

Direct Action

For workers' direct control of industry

Inside—Australian call-up
Steelmen v. bureaucrats
The wages paper-chase
Who owns Britain ?

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWMA)

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RACIALISM MUST BE FOUGHT NOW

THE first hint of the revival of the dormant immigration issue came in August, 1964, with a *Sunday Telegraph* poll, which claimed to show that 52% of the population wanted tighter controls. Why, then, asked the *Telegraph*, did Labour continue to oppose the Immigration Act?

The call was taken up by the *Daily Express*. According to Robert Pitman, although the public wanted immigration halted, the parties were combining to gag them. Cartoonist Cummings (an ex-Tribunite) weighed in with a cartoon showing Wilson and Home ignoring a huge black bomb smouldering under them. Both the cartoon and Pitman's

piece were later reproduced in *Combat*, the fascist British National Party paper.

Later Pitman returned with a piece entitled "Is Britain heading for race war?" This time his case was buttressed with misleading and inaccurate statistics (his figure for immigrant women in prison was twice that of the Home Office). Cummings contributed a cartoon of a huge black shadow creeping up behind Wilson.

By this time the election was in full swing. The story of Smethwick has been told many times. One Tory councillor spoke of a conspiracy against White Civilisation. The Tory helpers included a former leading local Mosleyite.

In Southall, another Pakistani centre, the Tory appeal to racialism was less open. However, since Tory canvassers included members of the self-styled "Southall Residents' Association", a local racist group, it might be interesting to know some of the things said on the doorstep.

On polling day, race prejudice cost Labour Smethwick, Perry Barr and Slough. In Southall, the British National Party polled 3,400 votes. In Islington and Deptford racist independents each gained over 2,000.

During the Leyton bye-election a variety of Fascist notices appeared. In the *Sunday Telegraph*, Peregrine Worsthorne explained that "most people want to keep Britain white for perfectly decent reasons."

After the election, the British National Party claimed that the Tory candidate had asked them to withdraw their candidate, but congratulated them on their anti-immigration stand.

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Tilbury construction men win by direct action

FOSTER WHEELER and John Brown Land Boiler Constructors are one of the chief contractors on the Tilbury Power Station site. For the last two years, welders on the job have been subject to the divide-and-rule tactics of this Anglo-American employer. They have not been offered the same facilities as other trades on the site, i.e. they have been forced to accept the 'individual system'.

Recently the boilermakers elected their own shop stewards and held meetings. Arising from one such meeting the management were informed that members of the Boilermakers Society would no longer tolerate the 'individual bonus method' and demanded the 'pooled bonus system'. 'Individual bonus' is the employers' method of sorting out the blue-eyed boys. It can be connived by the employers that some individuals can make £20 bonus, and others can't make even 'single time'.

The employers' reply to the boilermakers' demand was to restrict future meetings to one hour per month. Obviously the workers' reaction to this was negative and they continued to hold their meetings in the car park. The firm wielded the big stick and threatened the sack, but the meetings continued.

Arriving at work on February 8, 55 workers found their cards were not in the rack, in fact they were 'locked out'. An executive member of the boilermakers sent for an executive officer to discipline the men and get them back to work. The 'officer' failed to arrive. The site engineer called in the

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THE WORKING WEEK AT SEA

A NEW wage structure has been announced for seamen. Instead of a 44-hour week, with compensation for weekends at sea, crews are on a 40-hour week in port and a 56-hour week at sea. The new agreement has taken six months to negotiate. There were fears that the 56-hour week would be misunderstood, the agreement amounts to 12 hours' guaranteed overtime a week. London seamen are demanding a special union branch meeting to consider the questions. The agreement is due to start March 29.

An agreement is expected shortly on the establishment of shop stewards on board ship. This has been a continuous issue for years, amounting to seamen versus employers supported by the National Union of Seamen.

Coming events cast their shadows

I CAN assure readers of last month's DA that we have no crystal ball. We did feel that Ted Hill may be bobbing for a title, now we are sure. When Ted announced his retirement from president of the Boilermakers' Society, he stated: "If I can reassess my values and use what I have left in the service of the working class movement I shall do that, whether it be in the House of Lords or anywhere else".

CLERKS GUM UP THE WORKS

CLERICAL workers at Massey Ferguson are on strike in support of their demand for a 5% all-round increase. Negotiations have been going on since March last year. Clerks are usually classified as non-productive, without them things appear to grind to a halt. A breakthrough on industrial action in the offices is progress indeed.

D.A.T.A. INTEND POKING 'INTENT'

DATA has stated in its journal that their executive refuses to accept the joint statement of intent on productivity, prices and incomes signed by the TUC, the employers' organisations and the Government. A resolution states that Britain's economic problems would only be solved through planning a society where the people had *adequate* (my italics) control

RACIALISM (cont.)

According to the Tories, all that had happened was that the BNP had asked their position on immigration and, when told this, had withdrawn independently.

Against mounting racialism. Labour's only policy—as the new controls clearly show—is abject surrender.

