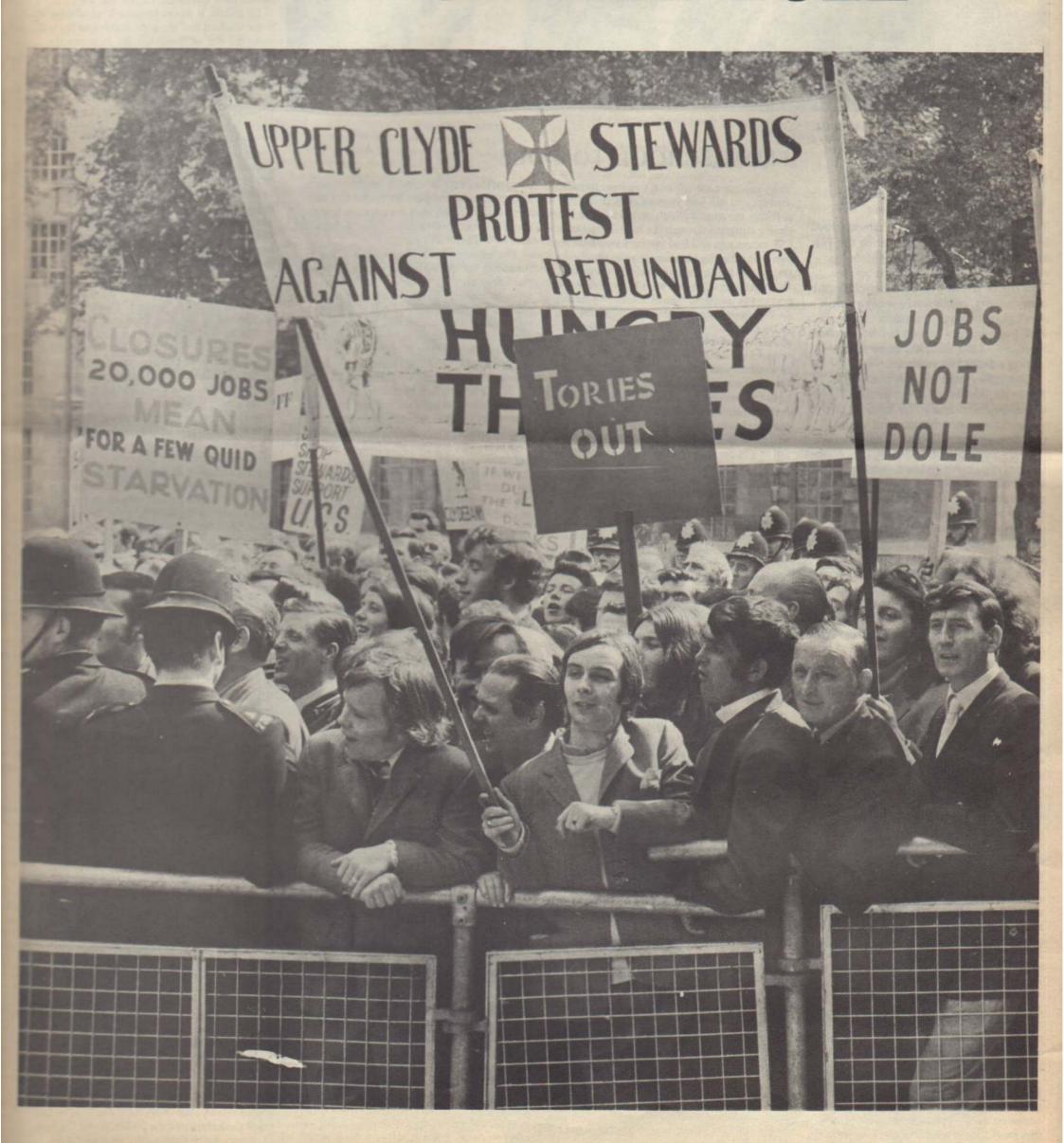
The Call Ole

YOUTH ON THE DOLE





YOUNG WORKERS LOBBY THE 1970 T.U.C.

