

The Week

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS
Vol.6, No.10, 22nd Sept.1966

6^D

DEFEND
JOBS BY
WORK-SHARING

GUNTER'S

"DISHONESTY"

74 Mansfield Road, Nottingham

Subscription : £2 per annum and pro rata

Page 1	Editorial Notes	Page 7	Scottish Notes
2	Dollar Drain on Polaris	8	Vietnam
3	New Threat to Economy	9	Vietnam
4	Union News	10	News from Australia
5	The Aircraft Industry	11	Hugo Blanco Trial
6	S.O. Report on Forges	12	Forthcoming Events

DEFEND JOBS BY WORK SHARING - REJECT GUNTER'S "SACK 'EM" CALL

If anyone had any doubt at all about the nature of the incomes policy and the long term policy of the Cabinet, Labour leaders have, between them, destroyed any illusions during the past few days. Gunter's talk of "dishonesty and thriftlessness" sounds strange coming from the Minister of Labour (or should it be Unemployment?) of a Government which has dishonestly broken nearly every election pledge it made and has continued to thriftlessly spend hundreds of millions on Wilson's "East of Suez" policy. Callaghan informs us that the incomes policy is necessary as a long term measure, and Barbara Castle and Richard Crossman continue to dress up a vicious wage freeze as being "socialist" and "what the left has wanted for years."

Perhaps the most polished and sophisticated defence of Government policy has appeared in the columns of the New Statesman. However, we wonder if these apologists of Wilson have bothered to think things out: If planning = socialism; if control of wages (regardless of ownership) = "what the left has wanted for years" - then how does one define Nazi Germany, or Johnson's incomes policy? Does Marshall Ky's banning of wage increases for civil servants make him a socialist?

It is in this general context of a Labour Government pursuing the most right wing policy of any British Government since the 1930's that we have to view Mr. Gunter's "Sack 'em" call. The workers and shop stewards in the motor car industry, who are advancing the demand of work sharing instead of sacking, must be supported by the whole movement. The policy of the Government is designed to assist capitalist rationalisation of British industry by smashing working class resistance to big business reorganisation measures by two methods: increasing unemployment and weakening factory and trade union organisation. When economists and others speak of the present slump being followed by a boom, what they mean is that they hope that the present downturn will be followed by a period of capitalist prosperity in which the relationship of forces between the workers and employers will have been decisively changed in favour of the latter.

The arguments in favour of sacking because this will help in the redeployment of labour are indefensible from a socialist point of view. To say the least it places the whole question at the mercy of market forces and chance. The only socialist method of redeployment of labour is that of planning in an economy which is decisively developing to social ownership.

Defend Jobs by Work Sharing continued

Even from a capitalist viewpoint chance is insufficient and whether we, or the Minister of Unemployment, like it or not, the logical conclusion of present Government policy is direction of labour in some form or another.

Every man thrown on the dole is one less potential trade unionist; every change in the unemployment/vacancy equation in favour of the former weakens the whole bargaining position of the trade unions; every time a factory is hit by large scale sacking, the trade union organisation in that factory suffers qualitatively and quantitatively. The instinctive reaction of shop stewards' committees to call for work sharing shows a very healthy class spirit. While other workers remain employed in a factory they can still organise resistance to rationalisation measures: once they are out they are atomised and defenceless. Some motor car manufacturers have let the cat out of the bag by talking of resuming full production next year without increasing their work force - without, in other words, taking back the workers which Gunter is so keen to encourage them to sack now.

The class demand of work sharing without sackings of any kind is potentially explosive. It represents an advance in consciousness in the sense that it embodies a complete rejection of the right of the employers to determine hiring and firing policy. As a first step in acquiring a socialist attitude to the problems of the day it is of great importance. The fusing of this demand to the more general demand of workers' control, and the taking of this demand to the further stage where workers will refuse to be sacked by 'sitting in' must be the pattern of the future.

