

# Direct Action

## WORLD LABOUR NEWS

Inside—CND activists plan for Easter : Painters strike  
Automation hits workers

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION

Vol.5 No.3 (33)

March, 1964

Fourpence

Housing racket—business as usual

## THE GHOST OF PETER RACHMAN

IT is now 14 months since Rachman died. Thanks to Mandy Rice-Davies and the Ward trial, the press found they were on a good thing. There were a few months of seven-Sunday weeks, when everybody came to know of Rachman and his activities. 'News of the World' reporters took rooms in St. Stephen's Gardens and reported "I Lived in a Slum"; Panorama moved into Westbourne Park Road.

Then other stories took over the front pages and the small storm of public indignation died down. The Milner Holland Committee has been appointed and the government has been forced to introduce its Housing Bill. But despite these supposed cure-alls, Rachman's ghost still looms over Paddington and North Kensington.

Admittedly, when the story first broke there was something like panic among the closely-knit group of Paddington slum-landlords. Raymond Nash, of Venus Properties, sold all his Paddington houses by September (he has since re-acquired them) and the others hurriedly began repairing

leaking pipes, renewing light-bulbs and bannisters and issuing rent books. But that was six months ago and now that "Housing" is last year's news they feel safe to come into the open again; as this little incident shows.

Capital and Suburban Properties Ltd. is registered at 84 Queensway, W.2, just round the corner from the old Peter Rachman Ltd. hang-out at 91 Westbourne Grove. It is only one of the many companies run by friends and associates of Rachman and using methods made famous by him, which specialise in West London slum property. Its managing director is Peter Alfonso Davis, one of Rachman's most successful managers and, possibly, the "experienced coloured man" referred to in the Commons debate.

Recently, Capital and Suburban bought 125 Gloucester Terrace, Bayswater, in the name of Davis' girl-friend, Hilda Ludlam from Hamburg. There were a number of controlled tenants in this house and Davis made it known that he wanted to get rid of them. Knowing his reputation, most accepted a cash statement.

One tenant—a Miss Linscombe—however, refused to leave. She came home one night and found that her room had been entered and ransacked. All the furniture, including the bed, had been overturned and sheets, clothes and personal belongings scattered over the floor. This happened several times and, although nothing, not even her transistor radio, was ever taken, Miss Linscombe found it impossible to carry on living in that house.

So things have not changed much. Despite newspaper  
*continued on page 2, column 1*

## Spanish Anarchists on hunger strike in France, Belgium

AS WE GO TO PRESS, a young Spanish comrade, FRANCISCO ABARCA, is threatened with extradition from Belgium to Switzerland, on charges of anti-Franco activity in the latter country. He has been under arrest since October 11 last year, while an international extradition warrant was obtained on the demand of the Swiss authorities, to face a charge of trying to set fire to a Spanish plane in Switzerland, which he firmly denies.

Abarca, who had been living in France, left that country for Belgium last autumn, to avoid being involved in police manoeuvres against Spanish libertarians, 21 of whom were detained. Fifteen of these have since been released on bail, and the other six, including our comrade Salvador Gurucharri, were recently transferred from the Santé in Paris to Fresnes jail, where they have been given the status of political prisoners.

LATER—Abarca and five comrades in Fresnes on hunger strike in protest against continued detention. One of latter, Jose Pascual, aged 48 and suffering from TB, has lost 12lbs since beginning fast. On February 22 some 50 members of FIJL, CNT, SWF FLA picketed French Embassy in London and handed in protest to Ambassador.

## RAT IS TRAPPED

GEORGE ORWELL'S prediction of a nightmare Britain in 1984 with Big Brother watching YOU is already coming true today. The 5,000 workers at the British Motor Corporation's Bathgate, West Lothian factory know what I mean. They thought that Henry Mulligan was one of their workmates. But his duties were more than being an assembly line operator. He was an informer planted to spy on them by the management. Mulligan's secret was exposed because he took his snooping job a stage further. He was found guilty at Linlithgow Court of trying to frame four innocent men by planting motor equipment in their lorries. He was jailed for six months. Mr. John Clark, the chief security officer, got him the job.  
SUNDAY MIRROR 26-1-64

sensations and "official action," Paddington in February, 1964, is much the same as it was in February, 1962. With one notable exception, the old gang, Nash and Shabaini, Cyril Kaye and Peter Davis, is still in control. Now that no paper will touch the story the old conditions have returned. Peter Rachman with his Heavy Glove Gang was no isolated figure, but just one strand in a huge network that is not only slum-landlordism but the whole of the property business.

And where do the authorities stand in all this? Paddington Borough Council seemed to be taken aback by the Rachman "disclosures." Although the people of Paddington had known about the housing situation since 1957, the majority of their elected representatives had to rely on the national press for their information. Paddington, with its millionaire mayor and some of the worst slums in London, became an even dirtier word than it had been before.

A face-saving operation was needed and a house-to-house survey of the St. Stephens Gardens area was attempted. This was impossible to complete, because of the difficulty of tracing owners of particular properties (one house in St. Stephens Gardens itself changed hands six times between the 23rd and 30th of September).

The result of this was that Closing Orders have been haphazardly placed on various houses in the western end of the Gardens and in adjoining parts of Ledbury, Shrewsbury and Westbourne Park Roads, as well as in some areas of Bayswater and North Paddington.

The landlords have found it cheaper to evict tenants and do without the rent than to make the necessary repairs, so that the houses could be declared "fit for human habitation." For the tenants it has meant that a leaking roof is exchanged for no roof at all. "Ah well," said one of the council officers, "you have to be cruel to be kind to these people."

