

# Direct Action

For workers' direct control of industry

Inside—Dublin builders on strike : Trade Unionism or Syndicalism? : NUJ members victimised

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWMA)

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## THE GUNTER MENACE

"... unless the unions face the facts of life as they are in the late 1960's, then in seven to ten years' time the State will have to intervene."—Ray Gunter (Shadow Minister of Labour earlier this year).

"In this crisis unofficial action is a negation of the whole principle of collective bargaining and can only lead to anarchy. I strongly condemn such action."—Ray Gunter (Minister of Labour, 19.10.64).

THE first 100 hours of the Labour Government had not passed before the new Minister of Labour made a scathing attack on dock trade unionists and a large section of the working class. Before Wilson's 100 days have passed this

flow of intimidation will have become a flood of controls and coercion.

Wilson's pre-election promise during the London tube strike to be tougher with unofficial strikes will be one of the few he will keep. And, with the assistance of his labour lieutenant, there will be no time lost.

On present form, electioneering condemnations of militancy, and past performances as leader of the railway clerks' union, Ray Gunter's name will be headlined frequently and favourably by the Press. His anti-working class policies will be editorialised with sympathetic consideration as the Labour Government takes the extreme Rightist turn that entrenched economic interests are demanding. There will be few outraged cries of woe from Fleet Street and its faceless friends.

Coming events cast their shadows before and, even as a Shadow Cabinet, scrambling for their Ministerial substance, the Labour leaders claimed they would be more effective in handling strikes and the present troubles that threaten in the docks, on the railways, in steel and engineering, among printing workers and teachers, and in the electricity industry.

The unofficial call for a one-day strike by the dockers, and

*cont. on page 2, col. 1*

## Irish itinerants start their own workshop

A WORKSHOP to produce tin and copper ware, which will be run by workers' management, is being planned in Ireland by tinker members of Itinerant Action.

Tinsmiths among the three hundred travelling people camped on the outskirts of Dublin, at Ballyfermot, have already produced a set of samples and orders are being sought.

Preliminary talks have been held with the Irish Tourist Board, which is interested in the idea of helping to market the mugs, candlesticks, tea caddies, milk jugs, and other articles, as souvenirs.

The scheme is being initiated by Itinerant Action organiser Gratton Puxon, who believes that the workshop will be a first step in the revival of the tinkers' trade and will thus help them to maintain their independence in a mass-production economy.

A group of eight tinkers, from Dublin, Wexford and Galway, are participating in the work. Experiments with designs combining tin and copper are being carried out. Traditional tools and methods are being used to produce a craft finish and, more important, to preserve the satisfying relationship between tinkers and their work.

As we go to press, however, the scheme is threatened by a new ultimatum to the itinerants, ordering them to quit the Ballyfermot site.

## 'FREE SPAIN' COMMITTEE WORKS FOR TOURIST BOYCOTT BY DANES

IN DENMARK, the "Spanien Frit" (Free Spain) Committee is carrying out active propaganda against the Franco regime and collecting money for the Spanish Resistance. An intensive campaign against tourism to Spain and the agencies which arrange such holidays has been mounted. Some 10,000 posters carrying the slogan "Holidays in Spain support Franco's terror" have been put in Copenhagen and many of the provincial towns and a declaration demanding a boycott was signed by 50 well-known trade-unionists and left-wing intellectuals. Anger against the travel agencies is strong in left-wing circles.

Young activists have smashed the windows of travel agencies specialising in trips to Spain in some 25 cases, mostly in Copenhagen, and petrol-bombs were thrown against two of them, causing extensive damage to one. The agencies, relying on income from the 100,000 Danes who yearly visit Spain, have been slow to take the hint, however.



M. CALLINAN



# Dublin building workers fight for 40 hours

THE Dublin building strike, which ended after nine weeks on October 15, was the city's greatest industrial crisis for many years. Some 20,000 workers were involved, their numbers matched by their determination and tenacity in pressing their demand for a reduction of the working week from 42½ to 40 hours.

In October 1963 the 17 unions of the Dublin Building Trades Group served a claim for the 40-hour week and 1s. an hour more on the building employers. A recent building boom has rocketed employers' profits and in the prevailing labour shortage above-minimum rates have been paid, so that the unions were merely consolidating the worker's position against a future slump and a repetition of the savage treatment handed out by employers during past slump periods.