EDITORIAL

There are now more people unemployed in Britain than at any time since the War, and the total is generally expected to reach the million mark by the winter. This figure doesn't of course include the many others, particularly women, who don't sign on when they don't have a job. And the numbers will be further swelled by many of the 500,000 or so who are leaving school this summer.

Unemployment hits particularly at these last, and at youth in general. They are totally unprepared by school for this situation-careers masters and youth unemployment officers will tell you what obs are available but nothing about what to do if you can't get one-and are therefore more easily prone to frustration and demoralisation. In most cases they will not be in trade unions (schools don't tell you about them, either) and will therefore not realise at the time. be completely on their own; even if they are union members they cannot expect too much help from their local official. Young people who are unemployed get lower benefits than older workers. And many cases they will be dependent on parents, with all the pressures and restrictions which that can involve.

In this situation unemployed youth need to get together and organise themselves to change It. The Spartacus League is arranging a series of meetings round the country on this question, and hopes that in many areas these can lead to the formation of Youth Unemployment Committees to organise action. Of course such committees should not operate in isolation, and should include representatives of the trade unions, of Claimants Unions, of Schools Action Groups, etc. But the main initiative and the main responsibility must come from the unemployed youth themselves. They themselves must take the lead in fighting for their rights, in organising local activity such as meetings, pickets, marches, etc.

These committees must also seek support rom local trade union branches, trades councils, affairs, then isn't it rather strange that nature thop stewards committees, etc. -arranging for speakers at meetings of these organisations is one of the best ways of doing this. Money of sourse is the most urgent need. The committees should as one of their major tasks make preparations for the "mass youth lobby" planned for the TUC Congress in Blackpool on 6th September, and should aim to make the problems of snemployed youth one of the major emphases of this lobby. Local trade union organisations should be asked to sponsor coaches to this lobby as well as helping in other ways.

The organised labour movement must be left in no doubt that the problems of unemployed youth are extremely pressing and that immediate it was going to produce a lot more brainy people action on their part is essential. For its part, the Spartacus League will make every effort to ensure that unemployed youth can organise effectively and successfully to finbs

FROM SCHOOL TO DOLE

When you leave school, or if you have left school already, you will find yourself confronted by probably the most difficult period of your life. Having struggled through the final O level or CSE exams you will find yourself torn between two contradictory ideas about your situation. On the one hand, it seems that you are now free to choose what you want to do rather than what your teachers or parents wanted you to do. On the other hand, you will be increasingly aware that the number of exams you passed, the streams in which you were placed, the remarks in school reports, etc., are what really determines your job future and therefore the future of your life as a whole. By the time you have tried out several dead-end jobs-office teamaking, factory work, etc.-you will come to the conclusion that it is already too late. You will come to realise that what you finally do is not at all your own free decision-it was determined in advance several years ago by examinations, pressures exercised on you by parents, attitudes you adopted to certain teachers, etc., the consequences of which you certainly did

The fact of the matter is that the "educational" system is not so much an education as a sorting and grading process. Its real purpose is to give you a label which enables future employers to size you up. The way the educational system works is not an accident or a design of nature. It is determined by the longterm labour requirements of industry-or more accurately of the small class of people who own the industry in a capitalist society. Schools are there to sort out and train a minority to do the skilled jobs in society. The rest (the vast majority) are then discarded to find their own way in society-which usually means getting a lousy dead-end job or increasingly no job at all.

Now you may reply that really you did your best but there were many others in the class who were "brighter" than you; that nature just isn't very kind to most of us but mysteriously bestows upon a few some extra brain capacity. This lucky few then go on from school to get the most rewarding, most exciting, and best paid jobs, while the majority on the other hand get the dirtiest, most tedious and boring, and worst paid jobs.

