet taken against government policies and would be a rallying call to every worker in every industry.

Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper  
Published by The Newsletter,  
186A Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4  
Printed by Plough Press Ltd. (TU), r.o.  
180 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4

## Rootes Rub it in

HAVING defeated the strike of nearly 1,000 workers at their Acton factory, the Rootes management have already introduced substantial cuts in various wage rates. With as yet no Shop Stewards' Committee to protect them, these vicious attacks have been introduced without meeting any serious opposition.

The normal piecework rate gave the men on production an average of 10/- per hour (twice the national average). All the other 'locally' established rates for time lost through machine breakdowns, changeovers and 'waiting work' periods, etc., have been reduced to the level covered in the National Agreements between the TU leaders and the Engineering Employers' Federation. That is a reduction of about 50 per cent in 'lieu earnings'.

Only five of the 29 stewards involved in the strike have got their jobs back, one in seven of those sacked. Whilst none of the Communist Party members was a steward or serving on the Strike Committee, every one is now unemployed.

To drive home their victory, Rootes have in many cases put people in different departments to those they previously worked in, so as to break up relationships and prevent any resurgence of the 'old' trade union spirit, although this action is largely responsible for the present difficulties in production.

The warnings given in The Newsletter have been all too quickly verified by experience.

## Construction Workers Sacked

BECAUSE they refused to work outside in a temperature of nine degrees below zero, 400 construction workers were sacked last Friday. They were employed on an extension to the Stanlow oil refinery, near Ellesmere Port.

Before they were sacked, the men had already agreed that, pending negotiations, they would work on sections under a degree of cover, which the management claimed were free from inclement conditions. One of these sections was the fabrication shop. Even there, conditions have been so bad that two out of ten men working there went down with pneumonia just before the big freeze up.

The management demanded that all the men on the site return to work. The men declared that this was a refusal to operate the 'inclement weather' agreement.

They say the management have continuously provoked the stewards' committee and that the site agent broke a pledge on redundancy by sacking 52 men on Christmas Eve—despite recruitment of other men in the trades concerned only a week before.

Mass meetings of the men have demanded that the job be blacked by the unions and that there should be no return to work except on the basis of full reinstatement with no victimization.

Other sites in the area are being contacted for support.