

DIRECT ACTION

**SYNDICALIST WORKERS FEDERATION
INTERNATIONAL WORKING MENS ASSOCIATION**

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LAWS CAN'T STOP STRIKES

AS THIS ISSUE goes to press, the Labour Government strikes another blow at the workers. This time it is ten London gasworkers, each sentenced to a fine of £50 - with only six weeks to pay - for stopping work, who are the victims of the State and employers' ruthless war against the working-class.

The men's original sentences of one month's imprisonment were varied to the fines by an appeals court. Stalinist Claude Berridge, of the National Trade Union Defence Committee - one of whose alleged aims was to defend the ten strikers - has hailed the court decision as a "great victory" for the workers. This statement is utter nonsense.

WHAT MATTERS IS THAT THE STATE HAS PENALISED WORKERS FOR GOING ON STRIKE.

Nor is this the first time, even under the Labour Government, that the power of the State has been invoked against the workers. After the very successful Grimethorpe Colliery strike of 1947 - against the increased stint - many miners were heavily fined for breach of a contract negotiated by a union executive far above their heads. This procedure has been repeated many times elsewhere. And twice has a State of Emergency been declared by the Government during London docks strikes, under the Emergency Powers Act of 1920, which the Labour Party then opposed in Parliament.

What then, can we do when repressive anti-strike legislation is used against us? If we stick to the letter of the law, and never take direct action for our economic good, we shall without doubt be forced to accept an ever-lowering standard of living.

Even if wages are not cut - and there is no guarantee of that - they will buy less as prices continue their spiral skywards. We have, then, only one choice - we must go ahead to maintain and improve our living standards, whether or not the politicians or

anyone else try to restrict our means of struggle.

Some Lancashire miners recently set a shining example of how to deal with any such nonsense from the courts of law: several thousand struck work when a workmate, Jim Horrocks, was jailed for his part in a previous strike. The Law decided that he "broke a contract."

Within a few days, Horrocks had been released. It is even rumoured that the Coal Board paid his fine!

As reported in our last issue, our Finnish brothers also defied a law outlawing strikes (passed in wartime and never repealed, like most dirty legislation), and thereby pushed up the general level of their wages by 15%.

The way to beat Order 1305, Emergency Powers, and other similar anti-labour laws is to defy them, and always to stick by a workmate who is victimised. The way to beat the boss is by fighting him.

- P.G. Baines

"DEATH TO FRANCO!"

Four Anarchists freed at trial in Genoa

A week after the hypocritical "democratic" politicians of the United Nations had voted for the resumption of normal diplomatic relations with fascist Franco Spain, four Anarchists stood their trial in Genoa, Italy.

Three of them - Gaetano Busico, Eugenio de Lucchi and Gaspare Mancuso - faced charges, which they freely admitted, of an armed attack on the Franco consulate in Genoa, during November, 1949. The fourth - Vincenzo Toccafondo - was indicted for an article in a Genoese paper, in which he expressed the unconditional solidarity of the Ligurian Anarchists for the action of the three men.

The trial, held in the Palace of Justice before a courtroom crowded with anti-fascists, resulted in the freeing of all four comrades. But it achieved more than that. During the hearings witness after witness testified to the inhuman brutality of the Franco regime, and to the heroic resistance of the Spanish Anarchists and Syndicalists. From being a trial of four libertarian workers, the trial developed into a public anti-fascist demonstration.

Busico spoke of the time he had spent in the ranks of the

resistance movement in Spain during 1945 and 1946. He named some of the comrades who had sacrificed their lives in the armed struggle against Franco - among them Jose Sabater, Alpuente, Rodriguez, Barreo, Amador Franco and Francisco Martinez. The attack on the consulate, he said, was an act of protest against Franco's persecutions, and an attempt to waken people from their apathy towards oppressed Spain.

De Lucchi, speaking of fascist crimes, declared: "They must not be allowed to continue. Our comrades and other anti-fascist Spaniards must not die because of the world's indifference. Someone must reply with the mailed fist."

Mancuso told how he had escaped after the attack on the consulate, and how he gave himself up to the Italian police; "Busico and De Lucchi would have paid for what the three of us did. It was my duty to be with them."

Our Spanish comrade, Federica Montseny, gave carefully documented evidence of the Falangist terror against Anarcho-syndicalists, Basque Catholics, Socialists, Communists, Republicans, trade-unionists.

Ex-fighters in the Spanish Civil War spoke of the social achievements of the C.N.T. and F.A.I. A letter was read from the writer, Carlo Levi. In it he said: "The Spanish Anarchist movement, based on the C.N.T., has been and is a broad, popular movement, which represents the most genuine historical expression of the Spanish people."