But if nature is to blame for this state of produces roughly the right number of people to do the skilled jobs and roughly the right number to do the unskilled jobs? How did nature know? Of course we could say that there must always be a few skilled jobs and lots of manual jobs in any society, because nature just doesn't make lots of brainy people. However this answer to the question can't be correct-because it can certainly be demonstrated that while the population of the British Isles has risen quite considerably since the last War the number of skilled jobs has risen very much faster. If nature is the cause of "intelligence", then why did it suddenly decide that after 1945 than it had done previously?

If nature isn't the explanation, then what is? Maybe there have been more skilled jobs since

parents, the range of subjects taught is much wider, and these subjects are taught to a more advanced level. But then the question arises: why did society suddenly decide to extend the educational system?

The answer, of course, is that since the War the amount of skilled labour required has risen much faster than the amount required over the previous century. That is, industry today requires more technicians, engineers, designers, architects, scientists, planners, accountants, etc. than ever before. More and more people have to be trained, before they go out to work, not simply to read, write and count, but to do complicated mathematical problems, to understand the scientific structure of matter, to do physics and chemistry, to learn accounting, to have an elementary grasp of the history of the country, its geographical structure, where its minerals are found, what its transportation pattern is,

What has happened is this: over the last 25 years an industrial expansion has been carried out by the capitalist class (not just in Britain, of course) which has created hundreds of thousands of new skilled jobs. However, the capitalist class is not so numerous that it can fill all these occupations with its own sons and daughters. Consequently they have been forced to extend to the sons and daughters of the working class the educational facilities which they had previously kept for themselves. This involved a large and ongoing building programme of colleges and universities, new grammar and comprehensive schools, and the raising of the school leaving age from 12, and sometimes 13, to 15 years and now 16. The money for this of course came mainly from taxes gathered from the wages of the working class and not from the capitalists' own pockets.

The whole purpose of this expansion programme was to give larger numbers of working class children a "chance"-a chance to get skilled jobs and produce more profits for the capitalist class through the quality of their labour. But at the same time it had to ensure that ALL of us didn't get these jobs, because that would leave none of us to do the unskillea work. What the state therefore did was to construct and expand a system in which everybody (it was "universal") was given the opportunity but which at the same time ensured that only a few would be successful. That is why it is competitive. Competition doesn't arise day after day in the schoolroom because some of us are brainy and some dull. Competition is deliberately introduced into the day to day life of the classroom through the teacher and through the examination system to which day to day life is ultimately geared.

That is why we are all given the same "abstract" kind of education. We are all forced to run a race (which takes several years)-a race to gain mental formulae and facts which are of value only to the successful few. For the majority of us, destined to become the unskilled labour force, they are of little or no value; but it is not the teacher's task to tell us the truththat for most of us the whole process is a complete waste of time and hell into the bargain.

streams in the school even when it is apparent to everybody that the game is up. It has to perpetuate the illusion that its purpose is to "educate" us all; despite the fact that it is patently obvious that education is about jobs, it continues to perpetuate the illusion that education is something separate from jobssomething that makes us human and rational. Of course this whole competitive hell which goes on day after day is in fact one of the most inhuman and irrational experiences we will ever have to go through. And of course the very nature of this experience means that it is by no means the most "brainy" who come out on top. Many who are equally or more intelligent simply (and naturally) react against the whole system-against its values, against the way problems are set, against the organised terror of the school, against the fact that they have no say in "their" education. Because they don't fit in, they too are discarded so that they don't disrupt the system. Most teachers want us to answer their questions, not ask our own.

Of course, it would be some kind of solution if the teachers and the state decided to try and make the size of classes smaller, to lessen the degree of competition, to abolish the examinations, to respect the pupils, etc. This would indeed go a long way towards solving this mess. But the plain fact is that they won't for as long as society is organised in the present way, in the interests of a few and their need to make profits by exploiting the rest of us. The whole purpose of the present set-up, far from "educating" people, is to produce precisely this state of affairs: to produce a certain number of "successes" and a whole lot more "failures". It is designed precisely to create large numbers of people who believe themselves to be failures and a few others who believe themselves to be successes. It should be noted that this process is carefully regulated-where "too many" have passed O Levels the marking standards are adjusted to ensure that some who would have passed are failed. A "correct" number of passes is expected by the state from each region.