Neither is the LCC record too good. Although, theoretically, they have nothing to do with it, they must take at least some of the blame for the situation in Paddington. They have consistently refused, on density grounds, consent for housing development in the working-class districts. Last December, though, they granted it for the "high quality" development of St. George's Churchyard site (facing Hyde

Park and two minutes from Marble Arch).

In October the LCC made a compulsory purchase of four large houses in Leinster Square and over a hundred tenants, including a number of old age pensioners, had to move. These houses are still empty and there is no sign of any work being carried out on them. Closing Orders have even had to be placed on one LCC property in Paddington (243 Gloucester Terrace).

These authorities claim that their hands are tied. The Town Clerk of Fulham spoke for all Metropolitan Borough Councils when he said that a Council cannot probe too deeply into housing questions or it will "find itself footing substantial bills at the ratepayers' expense." Yet Paddington, the most deeply involved of all the councils, finds nothing strange in spending £500 a week of the ratepayers' money on, of all things, time and motion study!

And who are these ratepayers who must not be offended, anyhow? Of course—the landlords! So everything fits into place. The councils need the landlords and make no distinction between bad and "good" landlords. They are all bound up together, all part of a system. They won't go until the system does. And only then will Rachman's ghost be finally exorcised.

STEPHEN WYCHERLEY.

## Unilateralists call for Easter discussion

**D**URING the week-end of February 15-16, between 20 and 25 people met in Oxford to discuss the present state and structure of CND. They were from many different CND, YCND, Committee of 100, CUCaND Groups and other organisations active in the nuclear disarmament movement, including the SWF, but on an individual, not delegate or representative basis.

The meeting was convened by Laurens Otter and members of Wellbeingborough CND, because it was felt deep disquiet existed within CND, regarding the path it was taking on Unilateralism. The meeting decided to issue a leaflet, convening an open forum in London on Easter Sunday evening of those who believe that:

1. People of every country must demand that their country should unilaterally withdraw from any nuclear alliances at once.
2. CND must call on the peace movements of all other countries to draw people into unilateral opposition to their own governments' military policies.
3. In Britain CND must campaign more clearly and uncompromisingly for immediate withdrawal from NATO and must organise real opposition to the Polaris bases.
4. We must be ready to fight any attempts to reintroduce conscription with solid, radical opposition and not just verbal protests.
5. We want to find out why little has been done to implement the more radical resolutions of annual conference, especially those on industrial action, schools for non-violence, etc.

Those at the Oxford meeting agreed to approach groups and organisations with which they were in touch regarding sponsoring the London forum on March 29. Further details from: Laurens Otter, 5 New Yatt Road, North Leigh, nr. Witney.

**MUJERES LIBRES (Women for Freedom) FEDERATION**  
of Spain, exiled in Britain

Giovanni Baldelli (guest speaker) on "EDUCATION AND FREEDOM" on Sunday, March 1, 3 p.m., at the Royal Hotel, Woburn Place, London, W.C.1 (near Russell Square tube station and Euston Square station; 68 bus). All welcome.

## TWO GOOD COMRADES

**W**ITH DEEP REGRET we record the death of our comrade Paul Polgare, which unhappy event occurred on February 5, when he was scarcely 50 years of age.

P. Polgare was born in Hungary and studied at Berlin University. He was living in Paris when the Spanish Civil War started. July, 1936, found him in Barcelona, joining the Spanish Anarchist Movement, in which he played an active part. He remained in Spain until March, 1939, and came to London as a refugee with a group of Spanish comrades.

From 1939 he was an active member of the Spanish Libertarian Group exiled in Britain and remained so until his last moments.

With the death of our comrade Polgare the international Anarchist movement loses a fine militant. We remember him with affection and shall try to fill the gap he has left—a task that will not be easy.

We have the equally sad duty to report the passing of comrade Salvador Gimeno, at the age of 60. S. Gimeno was a native of Manises (Valencia), where he belonged to the CNT. He played an active role during the period of the Spanish Civil War. He came to London in 1939 as a refugee and remained a member of the CNT. He died on February 2, after a long and painful illness. Our comrade Gimeno died in exile, doing honour to his position of political refugee

## INDUSTRIAL NOTEBOOK

# Law lines up with employers—as usual

THE Rookes v. Barnard case and the Lightermen's case have set the union reformers whooping with glee. This was right up Martell's street—**New Daily** front page 23.1.64: "Unofficial strikes outside the context of union negotiated agreements may now be grounds for damages and moves to start "sympathy strikes" and "black" products in places not directly connected with a dispute may have to stop."

Sir George Pollock, Q.C., director of the British Employers' Confederation says "Not to worry," it is not expected that the "closed shop judgment" will encourage employers to take legal action. He then quietly points out that in law there is no "right" to strike in breach of contract. The strike in breach of contract is not a right, but a legal wrong.

What's all the fuss about? TU bureaucrats are statesmen, they will not entertain strike action, until hit over the head with a sledgehammer. It's the rank and file 99 per cent of the time which engages in strike action, and rank and file militants have never had any illusions as to whose side the law will take in any strike action. So what's new? In any case successful militant action does not necessarily mean traditional strike action, just conform to rules and regulations made by the employers and then things have a habit of going wrong.

Incidentally, for the record, whilst Bill Lindley, General Secretary of the Watermen, Lightermen, Tugmen and Barge-men's Union was in court on a contempt of court charge, 3,000 lightermen in the Port of London stopped work.