Despite Wilson's condemnation of Smethwick Labour Club, he will not threaten it with the proscription he is so fond of in other cases. In Southall, one Labour councillor is widely believed to have any future sale of his house covered by a colour bar clause. And remember how, in 1958, North Kensington's Labour MP complained that the Tory Home Secretary was too harsh in condemning the Notting Hill rioters.

Nor is there any point in calling for legislation, as the "left" is doing. Any "anti-Fascist" tightening of the Public Order Act would be so vague as to achieve nothing but the setting of a precedent for strengthening the framework of the political repression we have all seen operate in the past few years.

As for anti-discrimination laws, there are more ways to make people unwelcome than by not serving them. And have US anti-discrimination laws prevented the pressures of US class society forcing the Negroes into the slums of Harlem and Chicago?

THE SITUATION IS URGENT. Now the Tories have seen that race hate wins votes, they will probably try it in a good many more places next time. Already Sir Edward Boyle and Aubrey Jones are under pressure from local Tory racialists. The *Express* and *Telegraph* are talking in ways that a few years back only Mosley was doing.

The real solution lies with the people—in the factories and the slums—themselves. The organisations that can meet racialism are shop floor committees and tenants' associations—groups set up by the people themselves, which can meet the causes of friction, while never losing sight of the common enemies—the boss and landlord.

ROGER SANDELL

over the means of production, distribution and exchange. Trade union leaders on the board of the management, no doubt.

FARMWORKERS GET CHICKEN FEED

THE General Secretary of the National Union of Agricultural Workers said at a union meeting that farmworkers were still working four hours a week more to earn £4 a week less than industrial workers.

We all know that farmers are always skint, we can now see that the farmworkers are *skinter*.

Farmworkers have a tradition of militancy, they need it now more than ever before, if they are to progress.

DOCKERS OPPOSE MERGER

SOME 580 dockers and stevedores employed by two stevedoring companies are opposed to the merging of the firms. The dockers' liaison committee say this is a backdoor method of introducing mobility of labour, which could mean some firms will corner all the work for the permanent men and not call on the pool (casual workers). Decasualisation and mobility of labour must be in the hands of the dockers themselves, as a step towards Workers' Control.

GUNTER AND WORKERS' CONTROL

ON ITV on Tuesday, February 16, Ray Gunter, the Minister of Labour, discussed the Trade Disputes Bill with TORY trade unionists, Ray Mawbey, MP, and Sir Edward Brown, MP. The discussion in general was idle chit-chat, but right at the end Sir Edward accused the Labour Party of standing for workers' control. Ray Gunter dived right back and accused Sir Edward of being 20 years behind the times. Unfortunately the programme finished—I would have loved to hear Ray defending Clause 4.

NICKY'S SWAN SONG

THE 1963 pay agreement in engineering was contrary to the 'national economic interest', according to Nicky. The responsibility for this unpatriotic act is placed firmly on the doorstep of the unions, which had secured settlements under the duress of a ban on overtime and threats of further industrial action. This really is a shocking indictment, especially when it's "Backs to the walls, chaps". Now that George Brown claims the class war is over, this won't happen again—You wanna bet?

BILL CHRISTOPHER

TILBURY MEN WIN (cont.)

shop steward, to ask if he was going to contact the 'officer'. He received a prompt reply: "You want him, you get him".

The site engineer offered to restart the men at 10.15, with time lost subject to discussion between him and the E.C. Officer. The shop steward refused this arrangement and demanded Time and pro rata bonus. Site engineer refused and the men walked out. On the following day the men returned, pay arrangements being to the satisfaction of those concerned.

By using direct action the workers have improved site conditions out of all recognition. In future, meetings will be held when the workers deem them desirable, otherwise direct action—OUT!

The workers on this site are fighting a three-pronged attack—the employers, the 'get back and work' ideas of the T.U. officials and the creepy-crawly Moral Rearmament crowd. Therefore 100% solidarity is needed between all trades, brickies, carpenters, scaffolders—the lot. Who does what job, nine times out of ten, is the luck of the draw in the first place, but to win a dispute the solidarity needed has to be worked and argued for. Craft and non-craft means nothing, but to win means everything.

B.C.

MENZIES FAKES CALL-UP CRISIS

PRELUDE to the introduction of peacetime conscription of Australian youth, on a selective basis for overseas military service by the Menzies Government, was the development of a phoney defence crisis. This was manufactured by the Federal Authorities during the last few months of 1964 and designed to have its impact on the Senate elections in December.

"For what it is worth, Menzies retained control of the Senate on an issue which split the Australian nation almost 50-50," commented *Century*, a forthright Australian Labour weekly. To its credit, the Labour Party vigorously opposed conscripting young Australians for jungle warfare in the swamps of SE Asia.

Once again Menzies has proved himself an expert at creating eve-of-election, synthetic crises. In 1949 he secured office on a completely phoney issue—the threat of cancerous inflation, and promised, of course, to put value back into the Australian pound. Again and again he has relied on the boggy of Communism to provide him with his election bait, perfecting this technique by his famous pre-election drama of the Royal Commission into the Petrov espionage disclosures.