The kind of jobs we get are not therefore "our" choice or, "our" fault. They are deternamed by how we tared in one of the institutions of the capitalist system. Equally, the same principle holds if we can't find a job.

As school leavers and young workers you now face growing insecurity of employment. This applies to tens of thousands of school leavers, college leavers, and even university graduates, because the economy is going into a general recession. When profits fall, as they are doing now, workers are laid off because production is cut down. So, not only do the working class create the capitalist's profit through their labour, but they now suffer by losing their jobs when the capitalist can't maintain this profit. The visible result of this system, where profits count for everything and social needs for nothing, is the dole queue.

But among all the unemployed it is youth, and particularly school leavers, who are destined to suffer the greatest lack of employment. The reason for this is simple, and operates over the long term. As pointed out earlier, the technological revolution has proceeded very rapidly over the last 25 years. And while the educational system has therefore thrown up more skilled workers-who are generally absorbed into employment-it has also thrown out thousands of unskilled workers who can't find jobs because the same technological revolution has destroyed many more jobs than it created (one of the advantages to the capitalist of new technology is that it cuts labour costs through redundancy). For a long period of time, this tendency to create redundancy remained "hidden"-older workers were retired earlier, women workers were laid off (they tend not to register on the dole because most are married, and so they don't appear in the unemployment figures), and retraining schemes were put into effect. But the current recession in the British capitalist economy is making the long-term trend appear very visibly: many young unskilled workers are now simply not employed in the first place.

The young unskilled worker is therefore a double victim: a victim of the school and of the technological revolution which created the competitive hell of the school in the first place. But while youth are the worst sufferers from unemployment (in terms of demoralisation and frustration as well as financially), they are at the same time the most willing to do something about it. It is with this expectation that the Spartacus League has launched its campaign on unemployed youth-help them firstly to understand the nature of their problems and the kind. of society which deliberately produce

UNEMPLOYMENT

A POLITICAL STRUGGLE

Unemployment is not an accident. Mass unemployment has been tolerated and encouraged by both Tory and Labour governments because it is an essential weapon in the bosses' armoury, because it can be used to keep wages down and thus to restore or increase profit levels. The present increase in unemployment reflects the fact that in recent years the organised working class has temporarily succeeded in increasing the share of wages in the national income at the expense of profits. For such a trend to continue would be nothing short of disastrous for the employers and their government (be it Tory or Labour). To solve their problems and restore their profits they must smash working class, militancy. As a leading City journal, The Banker, recently stated, "less unemployment would surely intensify the militant union pressure for an ever-growing share of wages in the national income". You face unemployment because it is a vital part of the employers' attack on the living standards of you and your fellow workers.

The present Tory government and its Labour predecessor have followed policies which attack the working class in at least four ways.

- 1. Through increased unemployment. Under Labour, unemployment doubled to 600,000. Under the Tories, unemployment has increased to 800,000 and is still on the way up. Taking individual companies, the Tories are prepared to see 27,000 men's jobs threatened through the collapse of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders while Labour gave a knighthood to Arnold Weinstock after he had sacked 15,000 GEC workers.
- 2. Through attacks on individual groups of workers. The Labour Party carried on a vicious campaign in 1966 against the seamen even though they were one of the worst paid sections of the working class. The Tories did not hesitate to try to crush the Post Office workers and to whip up "public opinion" against the power workers. They openly say that their aim is to force wage increases below the increase in the cost of living.
- 3. Through attacks on the Social Services.
 The Labour Party increased charges on National Health Service teeth and spectacles, increased the tax of less well-paid workers, and abolished the principle of universal family allowances.
 The Tories have increased prescription charges, abolished free school milk, increased school meal charges, and aim to greatly increase charges for housing.
- 4. Through laws against the Trade Unions. Labour's In Place of Strife proposals would have introduced secret ballots, allowed the fining and imprisoning of workers, and would have made easy the victimisation of shop stewards. The new Tory anti-union laws do exactly the same.

