

# Direct Action

For workers' direct control of industry

Inside—NAB bureaucrats  
Rape of Dominica : May  
Day reports : Rise and  
decline of trades councils

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWMA)

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## LABOUR'S MEN OF STEEL

THE great steel debate at Westminster is over. It is evident that the Labour Government has decided to put off the Bill to nationalise the 14 major steel firms for at least a year. In the face of dangers to their precarious hold on the power to govern, Wilson and his Cabinet colleagues have forsaken their much-vaunted determination to bring in the

Bill this session, although it is now ready for presentation.

Until now, the understanding has been that the Bill would be brought in after Whitsun, and this latest expedient move is likely to cause more left-wing clamour and lead to further dissention within the Labour Party. Wilson is known to prefer social legislation of the land and housing variety as a vote-catcher in the event of having to face the electorate, and is anxious to have a programme on land, rents and mortgages on the way to implementation before steel.

Nationalisation of steel would require—even if the Lords were not troublesome—the time taken to pass the bill and another 36 weeks to vesting date, probably about a year. The majority of Labour MPs will be behind the Wilson strategy and electioneering tactic. The Cabinet will argue against the left-wing MPs that they have already got the approval of MPs in this Parliament for steel nationalisation by acceptance of their White Paper.

The leftist politicians have got away so far with the  
*cont. on page 8, col. 1*

## Japanese workers act against Vietnam war

WE issued an appeal, calling on the revolutionary organizations of the world to stand up for united action against war and colonialism in Vietnam early in April. Since then preparation has been made for the mass protest action of workers and people here in Japan, supply base of the US imperialists for Vietnam.

On April 26, the first mass protest action was achieved through the co-operation of the anti-Stalinist revolutionary organizations and the militant wing of the Sohyo (General Council of Japan Trade Unions), with 50,000 workers and students sitting down in front of the US embassy in Tokyo against the suppression of the policemen. 15,000 public enterprise workers, 10,000 private enterprise workers, 10,000 Tokyo municipal workers, 5,000 workers from the local cities and 5,000 Zengakuren students participated.

The struggle was backed by a series of strikes in telecommunications, post office, steel, chemical, electric machine and shipbuilding industries, ranging from the middle of March to the end of April.

The Communist Party, despite its insistence on anti-USA campaign, disappeared in front of the mass action of the workers and students. (It called the sit-down protest before the US embassy dangerous adventure and provocation.)

Now we are preparing for the second powerful action toward the middle of May, to break the wall of the police cordon by the power of 100,000 demonstrators.

Once again we call on your organization to stand up for international united action against war and colonialism!

National Committee, Japanese Revolutionary  
Communist League.

## US labour fakers support Johnson

"WE FULLY SUPPORT President Johnson in having our government take energetic and retaliatory measures to deter and halt Communist acts of provocation and aggression." Thus George Meany, President, and the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO, earlier this year. (The AFL-CIO is the TUC of the United States.)

The Executive Council held its meeting at the popular holiday resort of Miami Florida. But the union bosses refused to stay at an ordinary Miami hotel. They went instead to Miami Beach where the hotels are mainly for millionaires, starting at prices of \$50 a day and up. After the Executive Council adjourned, Meany and a delegation went to Washington to tell President Johnson about the need for a minimum wage of two dollars an hour.

Information from "News and Letters"

You don't need a Labour Government for class collaboration.



# Dominica is raped once again

WHEN a very idealistic Free Frenchman asked the Emperor Roosevelt II why he tolerated a certain Fascist dictator in Central America (it could have been Trujillo or a dozen others at the time), the deity replied in these words. "He *may* be a son-of-a-bitch, but he's *our* son-of-a-bitch". It is now quite clear that Wessin y Wessin and Imbert Barreras are Mr. Johnson's beagles. With the pathological masochism of the true "pocho" or gringo-lover—they revel in having their ears pulled and their backsides kicked. In Europe we call such people "quislings".

Colonel Caamaño may or may not be a potential Castro. We can be quite sure that Juan Bosch is not much further Left than Wilson. Even Washington cannot claim that there were more than 50 or 60 "trained agitators" from Cuba present, and we who take American hysteria with a grain of salt will tend to believe that these were about as significant as the Young Communist League of this country.

All sides are agreed that 12,000 ordinary Dominicans took up arms against the militarist junta. To anyone with a half-open mind this looks very like a popular uprising. To those of us who know a little about the affairs of the Latin republics, there is nothing improbable about such an uprising. Such events are brought about when people are oppressed and exploited beyond the point of endurance. The people of Dominica have suffered under the worst tyrants imaginable and have been exploited mercilessly for generations. Many of them (perhaps a majority) hoped for

improvements under the régime of the legally-elected President Bosch. Whatever else he might be, Bosch is not Johnson's son-of-a-bitch, as his projected land reforms showed, so he was removed by an army putsch, organised by the Central Intelligence Agency.

Bosch's crime was independence, and for this the CIA will even remove a Fascist. Remember Perón?