The leading figures, the hand-picked judges, were duly rewarded with knighthoods and the lesser fry with soft jobs at hefty salaries. The Petrovs, who had defected, were granted citizenship and huge pensions for life. It was revealed just before that election that members of Dr. Evatt's staff were on the list of people named by Petrov as potential sources of information. Although those named were cleared completely of any overt or covert act of treason, Menzies had retained the reins of government.

In the latest Senate swindle he raised the alarming cry that the barbarians were at the northern gate. He claimed that Australia was in grave danger from Sukarno and his Red

Chinese friends. Yet Menzies has spent hundreds of millions of pounds on defence programmes and rearmament. And if Indonesia is such a threat to Australia, why has the U.S. been giving it large quantities of economic aid? Why has Australia been assisting Indonesia via the Colombo Plan? Why are Indonesian army officers being trained in Australia?

At first Menzies denied that his defence policies amounted to conscription, calling his latest proposal a *Draft for Selective Military Service*. He soon realised that he would have to drop the pretence and, facing the Labour opposition, stated his proposition for Conscription. Just 50 years ago, he himself held the King's Commission in the Melbourne University regiment. Expected to volunteer for military service in France, he instead resigned his commission to stay at home.

Now he is telling young men attending universities that they may complete their studies before being required to serve their full two-year term immediately after graduation. On this occasion there will be no question of Australians conscripted for overseas service staying strictly within the immediate zone of Australia's own defence operations. They will be liable to be sent anywhere on the face of the globe. It is conscription for unlimited overseas service in peacetime.

J. T. Lang, former NSW Labour Premier and editor of *Century*, claims that pressure was exerted on Menzies principally in Whitehall and Washington, forcing him to enter into specific commitments regarding the involvement of Australian forces in Malaya and SE Asia. The US State Department, he asserts, in order to intensify the pressure, "leaked a summation of its views on the inadequacy of Australia's contribution to *Time* magazine, which carried the invidious comparison between our armed strength and that of Cambodia." And in the same editorial (*Century* 20.11.64), he describes any system of selective ballots as a "thinly disguised lottery of possible death. It involves the reintroduction of war-time manpower controls and also will bring back the problem of political influence being used to dodge the draft."

On the eve of the election, which was to give Menzies his phoney "mandate", Lang asked the voters "What possible interest have Australians in maintaining the corrupt, treacherous, anti-Democratic regimes of venal rulers of these tinpot countries, who would never scruple about selling out to the Communist cause if they thought they could make a better bargain? Do you believe that Australia should defend Malaysia to the last Australian?"

The Australian workers will soon start paying, even with their lives, the full price of Menzies' fraudulent politics and his extended reign as ruler of the Commonwealth. They can look forward to tough budgets, credit restriction and harder times, as their sons, reaching the age of 20, become marbles in the State lottery barrel, operated in defence of Capital.

M. CALLINAN

Remember Christie!

ON March 11, Stuart Christie completes his seventh month in the hands of his Fascist captors. He was arrested on August 11 last year with Fernando Carballo. The arrest was announced five days later. During this time, according to *Ruta* (paper of the Iberian Federation of Libertarian Youth, FIJL, in exile), our comrades were drugged, beaten and tortured, Carballo the worse because he is of Spanish nationality. We have no reason to doubt that these things happened. They are common treatment for political offenders in Spanish jails and the FIJL has always been impeccably correct in all its statements of fact. Nor, for that matter, has the Franco regime issued a denial.

We hear that Stuart has been given cooking facilities in the Carabanchel prison, Madrid. He is lucky, perhaps, for Carballo's whereabouts are unknown, except that he languishes somewhere among the thousands of Spanish workers and peasants whose only crime has been to say "no" to death and therefore are condemned to a living death.

But cooking facilities are no antidote for prison walls and another nineteen years and five months to do, at the age of not-yet 20. Please at least show your solidarity with cards, letters, books (bearing in mind that they will be censored), or with material aids (of which money is the most easily sent). The former may be addressed direct to Stuart Christie, Carabanchel Prison, Madrid, Spain. The latter are more likely to reach him if sent via the Christie-Carballo Defence Committee, 34 Cumberland Road, London E17. Money and food have already been sent. Please help to keep it up. All donations will be acknowledged.

HELP SPANISH TOURIST BOYCOTT

FROM the Spanish comrades of the exiled CNT in this country, the SWF has received the gift of 1,000 two-colour postcards, in aid of our Press Fund. These beautifully-produced cards, 7x4 in., with the CNT imprint, depict four aspects of Franco Spain that Costa Brava tourists usually miss: photographs of a Spanish prison gallery, political prisoners, slums in Madrid and armed Civil Guards on patrol. By using these cards, which have the normal spaces for greetings and addressing, readers can help both the Spanish Tourist Boycott campaign and the SWF Press Fund. They are 6d. each, 6s. for 12, plus postage (2d for single copies, 6d for 12) from SWF, 34 Cumberland Road, London, E17.