## SHOP STEWARDS ABOARD SHIP

THE executive of the National Union of Seamen is again slapping in their demand for shop stewards aboard ship. They must get in before the union's annual conference in June, or the delegates will have their guts for garters. The policy of ship shop stewards has been consistently opposed by the shipping employers. Some time ago a complaints procedure was negotiated; it was an advance but still inadequate.

The idea of shop stewards at sea frightens the life out of shipping employers, yet cable-laying ships of the Post Office have had them for years. Why the intense opposition? The short answer is that if shop stewards were aboard, reactionary "Masters" and stinking conditions would not be tolerated, something could be done about grievances on the spot, instead of being allowed to fester.

## FORDS LAY DOWN THE LAW

FORDS of Basildon have refused to accept a shop steward. The man concerned was one of the 39 "alleged trouble-makers" in the 1962 dispute who was sacked, then reinstated. The management claim his reinstatement was subject to two conditions: (1) that he left Dagenham for Basildon, and (2) that he never held a trade union office.

## SWF SOCIAL

FRIDAY THE 13th OF MARCH

MAKE IT YOUR LUCKY DAY AND JOIN US

at the White Swan 28 Farringdon Road, London, E.C. (near Farringdon St. station, in loop off main road on other side of railway line).

Licensed bar—Music—Entertainment

ADMISSION 2s.6d.—in aid of DIRECT ACTION

The area organiser for the National Union of Vehicle Builders stated that No. 2 condition had never been accepted by their organisation. The rank and file who elected the steward are insisting on the company accepting—if they don't it means in effect that Fords can have shop stewards of their liking.

Fords Dagenham suspended a foundry steward for five days and, at the end of his suspension, refused to recognise him as a steward. The foundry workers' president has made representations to the management and they have promised to take another look. A firm stand must be taken by the workers on the position of stewards, otherwise militants will suffer the fate of the "13" and shop organisation smashed.

## MODERNISATION

BIG news hit the front pages on February 11: the TUC is to try and help unions get together to discuss closer working and amalgamations. Let's have no illusions, this policy is not to implement a policy of "direct action," merely a tidying up for administration. Industrial unionism has been rejected as "impractical" by the TUC. Funny, I didn't think the word "dangerous" was spelt like that.

## TEXTILE WORKERS FIGHT ON

THE 240 workers are still locked out by the Denby Mill employers in Bradford. Thirteen weeks ago the employers declared the mill an "open house" and have attempted to keep the plant working with scab labour since. The picket line has been manned every day and scabs have to be smuggled into the plant by private car and closed van.

At a rally in Shipley in support of the 240 workers, demands were made from the floor for an overtime ban throughout the trade to be considered, lockout pay to be doubled and a recall meeting of the executive of the National Union of Dyers, Bleachers and Textile Workers.

## MARTELL WAITING TO POUNCE

THE International Publishing Corporation (Daily Mirror) has labour problems. Since enlarging his Empire, Cecil King has gradually been closing plant here and there and sending work out of London, because it is cheaper. Members of the Paperworkers' Union are concerned about the spectre of redundancy (the sack) and have demanded from the IPC an "unlimited guarantee of no redundancy in any circumstances." This demand may sound fantastic on the surface, but with the "doodle and bucking" in the printing industry at the moment, employment in some branches is precarious to say the least.

Martell in his **New Daily** (12.2.64) claimed that if Fleet Street shut down, preparations were complete for publishing millions of copies of an Emergency Edition of that paper. I bet Martell is choked now that publishing of the Mirror and Herald is back to normal, as he hoped to put **New Daily** on the map. In an editorial on February 13 the IPC was slammed for not taking the initiative in having "a go" at the print unions; it also accuses the IPC of suffering the weaknesses of a giant, but refraining from exercising any of the strengths which go with that condition. "Have a go, Cecil, and I will clear up the pieces. Thanks very much."

BILL CHRISTOPHER.

\* \* \*

ANARCHIST YOUTH 4 is now out. This issue includes "The Church in Spain," "The Chink in the Armour" (South Africa), "Federation," "Contact with the Left," and "Vote Labour?". Copies (9d. including postage) from Anarchist Youth, 38 Oxford Gardens, London, W.10. Subscription 3s. a year.

# Direct Action

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE SYNDICALIST  
WORKERS' FEDERATION

## In the red—OR black

**D**IRECT ACTION does not pay its way. Small political papers never do and never will. So from this issue onwards we will publish our Press Fund each month, somebody will get the job of writing a column describing the financial position of the paper and, when necessary, calling for voluntary contributions from our readers.

Since we changed over to a printed monthly paper our expenses have increased. So has our circulation. But because the income we have from sales does not cover our fixed expenses, we make a loss on each issue. This loss has always been met so far by contributions from members of the Syndicalist Workers' Federation and by sympathetic readers. We feel that it is necessary to state the position of the paper clearly, so that the importance of such donations will be fully appreciated.

To stay out of the red we need at least £50 every month. This goes on rent for the premises where we keep our printing press, electric light and power, ink and paper, postage for our postal subscribers. At 4d. per copy, or 6s. per year (incl. postage), we could break even **IF WE SOLD EVERY COPY WE PRINT.** But we don't.

Some go out as exchange copies to other anarcho-syndicalist papers throughout the world. Some go out to people who have not renewed their subscriptions. We still send them out because we have found that most readers renew eventually and we would hate to lose a reader over some avoidable delay.