MILLIONS OF DOLLARS DUE FOR REPAYMENT DURING FREEZE

Most of the foreign exchange costs of Britain's Polaris submarine programme is due to be paid during the next two years - a massive drain of over £150 million in dollar currency. This, of course, is in addition to the £250 million which make up the sterling share of the programme.

Two additional factors have recently come to light. Firstly, the research and development costs of the warheads which are to be fitted to the missiles: such charges are normally disguised in Government accounts by appearing under some blanket heading such as "Headquarters Costs", which can be used to conceal the true expenditure on fissile material.

The second factor, which appears to have been appreciated, or at least announced, at an astonishingly late date, is the need for a communications satellite in order to maintain operational contact with the four submarines. Quite apart from the dollar outflow, the escalating costs of this reckless project are a strange example of Mr. Gunter's virtue of thrift.

THE TIMES WARNS OF A FURTHER THREAT TO THE ECONOMY

from an industrial correspondent.

The Times (14 September) warns that Britain is heading for grave difficulties in the steel industry as the 10% import surcharge is removed at the end of October. Such warning signs of crisis at a time when the Government is already cutting back the economy underline the dangerous situation into which we shall move at the start of the winter period. Says the Times:

"A flood of cheap foreign steel will come into Britain directly the 10% surcharge is removed. Already the forward orders that have been placed are sufficient to pose a major problem for the industry and current imports are very high. The Iron and Steel Board is watching the situation closely. If the winter imports rush threatened in steel is repeated even to a lesser degree in other areas of business it is clear that the removal of the 10% will have serious repercussions upon the overall trade balance.

"Between January and July this year Britain's steel imports reached 477,000 tons far higher than the 300,000 tons imported during the same period last year. Leading steelmakers now take the view that the rate of imports must continue to rise, having regard for the state of world steel trading; and that an imports upsurge of frightening proportions will be seen immediately following the abolition of the 10% temporary duty. Before long steel imports could be running at 10-15% of the British industry's 500,000 tons a week current production rate. During June and July (the latest available figures) steel imports into Britain hovered between 77,000 tons and 82,000 tons a month, which is twice the average rate for the first part of the year. The biggest increases in imports during the year have been in steel sheets, light sections and steel tubes.

"The British industry can look back upon a similar cycle three years ago when the price of world steel offered in export markets fell rapidly and was accompanied by a swift rise of Britain's steel imports. That year steel sheet imports shot up within a few months from 13,000 tons a month to 52,000 tons a month. It is not an exaggeration to say that all major steelmakers in Britain, Europe, and Japan are nearing their wits' end trying to stop the continuing rot in steel prices. The 30% differential between export and home prices is inevitably eroding their home prices now. The Europeans are resorting to selling cartels but that traditional defensive answer of big business is not proving satisfactory. For instance, it does not work when trading into east Europe. Also the entrepreneurs of steel, mostly trading through big ports like Antwerp are in a position to kick holes in most defensive moves practised by the steelmakers.

"There is always a steady trade in sheet steel into Britain from the IJmuiden mill in Holland. British car makers like an alternative supply. In fact the Dutch sell at ruling British prices and the trade is in no way regarded as sinister by the British steel industry. But the new imports of steel that are now being signed up for delivery after October are in quite a different category. They are from export-oriented steel mills in Belgium, Austria, West Germany and elsewhere. They may pass through middlemen so that their origin is difficult to determine. The British steelmakers are going to try to prove that some of these imports will be "dumped" i.e. sold at below ruling home prices of the nations of origin. But ruefully the British steelmakers admit they will have great difficulty in proving dumping so that the Board of Trade can act. Origin of the steel imports may be obscure. Even if origin is proved the ruling home price may be obscure because of the flexibility of European pricing. Then, the foreign producers can claim that their low price takes account of hidden discounts given to their home market customers".