So much for the politicians and their complex games. The games are deadly and involve human beings. Lives are lost, and we must remember that even the KKK Marines have old mothers and fond wives who may miss them. Above all we must never forget the working-class women and children—250 of them who were machine-gunned and rocketted by the British built Vampire jets of Wessin y Wessin's fascist air force, in one afternoon. So is the world made safe for the *Readers Digest* and Rotary International.

We must remember the 12,000 "armed civilians" who did the thing which is unthinkable in Transport House as it is in the White House. They tried to make a revolution. For a few days the streets were in the hands of an armed people. Perhaps by now, Colonel Caamaño has established "authority" over them. It is clear that there will be no successful revolution this time. The struggle now will be between the politicians, to decide whether Dominica is to be ruled by its own middle class or by the quislings of the American Empire.

It looks as if the American State will not even permit the Dominicans to live under the bourgeois national state of their own choice. It must be Quisling—or napalm, lazy dog, and later "tactical nuclear bombs"—and after that, who knows. One would think that the Americans would realise that this struggle must go on forever—or until the people of Latin America have the liberty and the standard of living they are naturally entitled to. Any reasonable man or woman would see this. But a thief does not see the logic of your actions when you defend your pockets from him! Nor does a North American capitalist know why people from Chihuahua to Tierra del Fuego would like to get that gringo paw out of their pockets.

The "unreasonable" people of Latin America, today as during the great Mexican Revolution have a simple slogan, TIERRA Y LIBERTAD, land and liberty. It was written on the red and black banners of the armies of Zapata and Villa. Communist scares may come and go. In the land of hysterical speculators there will always be some kind of scare. But the reality will be that people who have not enough to eat and who do not live in freedom will continue to fight—as the Mexican revolutionary song says, "en la seguilla por tierra y por pan", in the pursuit of land and bread.

SEAN GANNON

## WHO KILLED DELGADO?

WHO MURDERED Humberto Delgado? For us there is no possible doubt: the Spanish police arrested him, handing him over to the Portuguese police, who murdered him and his companions, burying the bodies under a heap of stones in Spanish territory . . . if the crime had been carried out by the Spanish police alone, the bodies would not have been carelessly buried some 350 yards from the frontier . . .

Without any doubt, too, they were victims of a trap carefully laid by the Portuguese secret police who, like the Spanish, have infiltrated their agents in all emigrant circles . . .

Finally, only three bodies have been found, although there are said to have been six members in the group. Where are the other three? Will their bodies be found later? Are they in a Portuguese jail? Or were there among them agents who handed Delgado over to his death?

Federica Montseny, in "Espoir", 9.5.65.

## Cuban guerilla fighter faces death sentence

ELOY GUTIERREZ MENOYO, a revolutionary militant, has been captured by Castro's Communist militia. Three comrades with him, Noel Salas Santos, Domingo Ortego Acosta and Ramon Quesada, have also been arrested. All risk execution. Eloy and his comrades landed secretly in Cuba to organise resistance against the dictator. As usual, they are being labelled "counter revolutionaries," "agents of the CIA", etc.

*Bohemia*, a Castro weekly paper, published a five-page "confession" by Menoyo, which was also televised. Menoyo replied to questions from "comrade" Blanco, of the Department of State Security—giving a self-criticism, which had obviously been written beforehand and "taught" to him.

Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo is Spanish. His parents were members of the Spanish Socialist Party. His elder brother was killed on the Madrid front and his younger brother fell fighting Batista's tyranny. After Franco's victory, the family emigrated to Cuba. When Sergt. Batista proclaimed himself dictator, Eloy joined the underground revolutionary movement. On March 13, 1957, with Fidel Castro, he took part in the attack on the presidential palace. He had been one of the earliest fighters in the Sierra de Escambray. One of Castro's first actions on achieving power was to dissolve the true revolutionary army, imprisoning and executing anarchists. Eloy attempted to keep his combat group together, as he wanted to take the guerilla struggle to Spain. But the Party vetoed this idea. Eloy then chose exile and undertook the struggle against Cuba's new tyrant. Betrayal delivered him to Castro.

"Le Monde Libertaire", May 1965



# BROWN'S INCOMES 'POLICY' LOOKS SICK

GEORGE BROWN'S Incomes Policy is beginning to look a wee bit sick. Some unions are supporting with the right hand, i.e. 3½%, but with their left hand submitting claims for 6% or over. Para. 15 of the "Prices and Incomes Policy" states "Exceptional pay increases should be confined to the following circumstances . . ." Clause three of the same para states "Where there is general recognition that existing wage and salary levels are too low to maintain a reasonable standard of living." Therefore unions endorsing the Incomes Policy are hoping their 6% will come under 'clause three'.

The debate on incomes at USDAW's conference was sickening. It is a recognised fact that shop workers' wages are putrid, yet delegates allowed General Secretary Alfred Allen to soft sell them into endorsing the executive's support for Government policy. Allen convinced conference that wages push up prices, therefore to push for increases was pointless. Rather support the Government to hold down prices, but one gets the impression that USDAW delegates still hope to get a £2 increase under the clause three'.