Six lawyers - men who had voluntarily offered their services - defended the accused. None of them made any apology for the action of our comrades. All of them declared that the act was a justified reply to fascist barbarism. "Death to Franco! Long live freedom in Spain!" cried one.

The judgement of the court was a complete acquittal of Toccafondo, and nominal sentences on the other three, which meant their immediate release. Our warmest greetings go to them, and to the Italian and other comrades who organised their defence.

MEANWHILE . . .

U.S. Govt. aids Spanish Fascism

"In Washington, it was be-kind-to-dictators week. At long last, Francisco Franco of Spain got the E.C.A. loan he had been seeking . . . E.C.A. announced it would begin immediately to channel to Spanish industry and companies . . . \$62.5 million."

- TIME, 27.11.50.

Textiles Today, IIBy J.O. Pilling

OVERSEAS COMPETITION

IT IS REMARKABLE that the British and American governments can send a textile mission to Japan, and that mission only enters one Japanese mill, and that mill is, as they quite candidly and openly admit, a showcase and the only one of its kind in the whole of the country. It was featured in an article in the Northern "Daily Telegraph", before the Anglo-American mission had returned or had given its report, and was obviously taken from the usual press feature sources. The Quaker chocolate kings have nothing on this palatial sweet-shop. The timetable for the girls is worked out in a way that surpasses Billy Butlin, and one can almost see them enjoying themselves to order in the ping-pong room. The visit to this employers' paradise was not part of the mission, but just an afternoon picnic. The mission was one to co-ordinate trade.

For five years now, the textile employers and union leaders have been bringing up the bogey of Japanese competition as an aid to their "work harder" campaign. They would ignore the fact of the Pacific war, and pretend Japan stands as an equal power instead of an American colony.

Whenever there is any talk of foreign competition by the bosses, that is the workers' argument for the Syndicalist Workers Federation. As a section of the International Working Mens Association, it is the only industrial organisation that practises international working-class solidarity, the only body that recognises that the interests of the working people in all lands are the same.

Before the war it was Indian competition. The same, old hypocritical attitude for, when Lancashire weavers were in the dole queue, it was not their Indian comrades that were to blame, but the British employing class, who controlled the industry in both countries. Why don't they talk of Indian competition now? And why not of the U.S. instead of the Japanese, because the fact is that British textile prices have to equal the American, and the currency disparity taken into account?

The Tories are now putting out the line that it is Chinese competition that is most dangerous, presumably because the major economic conflict at present is between the American and Russian blocs, and sooner or later this will develop into a shooting war. The truth is that any excuse is good enough to make the working-class work harder and, at the same time, keep

wages down. If that can be done by causing international bad feeling, so much the better. More than anything in the world the employing class and their tools in parliament fear the solidarity of the workers, and when this is extended beyond the arbitrary national frontiers, their rage knows no bounds. Remember how the gutter press howled when the seamen on the Cunarders struck in sympathy with American portworkers a couple of years ago?

The greatest strength of the workers lies in their solidarity, and the ONLY effective way of dealing with the world crisis - the permanent world crisis - is the international working-class solidarity for which all sections of the I.W.M.A. stand.

TWO GOOD MEETINGS

Arising from a challenge in the columns of the local paper, our Merseyside comrade, Dave Pude, debated that "the Communist Party of Great Britain has omitted to state any other policy than that which has brought disaster to Russia," with a member of Colne (Lancs.) branch of the C.P., before a crowded audience in the Co-operative Hall Guild Room at Colne on Sunday, Nov. 12.

Comrade Pude, in a well-documented speech, gave a factual survey of the development of Stalinism, showing how the interests of the Russian ruling-class have always been opposed to those of the international workingclass. Referring to the "Peace Campaign," he showed - by references to the history of the USSR - that the Communist Party had used propaganda for war or peace to suit its own particular interests.

In reply, Hubert Smith (Colne C.P.) put forward a reform policy, similar to that of the Labour Party - social welfare, maternity grants, cod-liver oil for children, etc. Rejecting workers' control of industry, he said the C.P. realised the importance of the managerial class. An S.W.F. member in the audience jumped in with the observation that, on Smith's own admission, the C.P. was a middle-class party. Which, for some reason, seemed to annoy middle-class party members present.

The meeting represented a big step forward for our local group, as a large number of people heard S.W.F. policy for the first time.

The following Sunday, November 19, a public meeting was called by Nelson and Colne Anti-Militarist Committee at the Weavers' Institute, Nelson. Delegate speaker for the S.W.F. was Julian Billing, who outlined Syndicalist anti-militarist policy to an audience of more than 100. Other speakers were from the Independent Labour Party, Peace Pledge Union and the Colne and Nelson Libertarian Group.