Direct Action

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True-blue Mrs. White

"PERSONALLY I certainly am not going to Spain for my holidays this year. . . . There are other places in the sun." Mrs. Eirene White, Colonial Under Secretary, 15.2.65.

A gesture of solidarity for the Spanish workers and of opposition to Franco's fascist regime? Support for the campaign against Spanish tourism, launched in 1963 by the SWF, following an appeal by the libertarian underground movement of that country? Not a bit of it. The Labour leopardess is just running true to her imperialist spots. With a fine old Boys-of-the-bulldog-breed, Britannia-rules-the-waves wave of her little Union Jack, Mrs. White is replying to Franco's restrictions on travel between Spain and Gibraltar.

Franco can jail and torture miners, shave the heads of their wives, garotte resistance fighters and deny even the most elementary rights to Spain's workers. He can condemn Scots Anarcho-Syndicalist Stuart Christie, aged 18, to 20 years in prison for allegedly carrying explosives—nothing more. With more than a million dead, as the result of the civil war he provoked, the bloodstained little generalissimo can sit on top of a pyramid of corpses. And the only reply of Britain's Labour Party is a few murmured words of polite protest.

But once let Britain's naval base in the Mediterranean come under restrictions from Spain's latter-day Hitler and the angry chorus rises. Eight days before Mrs. White's remarks, the Co-operative-owned *Sunday Citizen* had weighed in with an editorial ("Let's Snub Franco's Sun"), urging readers to choose places other than Spain for their holidays. Five weeks earlier, however, the same paper headed an article in its holidays feature, "This one is a MUST," and went on to say that "A holiday in Spain will always be cheap at the price. You MUST see Spain." (27.12.64).

Last year, some 2,100,000 Britons are estimated to have been among the 13,000,000 tourists who provided one of the main props for Franco's tottering financial facade. Many of them, solid trade-union members, would be horrified at the suggestion that their holidays helped fascism—though Spain's Minister of Tourism, Fraga Iribarne, has repeatedly made it clear that such is the case.

Dockworker's Voice, whose sponsors include Ian Mikardo, Anthony Greenwood, Frank Allaun and Sydney Silverman, has advertised a travel agency offering air tours to Spain—with a 10% reduction for bona-fide trade unionists. The *ASSET Journal* (November-December, 1964) stated that the union, through a joint organisation with three other trade unions, recommends to its members Horizon Holidays Ltd—and included an advertisement for Horizon's 15-day holiday at the Club el Catalan, Estarrit, Spain.

What is the attraction of Spain? Its cheapness to tourists. And who foots the bill? The underpaid Spanish workers. British trade unionists should follow the lead given by the London Typographical Association last year, when its delegate conference called on all members to boycott Spanish tourism, *in solidarity with their brother unionists in that country*—NOT because of the threat to Gibraltar, in which the only real losers will be Spanish workers with jobs on the Rock.

IT'S UP TO YOU . . .

DIRECT ACTION, monthly paper of the Syndicalist Workers' Federation, is democratically controlled by the organisation and edited by the National Committee elected by annual conference. ALL work on the paper, as for the organisation generally, is voluntary and unpaid.

Why is the paper so small? Why does it not appear more frequently? These and similar questions are often asked by readers. The answer is quite simply that, with our present resources we can't do any better. DA is printed in their spare time by London comrades, on an old platen press that turns out only 400 copies of two pages per hour. The size of the paper is governed by the size of the press.

Like our critics, we want to see a bigger paper coming out more often. That means a new press. It also means boosting DA's present circulation. YOU can help by taking extra copies for sale, getting new subscribers, supplying addresses of potential subscribers—and giving cash to the Press Fund toward a new printing press.

Apart from sales and cash, you can help us make the paper a strong voice of rank-and-file struggle, by sending news of direct action on your job—or in your locality.

"Direct Action" is, we believe, the only printed paper in the working-class movement of Britain that is owned, controlled, edited and produced by voluntary workers—in complete harmony with the ideas it propagates. Worth supporting? Well, let's hear from you.

GROUP NOTICES

LONDON SWF: open meetings every Friday, at the Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Road, WC1 (5 min. Kings Cross Station) 8.30 p.m.

March 5 Tom Brown: A page of Labour History

12 Paul Robertshaw: Your MP

19 Ken Hawkes: Joe Hill's life and songs (with records)

26 Mark Hendy: Background to the Hitler-Stalin Pact.

April 2 Desmond Macdonald: The Entertainment Industry.

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.

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

BRISTOL: Contact John Coveney, 1 Richmond Park Road, Clifton, Bristol 8.

DUNDEE: Meetings every Saturday, 2.30 p.m. at Mike and Alison Malet's, 20 South George Street, Dundee.

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

Meetings at Horseshoe Bar, Drury Street, Tuesdays, 8.00 p.m.

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, Middx.

WITNEY: Meetings 1st Friday each month. Contact Laurens Otter, 5 New Yatt Road, North Leigh, nr. Witney, Oxon.

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.