As was to be expected, the AEU supported the Incomes Policy. Carron called for self-sacrifice, backs to the wall and all that jazz. Sir Bill has always lapped up this productivity lark, he has been on the National Productivity Council long enough.

The TGWU kicked the incomes policy out of court, as did ASSET at its recent conference. Mikardo, a member of ASSET, has literally told George Brown to go and 'do his homework'. A NUG & MW delegate conference endorsed the statement of intent, after being told by a delegate that wages are always trying to catch up with prices.

The Prices and Incomes Policy is a dead duck and before long the Government will have to insert some teeth. They will claim that prices are not being kept down, so measures will have to be taken to enforce it—and wages will come under the same enforcement. Any enforcing the Tories can do, Labour can do better.

## A LONG WAIT

PROVINCIAL BUSMEN are still awaiting the outcome of the Court of Inquiry, set up to investigate their wage demands. The Committee started investigating at the beginning of April. In May, the busmen's union agreed to call off a national strike after the Minister of Labour had agreed to an independent inquiry. During January and February, over a vast area of the country, rank and file provincial busmen had staged unofficial strikes, involving as many as 30,000 men. The general executive council of the T & GWU decided to make the strike official. This was the kiss of death, and was done deliberately, *not to consolidate the strike but to call it off at the first opportunity.*

Municipal bus crews obtained a 15s. increase by strike action, but the so-called *private employers* stuck at 11s. These private companies are a load of bull, more than 60% of them are state-owned.

## 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, 7×4 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 (2½d for single copies, 6d for 12) from SWF.

Busmen are understandably choked over the delay. 1,000 busmen employed by Midland Red have seriously thought about tearing up their T & GWU cards. They can actually earn up to £14 per week, provided they live at the bus garage, work all the shifts and walk about like zombies.

Three conductors employed by the Eastern National Omnibus Company refused to charge the higher fares which had been introduced; they stated they had not been given sufficient time to learn the new fare stages.

This is a cracking idea, if spread to all buses nationally. It would be far more effective than George Brown's Incomes Board, and busmen would certainly gain support of the passengers.

On May 12, representatives of 27 Midland Red bus garage crews expressed strong disapproval at the delay in the report of the Court of Inquiry. The Labour Ministry Committee of Inquiry have finally reported, and recommend increases of more than 6s. 8d., a sick pay scheme and a 40-hour week by April next year. The companies argued that the increase would not be in line with the Government's incomes policy. The committee state that the adoption of their recommendations would come under the "catching up operation". The committee also state that higher bus fares and cuts in services would seem inevitable, if their recommendations are accepted.

Needless to say the committee condemned the unofficial strikes and claimed they had no effect on their decisions. What a laugh! It needs more than a 'Please' to kick Ray Gunter into action. Patience may be a virtue but Direct Action gets things done.

## CAR WORKERS SIT IN

AT THE Pressed Steel Company, Linwood, 27 workers staged a 'sit in'. Trim shop workers were told not to report for work. Workers did turn up and compelled the management to admit there was some work available. The management called in the police, who carried the workers out. They were later charged with causing a breach of the peace.

This type of industrial action is foreign to British managements, it not only had them worried, but the unions as well. This form of action could be a forerunner to taking over a factory and continuing production. It has recently been done in South America. Picketing outside means possession has been lost, 'staying in' means the workers have taken control. The management on this occasion removed the men quickly, they were afraid the 'sit in' would spread throughout the plant.

## PART-TIMERS NOT WANTED

THE Union of Post Office Workers, at its annual conference, authorised the union's leadership to discuss with the Post Office the recruitment of more part-time postmen and postwomen. This was part and parcel of the recent wages agreement. Ron Smith, General Secretary of UPW, informed conference that the Postmaster General would be entitled to repudiate the agreement if discussion did not take place.

London's Paddington branch stated they would never stand for part-time workers and would come out on unofficial strike if part-time labour was introduced into their area.

Part-time work is detrimental to an organised structure. Obviously this type of labour is not interested in any type of industrial organisation and could cut the ground from under the feet of permanent workers. Part-time labour doesn't want bother, just the additional cash. Also, of course, it can be a form of cheap labour.

BILL CHRISTOPHER



# Direct Action

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION, BRITISH SECTION OF INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION

## Laws have not stopped evictions

THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT is supposed to be introducing 'permanent' legislation for the protection of tenants, provided it has time (and provided it survives). It will be based on the Protection from Eviction Act (1964) now in force. Let us see how this Act works.

It provides that a landlord 'cannot' evict a tenant without first getting a Court order. Of course, evictions have continued since the Act, particularly in North London. The Act also provides for criminal sanctions against offending landlords, although, of course, no action has been taken, despite the continuing illegal evictions.