However, those who can renew promptly will help us greatly and we would appreciate a note from anyone who for any reason decides not to renew their subscription. At present we have about 100 postal subscribers whose renewal is overdue—we would like to hear from them soon.

The figure of £50 is our present break-even point. But if we are to produce the anti-parliamentary leaflets and pamphlets we are planning, to publicise our programme during the coming General Election rat-race, or politician-race, we ought to have a reserve fund.

Pamphlets are quite a good economic proposition. Over a rather long period they cover their own production cost, but it takes an initial investment to get one into print. Then we have funds tied up in the form of stocks. The difficult part is financing the production of the pamphlet in the first place. **We believe that with an income of an extra £10, making a target of £60 every month we could do this.** At present it is impossible to say just how much short we are of that figure, but we are definitely below it in our average monthly income.

We are bringing out an election leaflet which will cost 1s. per 100 copies. There will be cheaper rates for bigger quantities. Orders with cash would be welcome from now on.

There is no need to remind members of the SWF of the importance of getting out and selling the paper at factories, on the streets or other obvious places. This would help to increase the percentage of each issue actually sold and help to balance the loss on free and unpaid copies. The Notting

Hill Group have been doing great work on these lines on Saturdays.

SWF members will receive the first issue of our Internal Bulletin this month and the financial position will be explained in greater detail through this medium in the future. However, this column will continue to inform **all** our readers of our recurring "balance of payments" crises. We need contributions to our Press Fund. Every donation will be acknowledged in the paper, starting from this issue. We have every confidence that our readers will continue to support this paper of theirs. After all, it is the only paper in the country owned, controlled, managed and produced by its readers!

SEAN GANNON.

**PRESS FUND — August 21st, 1963 - February 12th, 1964**

Tadworth, Surrey, D.W., 2s.; Romford, J.C., 10s.; Enfield, C.J.W., 2s.; London, W.10, A.J.M., 3s.6d.; Los Gatos, Calif. C.S., 9s.6d.; London, N.W.10, A.R., 10s.; London, N.1, J.P., £1; Birmingham, P.M.G., 10s.; Hartford, Conn, M.A., 11s. 6d.; Lomita, Calif., L.L.D., £1 15s.; IWW Branch, San Francisco, 9s.; Bradford, P.G. 2s. 6d.; London, N.5, J.A., 10s.; Hanover, Germany, W.Z., 11s.9d.; Croxley Green, P.J.McC., 10s.; Birmingham, L.C., 15s.; Berkeley, Calif., R.E., 14s.; London, W.10, M.H., £1; Taunton, C.F.W., 4s.; Poland, Ohio, S.M., 2s.; New Yatt, Oxon. L. v C.O., £1 5s.; London, S.W.3, M.S., 10s.; London, N.16, L.V., 14s.; London, W.2, M.C., 10s.; Manchester, R.B., 10s.; Hong Kong, M.S., 4s.; Berkeley, Calif., E.A.B., 4s.6d.; Wolverhampton, J.G.L., £1; Glendarvel, Argylls, H.R.D. ("In memory of Harry T. Derrett") £1; Chorley, J.L., 8s.; Miami, P.W., 8s.; Tadworth, D.W., 6s.; Hove, A.R. 1s.; London, S.W.3, M.S., £1; Gothenburg, Sweden, M.C., 10s.; London, N.W.3, K.H., £6. Total: £25 14s. 3d.

## GROUP NOTICES

S.W.F. (LONDON)

Open Meetings

March 4 Recital of revolutionary and folk records.  
11 Non-violence and Syndicalism ..... Wynford Hicks  
18 Aspects of Workers' Control ..... Tom Brown  
25 Anti-Parliamentary action and the  
General Election ..... Mark Hendy  
Wednesdays, 8.30 p.m., at the White Swan, 28, Farringdon Road, London, E.C. (near Farringdon St. Station, in loop off main road on other side of railway line).

**OXFORD ANARCHIST GROUP:** Details from Laurens Otter, 5, New Yatt Road, North Leigh, near Witney, Oxon.

**EDINBURGH.** Would anyone interested in forming a group in Edinburgh, please contact Alasdair Macdonald, Torphin, Torphin Road, Colinton, Edinburgh 13.

**BIRMINGHAM AND W. MIDLANDS.** Contact Peter Neville, 12 South Grove, Erdington, Birmingham 23.

**SOUTHERN FEDERATION.** Contact Ken Parkin, Old Tea House, Brockenhurst, Hants.

**GLASGOW FEDERATION OF ANARCHISTS** meet every Thursday evening at 7.30 p.m., 4 Ross Street, Glasgow S.E. (off the Gallowgate).

**LIVERPOOL**—Those interested in forming a libertarian discussion group on Merseyside, please contact Vincent Johnson, 43 Millbank, Liverpool 13.

**BRISTOL FEDERATION OF ANARCHISTS**—For details please contact the convenor, Ian Vine, 3 Frelands Place, Hotwells, Bristol 8.

**NOTTING HILL ANARCHIST GROUP**—Please contact: The Secretary, Top Flat, 38 Oxford Gardens, London, W.10. N.B.—The monthly discussion meetings have been discontinued.

**ROMFORD AND HORNCHURCH ANARCHIST GROUP**—for details please contact Chris Rose, 34 Newbury Gardens, Upminster, Essex, or John Chamberlain, 74 Upper Rainham Road, Hornchurch, Essex.

**MANCHESTER AND DISTRICT**—Contact Jim Pinkerton, 12 Alt Road, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancs.