SHIPYARD UNION LEADERS REJECT MERGER PLAN from a Tyneside reader

The Executive of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, meeting in York last week, turned down the Geddes Committee proposals that the number of unions engaged in shipbuilding and repairing should be cut from 15 to 5. The idea was turned down as unrealistic as most of the unions concerned have more members in employment outside the industry than in the shipyards. But, as an alternative to union mergers, the Confederation will set up a special committee to handle negotiations with the Shipbuilding Employers' Federation.

RAILWAYMEN OPPOSE WAGE FREEZE

The 1,000 strong Euston No.1 Branch of the NUR has voted to oppose the Government's prices and incomes policy. Their action follows closely the unanimous demand by the Manchester district council of the NUR for strike action if the Railway Board refuses to pay the 3½% increase promised by Mr. Wilson last year.

'WE WILL FREEZE OUR WORKING METHODS' SAY BEA ENGINEERS

BEA engineers and maintenance men at London Airport are refusing to co-operate in a productivity deal signed with the company in 1964. The pay increase promised in the agreement has been barred by the wage freeze, but the company is trying to impose the altered working conditions unilaterally.

Shop stewards plan to commence their non-co-operation moves in October and expect this to lead to a steady accumulation in delays culminating in BEA's inability to operate a proper scheduled service by the start of the summer schedule in April next year. The 3,000 men concerned are members of the AEU, ETU, NUFTO, NUVB, T&GWU, SMWU, ASPD and the ASW.

In the 1964 agreement a fixed yearly increase was accepted in exchange for revised working conditions and shift patterns. The new double day shift comes into the third year of the productivity programme, and was intended by BEA to be used for the overhauling of its Comet and Trident fleet during the winter months. The workers maintain that the working methods will be frozen along with the wages and that they see no point in further discussions with the management. An industrial dispute is the "likely result in the event of the company posting notices because of the refusal to work the new shift patterns."

WAGE FREEZE ENDS DOCKS TALKS

The talks between the London port employers and the T&GWU, which commenced a year ago on the basis of the Devlin Report recommendations for alterations in the wage structure, have now been abandoned because of the wage freeze. Said one spokesman, "It is pointless to talk of modernisation when this can mean nothing in terms of wages."

AIRCRAFT: Bankers' or Workers' Control? by Alan Rooney

The British aircraft industry, both airframes and aero-engines, is now virtually one vast monopoly run by merchant bankers. Since the Rolls-Royce take-over of Bristol-Siddeley Engines and the Bristol Aeroplane Holding Company, there is now only one firm on the aero-engines side - Rolls Royce. In fact the financing of the take-over of B.S.E. (which involved buying up 50% of the shares owned by Hawker Siddeley) was done by the powerful merchant bank of LAZARDS, which also financially controls such companies as Shell, English Electric and E.M.I.

On the airframes side, only two firms exist: 1) The British Aircraft Corporation. This firm, too, is financially controlled by Lazards, as B.A.C. is owned by English Electric (40%) and Rolls Royce (20%). The only other shareholder of B.A.C. is Vickers, who hold the other 40% - and Vickers is controlled by the MORGAN-GRENFELL merchant bankers. And, as Sam Aaronovitch pointed out in his 'Ruling Class', "Let it be remembered that Morgan Grenfell and Lazards in any case work very closely together."

2) Hawker Siddeley is the only other airframe company of any size. This company is financially controlled by the merchant bank of HILL & HIGGINSON. (The Government has a 51% stake in Shorts)

When Lazards were carrying out the recent take-over operations, Rolls-Royce issued a statement, together with Bristol Aeroplane, saying that they were of the opinion that the merger was in the best interests of the shareholders and the employees of the companies concerned. (As far as is known, the workers at the Bristol Siddeley plants at Coventry and Bristol were not effectively consulted at all.) According to the 'Financial Times', "The Government has told Rolls-Royce and Bristol Siddeley Engines that it sees no objection in principle to the proposed merger. The Board of Trade does not intend to refer the proposed merger to the Monopolies' Commission."