The interesting thing is that, even if a prosecution were brought, it would not help an evicted tenant in the slightest. The fine payable on first offence does not go to the tenant as compensation for deprivation and disturbance, but to the State. No doubt the State feels it should be compensated for the damage caused to its new image of landlordism! In any case the fine involved is hardly likely to daunt the average landlord. If he is foolish enough to get caught twice, the

landlord may be imprisoned, but this still does not help a tenant.

The main point, though, is that legislation *cannot* protect a tenant from eviction. Legislation can never deter the determined and, so long as property exists, there will be rapacious or vindictive landlords. And once an eviction has happened, apart from compensation to the tenant, legislation is equally useless, because once a place has been re-let, the first tenant could be reinstated only by perpetrating another injustice, namely evicting the second tenant.

Of course, and to us it is almost too obvious to repeat, the only remedy is for tenants to organise for self-help and to them the Act may have a limited use, since it will widen the scope for legal picketing and thus make it less likely that they will be molested by the police.

The 1964 Act does not apply to Public Authority tenants, but the proposed one is supposed to include them, too. Why should 'public' landlords be treated differently from 'private ones', from whom they differ only in name?

P.R.

## MAY DAY, 1965

AS USUAL, May Day was celebrated in the "respectable" way on the following Sunday by the official Labour movement in Britain. As usual, too, the SWF held its own meeting on the afternoon of May 1 in Hyde Park.

Despite arrests of militants beforehand, the illegal May Day demonstrations in Spain took place as planned. In Barcelona, 3,000 workers answered the ASO call and marched down the Ramblas, continually harassed by armed police. In Madrid, several thousand workers demonstrated. In Saragossa, workers massed in a protest demonstration outside the fascist TU headquarters. In Bilbao, 4,000 engineering workers celebrated May Day on the streets. Latest arrests of ASO members include A. Julio in Barcelona, Salvador Domenech in Madrid, Francisco Villa in Saragossa.

In Russia, the May Day parade was, for once, not devoted to showing off military weapons—that came a week later, when the 20th anniversary of the end of the war in Europe was celebrated.

But back to the "official" circus in Britain:

"Hecklers' May Day" was the verdict of the *Scotsman* on the various Labour Party meetings. In Hull, Mr. Wilson felt obliged to tell his audience, "There are some of us more interested in getting a peaceful solution [in Vietnam] than with satisfying our own egos." The war was also the subject of continuous interruptions in Hyde Park, London, where Mr. Stewart, the Foreign Secretary, was forced to declare Labour's support for US policy in Vietnam.

On the home front theme, Mr. Brown declared in Glasgow that his incomes and prices policy was "absolutely essential" to all the Labour Government were trying to do. Three fireworks exploded during his speech.

Hecklers were dealt with heavily during meetings at Birmingham and Manchester by stewards.

At Liverpool (reports Vincent Johnson), some 200 people assembled at Pierhead, to be told how good the Labour Government was by a succession of speakers. We were then informed by Liverpool Labour Party and Trades Council that the proposed march was off, as not enough had turned out. More cliché-ridden speeches followed and we were then told to go home. The breakaway Y.S. members and Anarchists and Syndicalists present didn't like this and called on other marchers to march anyway. We moved off, a bold

cont. on page 7 col. 1

## 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.

June 4 Tom Brown—Philosophy & Syndicalism.

11 Bill Gape—Industrial Organisation Now.

18 Ken Hawkes—Sacco and Vanzetti (with records).

25 Automation—an open discussion.

Open-air-meetings every Sunday, Hyde Park, 3 p.m.

LONDON: SWF Industrial Action Sub-Committee (London). Readers wishing to help in the work of this committee are asked to contact the Secretary, c/o 34 Cumberland Rd., London E.17.

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

BRISTOL: Contact S. Gannon, 22 Hampton Road, Cotham, Bristol 6.

DUNDEE: Meetings every Saturday, 2.30 p.m. at Mike and Alison Male'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.

HULL & E. YORKS: Contact Rod Baker, 6 The Oval, Chestnut Avenue, Willerby, E. Yorks.

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.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS: Contact J. D. Gilbert Rolfe, 4 Mount Zion, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

WITNEY: Contact Laurens Otter, 5 New Yatt Road, North Leigh, nr. Witney, Oxon.

DIRECT ACTION PRESS FUND, May 1965

Anon., 4s.; Thornbury, Bristol, S.G. £1; Huddersfield, A.L. 13s. 6d.; Willerby, E. Yorks., R.B. 2s.; sales of CNT "Spain Today" postcards, 15s.; Bedford SWF Group 5s.; London SWF Group £4 19s. 10d. Total £7 19s. 4d.



# TRADES COUNCILS: RISE AND DECLINE

TRADES COUNCIL, I used to think, was a dull term evoking a picture of local shopkeepers meeting to keep down the rates, or keep up prices, but some old copies of the Syndicalist paper, *Solidarity*\*, published in 1913, and given to me while I was yet a boy, aroused my interest in these local trade union bodies. Syndicalist papers of that time were very conscious of the need to gather together organised and militant industrial labour on local bases. Certainly the times justified such efforts. Moved by the old Syndicalist battlecry "*Solidarity!*", they sought to develop further the tendency to organise locally, to bring help to strikers.