Principles of Syndicalism, II

By TOM BROWN

ECONOMIC FEDERALISM

IN THE FIRST article of this series, published in the November issue of DIRECT ACTION, we outlined the Syndicalist organisation. First the assembly of workers and their job committee at their place of employment - factory, ship, mine, shop, office etc. - Next the federation of factory or job committees of each one industry into a district industrial federation, as the Scottish Miners Federation, the Yorkshire Textile Federation, the Midland Railmen's Federation, and so on for each industry and each economic district. From these come the national federation of each industry - road transport, engineering, distribution, building, etc. Then all national industrial unions or syndicates are federated to the National Confederation of Labour, covering the whole economy of the country. In the other direction, each factory meeting and committee is affiliated to the local council of syndicates, somewhat like the familiar Councils of action, though much more thorough.

In our first article we applied the Syndicalist principle of organisation to the present stage of the class struggle alone. But the same principle is applied during the Revolution, when the class struggle bursts its normal bounds of social restraint and the two classes confront one another over the barricades.

The factory, pit and other job organisations take possession of the places of work and operate them for the working class, cutting off the supplies and services of the employing class. The millers supply the flour to the bakers, the bakers distribute bread to the people. The power station workers send electric current to the factories while receiving coal from the revolutionary miners. The Farm Workers Syndicate collects food and sends it to the towns; the Municipal Workers' Syndicate maintains the essential services of town life, and communications are re-established by the postal workers. Rail, road and water transport workers carry goods and services among the many industries and localities.

At the same time, the grip of the Syndicates on the social economy prevents the employing class obtaining the essentials of existence. No food, no water, no gas, no servant for their homes. The more time they spend cooking or carrying buckets of water, the less time they have for blacklegging or shooting workers. No trains, no petrol for their cars, no ammunition from their factories, no telephone, no newspaper to print their obscene lies. Other tasks are carried out by the various organs of the syndicates: chief of these is the extension and

defence of the revolution.

The raising and arming of the Workers' Militia is chiefly the work of the factory committees and the organisation of Workers' Patrols, to guard against hooligans and counter-revolutionists, is that of the local Council of Syndicates. Without goods and services to be bought, the cheque books of the capitalists become useless; they can no longer hire the services of thugs and blacklegs.

With the triumph of the revolution, the functions of the Syndicates change and develop, but the constructional principle remains the same. The purpose of the committees and federations is now solely that of running the social economy, the industries and services. What men consume no longer depends on how much money each possesses or the oscillations of the market, but on what men need and the capacity of industry to meet these needs.

The National Confederation of Labour will meet quarterly, monthly, or at whatever intervals are found necessary, to consider the economic programme. Guided by the trends in taste, the rise and fall of particular demands and information supplied by the Distributive Workers' Syndicate, they will form the programme of each group of utilities. If 2,000,000 yards of wool textiles are likely to be needed for the coming year, then that task will be handed to the Textile Workers' Syndicate, who will divide it among their districts. In turn, each district will allot the share of the district task to each mill, according to the number of workers and the machine capacity of the undertaking.

To the Clothing Workers' Syndicate will be given the work of producing so many suits, coats, etc. To the Miners' Syndicate the responsibility to raise so much coal, the Iron and Steel Syndicate so much finished metal, the Wood Workers' Syndicate so many articles of furniture.

Through the same channels will be expressed the needs of the Syndicates as well as the needs of individuals. The Iron and Steel Syndicate requires ore, limestone and coke. The Construction Syndicate needs timber, bricks and cement. The economic council of labour makes possible complete economic planning instead of the present chaos. It is not Syndicalism which means chaos; it is the present capitalist system which has brought society to the greatest chaos, economic and political, ever known.

The considerations of the national economic council will not, of course, be limited to one particular country. While

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each country and region will develop its own resources, as against the present stupidity of international finance capital, there will remain some utilities which can better be made in certain areas. It will be the work of the economic council to import such things - say oranges to Britain - and to export others - say textile goods or machinery.

Let us here correct a misconception which may be creeping into the minds of some readers. Syndicalism is not nationalistic. The international character of Syndicalism has found expression in the International Working Mens Association, of which the Syndicalist Workers Federation is the British section. But historical conditions force us to fight within national boundaries and we do not determine the character of the class struggle. Nevertheless, Syndicalism seeks the complete abolition of national frontiers. Indeed, this must be the outcome of technological development if allowed to continue.

