

# Direct Action

For workers' direct control of industry

Inside—The parliamentary confidence trick : Seventh SWF Conference : Direct action by Kent homeless

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWMA)

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## SOLIDARITY WILL BEAT GRUNTER

RAY GRUNTER, Tory leaders, trade union leaders and the Government can't wait to get cracking with legislation against the workers. Ray Grunter, when he spoke to the annual convention of the joint industrial council for the Printing and Allied Trades, said in so many words that the Government would have to intervene if industry's voluntary system of settling disputes failed to do its job.

A "fundamental reconsideration" of the role of Government in industrial disputes would be "inescapable", he said, if industrial self-government broke down.

A plan to give the Birmingham District Committee of the National Union of Vehicle Builders (NUVB) through its Branch Committees, the power to vet the appointments of and, if necessary, withdraw credentials from shop stewards, has just come into force.

Under the new arrangements, no member will be able to become a shop steward until he has served at least 12 months on a particular shop floor. Members will continue to elect their own shop stewards. But the man elected will have to appear before the branch committee, which will make sure that he knows "all the implications" of a shop steward's job.

This sounds as if the new vogue in industry will be tame, brainwashed shop stewards. This has been the ambition of union leaders and employers for a long time.

The Ministry of Labour has submitted its ideas to the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers Associations. The Ministry's ideas on Labour Courts is very similar to the ideas outlined by Sir Keith Joseph, shadow Minister of Labour. What price now? That Ministry officials are hidebound Tories, whatever the government in

power. During the first day's hearing, even George Woodcock was forced to ask Sir James Dunn permanent secretary to the Ministry, whether he found it as interesting as he himself did, that all but two of the questions had been about the deficiencies of the unions.

The Confederation of British Industry proposes fundamental changes in the law in its evidence to the Royal Commission. Under the Trades Dispute Act of 1906, trade unions were given complete immunity from tort. The CBI would like to restrict this immunity. They want sympathetic strikes clobbered by law, breaches of agreed procedure hit and immunity confined to registered trade unions. The Registrar would be required to be satisfied that rules made appropriate provision for disciplinary action and appointment of union officials and shop stewards. No benefits would be payable to members who took part in industrial action not in accordance with union rules.

Over the past weeks one has read of various pieces of evidence being submitted to the Royal Commission and, as was to be expected, it looks like a rough time for the workers. It must be obvious to all that the only things they can rely on are their own efforts and solidarity. The Government and the union bureaucracy are out to tie them hand and foot; whether they succeed is down to you and me.

## Cecil King's Daily Comic attacks workers

THE *Daily Mirror* is to be congratulated: it has at last caught up with the times. Its four-day campaign against the working class contained the same old tripe that has been bootied around for the last 15 years or so.

"Sabotaging the national economy" is a hardy annual, trotted out every time any government is in the muck. Let's face it, all governments are perpetually in the muck.

"Management must manage" is the key to the whole question. Until workers themselves control and manage their own affairs, which include industry, anything else is so much guff.

In the interim, Joe Soap has to hold what he has and gain what he can. The *Mirror's* job is to wave the Union Jack,

cont. on page 2, col. 1

## SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD

DURING repair work, a skeleton was found in a long-disused part of the Kremlin. The discovery was reported to the current political boss. He in turn summoned the Chief of Police, and instructed him to investigate.

A week later the Chief of Police returned. He reported that the skeleton was none other than that of Ivan the Terrible. The politician thought this wonderful. It would cast great glory on him to have started the investigation. He asked the Chief of Police how he had established the identity of the skeleton. "Easy," said the Chief of Police. "It confessed."



## OUR THANKS . . .

. . . to all those readers who have responded quickly and generously to our appeal for £400-plus for a new press. Donations are listed below, and each has been acknowledged by post.

## . . . but more is needed

. . . as we go to press, we have had just *one-fifth* of the money we need. We are *sure* that our readers are interested enough (and well-off enough!) to do better than this.

Time is marching on. In the present state of affairs it seems unlikely that we will be able to fulfil our intention to produce the bigger and better paper that the press will print in January—unless the cash comes in faster, much faster.

Just a reminder: financial assistance can be of two forms:

1. Donations—can you send a sum right away to help pay the deposit on the new machine? And/or:
2. Pledges—will you guarantee to send a fixed sum regularly (weekly or monthly)?

We'd prefer to buy the press outright and so avoid hire-purchase interest payments. Which course we take depends on our readers.