The London Syndicalist Conference, of November, 1912, discussing this problem, suggested that besides a national federation of industrial unions, there should be a national federation of Trades Councils and that these two bodies should then be united in a National Confederation of Labour. It has been said, perhaps with some truth, that British Syndicalists then were influenced by the French Syndicalists of the CGT and its *Bourses du Travail*. In any case, this idea never became a tenet of our movement, though many of our comrades worked in the councils to make them militant organs.

Local organisation to give aid to strikers and defend workers against class prosecution, of course, preceded the Trades Councils; the Webbs' *The History of Trade Unionism* records that local *ad hoc* councils of trade unions were, early in the 19th century, formed to fight on particular issues—for example against the Combination (anti-trade union) Laws in 1825 and in defence of the Dorchester farm labourers transported for trade union membership. These councils were temporary, but permanent councils came into being in the large towns between 1858 and 1867; by 1860 they existed in Sheffield, Liverpool, Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as many smaller towns. In the following year the London Trades Council was formed. It seemed natural to call them *Trades Councils*, because they largely represented the "trades", i.e. skilled workmen.

The councils did excellent work helping strikers, by collecting money and food and sending voluntary helpers to the fight. Such aid was not limited to strikers of their own locality. Miners received help from cities far removed from any coalfield; city helped city, too.

Great effort was put to the defence of trade unionists prosecuted by the law. In this work a national related pattern developed and constant struggle and publicity helped to check somewhat the law's attacks. The councils acted, too, against anti-working class legislation by lobbying Parliament and politicians. This activity was distinct from the later political activity of the councils. In those early days any politician, whatever his party, had to justify himself, or take the risk of attack at the hustings and the shifting of a block of popular votes. Most working-class bodies were not pledged to unquestioning loyalty to any one party and many took the view that "my enemy's enemy is my friend." The franchise thus became a weapon pointing in any needed direction.

With the rise of the Labour Party, however, most Trades Councils became part of that body; indeed in many towns the two coalesced under the title Trades Council and Labour Party. Political activity now meant something new: members

were pledged to work for the election of Members of Parliament, who, once elected, owed no legal responsibility to elector or trade unionist, but demanded of their henchmen unswerving loyalty, "for better, for worse."

Trades Councils now found themselves supporting, by work, votes and money, the things they had once fought. For example, during the London building workers' strike for the 9-hour day, the building of Chelsea barracks was held up. The War Office sent the Royal Engineers to do the work. In 1825 and 1834, such State action had been successful, now it awoke the opposition of the London Trades Council, who stirred up enough agitation in the lobbies of Parliament and in public to cause the government to withdraw the soldiers.

We turn now to 1924 and the first Labour Government, with seven trade union officials in the Cabinet. In their second month they intervened in a threatened wage strike by 110,000 dockers. Arthur Creech-Jones, the transport union's National Secretary, received a letter from Colonel Wedgwood, Cabinet Minister, threatening to use the Army to blackleg on the dockers. The following month, during the London tramworkers' strike, the Labour Government set up a committee to use the Emergency Powers Act against the strikers and sent the Army Service Corps to run a black-leg transport service.

Sixty years earlier, Trades Council support of such a government would have been impossible. Ernest Bevin, chief official of the dockers' union, must have thought something like this when he said, "I only wish it had been a Tory Government in office. We would not have been frightened by their threats. But we were put in the position of having to listen to the appeal of our own people."

Twenty-one years on and a third Labour Government meant less, not more, political influence for the "Trades and Labour Councils." Again government attempts at strike-breaking by the use of armed forces and by prosecution, fining and imprisonment of strikers, on the pattern of 19th century Toryism.

Within a week of taking office, the Labour Government ordered conscript soldiers into Surrey Docks, London, to break a strike called against a wage cut. Three months later, when 43,000 dockers were out, the same government sent 21,000 conscripts to break the strike and in the following year used soldiers to smash the Southampton dockers' strike. In the 1948 dockers' strike they again used the Army against the strikers. In the 1949 dock strike, again troops were sent to work (for these and other cases, see the SWF pamphlet, *How Labour Governed*, 1945-51).

When Trades Councils became controlled by Labour Party leaders, they were permitted a little of their old-time working class action—so long as the government of the day was Tory. If a Labour Government existed, however, the little "Go" became a big "Stop". Small wonder the councils lost influence and vitality and began to wither.

TOM BROWN

(to be concluded).

## Subscribe to DIRECT ACTION

Yearly subscription rate 6s. 6d. (US & Canada \$1—dollar bills preferred to cheques, owing to loss in negotiating latter) from SWF, 34 Cumberland Road, London E.17. Cheques and p.o.'s payable to Syndicalist Workers' Federation.