January this year saw the signing of the National Wages Agreement by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the Federated Union of Employers (FUE), providing for an immediate 12½ per cent increase and a halt to any cost of living claims for 2½ years unless the cost of living index rose beyond an agreed undefined amount. The Agreement was inspired by Lemass and the Fianna Fail government, who want to see the rigid wage-structures (enforced by tight union discipline over the rank and file) of Holland, West Germany and Sweden repeated in Ireland—without the state welfare schemes of those countries. During the negotiations for the Agreement, the Building Trades Group said they would not be bound by it as their claim had been entered previously, and after its signing they abstained from voting on it for this reason. For them the Agreement meant 8½d. an hour more. The employers also promised certain fringe benefits such as a sickness, holiday, and pension scheme, and improved wet-time pay, to alleviate what one building worker described at the time as the "pigsty" conditions on the sites. The terms were to be resolved within six weeks; they were not, and still had not been when the strike began on August 15.

Despite the history of the claim for the 40-hour week, the employers and their mouthpieces, the capitalist daily press, insisted that it was a breach of the agreement. In Ireland there is no Labour Party or trade union daily or even weekly paper to refute such lies. A fortnight after the strike began the FUE requested Cement Ltd., Drogheda, the Irish cement monopoly, to withhold supplies from the more than 500 small contractors in Dublin who had conceded the union's claim. The national Builders' Federation also imposed an overtime ban throughout the Republic to discourage men on strike from moving to unaffected areas.

But the employers could only do so much. While many Dublin workers found work in Britain, those who went to Cork demanded Dublin rates—and got them after strike action there!

Meanwhile, the employers offered half an hour off the winter working week, the extension of the winter period from 12 to 17 weeks, and the fringe benefits promised the previous January!

While balloting was taking place in the unions about 10,000 workers marched across Dublin to a meeting in Parnell Square. At the meeting union leaders were amazed to find themselves heckled by their own members. When they

tried to speak of the way negotiations were progressing, thousands of voices shouted "no vote" and demanded the proposals be rejected out of hand.

This was something new. The demand was a popular one among active trade unionists from the very beginning, but before the strike "active trade unionists" in the building industry were very few. Now thousands were showing their determination to gain the demand. Not surprisingly, every union rejected the offer.

While further negotiations went on another march and meeting took place. During the parade a group of building workers climbed the 140-ft. Nelson's Pillar and unfurled a huge banner reading "40 HOURS NOW" which they chained to the top of the railings. At the meeting, the union leaders, expounding the contradictory ideology of class collaboration in their talk of an "honourable" settlement, got a rough treatment from the crowd, who chanted back "40 hours." After this the central strike committee banned any more demonstrations for the 40-hour week.

The employers' second offer covered the whole country. It was the same fringe benefits with one hour less per week from resumption of work until March 1965, back to 42½ hours from March to October, then 40 hours till March 1966.

Though this was far short of the original claim, the union leaders recommended acceptance. In one union, the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, they used their power to terminate a strike whenever they wish, and declared acceptance without their members voting. However, after an unofficial meeting outside the ASW hall a crowd entered and extracted the promise of a vote. (Talk of burning down the hall may or may not have helped.) The result of the vote, with hundreds of members watching, was rejection by Dublin but acceptance by the majority outside Dublin; final result—acceptance. Then it was discovered that no ordinary members outside Dublin had voted, merely 11 area representatives invited to the meeting and casting the outside members' votes as they pleased. Union leaders were escorted from the hall by the Riot Squad!

Of the 17 unions only four accepted the employers' terms—to the affected consternation of employers and press. The strike went on. The police received more frequent calls (a Molotov cocktail was thrown through the window of Cement Ltd.) and the men appeared only to be digging in. Scab-chasing squads vented their rage in ways that union textbooks describe as "intimidating."

The government attempted to mediate, bringing the strike to a climax. This was the resignation of Minister of Agriculture Paddy Smith, a wealthy farmer, who stated that he could not serve in a government that dealt with a tyranny led by trade union leaders so incompetent that they could not lead their grandmothers. Smith was not, of course, referring to the shortcomings listed above.

Finally, the third offer was accepted after talks in the Ministry of Industry—40 hours from October 1965 through the following winter period, hours thereafter subject to "confirmation"; a step-down period with 41½ hours from resumption of work till March 1965; and summer hours for 1965 to be proposed by a special commission with a government chairman and representatives from unions and employers. Advances were also made on fringe benefits.

In comment, it need only be stated that the claim was for "40 hours now", and that benefits had been agreed long before. Building workers should now tackle "Operation Pigsty."

DUBLIN REPORTER—PAT KELLY

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# Direct Action

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## THE RIGHT OF HIRE AND FIRE

**C**ALUM MACKAY had been employed at Remington-Rand's Glasgow factory for 15 years and for 13 of them was shop steward convenor. Paid a merit rate before he became a steward, he was regarded as a first-class toolmaker and perfect timekeeper. He was also one of the longest-serving workers.

Disregarding the usual management system of pink-slip warnings, Calum Mackay was called in to the foreman's office on Monday, March 23 and sacked as a slow worker, with the toolroom shop steward as a witness. The foreman could give no evidence to substantiate the management's charge, which was a clear breach of national agreement.