Undoubtedly it is now necessary to fight the Tories with all the organisational strength of the working class. That means making it impossible for them to govern by defying and breaking all the reactionary laws which they pass (e.g. registration, non-payment of fines by trade unions, etc.) But it would be a very bad mistake to think that replacing the Tories with a Labour government would solve the problem of attacks on the living standards of the working class. A Labour government, just like the last one, would also have to carry out such an attack, although it might choose different methods (a state-imposed wage freeze, for example). In the case of unemployment, as with every other attack on the working class, what is needed is a policy which can be used both to fight the Tories now and to fight any future Labour government which also attacks the working class.

FIGHTING UNEMPLOYMENT

The most important way of fighting unemployment is of course to prevent people becoming unemployed in the first place. In the past, union leaderships have frequently signed wage agreements allowing sackings in return for pay increases. Now however some unions, such as DATA and sections of the TGWU, have declared that they will not sign productivity deals which involve redundancies. The struggle against redundancies already accepted is of course a

and eventually had to give up. The extension of this policy to the whole of the trade union movement would represent a tremendous step forward in the struggle against unemployment.

Secondly, some union members are now adopting much stronger measures in the fight against unemployment. Workers at the Rotax works in West London agreed to physically prevent the removal of machinery from a factory which the management had declared it was going to close. At Upper Clyde Shipbuilders the men have agreed to occupy the yards if the government tries to close them. Tough measures are always necessary when dealing with a government if the unions are to have a chance of winning. Tactics such as petitions and lobbies of Parliament are worse than useless as the UCS men found out when they went to Downing Street. It is only tough action right from the beginning which can defeat governments when they create unemployment or attack the working class in other

But the most important way of protecting jobs is to fight for union control of hiring and firing. This means control by the unions of the number of people employed in an industry and of how work is allocated if there is a rundown in the industry, and involves measures such as the introduction of work sharing instead of redundancies. Part of this struggle is the traditional trade union fight for a shorter working week. A 30 hour week, which DATA is already campaigning for, would greatly increase the number of jobs available. Tied to the question of a shorter working week is the question of overtime: working overtime needs to be made conditional on a guarantee of no redundancies or short time in an industry or firm.

ORGANISING THE UNEMPLOYED

Employers have always tried to use the existence of a mass of unemployed, unorganised workers to frighten workers still in jobs into accepting lower wages and worse conditions. It is therefore vital from the point of view both of those in work and of those out of work that the unemployed are organised. Unfortunately, trade unions have not always done the job which needs to be done. At the crudest possible level, the unemployed pay lower dues than members in employment and for that reason alone some union officials are unwilling or completely refuse to do anything about their unemployed members. Thus the TUC refused to support the South Wales "hunger" marches of the unemployed in the 1930s. For the trade union official who is basically interested in a quiet life, the unemployed are an inconvenient problem. Their problems are usually those of vicious

Social Security officers, hire purchase companies, rent collectors, etc. which can only be dealt with on an individual basis and therefore disturb the comfortable routine which the official has built up for himself.

Most important of all, the unemployed are a potentially explosive section of the population because their problems are so pressing and so urgent. The belief that society is basically all right may seem reasonable if you are earning £25 a week, but is much less convincing if you are having to live on the dole on £8 a week. For all these reasons we can judge how serious a union and its officials are about dealing with the real problems of workers by how seriously they take the question of organising the unemployed.

As far as payments to the unemployed are concerned, what is needed is the slogan of five days work or five days pay. In other words, if capitalism cannot provide work then that is the fault of capitalism and not of the unemployed, and the unemployed should not suffer because capitalism cannot provide them with a job. Already in some industries victories have been won with firms agreeing to pay men for any time they are laid off. This needs to be extended to cover those out of work for longer periods.