S. WALES ANARCHIST GROUP. Irregular meetings held. Enquire Peter Raymond, 300 Whitchurch Road, Gabalfa, Cardiff.

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

STEELMEN versus BUREAUCRATS

FOR MONTHS, if we are to believe the capitalist press, a fierce controversy has been raging over steel. On my left, that subversive organisation, the Labour Party. On my right, those defenders of the fair maiden Free Enterprise, the iron and steel bosses. The last people the bureaucrats on either side dream of consulting are the steelmen. For us, the workers in the steel industry, it all seems a bit remote.

Most of my workmates are vaguely in favour of nationalisation. After all, nothing could be worse than the present set-up. But nobody is kidding themselves about Wilson and his crew. They are regarded for the most part, with the same hatred as the steel bosses, the ruling class in general and the union leadership.

Let's examine the rival groups of bureaucrats. First, the Free Enterprisers. That's a laugh. Management representa-

tives will occasionally admit that the steel companies don't compete: "Each company satisfies a different need. We (Stewarts and Lloyds) make tubes. The only other firm that does so is Tube Investments. They don't try to take our markets and we don't try to take theirs."

Nice work if you can get it—and the steel bosses have got it. If Wilson doesn't carry through nationalisation it will be sheer cowardice. After all, he ought to be able to carry even small businessmen on the issue. Steel is big business. Monopoly capitalism. But the steel bosses aren't really too worried about nationalisation; after all, if the Labour Party gets the Bill through that opium den of the people, there will be compensation beyond the wildest dreams of avarice. All those full-page adverts in the papers ("British Steel works well for you—leave well alone, . . .") and in the union magazine, *Man and Metal*, are not designed to prevent nationalisation, but to force as extortionate a price as possible for the industry. And don't forget, the British people have already paid for it once. Under the last "Labour" government (as if any government could represent Labour!) £245-million was paid for an industry officially described as 40% scrap. When it was denationalised by the Tories, the steel barons got it back for a fraction of this.

Where do we fit into all this? Well, we're not very important. After all, we're only the producers of all wealth. To illustrate the bosses' attitude, here is the experience of a young friend of mine—call him Kenny—who started work for Stewarts and Lloyds at Corby recently. Nowadays they have these two-day "introduction courses," in which a management representative tells you what a good firm it is, how you can progress if you're good and how lucky you are to be taken off the Partick broo (dole). My mate got down to brass tacks right away: "Why don't you pay night-shift rates?" (we work a three-shift system).

"Well," said Mr. Low, the lecturer, "I'm not supposed to argue with you, but I'll tell you. It's not economic to stop a blast furnace, they have to keep going all the time. And with them working, everybody has to work."

"That doesn't answer my questions," says Kenny. "If the company wants us to work nights, they should pay night-shift rates."

"What do you mean, 'They'?" asked Low, who was losing his matier-than-thou attitude. "You are a part of this company. When you joined it you became as much a part of it as the shareholders." This sent the class into gales of laughter.

What of the British Iron, Steel and Kindred Trades Association? A bureaucratic union. A corrupt union. A union whose officials have a habit of being promoted by the bosses. You ask any steelworker what he thinks of BISAKTA. The answer won't be fit to print. But the bosses know how to handle those who step out of line, either with the carrot or the stick. And most men are far too busy knocking up their bonus to notice that they are living in slavery.

So there it is. The workers divided and ruled by the bureaucrats of management and BISAKTA; and under nationalisation the State will simply impose yet another load of parasites upon the backs of the workers.

As I write, a meeting is being held in Sheffield to start a campaign for democratic control of nationalised steel. It remains to be seen whether they will do any good, but democracy with the final power in the hands of the ruling class isn't worth a damn.

MICHAEL BUCHANAN

'Unwanted foreigners'

DURING the past few years, thousands of foreign workers, mainly from Italy, Spain, Portugal and Turkey, have been invited to work in Holland, initially in the coal mines, but later in more and more industries. Shipping companies, too, employ many foreign workers, especially Spaniards and Portuguese.

When hired, most of these people are given a contract in the Dutch language to sign, which they cannot read or understand. Sometimes an interpreter (usually an administrative employee of the firm) explains the meaning of the contract, but more often they are told nothing at all. As nearly all Dutch workers are on collective contracts, drawn up officially by the employers and trades-union officials, and controlled by the government, the practice with foreign workers means it is possible to deny them the legal rights supposedly enjoyed by all workers in Holland.

At a recent meeting of the Union of Seagoing Workers, president D. Opmeer said that, during the last six months of 1964, union officials successfully demanded a total of more than 100,000 Dutch guilders (10 guilders=£1) for workers who had been underpaid, most of them foreigners organised in the union. He revealed that the sum per worker varied from 100 to several thousand guilders per voyage and he believed this could be due only to a deliberate policy by employers to deny foreign seamen their pay.

More than 50 Turkish workers were sent back to Turkey in January, after they had been fired by Indeco-Coignet of Zaandam (a firm which prefabricates wooden houses). They had been paid far less than the wage they had been promised before leaving Turkey, in some cases 17-25 Dutch guilders underpayment per week. The trouble here again was that they had been unable to read the contract and wage scales. They went on strike (January 11), staying in their lodgings at Zandvoort, when they discovered this underpayment and demanded a wage increase.