\*The Syndicalist paper *Solidarity* should not be confused with later papers which have borrowed the old name. I have known four papers with this name in Britain.



## Book review

## Malatesta's message

**Malatesta—His Life and Ideas**, Ed. V. Richards. (Freedom Press, 309 pp. 13 illus. Cloth 21s. Paperback 10s. 6d.).

THIS INVALUABLE and well translated book should be in the hands of every militant. Malatesta's clear and concise thinking, which brought him into conflict with many of the leading revolutionaries of his day, is a joy to read. Here surely was one of the most consistent of men, the supreme revolutionary pragmatist. An unusual role for an anarchist and a revolutionary. He saw clearly the consequences of actions and modes of revolutionary advance and was not deceived by formulae which would not work, if those taking part in them were not prepared to advance to the social revolution. He did not fall into the traps of excessive optimism and theoretical fatalism which befall those who think there is an only way to the free society. His comments, therefore, still apply today as much as they ever did to Italy, Russia and Spain.

Unfortunately, the book has serious faults as propaganda. To anyone new to the period or to anarchism, it is enough to put them off reading it when they discover that the first two-thirds of the book is composed entirely of articles by Malatesta and catalogued under various headings. I am against this divorce from the content in which they were written on two grounds: a lump of propaganda is like a slab of wet dough all at once, also I resent this attempt to categorise his articles in a way I am sure Malatesta never intended and in imitation of the marxist dogma presentations. Another annoying fault is that there is no index.

The articles themselves are extremely good and more's the pity they suffer from this type of handling. The biography is scrappy and very deficient on Malatesta's early life. His later life is well presented, though the author is a little over-concerned with his squabbles with the pro-Allied anarchist and syndicalist group. Woodcock's *Anarchism* gets a hard bashing for bad research, which should make that would-be epitaph writer blush.

As V. Richards points out in a third section, we must learn from the mistakes of the past. This is made doubly difficult by lack of information about the history, mistakes and successes of the libertarian left. I, for one, know nothing of the mechanics of the way the CNT operated, or who were the *Treintistas*, etc. Sometimes I find out by word of mouth or a half-understood article in an alien language. Give us the books, let us find out where we have ever gone wrong, and this is one book the whole libertarian left needs to read. Whether you agree with it or not, it gets you thinking.

DIGGER WALSH

## FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS

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

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

**OXFORD ANARCHIST GROUP:** Contact H. G. Mellor, Merton College, Oxford.

**SURREY ANARCHISTS** are invited to meetings on 1st Thursday of every month at Chris Torrance's, 63 North Street, Carshalton, Surrey (ring 3 times) and on 3rd Thursday of every month at M. Dyke's, 8 Court Drive, Sutton, Surrey. Both meetings 7.30 p.m.

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

## An open letter to the Labour leader

DEAR HAROLD,

You must have wondered why I haven't written before. Well, I've been just waiting for the best time—for one thing you've been globe-trotting such a lot. You were no sooner back from Washington when you shot off to Bonn or Paris or somewhere or were coming back from Rome. It was terrific, Harold, watching you whizzing from one capital city to another—just like that Peter Stuyvesant cigarette advert.

Didn't those Wall Street tycoons take a belting when you said you'd knock hell out of them! Serve the Yanks right for calling you a braggart Briton. They think that just because they've got the British aircraft industry at last, they're in the saddle. You know, we thought it was downright pointed the way L.B.J. said "no more visitors" the very day you left—poor old Shastri took it hard, didn't he? Such a quiet little fellow, too—not a bit dynamic like you.

But the general ingratitude, Harold! It's disgraceful. Of course Ian Mikardo's proved the local elections were really a victory for Labour, but you'd think a few more of the workers would have turned out to vote, wouldn't you? Just because taxes and rates, beer and smokes and postage and fares have gone up and no one can get a mortgage, they've gone sulky. There are a lot of malcontents like Bro. Grundiman about, all right. You know, they still begrudge you politicians your 75% rise, and refuse to see that they are not entitled to more than 3½% if the British economy is to face up to the challenge of the Space Age. You're quite right to tell them all to go to blazes—I'm sure you must hate *their* guts like Wigg says he hates the Tories'.

And it's the same with security. After all the serious, secret work you and Wigg have been doing to tighten up our security and save us from traitors, how everyone has gone on about Dick Crossman and those housing documents! But Harold, *why* are the housing papers secret? Grundiman said at our last Ward meeting the secret is that Labour's got no housing policy, but that can't be true of course. So just what did old Crossman grab up in mistake for his television interview notes? Might be an idea to let Wigg nose round *his* office sometime. Looks like he's got his things in a bit of a mess, somehow.

Harold, one suggestion: With all the jobs you've found for all those people, couldn't you figure out something juicy for Mikardo? Last week, Grundiman was calling him the Leader of the Labour Opposition to the Wilson Tory Government. I'd be pretty quick about it too, if I were you.