Because the trade unions have tended to fail in their duty to the unemployed, organisations such as Claimants Unions have sprung up in many areas. These do a tremendous job in ensuring that the unemployed and others get their full benefits, in preventing the social security departments from intimidating people, and in providing at least basic organisation of unemployed workers. This work is very valuable, but it is not sufficient. Only the trade unions themselves have the money and the resources in terms of full-time organisers to organise the unemployed on a mass scale, and it is in their direct interest to see that the unemployed are represented on Trades Councils, inside trade unions, that branch funds are devoted to organising the unemployed, and so on. The long-term aim of Claimants Unions must not be to organise the unemployed in separate organisations but to fight to ensure that both employed and unemployed workers are represented in all the organisations of the working class movement. Some steps are already being taken in this direction-for example, the largest TGWU branch in the country has recently given money to the Claimants Union.

A POLITICAL STRUGGLE

Although trade unions can do a great deal both to prevent unemployment, and in the organising of the unemployed, their effectiveness will always be restricted by the fact that the huge power of the government remains in the hands of those who are actively supporting and creating unemployment. Unless a *political* fight is waged against the Tory government it can attack the working class through taxation policy, cuts in the social services, forcing rent increases by local councils and in a whole host of other ways. The Tory government must be defeated in its aims if any progress is to be made.

However, simply replacing the Tories with Labour will not do much good. To see why it is only necessary to remember the last Labour government. The trade unions need to prepare a plan for fighting regardless of which party is in power. Certain actions such as bans on overtime, bans on productivity deals, introduction of worksharing, etc. can be introduced at once. But these can only be short-term measures. When it comes to the crunch it is only a change in the control of the economy that can solve the problem of unemployment. The present suggestions of the TUC for expanding the economy are extremely dangerous precisely because they leave control over investment in the hands of private employers, who will only increase their investment if the government continues and extends its attacks on the working class. Only measures of nationalisation and workers' control will genuinely safeguard the jobs of workers. The political attacks of the employers' government must be countered with a political alternative: a government based on the organisations of the working class. This is a political solution which will involve a big political struggle both inside and outside the Labour

Alan Jones

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THE

When you leave school, you have to go and sign on at the Labour Exchange. If they inform you of your rights, you will be sent either to a job (unlikely) or down to the Ministry of Socials Security to claim supplementary benefit! The Ministry of Social Security has a simple message; if you are unfortunate enough to be uneniployed: it is servility and obedience. They will deny that you are entitled to any benefit, make you wait for hour upon hour, treat you as some type of parasite. You will ask yourself . Whys didn't they teach me about these things in school? Why was I only told about employment possibilities?" The answer lies in the type of society in which we live Capitalism. This system Spartacus League are active in the only existing has established certain priorities, and works according to certain laws. Its profits, you will learn, are more important than any consideration for individual needs or even humanity. While Heath goes yachting, thousands of people sit at home without a shilling for the gas by enough-food to eat. You will see some of these people when you claim your benefits.

In your locality, there may well exist a Union to fight for your rights under Social Securityit will be called a Claimants Union. It is a Union of people in a similar situation to your own, but who understand what your rights are and how to fight for them. If you join the Union, you will be able to achieve your rights much faster than if you try to win them on your own. Most of the Unions in the localities stand for what they call the "Claimants Charter". It contains four points:

1. The right to adequate income without means test for all people.

2. A free welfare state for all with its services controlled by the people who use it.

3. No secrets and the right to full information. 4. No distinction between the so-called

"deserving" and "undeserving". When you are down at the Labour Exchange, you might well get a leaflet from the Child Poverty Action Group or some other Charity Organisation, claiming that they can help you obtain your rights. These charities are advice bureaux run by liberals, no doubt with good intentions, but in the business basically to salve their consciences. The Claimants' Union is not comparable to such organisations. It stands for the self-activity of the membership: claimants working together to fight for their rights, representing each other at the Social Security, and at Appeals Tribunals, pooling information

and experience, organising collective action.