Presumably the Government regards such big business moves as in line with the Plowden Report, which specifically stated that aero-engines should not be nationalised. But the fact remains that the Government gives the manufacturers over £100 million a year in subsidies, according to that same Plowden Report. There is no doubt that this private aircraft monopoly could not exist without these Government gifts which allow the Lazard, Morgan-Grenfell and Hill-Higginson merchant bankers much scope for profit making. And the continuing dependence of the industry on Government money is illustrated by the further subsidies to B.A.C. for Concord and by the extent of Government military orders.

The recent report of the Public Accounts Committee shows how Britain's Aircraft monopolists milk the Government. We know how Ferranti fixed their books in 1963 on the Bloodhound missile and made vast excess profits. The new P.A.C. report shows that Hawker Siddeley and B.A.C. also keep their books effectively closed to Government inspection and still get vast subsidies, as the 'Sunday Times' Insight column revealed:- "The most significant post-mortem is on the Hawker Siddeley Buccaneer naval jet bomber. A crucial question in fixing the price was the number of man hours required to build the airframe. Ministry officials worked out - clearly haphazardly - sets of figures which varied between 135,000 man-hours and 176,500 man-hours.

Aircraft Industry continued

Hawkers claimed that 207,940 man-hours were needed. After a series of arduous meetings a compromise of 171,500 was agreed - but the Ministry still does not know whether that figure was correct. In fact nobody outside Hawkerc does.

As is customary for a fixed-price contract, work on the planes had actually begun before signing. But Hawkerc would not let the Ministry see their working-cost calculations. And the Ministry cannot demand them: in fact, it cannot even demand to see the actual costings for a contract after it has been completed, as a guide for the future. So, four months ago, the Ministry had to sign another, similar contract with Hawker-Siddeley under the same lack of 'equality of information.'

The case for the nationalisation of the airframes and aero-engines industry is unassailable. Even the AEU, which is the biggest union in the industry, the TUC, and the Economist are in favour of outright nationalisation. Technically, nationalisation is easily achieved as the number of plants involved is small. Shop stewards systems in the industry are well organised and can easily be extended to include managerial functions in a publicly owned industry. Discussions on these questions are continuing among aircraft workers, following the Nottingham Workers' Control conference. This Government must be made to give a lead on this first of all showing: that it is prepared to stop the subsidies to merchant bankers and is keen to replace the bankers' directors with workers' control.

GOVERNMENT PUBLICATION DESCRIBES FORGE BUILDINGS AS "BEYOND HOPE"

from an Industrial correspondent

'Conditions in the Drop Forging Industry 1954-1964', published by H.M.S.O. price 5/Od., makes numerous comments of direct relevance to the subject of workers' control, and particularly to the use of workers' safety delegates with direct responsibility for safety and health management. These, at any rate, are the logical conclusions to be drawn from a Report which refers to forges where "workers had to resort to patching up openings in walls with sacks and bags and where window frames were often left broken."

"The problem of lighting required urgent attention and there was no technical reason for the exclusion of light from any forge. All should have windows in the upper structures of the walls but broken windows were far too often repaired without being reglazed. The industry would benefit too from new artificial lighting systems properly designed by experts and periodically maintained and cleaned." The Report reminds the industry that the Factories Act stipulates the daily removal of trade refuse from floors and benches and the cleaning of the floor each week. Altogether the impression is given of an industry with its roots in the Victorian era, and in which the "dirty, dusty and dark conditions" are looked upon as "irremediable" features. In spite of many new constructions, there is still a class of buildings "beyond hope", and much is needed to convert others to modern standards. Though it jibs at drawing the obvious conclusions, the Report does recommend that a person "of sufficient status" should supervise the safety and health organisation. The existing bad conditions make it quite clear that it cannot be entrusted to the management.