Well, cheerio until I drop you a few more lines of advice from constituency level,

Yours fraternally,

JIMMY WIGGINS

## AWAY FROM IT ALL!

MR. ROBERT MELLISH, MP, the man Mr. Wilson appointed to solve London's housing problem, has bought a £3,500 country cottage well away from it all at Lancing in Sussex. He recently bought a £7,000 town house in Catford. The cottage will have no telephone so that Mr. Mellish, Parliamentary Secretary at the Housing Ministry, and his wife Ann can have peace at the weekends. "I've always fancied a quiet place out of town," he says. "I've lived all my life in London. Both Ann and I were born in slums."

*Evening Standard*, 30.4.65.



# Indian co-operative in perspective

THE ANAND SCHEME in Gujarat, India, is a vast co-operative milk marketing enterprise, which has grown up from two farmers in 1944 to several thousand today. Besides marketing the milk, the dairy also makes by-products for sale from it, imports fertilisers and so on. It has had truly staggering results; when one considers how near starvation level the Indian peasant lives and how easily, given a bad crop, he drops below this level, it is easy to see it must have saved hundreds of peasant lives and that the milk produced will have done much to relieve the desperate shortage of food in Bombay. While, since the milk is sold competitively, the rich middlemen doubtless get the lion's share, it equally doubtless helps keep prices down.

Because Anand does such good, one is chary of criticising it, especially since, given the objective conditions of India, a scheme run on libertarian lines could not compete successfully with normal capitalist enterprises.

As India shows no signs of imminent revolution, to make a root-and-branch critique of Anand would put one in the position of counselling the peasants to starve until the revolution—just about as constructive as asking them to wait for heaven after the great and glorious day of the Lord. Nevertheless, this should not prevent us making some criticism and insisting that Anand is not, as some claim, the perfect society in embryo.

One of Oxfam's staff, who is also a co-operative Party activist and has visited Anand, claimed in a recent address to Oxfam House, Oxford, that it was a perfect example of democracy with the normal pyramid structure we know as part of democracy and resembling the British Co-ops. When I asked whether the elected structure was unitive or federative and for details of the nature of the elections, he insisted this was unimportant. It was typical of his whole approach, that of a Fabian. He was incapable of understanding that, whereas a federative organisation might appear to have a pyramid structure, and yet power remain at the base, the very term "pyramid" suggested hierarchy and that, unless federative, such a system must have strata and power castes. That this was a permanent blind spot was shown by his likening the pyramid to Oxfam House—Oxfam is anything

but democratic. He had made great play with the fact that Robert Owen is admired in Anand: a little hard, as for all his paternalism, Owen insisted that, at least ideally, power in co-operatives should lie at the base.

The speaker had spent much time interviewing the Manager of the scheme. Everything he said, and all we heard previously, testified to this manager, within his limits, being a genius and having done wonderful work. Nevertheless, he is essentially a benevolent dictator and this the speaker apparently realised and approved. Equally disturbing was his quotation of Premier Shastri's views on the scheme (Shastri had made his first visit to Anand while the speaker was there). There was no comprehension of the ruling-class role of the Indian Government, nor of the scheme's management. Doubtless language difficulty accounted for virtually all the speaker's conversations having been with people of executive rank, or Western experts.

He was at pains to stress that this was not a collective in the Soviet sense, but a farmer's co-operative and he claimed that it could not, therefore, be authoritarian on the Soviet model and so avoided also the evils of the capitalist system. This was nonsense. Examination of the compulsory co-operatives in Egypt or Algeria, in most of which the fellagheen are left their individual holdings, would dispel the belief that this is any guarantee against tyranny. Indeed, given favourable objective conditions (Hungary, 1956), collectivised farmers can more easily combine for radical activity than could peasants in a co-operative.

In this context, the speaker instanced as one revolutionary advance of the co-operative that the peasants were paid for their milk in cash, instead of having it set against their debts to the moneylender. Doubtless in Indian circumstances this is an improvement, but it hardly adds up to Owenite co-operative socialism, though no doubt the idea owes much to Fourier's Fallanx ideas. He mentioned that nobody with debts was allowed to join the co-operative, though he did not appear to know this was a cardinal point in much early utopian socialism, the rule being designed to prevent what might develop into external shareholding in the co-operative. As in India this debars the majority of people in the area from joining the scheme, and only those in the co-operative make the sort of income that would allow them to meet debts, this rule appears positively harmful as now applied.

These are some of the flaws. Short of complete social change, it would almost certainly be impossible to have a system without them—and India is apparently not yet ready for such change. In present conditions, the Indian peasants need the Anand scheme, flaws and all, and we should help it thrive to the best of our ability (Clydeside, largely through the work of the speaker in question, has sent £50,000), if we are to assist India to feed her people—dead people cannot make revolutions. But this is no reason to don blinkers.

India is not, through the Anand scheme—or even through Bhoodan—building a socialist and libertarian society. She is, through such co-operatives, building a more efficient hierarchical society, which will help feed the average Indian (largely because there, as everywhere else, rulers get the most out of the ruled only if they keep them moderately well fed and healthy—and better educated than is at present normal in SE Asia).