The political organisation of society, that is the government of men by men according to territory, must give way to a social organisation, based on the administration of things, men regulating machines and utilities in a world economy.

The greatest tragedy of Europe is that complete economic districts are torn apart by frontiers which have no basis in science or nature. Throughout Europe frontiers cut through railways, rivers, canal systems and electric transmission to the impoverishment of the Continent and the fruition of war. Left to normal social development, rivers unite men in communities. London stretches along both banks of the Thames, Glasgow along the Clyde, and the same is true of the Tyne, the Humber and the Mersey. But when frontiers are made, rivers are often used not to unite, but to divide men. Rivers like the Rhine and the Danube, along whose banks great communities have grown, have been used as frontiers. Workers have been cut off from their employment, and merchants from their trade. Families have been divided and towns ruined by the capricious boundary makers, who call their crimes a peace conference.

The conflict of technics and politics threatens to make life impossible. Once one might say that Europe was one and stop at that; now one must say the world is one. Technics enables us to travel across the Continent in a few hours or encircle the earth in a few days, or send a message round its girdle in a few minutes. But politics works the opposite way. Even to travel across Europe, with the most expensive mode of land transport, takes several days because of the obstacles placed in one's way by political organisation.

Just before the first World War, even with countries

having a thorough passport system, few obstacles stood in the traveller's path. But just before the last war, the barriers had grown enormously. To stricter passports were added visas, the customs were increased and an entirely new kind of money customs invented. Today, of course, the situation is far worse. As technology progressed, politics retrogressed. The final stage of the conflict of technics and politics comes when the latter, dividing men unto death, utilises the former for the construction of tanks, guns and planes to the destruction of the social economy.

It is the aim of Syndicalism to sweep away all frontiers, to unite humanity in a world federation of producers and end poverty, oppression, exploitation and war.

Next month - "ABOLITION OF THE WAGES SYSTEM"

BANNING THE BANNERS

Politicians and would-be politicians have an absolute passion for banning things.

The "Daily Worker" and the Communists are continually calling for the banning of the Fascists, while the Fascists and some Tories are eager to ban the Communists.

For the last two years the London Trades Council march to Trafalgar Square in celebration of May Day has been declared illegal.

This has been so because some people asked the Home Secretary not to allow the Fascists to march. Chuter Ede readily granted their wish, and banned all political processions in the London area.

The British Peace Committee with its "programme for peace" among other things calls for a reduction in armaments and banning of the atomic bomb. Millions of people are signing the "Peace Petition," believing it can avert another war.

Those who sign the petition should realise that, if the politicians decide on war and can get the workers as cannon fodder, then we will have war. And if they decide to use the atomic bomb again, they will use it.

Now to ban it all, our government has banned many of the would-be banners of the atomic bomb from entering the country.

In America and Australia politicians who pride themselves on being "defenders of freedom," "the Western way of life" and all that, go in for banning no less than in the totalitarian countries, so it is not worth any worker taking part in any coming war, because as can be seen, there is nothing to choose between

either side.

The only course for the working-class is to reject politicians and governments and, instead, organise industrially, organise and prepare for workers' control of affairs, and then ban politicians.

- H.H.

SURFEIT OF SHAVIANA

MARK TWAIN wrote that one of the lesser tragedies of the death of Dickens, was the spate of people who had, perhaps, happened to shake hands with the man once or twice, going round lecturing on "Dickens as I knew him"! This appears already to have begun with Bernard Shaw - indeed one's impression is that it started as soon as it was known he was going to die.

The court jester of the first half of the twentieth century is dead, and the world is no richer, no poorer. Our comrade Federica Montseny, in an interesting article, compared Shaw and Wells to Thackeray and Dickens - the patrician and the plebeian. Shaw will date as Thackeray has dated and, until many years have past and many social changes been seen, a sensible valuation of his work will not be possible.

Great men of this type are always dispensable. Writing in 1940, Guy Aldred referred to Shaw as "Britain's dotting sage and teacup revolutionary." Such iconoclasm is healthy. The real measure of a great man today, is the amount of hatred the ruling class have for him, and it now appears they all loved Shaw.

What Syndicalist, in time of war, could say, "Tell the men to shoot their officers and come home," and still be allowed to reside in Ayot St. Lawrence?

J.O.P.

LITERATURE

MICHAEL BAKUNIN & KARL MARX (K.J. Kenafick) -----	5/6
TRADE UNIONISM OR SYNDICALISM (Tom Brown) -----	4d
BRITISH GENERAL STRIKE (Tom Brown) -----	3d
SOCIAL GENERAL STRIKE (Tom Brown) -----	3d
STRUGGLE IN THE FACTORY (Equity) -----	4d
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