**TUNBRIDGE WELLS ANARCHIST GROUP** meets on 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month at 8 p.m. at 4, Mount Sion, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

**CAMBRIDGE ANARCHIST GROUP.** Meets Tuesdays (in terms), Q5 Queens. Details, town and gown, Adrian Cunningham, 3, North Cottages, Trumpington Road, Cambridge.

# LENIN AND WORKERS' CONTROL

*At a recent discussion meeting of the SWF (London), to which the "Socialism Reaffirmed" group (Solidarity) were invited to discuss workers' control of industry. Martin Grainger for the visitors refuted a statement of an SWF member that the Lenin government's decree on workers' control came after the workers of Russia had begun the takeover of industry. The controversy prompted the writing of this study of Bolshevik economics.*

\* \* \*

A POLITICIAN who has one single overpowering aim and pursues it relentlessly, even wading in blood, has, if circumstances are favourable, a chance of success. He is not usually good at long-sight or broad-sight, but on a single aim he makes fluffily liberals his victims. The same is true of tycoons.

Lenin and the Bolshevik party had that single purpose, to gain and keep absolute power; all other things were means to that end, or were forced on them by the pursuit of it. This is true of collectivism and nationalisation. I shall quote a great deal from Mr. M. H. Dobb, M.A., because of his long service to the Communist Party, his position as lecturer in economics at Cambridge University and the respect given him by the CP. Dobb wrote two books which will help us — **Russian Economic Development Since the Revolution**, in the early twenties, and, in 1948, **Soviet Economic Development Since 1917**. The latter, a most interesting book, is published by Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.

"The leitmotif running through the speeches and writings of Lenin in 1917 was the overshadowing importance of the class which held the actual reins of power. For him this issue was paramount." S.E.D.S. 1917, p.82.

We know, of course, that when a Bolshevik uses the term "working class," he means in this context "the Party," which alone has the right to speak for the "working class."

Soon after the March revolution the peasants began to seize the estates of the big landowners. Dobb speaks of numerous cases of what the police called "agrarian lawlessness," mostly the taking of timber from estate woodlands and estate labourers' strikes in April, although we know that seizures of land had already started. The Provisional Government received reports of such happenings from 174 districts, mainly the Central Region and the Middle Volga.

On May 3, 1917, came the Government decree to establish land committees. Less than two weeks later a peasant congress at Kazan resolved to confiscate all estate land and a local landowner reported that "local administrative authorities are unable to restrain the local land committees" (see p.75). Early in July, Prince Lvov, head of the Provisional Government, resigned, mainly because he accused his government of a tendency "'to justify the disastrous seizures of property that are taking place throughout Russia . . . instead of combatting aggressive tendencies'" (ibid, p.76).

"In industry a parallel form of direct action was taking place in the summer and autumn . . . In the summer reports began to multiply of arrests of engineers by workers, acting in the name of local Soviets, and of the forcible expulsion from factories of unpopular foremen. On June 1 a national resolution of the executive committee of the Soviets advised all industrial workers to 'create councils at the enterprises, the control embracing not only the course of the work at the enterprise itself, but the entire financial side of the enterprise'" (ibid, pp.76-77).

Dobb goes on to relate what were then well-known

facts of further direct action in mine and factory. In June at Kronstadt dock committees were insisting on inspecting the books and accounts of the management and preventing illicit removal of materials. In the cable works the owner was deposed by the workers, after being accused of trying to close the works and sell out to a foreign bank.

In July, 1917, a conference of Ukrainian factory committees decided to remove directors who "refuse within five days to satisfy the workers' demands." From Kharkov the Government received complaints by factory owners that the management of one of the city's largest factories and the directors of the locomotive works had been kept under arrest by the workers for 24 hours.

In Petrograd, in autumn, some factories were to be closed by the owners. The workers at once prevented the transfer of machines and materials from the works. At Nikolaev on the Black Sea the workers at a shipyard sent delegates to places supplying the yard with raw materials to ensure supplies. In Moscow a meeting of leather workers' delegates decided to proceed at once to prepare the sequestration of the industry.

In October, one month before the Bolsheviks took power, the coal miners, after a series of strikes, took control of the mines. "Ataman Kaledin (later to be a leading figure in the Civil War) wired the Minister of War: 'At the moment the entire power has been seized by various self-appointed organisations which recognise no other authority than their own.'" (ibid, p.78).

In large and small factories of many kinds the workers were taking complete control, while the peasants were sweeping away the landowners and their managers.

In the take-over of industry the soviets played little part, most of the action being taken by the factory workers on the spot, sometimes backed by delegate meetings of factory workers of the district.

It is well to recall what was a soviet. In the revolution of 1905 and again in 1917, the workers and peasants quickly formed makeshift councils. In the towns they were formed first of all by delegates from factories and other places of work, later were added delegates from the professions and even from groups of shopkeepers. Political parties then were allowed to affiliate. These councils were called soviets. But by the last-mentioned type of affiliation the way was open to any unscrupulous politician to invent groups and gain more votes, also political theory tended to hog the discussion. But in the case of the factory mass meeting and committee this hardly arose, so that the workshop became the centre of revolutionary action and construction in the towns.

In the country the soviet was usually overwhelmingly peasant, concerned with getting the land under the control of the tillers and attending to local social needs. Most political parties had no interest in the peasants' aims, certainly not the Bolsheviks. Those who were with the peasants in this takeover were the Anarchists and Syndicalists, particularly in the Ukraine, and, in the great majority of cases, the peasants' own party, the Left Social Revolutionaries. Soldiers and sailors also formed soviets.