The management claimed that, over a period, they had assessed Mackay and his workmates in the toolroom, without their knowledge. Their case, therefore was built on **SPYING** and it is a slander on Mackay's good name to say his work was not satisfactory.

It had been clear to the union that the management were bent on getting rid of Calum Mackay, ever since the big redundancy in February, 1963, when his movements as convenor were restricted and a series of indignities imposed on him. The union advised him not to let himself be provoked and, for the following year, he endured a series of persecutions.

The national agreement, which covers Mackay's dismissal, states:

"The Employers and the Trade Unions, without departing in any way from the principles embodied in Clause (a) above, emphasise the value of consultation, not only in the successful operation of the procedure set out in Section 2, but in the initial avoidance of disputes."

Section 2 states: "When a question arises, an endeavour shall be made by the Management and the workman directly concerned to settle same in the works."

In this case no consultation with the union took place. No attempt was made by the Management to discuss any problem they had "with the workman directly concerned." Here is a perfect example of how the Procedure Agreement works, **with the employer judge and jury.**

This is a blatant case of victimisation and Remington-Rand workers struck for five weeks in an effort to get

## Spontaneity

**T**HE "Financial Times" (14.10.64) attempted to do a 'Perry Mason,' looking for the leader of the London Tube strike. One poor blighter looked like being anointed with the Mark of Cain, until his loyalty was almost guaranteed by London Transport itself.

In the end the FT decided the dispute could have been spontaneous. The leadership of the strike was quite obviously the rank and file—and we can look forward to more of it.

Mackay reinstated. They were bamboozled into going back, so that negotiations could be reopened. On June 12, AEU national officials met the engineering employers on Mackay's case—and got a hard "NO" from them. Deadlock!

On September 30, 650 workers were to strike in support of their union's claim for the reinstatement of Mackay. Everything was laid on. Glasgow and District Trades Council declared full support. Glasgow branch of the Scottish Horse and Motormen's Association pledged full backing. But the strike did not come off . . . it is reported, "through lack of support."

Why? Has Calum Mackay been thrown to the wolves? Has the usual solution been found—the union found him a job elsewhere?

This case highlights an important point of principle: **THE RIGHT OF HIRE AND FIRE.** Employers will fight like hell to implement and maintain this right and, in seven cases out of ten, unions passively accept this. So it logically follows that victimisation issues have no chance. Ford's "18" was the classic example.

Militant shop stewards are fair game for crucifixion and, until the rank and file stand firm on the statement that **"WE DETERMINE HIRE AND FIRE,"** the road will be littered with crosses.

## SWF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The VI NATIONAL CONFERENCE of the SWF will be held in London on Sunday, November 15. For further details, contact the Secretary of the National Committee, Bill Christopher, 34 Cumberland Road, London, E.17 (Larkwood 3232).

## GROUP NOTICES

**LONDON SWF GROUP:** Open meetings every Friday, except the first one in each month, at the Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Road, WC1 (5 min Kings Cross Station) at 8 pm.

**OPEN-AIR—SUNDAYS, HYDE PARK, 3 PM**

**LONDON:** SWF Industrial Action Sub-Committee (London). Readers wishing to help in the work of this committee are asked to contact the Secretary, Joe Ball, 27 Jerningham Road, London S.E.14.

**BRISTOL SYNDICALIST GROUP**

**SPECIAL MEETING—Tuesday, November 10, 1964**

"The Old Duke", King St., Bristol.

Subject: SWF National Conference

Enquiries c/o Martin Howells, 7 Richmond Dale, Clifton, Bristol 8.

**DUNDEE:** Contact Roddy Cameron, c/o Stevenson, 44 Peddie St., Dundee.

**GLASGOW:** Contact Ron Alexander, c/o Kennedy, 112 Glenkirk Drive, Glasgow W.5.

**LIVERPOOL:** Contact Vincent Johnson, 43 Milbank, Liverpool 13.

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

**SOUTHALL:** Enquiries to Roger Sandell, 58 Burns Ave., Southall, Mdx.

**WITNEY—Meetings 1st Friday of each month. Contact LAURENS OTTER, 5 New Yatt Rd, North Leigh, near Witney, Oxon.**

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

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

**EDINBURGH ANARCHIST GROUP:** Contact Douglas Truman, 13 Northumberland St, Edinburgh 3.

**NEW FOREST ANARCHIST GROUP:** Contact Ken Parkin, Old Tea House, Brockenhurst, Hants.

**NOTTING HILL ANARCHIST GROUP:** Contact the Secretary, 5 Colville Houses, W11. Open meeting 1st Friday each month, 8 pm, British Oak, Westbourne Park Rd, W2.