Indeco-Coignet declined to pay up, the Turkish workers refused to resume work for the original wage and, when even the Turkish Embassy failed to make them see "reason", they were police escorted to a plane for repatriation as "unwanted foreigners". For more than 24 hours, while the Turkish government refused a permit for the plane to land, they were held at a police barracks. When transport was finally arranged several of them refused to walk and had to be carried aboard—which was done with "official courtesy" by the Dutch police.

Book review

Who owns property in Britain?

FROM time to time, figures are published showing some of the fundamental inequalities of capitalist society. In a new book, *Efficiency, Equality and the Ownership of Property* by Professor J. E. Meade (Allen and Unwin, 10s. 6d.), the following statistics are given for the distribution of property in Britain:

Top %	Owned % of Total Personal Wealth 1911-13	1936-8	1960	Received % of Personal Income from Property (before Tax) 1959
1	69	56	42	60
5	87	79	75	92
10	92	88	83	99

This shows that, although the share in total property of the top tenth of the population fell by nearly a tenth from 92 to 83 per cent over about 40 years, the top tenth were nevertheless able to garner all but one per cent of taxable (and only taxable!) personal income deriving from property at the end of the period. The property of this section of the population is obviously different, not only in amount but in kind, from that belonging to the remaining nine-tenths. Although the top tenth is not synonymous with the capitalist class, the two must correspond fairly closely and the figures therefore reflect fairly well the size of the privileged minority.

The figures do not indicate any absolute values, in money terms. However, after making the fairly conservative assumption that the total value of all private wealth doubled over the period 1913 to 1960, a simple calculation will show that the amount by which the value of the property of the top tenth exceeded the value of the property of the rest increased by some 57 per cent, whatever actual monetary value is given to the total of personal property at the outset. Again, this is in spite of the fall in the proportion of total wealth owned by the top tenth.

What is the reason for this? It is, again, in the differences in kind between the property of the top tenth and that of the rest, between the productive property of the capitalist and the non-productive property of the wage workers.

It is a simple, observable everyday fact that the capitalist finds it very easy to increase his wealth, the worker very difficult or impossible.

Of course, the mere concentration of the *legal ownership* of the means of production in the hands of a minority does not account for all the class antagonisms of capitalism. Legal ownership is only an expression of the control of the minority over productive wealth. Such power may be equally, or even more nakedly, expressed in the bureaucratic party domination of a state which has largely or entirely abolished private property. But the concentration does express the smallness and powerfulness of the minority that lives by ruling,

in distinction from the masses, who live by serving.

According to the publishers, Professor Meade regards the present "fantastic inequalities" in the ownership of property as a basic evil in the institutions of the "free world". With the qualifications in the last paragraph in mind, who could disagree with him? His solutions are a hodge-podge of reforms, however, ranging from minimum-wage agreements or legislation, to some kind of State capitalism. (In discussing the latter—which he equates with socialism—he makes the interesting disclosure that, while the actual value of the property assets of the British State total £21,000 million, its liabilities amount to £28,000 million). The reforms all imply the perpetuation of the commodity economy, of the capitalist system of production—the wages system—and, therefore, the ultimate denial of the socialisation of the control of the means of production that is the only possible basis of social freedom and equality. But this solution will require a revolution, will be a revolution, and that is just what economists like Professor Meade spend their time trying to avoid.

MARK HENDY

How IWW organised

DURING the passing years, IWW members forced the railroad companies to allow migratory workers to ride their freight trains. As the result of their agitation, many railroad and migratory wage slaves lined up in the IWW. Their largest membership in the USA was in 1923, when they had over 83,000 members. These members were highly militant and active and raised plenty of hell against the capitalist class and the slave-driving bosses all over the country.

The IWW members would load their packsacks with its educational reading matter and spread propaganda among the wage slaves coast to coast. The few who were not active were regarded by the majority as hall cats, spittoon philosophers and wallpaper revolutionists. The vast majority of these active members were intelligent and sober and very few of them were drunks. All halls had signs on the walls, "No drunks allowed", and this rule was enforced at all times by the membership. There was lots of anarcho-syndicalist sentiment among the active IWW members. In those years many strikes were won by the IWW in the harvest fields, the lumber industry, construction and the extra-gang railroad strikes for the wage slaves. Also famous were the free-speech fights they fought and won, when hundreds of IWW members filled the jails and stockades for the right to speak on the streets and maintain their halls in the towns and cities of the country. In many jails they sang IWW songs, broke out windows and wrecked the jail plumbing.

These revolutionary IWW's won and held good job conditions and control, without signing labour contracts with the master class. They regarded labour contracts as perfumed execution of the wage slaves. The vast majority of the members were anti-political and said the ballot boxes of the armed States and Governments should be chopped down.

Due to the militant action of the young libertarian members in it, the IWW in the USA is now showing a healthy growth again. Two-thirds of the US railroads today allow the migratory wage slaves and hoboes to ride their freight trains and jungle up along their right of ways.