The real soviets had nothing in common with the present so-called "soviets," nor were they initiated by the Bolsheviks. Until a month before they took power, the latter did not have a majority on any significant soviet. "In the course of the preceding month (October) the Bolsheviks had secured a majority in the Soviets of Petersburg and Moscow and of one or two other cities" (ibid, p.79). The peasant

soviets were all for the Left S.R.'s.

The Anarchists and Left S.R.'s and the peasants, with or without anyone's encouragement, were sweeping to victory in their battle for "the land to the tillers." Nothing could stop them. Nothing except satanic treachery. That was coming.

**TOM BROWN.**

(More next month)

## BOOK REVIEW

### HISTORICAL FICTION

**WE HAVE HAD** the patience and courage to read a book—better named a libel—whose authors are given as Jose Sandoral and Manuel Ascárate. Its title is **Spain 1936-1939** (Lawrence and Wishart) and its 149 pages evidence a clear intention to lie from start to finish.

Although we have made a big effort to go over once again events and facts which we had the misfortune and joy to live through, it is not possible to gather into these few lines an adequate reply on a subject to which writers of different kinds have devoted tons of paper and ink.

Anyone not knowing the truth of the Spanish struggle and reading the version in this book would have difficulty in seeing through the fables it propagates. Nevertheless, one fact would be obvious: that its author or authors belong to that species of "historical chaeleons" interested in turning things upside-down.

**Spain 1936-1939** is a work of fiction, based on Communist Party propaganda during the Spanish Civil War. The Communists have made big efforts—particularly of the imagination—in this class of literature, to twist facts and present them as "the reality of the Party."

Each chapter is an involved maze. Anyone knowing the facts can see through the deception this book signifies. A small example: the name of the author of **History of the CNT in the Spanish Revolution** is changed from J. Peirats to J. Peiro.

For them, the Communists, what happened in Spain from 1936-39 can be summed up as the work of the party. Notwithstanding this, they commit the blunder of claiming that their party in 1936 counted 30,000 members—a very generous estimate—men, women and children. What would have happened in Spain had the Communist Party alone been obliged to confront fascism with "such a formidable army"?

Thanks to concessions by the Spanish Socialist Labour Party (PSOE), which pawned its independence to Moscow, the CP expanded and was able with impunity to murder many socialists and members of the UGT who did not want to accept the Communist ticket.

The Spanish Communists, besides being few in number, had no policy of their own, being content to fulfil Stalin's orders, passed on by Russian advisers with that express task in Spain.

Sandoral and Ascárate say nothing of the Spanish gold that the Socialist ministers sent to Russia, as a guarantee for the arms needed to fight fascism; instead, when the arms arrived, always with delay, the Russian advisers imposed conditions. For each Russian gun a key post was claimed for a communist in the Republican army.

Largo Caballero, the Socialist leader, whom the Com-

munists at the outset of the war named "Spanish Lenin," was kicked out of the government, as "traitor," for not accepting Moscow control. He was succeeded by Negrin, who whilst calling himself socialist, was an unconditional servant of the Russians and notably contributed towards losing the war, having first sabotaged the revolution.

We are told in **Spain 1936-1939** that from the outset of the war the communists were the decisive force. In reality, during the early days of the struggle, the decisive days, the communists were not in evidence; subsequently they pushed others into the front lines, giving themselves jobs in the rear-guard. Not in Madrid, nor Barcelona, nor Guadalajara, nor in any part did the communists play a decisive role.

Those who gave battle to the Italian units in the Alcarria were not communists.

The communists made "their revolution" in their rear, with the consent of the socialists. But the Russian communists, not the Spanish ones.

We do not wish to go into further details. Readers interested in knowing what happened and is happening in Spain have had and still have the opportunity to study different versions and find the truth of the events.

The authors and instigators of **Spain 1936-1939** have attempted to do an ill-service to truth. Something they will have difficulty in achieving. Everyone knows the underhand tactics of the communists and the Spanish communists in this particular case are an exception . . . for the worse.

**A. RUIZ.**

## DIRECT ACTION PLANNED AT NUCLEAR BASES

**ALTHOUGH** the Aldermaston March has at last been abandoned, the anti-bomb movement will have a full Easter week-end. The CND's activities end with a "Washington-style" march in London on Easter Monday. For those who consider this inadequate the London Committee of 100 and the Scottish Committee of 100 are organising demonstrations at Ruislip (HQ of USAF in Britain) and Rosyth (NATO base) respectively.

A march organised by Committee and CND supporters will leave London on Friday and arrive at Ruislip on Saturday. Committee supporters will obstruct entry to the base and try themselves to enter it "to reclaim it for peaceful purposes."

In Scotland marches from Dunfermline and Edinburgh will converge on Rosyth base, also on Easter Saturday there will be a similar attempt to enter the base and obstruction if this fails.

Further details of the demonstrations from the London Committee of 100, 13 Goodwin Street, N.4, and the Scottish Committee of 100, 48 Dundas Street, Glasgow, C.1.

## YOUNG SOCIALIST LOBBY

**DIRECT ACTION** sellers, including a comrade who made the trip from Liverpool, were present at the Young Socialist lobby of Parliament on February 11. It was a quiet affair. After a meeting in the morning at Speakers' Corner the Y.S. marched round the West End and back to the Park. In the afternoon and evening they lobbied M.P.s and listened to Labour speakers in Central Hall, Westminster. We sold *Direct Action* and pamphlets, of which *How Labour Governed* was the most popular. Selling was pretty difficult but we hope our efforts weren't entirely useless. The Trots were there in force—their main slogan "Nationalisation with Workers' Control." It is our job to see that alternative ideas are presented to Young Socialists as to everybody else.