**ROMFORD AND HORNCURCH ANARCHIST GROUP:** Contact Chris Rose, 34 Newbury Gardens, Upminster, or John Chamberlain, 19 Chestnut Glen, Hornchurch.

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



## CONTROVERSY

## Trade Unionism or Syndicalism?

## Peter Turner writes...

Tom Brown, in his article "School for Syndicalism" (*D.A.*, September) claims the best of both worlds. The organisation he describes, which "overcame at one bound the hundredfold divisions of the workers. All crafts, semi-skilled, the boys and the women, were drawn together in frequent mass meetings. They elected and withdrew delegates, now know as shop stewards, whenever necessary." This type of thing still goes on today and is part of the unofficial rank and file movement in industry which exists within the framework of the official trade unions.

They may be based on Syndicalist and IWW ideas, but I am sure only a very few workers involved in these movements realise this. These unofficial movements should be encouraged and anarchists in industry should play an active role. But these are not the "new union movement" as Tom Brown describes them. What Malatesta means by this is a movement based solely on syndicalist lines with the abolition of capitalism as its aim.

There seems to me to be nothing "pontifical" in the statement that "Malatesta's main contentions still hold, that those anarchists who are prepared to act in the industrial sphere should work within the existing unions rather than propagate the idea of a new union movement." These were Malatesta's views and it is exactly what workers were doing during World War I.

Where are the syndicalist industrial unions? We just haven't got them in this country and even where they have existed, there were often strong reformist tendencies. I think that, in this country, it is better to work within the existing trade unions, propagating not only syndicalist and IWW ideas, but anarchist ones as well.

The syndicalist method of organisation can and is used in industry today, but needs extending. To knock the ideas of a particular anarchist, when they are applicable today, is rather shortsighted and dogmatic and to describe him as a "coffee-bar revolutionary" is stupid. As Tom Brown writes, "It remains for us to broaden the ideas of the valuable experience!" Surely the experience and ideas of Malatesta, Mann, James Connolly and Larkin can help us with this and the lessons learned from the present day mixed-economy capitalism can help us spread our ideas amongst the industrial workers.

## Tom Brown replies...

**T**WENTY-FIVE YEARS ago I was asked, by my fellow editors of the *Anarchist War Commentary*, to write three articles on Syndicalism. When the articles were published, Ethel Mannin urged us to reprint them as a pamphlet. We did so and the pamphlet was at once a success, having to be re-set and reprinted three times. It was reprinted, too, in the USA and translated and printed in Spanish by the exiled CNT in France, into Japanese by the Japanese Anarchist Federation and into Norwegian.

During that time I heard of no-one in the Anarchist movement in Britain who objected to the principles and practices outlined in the pamphlet; on the contrary, it was accepted as an outline of our principles.

I have never departed from those principles, for I have

not found anything wrong in them and events have proved their efficacy.

Since the war, however, some have thought it necessary to attack Syndicalism, while retaining the name of Anarchism, and for many years have sought an alternative to fill the vacuum. Unable to think of anything better, they have fallen back on reactionary trade unionism. Where lies this degeneration to reformism?

Peter Turner says of the workers' committees: "This type of thing still goes on today." Of course it does. Nevertheless, it did start as the result of Syndicalist and IWW word and deed, as the historians of industrial history, friendly, inimical or neutral, testify. The committees exist and grow because workers need an alternative to the effete unions—and whence can it come but from Syndicalist thought and precept?

Yes, few workers realise the origin of the factory committee movement, but that does not destroy its efficacy. Tonight, millions of people in Britain will switch on their electric lights, few will give a thought to Joseph Swan, the inventor, but they will not, because of that, go back to tallow candles. Countless millions now alive and well would have perished long ago, but for the work of Dr. Jenner and the country folk who guided him. Except for monuments to the father of vaccine, mostly in Latin America, his work is unsung, but nobody wishes to go back to smallpox.

Of "this type of thing" Peter Turner says it "is part of the unofficial rank and file movement in industry which exists within the framework of the official trade unions." Here we have two opposites existing in one body. This movement is "unofficial," it also "exists within the framework of the official trade unions." If that's not making the best of both worlds, then pigs do fly. I would like to ask ever anti-Syndicalist Anarchist, "Do you ever listen to yourself contradicting yourself?"

The movement away from reactionary unionism was the work of what has been called "New Unionism." In shape and meaning, this is exactly what it was. Here is the heart of the matter—and its understanding will justify this controversy. It was not *Trade Unionism*. True, it was only one stage of the development of Revolutionary Industrial Unionism and there are other stages yet, but this one is now accepted by most workers who are interested in their own problems. But the factory committees have never been accepted by the unions, except by *force majeure*, and these unions have fought a constant, though losing battle to control, tame, and even brainwash the shop stewards.