Three main areas of crisis have emerged in the application of freeze measures to Scotland. Most notoriously, the massive cut-back in production by B.M.C. throughout Britain has led from complete short-time working at their Bathgate factory to the planned dismissal of 850 employees on October 7th, a cut of approximately 20% in the labour force. This was announced the day after Douglas Jay had promised the local MP, Tam Dayell, that the BMC plants in Scotland and Wales would suffer less severely than those in the English midlands where the general employment situation was more favourable, and that the employees at the West Lothian factory would not be faced with a serious threat of unemployment during the winter. The management has been totally adamant in refusing to hear of any plan for work-sharing, and little support was found for strike action to back such a demand. When and if the situation improves it may be found impossible to recover the skilled labour about to be lost. At Rootes of Linwood where redundancies are also in the offing, the management's attitude on work-sharing plans has been more cooperative, and this may not be unconnected with the fact that strike action was a likely outcome.

In the Clydeside shipyards the government has refused to allow the implementation of a productivity pact that was highly popular with both sides of the industry and was already applied in one yard. According to press reports, Wilson personally decided on the rejection against Gunter's advice. Dan McGarvey, the Boilermakers' president, warned that he would not be responsible for his members' actions. The methods by which Edinburgh Corporation Transport Committee decided to reject the pay award for transport staff recall the practices of medieval bishops' councils. Six 'Progressive' (Tory) and one Independent member began the meeting at precisely 2p.m., and raced through business before the Labour members arrived four minutes later.

to

According to the NCB annual report, the mining industry in Scotland over the past year has continued to decline in terms of everything except productivity. Sales, output and manpower all decreased, and the number of collieries was reduced by 11. Ironically, the lack of confidence produced by the rundown of the industry has brought about a "runaway" of manpower such that there is insufficient even to staff the pits still in operation. The Scottish NCB is now having to organise a recruiting campaign. The organisational chaos and lack of long-term planning in the Scottish road network has been severely condemned by the Scottish regional controller of the AA who warned that without a proper national plan and vastly increased expenditure, the system was headed for disaster. A more encouraging feature was the opening of the big new pulp and paper mill near Fort William, a long-awaited stimulus for the Highland economy. It is interesting to note that the West Highland Railway is one of the key transport routes for this enterprise. This line was originally due for Beeching closure and was reprieved because of the mill. How many more projects will never see the light of day because potential transport facilities have been thus destroyed is a matter for conjecture.

It was perhaps unfortunate for the Secretary of State, William Ross that immediately prior to the BMC developments he had been telling Edinburgh Labour Party members that Scotland had been sheltered from the full pressure of the squeeze. Later he asserted to representatives of the licenced trade that there was little need to worry about the effect of the Selective Employments Tax on the Scottish hotel and tourist industry, as the restrictions on holiday spending abroad would bring more trade in this direction. No doubt a further contribution to integrated regional planning.

PAVING THE WAY FOR ESCALATION

Writing in the 'New York Times', Arthur Schlesinger, former special assistant to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, says that "observers in Washington predict a new venture in escalation before the mid-term elections of 1966. Everything in recent weeks suggests that President Johnson has made his choice, and that his choice is the careful (sic) enlargement of the war."

Calling for the United States to "reverse the drift towards a great and unnecessary calamity", Mr. Schlesinger castigates the Administration for failing to listen to advice from abroad. "The Vietnam obsession has stultified our policy and weakened our position in Western Europe and Latin America. It has precipitated the decision of U Thant to resign."

Adding point to these warnings is Eisenhower's television disclosure of his readiness to use nuclear weapons in Korea. As an instalment in a series entitled "The Struggle for Peace", it is uncomfortably and, no doubt, purposely relevant to America's position in South East Asia today. Eisenhower claimed that the war would have been won in a week if the weapons had been used. If the communists had not come forward to sign an armistice, the United States would have used nuclear weapons "enough to win." "So I let it be known - through several channels - that in the absence of an armistice I would not be bound by the kind of weapons we would use. My advisers said we might as well get ready to attack with any kind of weapons which we wanted to use." Although the Chinese "kicked a bit", they signed.