## Subscribe to DIRECT ACTION

One year (12 issues) 6s. (U.S. & Canada 90 cents, but we welcome dollar bills).

From: Syndicalist Workers' Federation, 34 Cumberland Road, London, E.17. Cheques and p.o.'s payable to Mark Hendy.

## 'Sold out by union'—but painters fight on

ON Wednesday, January 8, 22 members of the Amalgamated Society of Painters and Decorators stopped work at the Tulse Hill site, London, S.W.2. The stoppage was brought about by the Council's refusal to compromise with the painters on the question of transfers. In the past this has always been settled at site level.

The strike committee issued a statement and appeal for financial help, stating that the LCC had tried to transfer men to other sites, although there was plenty of work to keep them going because they would not bodge and scamp. They had protested that the work was being carried out with little regard for quality and they believed that working people's homes should be decorated in a workmanlike manner. As a result, on their site in over 14 weeks they had managed to earn only £2 5s. 0d. bonus, yet they knew of other sites where, by scamping, workers had been able to earn as much as £8 per week bonuses. With the existing LCC bonus targets, they maintain, it is impossible to earn bonus and turn out a reasonable job.

There had been other causes for discontent on the site—poor working conditions and inadequate safety precautions, rubbish everywhere and electric cables hanging into the mud and water. Three men had serious accidents as a result of the poor safety conditions. It was only after several weeks that the men managed to enforce a "closed shop" on the site.

On Tuesday, January 7, the Steward and Federation Steward were called into the office and informed by the LCC Welfare Officer that, as work was drawing to a close for the painters six men would be transferred off the site on the following day, ten on the Thursday, the rest when the job was finished.

He would not give an assurance that the men would be able to return to the site when work was available again. When asked if he would hold up the transfers until a Union Organiser could come on the site, he told the Steward he had already informed the Union office.

A meeting of the painters was called for mid-day on the Wednesday to discuss the question, but before this could take place, the foreman handed six members transfer instructions and told them to report to various depots after 12.30 or their wages would be stopped. They were later informed that if they would not accept the transfers they would be sacked.

Six men who wanted to leave the site asked if they could be transferred instead of the others. There was ample precedent for this, but this time the Site Representative would not consider it. Under the circumstances the men felt they had no alternative but to stop work until an Organiser came on the job.

The District Organiser arrived on the Thursday and spent two hours on the phone to County Hall trying to resolve the matter. The men themselves put forward the suggestion that everyone should return to work on the Friday, while the LCC officials met the organiser and the Stewards to discuss the question of transfers. This was refused by the LCC, but they did agree to the six men who wanted to go being transferred. Arrangements were made to resume talks in the morning.

The Organiser spent all day Friday on the phone to the LCC trying to induce them to come down to the site to discuss the question. **THIS WAS REFUSED.**

The LCC in turn put forward the proposal that if every-

one was prepared to leave the site and accept a transfer, it would show that they were not victimising men. If the men would not accept transfers in a block, they would be dismissed, including men they had agreed to transfer the previous night. Some of the men threatened with the sack had worked for the LCC for many years, and some of them were off sick at the time.

The men felt they could not accept such intimidation and should endeavour to win Union support and draw attention to the behaviour of the LCC.

According to the London office of the ASPD, there has been no strike. As far as they are concerned, the men refused to accept transfers in the normal way when work came to an end.

At the time of writing, a month after the stoppage, picketing still continues. The latest placard at the site entrance carries the bitter inscription: "The Union sold us down the river."

Readers wishing to support the strikers should send donations to the Strike Committee, c/o Mr. J. Lynam, 68, Saltoun Road, Brixton, London, S.W.2.

ANN BUTTERWORTH

## AN OPEN LETTER TO THE LABOUR LEADER

Dear Harold,

Busy as I am with pre-election work, I must write to congratulate you on your first anniversary as our Leader. You've certainly made a great job of it—Wilson on every poster, Wilson on every TV interview, Wilson making all the speeches in the House! I was wondering if that "Let's Go With Labour" poster couldn't be reprinted as "Let's Go With Wilson." How about it, Harold? It's best to do the thing thoroughly, I think, and anyway everybody's forgotten those other chaps. They're really a Shadow Cabinet now and, of course, some people don't like it, but can you help it if your brilliance puts them all in the shade?

Of course you can't, as I told Bro. Grundiman last week, when he was saying that you'd rub them all out if you could, but you had your hands full keeping George Brown out of the public eye. The trouble with George is that he's so full of ordinary human weaknesses like the rest of us and some people are just jealous because you don't have any. They don't realise that lesser men like Attlee and Gaitskell needed a Morrison or a Nye Bevan, but like you said in the *Time Magazine* article, "if you feel you have the ability and the power" there's nothing to fear in being Prime Minister.

I liked the *Time Magazine* story about you, but I think they could have left out some bits, don't you? That quote from Honor Balfour about you "smooth cherrystone face," when you were at Oxford! That wasn't the best—and how you never took any initiative or decisions, but always collected the subs regularly. I somehow didn't care for that, not that bit about Nye Bevan saying you were "All facts and no bloody ideas."

Of course, it was good having the whole issue devoted to your life, but they did make it all sound a bit dull, don't you think? And that photo outside No. 10 when you were eight and a half? Don't you think it's had it, Harold? Of course you know best, but I think it's the hat, or something. And after Vicky's cartoon on your anniversary day, I think it's just a liability.