Any steward who does his plain duty finds himself torn between his stewardship and the attempted domination of the union bureaucracy. Unless he understands the inherent irreconcilability of the two opposing principles, he becomes as a table-tennis ball between two bats. The workers, to accomplish even their own defence, must break the chains with which the trade unions seek to bind them and continue to develop their organisation, self-controlled, at their place of work.

What is the term most used in public discussion of workers' committees and strike action? Unofficial! Pick up any newspaper any day. In one week in London, a one-day strike of dockers and the promise of more to come, three-day strike of a considerable section of the tube railmen, successful action by the workers of the big United Dairies

cont. on page 6, col. 1



# THINGS IN GLOCCAMORRA

**T**HIS is a time of surprises. In the words of the Dixie minstrel: "It must be now the Kingdom's coming." Here in Britain the idea is definitely gaining ground that general elections are the concern of bookmakers, sociologists and people doing research on public opinion. Making the mark of the illiterate on a piece of paper at an election once in 5 years to save us from all harm is a very silly superstition, indeed.

Apart from the occasional 18th-century Whig or 19th-century Tory who is still around, what visitors to Britain love is the rich historical atmosphere of it all, Parliament, Madame Tussaud's, TRANSPORT HOUSE. Workers have no business voting during a general election, unless they're voting to decide who goes for the tea, (or electing a foreman) like building workers do in Sweden).

So it's odd to reflect that there's a corner of the dear old UK where the normal anti-parliamentarianism of the workers has got itself stuck halfway, like a hen with one leg in a jam-jar. Yes! Of course! We're talking about Northern Ireland!

The Belfast workers, Catholics and Protestants together, learned their Syndicalist lessons many, many years ago in a very tough school, to the tune of a swinging baton. Some of the ex-pupils went to round off their learning in other cities, like Dublin, where they created the Citizen's Army, probably the most effective military arm of trade-unionism ever to exist anywhere, outside of Spain. Among them was a northern "Prod" called White. Another, of course, was Connolly, from Monaghan originally, who completed his education bound wounded to a chair before a firing squad after the 1916 gesture.

No doubt it seems strange to those who don't know Belfast

## Controversy (cont.)

and several other actions in factories, all unofficial, all from below. Wilson, on the eve of the Election, threatened "unofficial strikers"; his Minister of Labour, Ray Gunter, a trade union official, started his first day of office with a strong threat against a proposed unofficial strike of London dockers, who at once rounded on their own officials, "Whose side is he on?"

Even before the 1914-18 war, Syndicalists warned the workers that the trade unions would become increasingly part of the State machine (it was a Liberal government then). This has been proved true under Labour and Tory governments. Churchill described the trade unions as the "Fourth Estate"—the other three are the Commons, the Lords Temporal and the Lords Spiritual.

Perhaps the best recent example of the marriage of unions and State is in the autobiography of the Trades Union Congress's most famous secretary, Lord Citrine (*Men and Work*, Hutchinson, 40s.). Reviewing it, H.D. Ziman writes:

"By the end of the book, it goes only to the outbreak of war in 1939, the reader realises that the close relations that exist between the TUC and the Cabinet (whatever the latter's politics) were created early in Lord Citrine's 20 years' General Secretaryship, not in or after the Second World War. The frequent visits he paid to 10 Downing Street did not leak out, since he slipped along the corridor which led from the Treasury building. He seems to have enjoyed being behind the scenes." *Daily Telegraph*, 3.9.64.

Work in the unions—but don't forget those secret passages!

that this depressed industrial city should be the scene of rioting over a flag.

You see, this happened on the Falls which is a ghetto, a city within a city, a miniature republic with its own well-defined borders, a couple of thousand working-class Catholic separatists who are entitled to fly a different flag from the rest of the UK if they want to. The flag-waving (the flag of the Republic is banned) began as an electioneering device by a party whose candidate if elected will not take his seat (English and American comrades may drink or circulate the aspirin tablets).

In fairness to the flag-waving Republican politicians it must be said that they only intended to whip up a little enthusiasm for the voting game. After the first evening's rioting they were just as scared of the situation they had created as the authorities and joined their voices to those of the government and the churches in asking everyone to be calm.

Someone said of course that the rioting proves nothing. I disagree. It proves that doctrinaire revolutionists and public rebels are ever willing to expose their flags and emblems to insult at the hands of the police, but the people of the Falls (one of those first arrested is a mother of eight children), apparently are not. Personally I think this minority has been betrayed too often by doctrinaire Sinn Fein types and bourgeois nationalists apologists of the millionaires' playground south of the border to have any faith left in anybody.

But if they can ever shake off their "leadership," if they could just escape from the multi-patterned swarm of romantics, mythologists, yellow politicians, agents-provocateurs, and downright professional informers who beset them, they're just as willing as ever they were to have a showdown with irresponsible representatives of their traditional centralist enemy, the State.