Active IWW members must take full advantage of this free railroad transportation to spread its propaganda to the wage slaves coast to coast. There are three-million migratory farm wage slaves in this country that need organising and educating and it's up to the active members of the IWW to do the job. Yours for real solidarity of the IWW and the IWMA—the sooner the better.

Seattle, Wash., USA.

SKIDROAD SLIM

ESSENTIAL READING—IN ANY YEAR

LENIN AND WORKERS' CONTROL

by Tom Brown

DIRECT ACTION Pamphlet No. 8 6d. (postpaid)

From Direct Action, 34 Cumberland Road, London E17. Cheques and p.o.'s should be payable to Syndicalist Workers' Federation.

The paper-chase after wages

MORE MONEY (from higher wage rates or overtime) increases the demand for goods. To simplify, let us imagine an island community with 100 workers, each receiving £10 a week. Every Saturday these workers go to the island store and pass £1,000 over the counter, receiving in return X quantity of goods. Suppose these workers gain 100% wage increase, then go to the store and present £2,000. If the production and distribution of the goods they seek has not increased, then they will still receive X quantity of goods, but now everything will have cost twice as much as before the wage boost.

We must here note that the 100% increase in production would have to be of the goods and services required by the workers. An increase in production of racehorses, ocean-going yachts, diamond tiaras or villas in Bermuda would not help them. This, although on a more extensive scale and in a more complex pattern, is what happens and is known as inflation—a process which makes money akin to a handful of ice cubes gripped on a summer's day.

Of course, rising dividends also cause inflation and, as the economy is now based on a principle of "controlled inflation", the workers must constantly seek wage increases to maintain even the status quo. Not to get a wage advance in money would be equal to suffering a wage cut in goods (or how to go backwards by standing still).

This is not to say that a real increase in wages cannot be obtained—in very favourable circumstances. We do, however, point out the very stringent limits to real wages advance imposed by capitalism and the State. Even in the present economic climate, much of the working-class "affluence", evident in a washing machine in the kitchen and a car at the front door, is due to overtime, often health destroying, and factory or office employment of the wife and mother of the home. And overtime, "bonus", even the job itself, as many aircraft workers are now learning, can be swept away almost overnight.

The seven centuries struggle of the wage workers to get a "living wage" has made some progress, but that progression has seemed to have little relationship to the many years of effort, or to the enormous increase in production since, say, the 14th century. Even then the wage worker received enough to clothe, shelter and feed himself and his family, which was about as much as the wage worker of the 19th century enjoyed.

Professor Thorold Rogers, in his celebrated work, "Six Centuries of Work and Wages", gives authentic information of the rate of wages and prices of food during the 14th cen-

tury. This shows that the artisan of that age, when a goose cost fourpence, could feed well, that his rent was small, that he often had common grazing rights and firewood, and his working day lasted eight hours. Until 1919, the *minimum* time spent at work by a factory or other skilled worker was 11 hours—9½ hours paid and 1½ hours unpaid meal breaks. Yet during the intervening six centuries, productivity had risen by several thousand per cent.

Increased production can raise wages by only a few degrees at the best; at the worst it actually lowers wages. On the other hand it can increase the income of the wealthy ten or twenty fold. In my opinion, the greatest, most lasting gains made by the workers during the past 100 years have been the reduction of the working day from 12 hours to eight, the five-day week, longer paid holidays and tea breaks. All these have been more difficult to steal back.

One means of stealing back wages is the recent invention of income tax deducted at source, pay as you earn. It was impossible to gather much income tax from workers before the birth of PAYE, but in 1943 the Churchill government, with the support of the Trade Unions and Labour Party and with a preliminary propaganda barrage from the Communist Party (at that time Mr. Churchill's Communists) was able to establish this predatory principle.

Now we are again faced with the infernal triangle of Employers, State and the "Labour Movement", determined to control or—to use the old, expressive phrase—"freeze" wages. What the Labour Government is now openly seeking to do is what they openly proclaimed just before the election and, like accused men voting for their own execution, millions of Labour men and women voted them into power.

Soon we shall hear weak protests from the Left Wing of Labour, but extreme Left, Right and Centre gave Wilson his "Freeze Wages" mandate. Under the Tories, the chief wages spokesman of the Left, Ted Hill of the Boilermakers, denounced wage freezing by "any government", then at last year's TUC again condemned it, but promised the support of his union to a wage freeze carried out by Wilson. He gave the lead to the rest and Wilson received standing ovations at the current trade union conferences.

Recently, Hill's successor as leader of the shipbuilders union has stated (in the *Daily Worker*) that the wage freeze of the last Labour Government put them back three years. Three years' loss they have not yet recovered, he added.

The only wage defence possible now is the direct action of the workers at their place of work—by themselves, for now they see their trade union leaders are in the government, contriving wage control.

But, let us repeat, wage struggles, can have only limited objectives. The only way for the workers to enjoy the enormous increase in productivity, present and possible, is by becoming the owners of the means of production. That is possible, of course, only by common ownership—the day of the village blacksmith and peasant has gone.