Now look, Harold, I must advise you to watch that Sir Alec. The Yanks haven't helped things by praising him for being direct and frank and giving straight answers. That's never been your line, of course, and it's a bit alarming to

see it going over so big just now.

Perhaps, though, you yourself could think up a few simple things to say in the near future, or even a direct answer or two. It might be worth trying, even at this late stage.

And the Yanks liked the way Sir Alec always looked the thing for every occasion. You know, I was always worried about you walking around the White House smoking that old pipe. Still, the Yanks won't be voting on our big day. No, it's the great British public who see your face on every hoarding and every screen, and that's what you've got to do these days, Harold—project the image to sell the product! It can't fail!

When I put this to Grundiman he said yes, and look how it succeeded with the little man in the Esso Blue ads. Really, one day Grundiman will push his luck too far.

Anyway I must get off to the canvassing around the council flats. We're pulling out all the stops at the local Ward—all eight of us are going flat out in the great "Go With Wilson" campaign. I'll be writing to you again as it intensifies, keeping you in touch with the reactions of the ordinary workers to your plans for a New Britain in the great Science Fiction Socialist Age. So, thumbs up—

Yours fraternally,

JIMMY WIGGINS.

## Canadian workers hit by automation

**B**ACK IN 1960 the average level of unemployment in Canada was an alarming 7 per cent of the total work force. So alarming in fact that a special committee of the Senate was set up to investigate the whole problem. After lengthy deliberations and the hearing of submissions by all manner of capitalist organisations, the commission published its report, "Manpower and Employment," in the fall of 1961.

This report clearly recognised the disastrous effects automation is producing in Canadian society, but fails miserably in suggesting any solution to the problem. In fact it shows a disgustingly cynical disregard for the working class who, naturally, are bearing the brunt of the impact of automation.

"We cannot pretend at this time to know precisely where the changes (i.e. automation) will lead us in the next few years, but we can be absolutely certain that they will continue and that the labour force will be required to make adjustment" (p.7).

Having settled the problem of who will carry the can, the senators noted that the more automated a society becomes, the higher the level of intelligence required by **those who work** in the society. The senators appear to hold the nonsensical view that mankind possesses a limitless amount of intelligence, that if an automated society needs a highly intelligent work force, then all that is needed is to supply the workers with some extra intelligence (rather like water in a well—whenever you need water, you sling down a bucket and haul up some more).

Unfortunately for the senators, mankind has only a strictly limited amount of intelligence and this unevenly distributed. Two-thirds of mankind has average intelligence, one-sixth has below average and only one-sixth has above average intelligence. If, as appears to be the case, above average intelligence is required of the work force in an automated society, then only one-sixth of mankind would be capable of working in such a society. They would presumably have to support the remaining five-sixths of us, who lack sufficient intelligence to control the machines. This

startling fact completely eludes the senators, who blithely equate intelligence with education and say, "Ah, automation needs more intelligent workers, let's build more schools and educate them some more."

"If we are to obtain the best fit between workers' skills and job requirements, a vigorous programme of vocational and technical training for both our young people and the unemployed must play an important part." (p.8).

"An imaginative large-scale programme which provides particularly for a higher status for technical and commercial courses of instruction and for advanced technical training is the sort of effort which is needed." (p.8).

As a result of this call for an "imaginative large-scale programme," the federal government passed, in December, 1960, the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act, which provided massive federal assistance to the provinces for the provision of more technical education.

More than 200-million dollars were spent on building new schools to accommodate over 100,000 pupils. These new vocational high schools opened their doors for the first time in September, 1963. Before that time schools had been oriented towards meeting University entrance requirements, but as only about 10 per cent of high school students go to university, this resulted in most pupils being taught subjects which had no practical value for them and which many lacked the intelligence to understand anyway.

These pupils, who do not intend to go to university, are expected to enrol in the vocational high schools, where they will be taught technical skills, so that on leaving school they will be employable in our automated society. Insofar as such subjects as electronics, automotives, etc., have more meaning to the average student than Latin and French, then the new schools are a welcome advance in the field of Canadian education. Unfortunately, the value of their contribution to solving the problem of unemployment in an automated society is likely to be small.

If the population continues to **increase** and the total number of jobs available continues to **decrease**, then they will certainly lead to a reduction in the number of uneducated unemployed. Unfortunately this decrease will be more than offset by the increase in the numbers of the educated unemployed.

Another danger is in the fact that the politicians, having spent over 300-million dollars of other people's money in an effort to solve the unemployment problem, will expect to see some results. As the highest rate of unemployment is among young people with a low level of education (those who quit school before completing high school) the temptation is to keep young people in school and off the labour market, whether or not they are gaining any benefit from their extra schooling. Already some politicians are calling for the school-leaving age to be raised to 18, in order to reduce unemployment.

**E**FFORTS ARE BEING made by Anarchists here to form a nation-wide federation in order to co-ordinate activities and, if possible, publish a newspaper. The first steps were taken last fall, when Anarchists from southern Ontario met in Toronto and decided to make such an attempt. A later meeting was held in Montreal, at which three commissions were set up to: (a) prepare a declaration of principles; (b) study the possibilities of publishing a newspaper; (c) contacting as many Anarchists and sympathisers as possible.

The work of these commissions is now in progress and any readers in Canada are asked to contact the Commission of Co-ordination, through this paper.

BILL GREENWOOD