The Social Security is a highly discriminatory system. It discriminates against the young (lower allowances the younger you are). It discriminates against unmarried women with children. It discriminates against single unskilled men. In addition, it operates under a series of rules and regulations which no one else is allowed to see: for example, the "A" code. which is classified under the Official Secrets Act. By reference to this code, the Supplementary Benefits officers can cut your benefits; without informing you of the reasons-in this' situation you have no rights.

The benefits that are granted under the Social Security system (see below) do not enable you to lead a life of luxury. In fact they need to be drastically increased but the trend. of the past few years has been for successive governments to attack these benefits and introduce new rules. It was the Labour government which, in 1968, introduced the notorious four; week rule, cutting off supplementary benefit of to unemployed unskilled single men between the ages of 18 and 45 if they had not found a job after four weeks. The Tory government is in the process of introducing a Bill reducing striking workers' benefits by £3 or so, and has set up a Commission to investigate so-called

abuses of the Social Security system. These measures of course are backed up by a hysterical press campaign against what they. variously call scroungers, loafers, etc. living, we are told, off the backs of the public. The

rand join the ranks of the unemployed, you will be described as an idler, a layabout as if you were respensible for the fact that the capitalist system and its various administrators are incapable of providing sufficient jobs. It covers up this tecapability by slandering the people for whom it cannot provide employment.

The first principle -governing the attitude of the Spartacus League towards the unemployed is the necessity to organise them in Unions. This, is the first step, if they are ever to get the henefits supposedly guaranteed to them under the various Social Security Acts. To this end, you will see that in marky areas members of the organisation of the unemployed, that is, the Claimants Union: However, we argue that it is insufficient just to organise the unemployed in Umons so as to gain their rights. What is necessary is to drastically increase those rights and finally to abolish the situation in which 800,000 or more people can be without jobs. This means smashing the system which has proved incapable of providing jobs. We want a system where the priorities are mot profit, with the inevitable side effects of degradation, unemployment, and misery. We want a system where the priorities are the interests of the working class.

This task, and indeed, in this situation, even increasing benefits, cannot be achieved without working towards the unity of the unemployed

and employed sections of the working class. It is vital to this end to agitate amongst the employed sections of the working class for active support of the unemployed, and to explain the unity of their interests with those of the unemployed. What we also think is a priority is to transform the existing Claimants Unions from being merely Unions which fight for the rights of the unemployed, to mass unions of the unemployed which engage the mass of those people in campaigns for increased benefits, and which link up with the employed sections of the working class. Only in this way can unemployment - and its accompanying degradation-be finally eliminated. Martin Turner

YOUR RIGHTS ON SUPPLEMENTARY RENEELT

DESTALLE	
Husband and wife	£8.50
Single householder	£5,20
Other person, aged:	-
- over 21	£4.15
- 18-20	£3.40
- 16-17	£3.05
- 13-16	£2.40
- 11-12	£2.20
- 5-10	£1.80
- under 5	£1.40

Plus your Rent, Rates or Mortgage Interest.

MEETINGS ON YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Spartacus League meetings are being organised in the following areas:

JULI	Tui.	Coventry
Sept. 11	8th	Birmingham.
	9th	Stafford -
	10th	Manchester ·
	12th	Glasgow
	13th	Edinburgh
	14th	York
	16th	Norwich
	17th	Colchester
ALC: N	20th	North London
	21st	Canterbury
	22nd	St. Albans
4	26th	Bristol
	27th	Cardiff
	29th	South-West Lond
	30th	West London

Further information can be obtained from: The Spartacus League, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

WHAT IS THE SPARTACUS LEAGUE?

The Spartacus League is a revolutionary socialist youth organisation in political solidarity with the International Marxist Group and the Fourth International. It strives to win those sections of youth who are becoming radicalised to the political perspectives of the Fourth International and to organise the youth to fight alongside the working class for the overthrow of capitalism and the socialist transformation of Britain and the world.

Further information, details of membership, etc. can be obtained by writing to: The Spartaus League, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

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