Given a certain amount of luck—no nuclear wars, for instance—such feeding may help keep a few more millions alive and enable them to work for a better society. This is the importance of Anand.

LAURENS OTTER

## MAY DAY 1965 (cont.)

40 or 50. The police were very rough and tried to stop the march many times; one Y.S. member was arrested, girls were punched, pushed and kicked. One young lad's face was very badly cut, many of the girls who had come from places like Manchester and Buxton, were crying. The only good thing for Merseyside was that Liverpool won the Cup—their shirts are a lot redder than the hearts of local Labour Party members.

Finally, Ireland. It was from Liberty Hall, Dublin, that the transport strike of 1913 was organised. From Liberty Hall the Citizen Army marched at Easter 1916 to overthrow class domination and exploitation forever. Now a new Liberty Hall has replaced the old. A skyscraper erected for £650,000 raised by workers' contributions.

The new building was opened officially on May 1 by Archbishop McQuaid, patriarch of Free State capitalism, receiving his blessing in the process. Among those present were President de Valera, Prime Minister Lemass and the Minister for Industry and Commerce, together with the principle pro-capitalist leader of Irish labour, William O'Brien, and two of his henchmen.



# NAB KEEPS THE DICKENS TOUCH

THE APPLICANT for National Assistance today would find little change from the drab conditions that prevailed in the thirties. The conditions under which National Assistance is given have undergone little change, in fact, from the days of Dickens. There is still the cold, fish-like stare, the acid grin often accompanied by offensive and insulting remarks from the officials.

The fact that the old dog has a new name and wears a new collar makes no difference. The stigma attached to "Parish relief" from earliest times still remains and is kept alive by cold officialdom and, one must admit, by too many who call themselves working class. The atmosphere of NAB offices is degrading and intimidating and frustrates the applicant from the beginning.

If, in the first interview, the applicant is not turned away or, alternately, sent home to await a visitor, the claim may

be dealt with on the premises. In this event the applicant may have to wait from one to any number of hours to closing time. Again the applicant may be sent to the Labour Exchange for some matter to be dealt with there. This usually entails a further call to the NAB office. One of the worst features of this business of applying for assistance is that the applicant, on stating his or her case, may be threatened with court action, although they have done nothing to warrant such action, the officials saying that the applicant is as though they need "Extra for nourishment." This despite throwing himself or herself on the State. This sort of intimidation is too prevalent.

It also happens that a person may be in receipt of an allowance from the NAB, but cannot manage on it. Such a person is told to get a doctor to certify that the applicant is in need of what is euphemistically called "Extra for nourishment." This is an embarrassment to both doctor and patient. Should the doctor be one who can be intimidated by officialdom—and there are many such—the matter becomes rather difficult. For, besides giving a certificate, the doctor must prescribe a diet. This is considered necessary for official scrutiny, as the patient may not *look* as though he or she needed extra for eats. The patient can still be refused if, in the eyes of officialdom, he or she does not look the fact that a qualified doctor has certified the need.

Visits from the "Officers of the Board" can also cause trouble with the applicants. On being told that what is euphemistically described as an "Officer of the Board" will call to see him or her, the applicant is instructed to remain at home until the call is made, even though it may be days later.

No, "National" or other assistance has not changed much since the days of Charles Dickens. And those who think it has have never come into contact with the present system of Parish Relief.

JOHN MACKINTOSH

## Men of steel (cont.)

"critical support" alibi on Defence and Foreign Policy—declaring their opposition to the Government front bench, but always voting for them out of party loyalty and in preference to Toryism, and of course because of Labour's domestic "socialist" policies.

The same parliamentary spokesmen of the left used to argue that Tory defence and foreign policy merely reflected the Tories' subservience to capitalist vested interests in their domestic programme. Labour's turnabout on steel and the compensation terms (likely to amount to £600 million, so generous that even the City financiers were shocked!) are surely the last straw for anyone with integrity on Labour's left. Wilson has achieved what he wanted—he has gone through the motions on steel, as the *Economist* (8.5.65) put it and cannot be accused of dodging the issue before he decided that the propitious moment has come for a general election.

Wilson, as the *Economist* continues in its editorial, "The Great Steel Bore", likes "showing off on the high wire with his majority of three. But he is not silly enough to be the Blondin of politics simply to flabbergast his own admirers." The *Economist* kindly omitted any comment on the performance of his colleague George Brown, who in his comic role as deputy leader proceeded to steal the show. Brown's double-talk on a possible compromise with the Big Steel Barons, in order to win the support of Wyatt or Donnelly, his slithering and sliding reduced the debate to Parliamentary slapstick and left us with a speech that is a classic for clangers.

For those workers who realise that nationalisation of steel would not make or break the capitalist economy of Britain, not benefit them or society in general, in the slightest, the Labour stunt artists of the Westminster revue put on an act seldom excelled at the Whitehall theatre.

M. CALLINAN

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