In a closing remark, clearly aimed at softening up public opinion for a further extension of the Vietnam War, Eisenhower said, "You cannot just stay and say that day after day we are going to take these casualties and nothing is going to be accomplished."

L.B.J.'s FORMER SPEECH-WRITER ADMITS DECEPTION

Richard Goodwin, a former speech-writer for Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, has admitted that he wrote false accounts of the Vietnam War. Addressing a meeting of the Americans for Democratic Action, in Washington last week, Mr. Goodwin accused the Administration of deliberate lying. "If we take the number of enemy we are supposed to be killing, add the number of defectors along with the number of wounded, we find we are virtually wiping out the entire North Vietnamese force every year." Of his own deceptions, he admitted that "there were some which I believed at the time and some which I did not."

AMERICANS WORKING ON GERM WARFARE

Assertions by a Philadelphia anti-war committee, that the University of Pennsylvania has been involved in secret research into chemical and germ warfare, have provoked a violent controversy in which the authorities have now been forced to confirm the existence of a laboratory staffed by forty chemists, biologists, physicists, mathematicians and meteorologists, and financed by the Pentagon to the tune of £12 million annually - nearly a third of the entire University budget. The allegations which forced this disclosure were the result of a rumour that the university was carrying out research into diseases of rice, and the Philadelphia committee correctly linked this with chemical warfare efforts in South Vietnam.

..... AND SMELLS

Possibly as a result of difficulties in brainwashing the bed bugs which they were planning to recruit to the U.S. cause, American scientists are now working on means of detecting body odour electronically. The 'Daily Telegraph' on Monday revealed that a Minneapolis Research Centre, under the direction of Dr. Heist, is conducting research into the electrical impulses in cells taken from the olfactory nerves of rabbits. "Preliminary tests are very hopeful and the U.S. Army is taking a deep interest in the developments which could be used to locate a Vietnamese soldier hidden in the jungle."

As a means of pin-pointing concealed targets for napalm attacks this "smelling out" of the enemy reveals once again the wholly indiscriminate nature of American tactics. Even Dr. Heist made no claim that an armed Vietnamese smells any different from a woman or child.

THE BLACKMAIL ELECTIONS

Even amongst the right wing newspapers there are few which are prepared to go even part of the way with L.B.J. in his enthusiasm for the Vietnam election results. One wonders who he thinks he is impressing. Most revealing of the electoral methods is the 'Daily Mail' report from its correspondent in Saigon. Richard West writes:-

"The high poll was ... an organisational triumph for the political police, achieved by a mixture of propaganda, appeals and sheer blackmail. The last was easy to see at any polling booth. Each citizen of voting age had been given an election card which he presented at the polling station. After voting he gave the card to another official who stamped it, clipped off a corner-ear and handed the card back. Both the card and corner-ear had been numbered."

"Every citizen may now have to show his stamped card as proof that he obeyed the Government by voting. The police can see from the corner-ears exactly who went to the polls. Anyone who did not vote is suspected of anti-Government sympathies. The electoral officer at the Minh Phung primary school polling station in Cholon said frankly: 'We have the number on the card so we can check who has done his duty to the country by voting. It is necessary to know who supports the Government and the proof will be necessary for anyone who wants to move from one district to another.' "

"In South Vietnam one needs police permission not only to move from district to district, but also to get rations, business licences or any favour from the immense bureaucracy. Those who did not vote will find themselves in continual trouble. That is why even some strong opponents of Ky said they would go to the polls rather than stand on principle."

WITHOUT COMMENT (from the B.B.C. programme 'Twenty-four Hours')

A poster in Saigon proclaims: "Every vote cast in these elections is a brick in the building of South Vietnam's democracy."