ART MAC AN DRABHLAIS

## FEDERAL LABOUR CODE LEAVES CANADIAN WORKERS IN POVERTY

**A**N HOURLY minimum wage of \$1.25 for workers in industries under federal jurisdiction (transport, banking, broadcasting, communications and crown agencies) is a feature of a new Canadian Federal Labour Code introduced into Parliament and becoming effective on January 1, 1965.

Other features of the code include a standard eight-hour day, 40-hour week, two weeks' holiday with pay after one year, seven paid statutory holidays, time-and-a-half for overtime, and a maximum work week, including overtime, of 48 hours. While directly affecting only 556,000, or less than 9 per cent of Canada's work force, the code, and particularly the \$1.25 minimum wage has roused considerable indignation among employers and their political soul-mates in provincial legislatures. The reason is not far to seek: provincial minimum wages range from a low of 50c per hour in Newfoundland to \$1 per hour in industrial areas of Ontario. With the federal code in force, the heat will be on provincial politicians to raise "their" minimums to, at least, match the federal minimum.

What does this wage of \$1.25 (the thought of which causes exploiters of human labour to scream with fear and rage) really mean in terms of human decency? \$1.25 per hour for a 40-hour week means an annual income of at the most \$2,600—less if there have been periods of unemployment. A

*continued on page 8, column 1*



# Book workers victimised by Collins

**I**NDUSTRIAL UNREST is nothing new to Glasgow, but a recent dispute there, which dragged on for more than a year, must be a little unusual, even for Clydeside. It concerned not a shipyard, but Wm. Collins, Sons & Co. Ltd., the giant publishing firm whose authors range from Boris Pasternak and Edmund Wilson, through Agatha Christie to Joy Adamson, of Elsa the lioness fame.

In June, 1963, four of Collins' staff were dismissed for attempting to procure "secret and confidential" information about the firm's business. All were active members of the embryo chapel of the National Union of Journalists, of whose existence the management had learned only some weeks before. Three were the chapel officials.

The information they wanted was which trade unions had diaries printed by Collins. Far from being "secret and confidential", it could have been obtained from the TUC.

The NUJ immediately decided to treat their dismissal as a case of victimisation, as did the national executive of the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation. National officials of the NUJ and PKTF, the Scottish TUC and even the Ministry of Labour were involved in a long series of meetings with W. Hope Collins, the firm's managing director, and others. Only now have the unions finally admitted defeat.

The union demand for reinstatement naturally became bound up with recognition of the NUJ. However, Hope Collins told a meeting of his staff, specially assembled for the purpose, that under no circumstances would he allow trade union organisation in his offices.

His final offer to the union was to accept the return of "some" of the four in an "administrative capacity" (one man was offered the job of assistant to the dispatch manager), but the NUJ refused to consider an offer that would take the victimised people out of the union and then leave them to the tender mercies of Collins. The dispute died, not with a bang but a whimper, and with it died any hopes of organising the office workers at Collins.

Why did the National Executive Council of the NUJ allow the dispute to drag on so long? Why did it allow the 13-strong Collins chapel to die a slow death? Why did it block the ideas put forward by the militant Glasgow branch, which wanted to issue press statements and contact Collins authors, local authorities, etc., and tell them what this firm was up to? Certainly the NEC came in for some withering criticism when the NUJ's annual delegate meeting heard the full story and passed a unanimous resolution calling on the NEC to withdraw the printing of their own diary from Collins—and urging other unions to withdraw all work, too.

The PKTF position is even more difficult to understand. They agreed that these people were victimised, but refused to take any action. They would not even black work previously done by the four sacked. They also adopted a most unfraternal attitude when the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers very astutely used this situation to recruit members at Collins—an effort which, unfortunately, now seems to have petered out.

One bitter comment made in Glasgow during the dispute was that the PKTF were behaving according to the highest

principles of trade unionism—as laid down by Edward Martell.

But the real villain of this sordid little tale is, of course, Hope Collins, who refused to come to terms with a very unbelligerent union. Although his attitude towards union organisation in his offices may appear to have much in common with that of 19th-century millowners, the firm's factory workers are organised almost 100 per cent and, on the whole, enjoy good relations with the management. Moreover, Hope Collins spoke during National Productivity Year about the need for management and unions to pull together; he is a past chairman of Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and has built a public image of himself as an enlightened industrialist.

Why, then, has he behaved in such a reactionary way in this dispute? First, there is the money. The amount required to raise wages and conditions to any acceptable level would be a fleabite to a firm the size of Collins, but whoever heard of a management willing to shell out more than it was obliged to?

An NUJ official described wages and conditions in the firm as "barbaric" and quoted as one example a girl, 24 and an Oxford graduate, earning £520 a year. Hours are 8.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m., with three-quarters of an hour for lunch. Holidays start at two weeks a year, then enter an intricate status system of long weekends and extra weeks.