Syndicalism is not all negative; it is revolutionary reconstruction, it shows how modern developments have made possible, indeed imperative, Workers' Control of Industry and the abolition of the wages system.

TOM BROWN

BULGARIAN CENTENARIAN WRITES

FROM FRANCE we have received a stock of **UN CENTENAIRE BULGARE PARLE** by Nicolas Stoinoff, published by the Bulgarian anarcho-syndicalists in exile. This French-language book is the autobiography of one of Bulgaria's best-known and loved libertarian militants, who died—aged 100—in 1963. It gives a vivid picture of our Bulgarian movements in the years before Stalinism—an inspiring story of militant struggle and intensive educational campaigns. Price 10s. 6d. (post paid) from SWF, 34 Cumberland Road, London, E17.

SWF PRESS FUND—FEBRUARY 1965

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Canadian capitalism juggles with figures

CANADIAN CAPITALISTS, ardent defenders of our "free enterprise system" and vociferous foes of all forms of socialism, are oddly coy in their approach to the subject of profits. Could it be guilty conscience? Or do they fear that Canadians are not quite convinced of the inevitability of the capitalist system? Whatever the reason, they go to great pains to explain away profits as a very minor factor in "our free enterprise society."

A recent article in *Industry*, organ of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, gives a breakdown of the manufacturing sales dollar, showing that profits average only 5.4 cents of every sales dollar. Of this, the poor, hard-done-by shareholder receives less than half (2.6 cents) in dividends, the remaining 2.8 cents being retained in the business for development. In contrast, the affluent worker receives, in wages and other benefits, 22.4 cents of every sales dollar.

KEEPING PROFITS HIGH

RECENTLY I stumbled on some official documents of the employment agency I used to work for, "prepared for study by and distribution to a limited group of top management executives," based on ten years' intensive work-study and dealing with the problem of keeping up profits in view of rising costs.

The agency, in the City of London, is an American subsidiary with branches in Spain, Western Europe, Cuba, South Africa and covers workers of all types.

Here are some quotations from this revealing document:

"Key problems facing management: In the face of rising dollar-volumes of business, company after company experienced a downward trend in profits . . . costs of doing business out of hand . . . labour costs, based upon contractual relationships or sheer habit continue to mount at a steadily progressive rate . . . in the light of present defence needs, the tax burden may become even more serious and difficult than at present . . . cost of floor space, for basic raw materials, of capital expansion funds show no sign of levelling off . . . we have to contend with a lower level of business activity (per person) . . . many firms 'threatened'.

"Areas where costs could be cut: Under-use of existing staff and over-staffing, etc." The agency's plan, "guaranteed" to enable firms to expand is: 1, Maintain a full-time staff at level justified by regular work-load and completely occupied all the time. 2, Employ the agency's skilled temporary employees as required, on a long-range plan to meet peak-load, seasonal and emergency problems (such as strikes). 3, Use the Agency on an hourly or piecework basis outside factory premises. 4, Develop expansion programmes based on the Agency's personnel facilities and floor space, so as to test new ideas without commitment to permanent capital investment. The document refers to the Agency's own "bonded, insured employees." Firms will analyse departments, to find whether work done by a highly-paid employee "should be done at a lower cost".

The results, obviously, are great from an employer's viewpoint—fewer workers to pay, hiring costs, training, advertising, etc. cut down, no insurance contributions and no more liability for Workmen's Compensation.

In regard to overtime, "You will gain economy by using our employees on a second or third shift," paid at the same rate of 5s an hour, even on night work—while the Agency makes a profit on every worker, every hour!

DAVID STRINGER

Statistics, it is said, can be made to prove anything. Here the capitalist produces statistics on profits and wages, so that he can plead poverty and hope to gain sympathy for his cause—the preservation of private profit.

Let us examine these figures from another angle. The 5.4 cents profit in every sales dollar, which the capitalist would have us believe is insignificant, turns out to be just over 24% of the amount of every sales dollar that goes in wages. In other words, if the profits were paid to the workers who produced them, it would mean a wage increase of 24%. How many workers would turn up their noses at this as being insignificant? How many workers are happy to be working one day in four for the benefit of a small group of shareholders?

Consider an even more significant point—only about 5% of all Canadians own any shares at all and most of this 5% own only a few hundred dollars' worth each. The bulk of all shares are owned by less than 1% of the population of Canada. The Canadian worker, then, spends one-quarter of his working life labouring to enrich still further this already wealthy group. Is it any wonder the capitalist tries so hard to conceal the real significance of profits?

Attempts are being made in Alberta to prohibit teachers from striking. The proponents of this authoritarian scheme have persuaded the government to appoint a Royal Commission to enquire into the matter. The commission is presently travelling around the province gathering evidence. The futility of banning strikes by law is illustrated by recent happenings in Quebec, where teachers are legally prohibited from striking. There Catholic teachers, in dispute with the education authorities and legally prohibited from striking, held a week of "study sessions". This of course, necessitated closing the schools while they were in session. The result of these "study sessions" was a settlement of the dispute and a return of the teachers to the classroom.

BILL GREENWOOD

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