One Vietnamese, caught in the act of venting his democratic feeling by tearing the poster, was summarily shot.

NEWS FROM AUSTRALIA from a correspondent in Sydney

FIRST STRIKE OF ABORIGINAL WORKERS WINS BIG PAY RISE

The first ever strike of Aboriginal workers, and one of the most dramatic strikes in Australian history against the UK meat empire Vestey's has ended with partial success which paves the way for further advances.

More than 1,000 Northern Territory Aboriginal stockmen on the Wave Hill and Newcastle Waters stations will now get higher pay as from November 1, as a result of an agreement between the Northern Territories Cattle Producers Council, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, and Government officials.

At an earlier stage of the strike the tardiness of the ACTU in responding to the stockmen's struggle aroused indignation throughout the trade union movement. Although the ACTU executive met for a week, it issued no call for general support from unionists throughout the country: nor did it utter any condemnation of either Vestey's or the Federal Government.

The strike, which started as a fight for equal pay with white workers, developed savagely as the powerful Vestey combine issued dismissal notices. With wages far below even the basic wage for white stockmen, the Aborigines were not union members: nevertheless the North Australian Workers' Union, through its secretary Mr. Carroll, identified itself immediately with the dispute and the Aboriginal leaders. It called for the widest possible support from all unions - not excluding the ACTU leadership itself. And Paddy Carroll announced, "Any man who accepts work to replace striking Aboriginal stockmen will be treated as an industrial renegade. Industrial renegades were once called scabs."

The victory now achieved is only partial, and there are already signs of differences of interpretation in the agreement. When, for example, it was pointed out to the ACTU General Secretary that the \$14.50 a week, plus keep, which some stockmen would be getting, would be nothing like the NT basic wage, the reply came that "this only applied to a relatively small number." The NAWU's leader has responded by making it clear that he is not prepared to accept a condition where even a few Aborigines did not get the full basic wage.

POLICE BAN ON SALE OF VIETNAM PAMPHLET DEFIED

Chief of the Victorian Police Vice Squad Det. Sgt. Whitehead with five uniformed policemen and five plain clothes men were defied by twelve ministers of religion who sold 300 copies of a banned pamphlet on 'American Atrocities in Vietnam' in Melbourne last week. The sales were made in defiance of the seizure of the pamphlet from bookshops on the previous Thursday. Crowds queued six deep to buy the pamphlet on a city corner, and all were sold within fifteen minutes while the Police Chief and his Vice Squad stood by. The ministers, who have announced their intention to continue selling the pamphlet whenever possible, were asked to sign a statement that they distributed them. These are now in the hands of the Police H.Q. pending further action.

In view of the worldwide concern at the trial of Hugo Blanco, readers of The Week will no doubt be interested in this account of the opening sessions. It is extracted from the current edition of World Outlook.

As feared by the defense, the Peruvian government opened the trial for Hugo Blanco Galdos without adequate notice; and selected a court in Tacna, a small town where even routine press coverage is difficult.

Twenty-eight defendants were brought into court August 30. Nine others were named in the indictment but have not been apprehended. The two leading figures in the case are Hugo Blanco, who is being defended by Dr. Batillana; and Pedro Candela Santillana, who is being defended by Dra. Caller. The latter attorney, together with Marcial Chalco, is also defending the 27 other defendants. The prosecuting attorney, Lt.Col.Oswaldo Paulinich, demanded 25 years in prison for Hugo Blanco, 22 years for Pedro Candela, and from 2 to 20 years for the others. The demand was not without sinister implications. The press had freely predicted that the prosecution would demand 25 years for Hugo Blanco but that the judges would hand down the death sentence. The prediction proved to be accurate as to the opening moves of the prosecution, giving rise to forebodings that the trial will end with martyrdom for Hugo Blanco.