Status is a matter of moment at Collins. Canteen facilities are stratified, with much bitter infighting to win a place in those reserved for "senior executives" and "staff". There is also the ludicrous sight of middle-aged executives worrying themselves sick as they try to decide whether their bay in the private car park is better than that of their opposite numbers in other departments.

It must be remembered, too, that many of the people eligible to join the NUJ are young and highly qualified. In the natural course of things, many would eventually reach high rank in the firm. Trade union members at top level are commonplace on newspapers, but this would be a new and very unwelcome development in one of Britain's oldest book publishers—unwelcome not only to Collins, but to the whole of the Publishers' Association, which is determined to keep such revolutionary ideas as the right to organise out of its patriarchal Dickensian world.

This is not a story of martyrdom. Three of the people victimised were placed in jobs with newspapers and television as soon as the NUJ decided further negotiations were useless. One, a girl, instantly doubled her salary, and the other two received substantial rises. One man is still out of work, but the union is seeing that his pay continues.

Unemployment is never pleasant, but at least these victims were spared the miseries of poverty. Nevertheless, a man has been out of work for 16 months and three people were unemployed for nine months, simply because they wished to join a union and raise their standard of living.

Anyone interested in the future development of white-collar unions (and all trade unionists should be), can learn a good deal from this dispute.

It should also warn us once again about the nature of capitalism and capitalists. We can only hope that in future, when bosses stand up and make speeches about co-operation between unions and management, people will remember the Collins affair and ponder.

**GAVIN MACDONALD**

SWF PRESS FUND—SEPTEMBER 18 to OCTOBER 23, 1964

London W9. A.R. 2s 6d; Bristol, S.G. £2; Red Deer, Alberta, B.G. 6s 6d; Stockton-on-Tees, L.F. £1 16s; Hartford, Conn., M.G.A. 10s 6d; New York 33. A.S. 7s; Colntraive, Argyll, H.R.D. in memory of H.T.D., 14s; Burnley, J.P. 9s; Dublin 12, D.P. £1; London Group £7 4s 1d. Total £14 9s 7d.

● The SWF has reprinted its leaflet, "A Cheap Holiday", attacking tourism to Franco Spain. Copies are available at 1s. 6d. for 100; 15s. for 1,000, postpaid.



# APPRENTICES ORGANISE FOR ACTION

**L**ANCASHIRE engineering apprentices, with their comrades from London, Scotland, Merseyside, Wales and the South of England, have agreed to call a strike for November 2. They are fed up with being used as a cheap labour force.

On October 18, at Manchester, the National Apprentices Wage and Conditions Committee declared that if something isn't done quickly, they will be out of their time before getting a pay rise. Their demands are outlined in the AEU Apprentices Youth Charter:

1. The following percentages of the skilled man's rate of £10 11s. 8d. to be paid to all apprentices. At 15 years 60 per cent, as opposed to 22.5 per cent plus 9s. 4d., rising to 90 per cent, as opposed to 62.5 per cent, plus 28s.
2. A 35-hour working week.
3. Four week's annual paid holiday.
4. The payment of full wages during sickness.
5. Full TU negotiating rights for all youths.

There is little doubt that apprentices in large numbers will join the dispute. In the North West there is solid support, not only by apprentices, but from many shop stewards and others. Apprentice flying squads are being formed to spread the strike.

This strike must depend on the support of the men, financial or otherwise. Underhanded victimisation by employers is already in full swing. The apprentices' demands must be kept before the public by means of propaganda,

## Canadian wages (cont.)

family with an annual income of less than \$3,000 is considered to be living in poverty in Canada. An income of between \$3,000 and \$4,000 per annum means that the family, while not living in actual poverty, only just manage to get by; any unforeseen setback or unexpected expense would plunge them into poverty. In other words, a family trying to exist on the Federal Government's new minimum wage would be living in poverty, unless the wife went out to work to supplement her husband's income. It is the thought of having to pay at least this miserable pittance to all their employees that is rousing "righteous" indignation among the exploiting class in Canada. They exhibit callous disregard for human decency, coupled with greed for private profit.

Of the 556,000 directly affected by the new code, approximately 50,000 will receive pay increases, to bring their wages up to the minimum \$1.25 per hour.

How many more have an annual income below the \$3,000 poverty line is not known, but in the whole of Canada more than half-a-million wage-earner families are living in poverty—20 per cent of all wage-earner families in the country. If the figure of \$4,000 per annum is taken to represent the minimum family income to ensure a decent, secure, comfortable standard of living, then over a million wage-earner families (37 per cent) are not earning enough to do this.

A resolution calling for an economic boycott against South Africa was approved (only one delegate objected) by the Canadian Union of Students, at its annual congress in Toronto. The resolution called for picketing of the South African embassy in Ottawa, boycott of ships carrying South African goods, distribution of posters to retail stores, fund raising for legal defence of political prisoners and pressuring of manufacturing, consumer and government groups.

**BILL GREENWOOD**

including factory-gate appeals for active solidarity.

Apprentices are already issuing their own paper *Industrial Youth*. This is a must for all youngsters who mean to stand on their own two feet and not be intimidated by employers because of their age. *Industrial Youth* (4½d. post paid) is obtainable from 15 Neston Road, Turf Hill, Rochdale, Lanes. **Solidarity on November 2.**

### SCOOPED!

**W**E have been "scooped" by the Economic League. The September-October issue of the *Economic League Bulletin* gives full details of the SWF's recently-formed Industrial Action Sub-Committee in London. The bulletin also states that the "Syndicalist Workers' Federation and its associate organisations are not large, but many of their members are fanatical in their determination to further the 'class struggle.' As far as industry is concerned their main danger lies in their ability to act as 'ginger groups' inside strike committees and unofficial organisations."

Any readers who wish to join these "fanatics," please drop us a line.

### INVEST IN YOUR WORK

**T**HE Burfield Group of companies, which owns the firm of Hardy Spicer, encourage their workers to invest in the concern. Its share capital has been increased out of undistributed profits from £265,000 in 1950 to 4,375,000 in 1963.

Of this, the workers have been able to buy £42,000 in shares. Other shareholders get £4 million in shares—a ratio of 100 to 1. This co-partnership racket is wonderful value for the employers: "Invest in your work, toe the line, it's your own money you are safeguarding."

Hardy Spicer was the firm who refused 290 inspectors 9d. an hour more pay, and whose Chairman, Mr. Herbert Hill, described the workers in such glowing terms as "pretty poor mentality" and "pretty poor levels of intelligence."

Master and man united!

### LONDON BUSMEN CHOKED

**D**ETAILS of London Transport's winter bus schedules, which started on October 21, show 898 duties cut from the rota—and 97 per cent of the total cuts (winter and summer) are applied at weekends, when the maximum damage is done to staff earnings.

Remember the Phelps Brown report? It stated: "The progressive contraction of the services must be halted and reversed." Obviously the LTE fail to understand the meaning of "Reversed." The Central Bus and Trade Group Committees have endorsed the following motion:—

"... bearing in mind that the serious staff shortage has continued throughout the summer with detrimental effects upon the staff and their working conditions, and upon the public by way of lower standard of service, despite heavy increases in fares, we . . . charge London Transport with failing to meet their obligations arising from the Phelps Brown Inquiry findings and recommendations."

The rank and file must have practical proposals for action to enforce these views.

### RAILWAY WORKERS IN FIGHTING MOOD

**T**HE Railways Board offer of a 5 per cent pay increase has been rejected by the NUR London District Council and railway workers in general will follow suit. If they are to catch up with workers in comparable industries, they will have to submit and obtain a wage claim every week for the next year. Railwaymen, busmen and dockers are in the same boat—so why not row together in joint action?

**BILL CHRISTOPHER**



# ***For industrial action***

*The following resolution was carried unanimously at an SWF National Committee meeting (July 20, 1964) and endorsed by the general membership (London) meeting, held on Friday, July 24, 1964:—*

That an Industrial Action Sub-Committee (SWF) be established, open to all SWF members prepared to work actively at industrial and trade union level for the promotion of our Aims and Principles. Immediate objectives being:—

- (1) To build support among industrial workers for the policies of Workers' Ownership and Direct Control of all industry and services.
- (2) To promote the policies of rank and file control and the right of recall.
- (3) To classify and constantly renew contacts within industry, shop steward committees, trade union branches, trades councils, etc.
- (4) Development of an Information Service on wages and conditions and TU structure within various industries, to render factory-gate propaganda more effective.
- (5) Formation, wherever practical, of SWF Industrial Groups to forward our policies, linking the efforts of members employed in the same industry and/or belonging to the same TU, e.g., Printing Industrial Group, Dockers Industrial Group, Transport Industrial Group, etc.
- (6) Organisation of public meetings and sales drives of "Direct Action" at selected factory gates.
- (7) Making available printing and other facilities for the assistance of workers in dispute.
- (8) Obtaining of first-hand reports on strikes and publicising the facts of industrial disputes to other workers, thus developing our network of contacts.
- (9) Organising Industrial Conferences, so that SWF industrial activists may meet and discuss common problems, inviting observers from other militant groups with similar aims.

If you are prepared to actively support the committee, please complete the coupon and return to the *Secretary, SWF, 34 Cumberland Road, London, E17.*

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Industry .....

Trade Union .....