Dr. Batillana objected to the trial being held in Tacna because it "lacked the necessary guarantees" for a fair hearing. He also charged that the defendants were brought to Tacna hastily and without previous notice. The defense also filed objections over a series of legal "omissions and errors" in the case. They argued for dismissal of the case; and, when this was denied, demanded its postponement. This was denied inasmuch as the Military Code does not provide for postponements. In addition to all the other difficulties facing the defense, the government placed the case under the Code of Military Justice although the alleged crimes actually come under civil law. The defense also charged that the trial was unfair, since eighty percent of the defendants speak only Quechua, yet the trial is being conducted in Spanish. When the court read the charges to the defendants in Spanish, Dra. Laura Caller objected. She pointed out that the Military Code provides in such instances for an interpreter. The head of the Military tribunal, Col.Roberto Acosta, said that after the charges were read in Spanish a copy translated into Quechua would be handed to the defendants.

When Hugo Blanco was brought into the small crowded courtroom at 8.30 a.m. he shouted the slogans of the peasants whom he had led in the valley of La Convencion in the heroic struggles of 1961 and 1962. When the hearing was suspended he rose to shout again, "Tierra o Muerte!" (land or death) Pedro Candela and the other 26 loudly echoed the slogan before the appreciative spectators who had jammed into the courtroom.

The highly political nature of the trial is revealed by the mere fact that the second day of the hearings (August 31) was spent largely with the prosecution reading extracts from the literature distributed to the peasants, and maintained that this "red literature" openly "incited" the land-hungry peasants to "rebellion". September 1st and 2nd the prosecution read into the record of depositions of witnesses concerning guerrilla incidents in which Hugo Blanco was allegedly involved. On September 3rd Hugo Blanco spent 6½ hours listening to what he had allegedly said during the investigative process. According to the press, the trial, proceeding in the usual drum-head fashion of Peruvian courts-martial, might last another six days.

VIETNAM DEMONSTRATION - A DELIBERATE OBSTRUCTION ?

Last week's issue contained brief details of the banning of the use of Trafalgar Square as an Assembly Point for the Demonstration Against British Complicity in the Vietnam War.

Far from being deterred by these measures, the Campaign announces that it is going ahead with the planned demonstration which will now start from the Victoria Embankment at 7 pm on Wednesday, 28th September, and march from there to the Labour Party Headquarters at Transport House.

The effect of changing the assembly point, having to inform everybody of the change, etc., is likely to hamper the demonstration, apart from the additional cost involved in reprinting leaflets and posters. No doubt the intention was that the last minute banning of the use of the Square would cause the demonstration to be called off in view of these difficulties. It must be emphasised, once again, that the only adequate reason that can be given for withholding the use of the Square would be a prior booking. In this instance no such reason has been given and the negative decision was delayed for four weeks, at a time when the authorities must have been aware of the publicity arrangements being made.

The obstruction means that the Campaign will have plenty of extra work in order to make the demonstration a success. Readers of The Week in the London area, who are willing to help, should telephone the Campaign offices at FRO 3138.

LONDON WEEK FORUM

The next 'Week' Forum is to be held at The Lucas Arms, 245a Grays Inn Road, Kings Cross, on Friday 14th October at 8 pm. A Discussion will take place on the Labour Party Annual Conference, which closes the week before, and on the recent TUC Conference.

The panel of speakers is still to be announced, but John Palmer, who was North East Croydon's chosen candidate at the last General Election (He was subsequently vetoed by Transport House) has already agreed to take part.

'THE WEEK' APPEAL FUND

Now that we are once again in full swing as a weekly publication we must repeat our appeal for donations and renewed subscriptions to enable us to maintain our schedule and make the many improvements which are dependent upon the acquisition of less primitive equipment. Assistance has flowed in from many quarters, but there are still areas of the country from whom we have yet to hear. THE NEED IS STILL MOST URGENT.