### DIRECT ACTION PRESS FUND—NOVEMBER, 1965

London W.2, R.E. £1; London N.1, M.E. 15s; Manchester, R.B. 10s; London S.W.16, E.W.D. 5s 4d; Stoke-on-Trent, W.E. £1; Manchester, R.M. £10; Tilbury construction workers (per E.S.) £2 8s 9d; London N.W.3, K.H. £10; London W.11, M.N. 10s; Hove, A.R. £1 10s; Stevenston, Ayr, R.B. 5s; Ongar, V.H. 10s; Kew, P.O. 3s 6d; Woodford Grm, J.P. £1 13s 6d; London S.W.9, V.J. £1; London S.E.5, M.H. £1; Loughrea, Galway, S.G. £1; London W.2, M.C. £1; Bristol, R.C. £1; Tadworth, D.W. £1; Holbury, Southampton, L.S. £1; Los Angeles, S.S. £1 15s; E. Molesey, Surrey, J.B. £25; London N.W.2, M.B. £1; Wolverhampton, J.L. £2; London E.19, S.M. 3s 6d; Bootham, York, L.F. £1; Greenford, Middx, J.McL. 3s. 6d; London N.W.3, M.H. £1 10s; London SWF Group (proceeds of social, 13th Nov.) £9 6s; Manchester SWF Group 17s 10d. Total £79 16s 11d.

## KING'S COMIC (cont.)

praise the union leadership, in an attempt to divert attention from financial monopoly.

Unfortunately some people swallow the guff the *Mirror* puts out; but have no illusions, when the *Mirror* states it is not anti-union, it is only *not* anti-union when the unions keep control of their members to compromise for capitalist economics.

In the last few years workers have begun to appreciate the fact that trade unions have become more and more part and parcel of the "system", and therefore interested not in destroying it, but making it more palatable.

Thus, when the *Mirror* supports 100% membership for unions they say it would create additional pressure on the unions to reorganise their out-of-date structure and make it possible to increase pay for more *able* (my italics) Union Officials. What they really mean, of course, is added strength for the unions to enforce greater discipline over their members.

The *Mirror* would have us believe that class interests no longer exist (George Brown told them), the picture of the bloated capitalist with his big cigar is out of date. Capitalism may have a new look, but the effect on the Joe's is just the same.

BILL CHRISTOPHER

## Swedish Syndicalists and the CNT of Spain

*The following message from the Swedish Workers' Central-Organisation (SAC) was received by the recent Congress of the Spanish CNT in Exile, held at Montpellier, France. We reproduce these extracts for their general interest to the international syndicalist movement.*

\* \* \*

Today we are particularly interested in stating the following: what we want is the continuity and permanent existence of the CNT inside Spain. We certainly believe in the need for renovation, since stagnation is death. But we declare that the important thing, basically, is that the CNT should remain faithful to its own libertarian birthright, both as regards struggle and from the constructive viewpoint.

We want to state frankly that we do not identify ourselves with certain trends, disposed to sacrifice the CNT in favour of false alliances or ideals of unity, which have nothing in common with the libertarian ideal. We understand the absolute need to work with other social forces, since we are resolutely against any absolutism of ideas and tactics, but this does not mean to betray the substance of the movement itself.

We think the movement needs the will to survive, to continued life and we do not understand the policy of suicide that appears to be the ideal of certain CNT militants in the present situation.

We do not accept alliances that, under more or less marxist inspiration, seek to subject the CNT to the interests of the big bureaucracies of trade union internationals. On the contrary, a libertarian wing of the international labour movement is more imperative today than ever before.

Because we have uncovered tendencies with which we cannot identify ourselves, we are now forced to reconsider the forms of our collaboration with the interior (of Spain). We feel it necessary to say this, so that there may be no misunderstanding of our attitude.

We are worried by certain trends that we have noted within the CNT inside Spain and we want to keep you informed of our thoughts. For the interior, yes, but for the CNT. Do not doubt the position of the SAC, which is loyal to the ideas and interests of the international movement. The SAC wants the CNT inside Spain to continue and we are ready to discuss the form of our activities with those militants who share our fundamental beliefs.

H. RUDIGER and E. ARVIDSSON  
(International delegates of the SAC)

### ESSENTIAL READING—IN ANY YEAR

## LENIN AND WORKERS' CONTROL

by Tom Brown

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

## HOW LABOUR GOVERNED, 1945-51

A RECORD TO REMEMBER 9d (postpaid)

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



# KENT HOMELESS TAKE DIRECT ACTION

**"KENT COUNTY COUNCIL TO EVICT ABOUT 80 HOMELESS MOTHERS AND CHILDREN FROM WEST MALLING HALF-WAY HOUSE"**

**"HIGH COURT INJUNCTION ENABLES K.C.C. TO FORCE SEPARATION OF 14 HUSBANDS FROM THEIR WIVES AND CHILDREN"**

WHAT DO these headlines mean? At West Malling, in the heart of Kent, is a collection of dilapidated wooden huts, surrounded by a high wire fence. It looks like a Nazi forced-labour camp. The Kent County Council call it King Hill Hostel. Many years ago this place was a workhouse. The living conditions then could not have been much worse than they are now. On entering, it's hard to believe that it's 1965 and not 1865. Yet the 43 mothers and over 100 children who are cooped up in the small, partitioned sections of these huts are desperate to stay. They are homeless. They have nowhere else to go. This miserable misfortune enables the worthy Kent councillors to get from the families a signed acceptance of a degrading list of rules and conditions before being admitted.

But how do families get into this apparently hopeless situation? The immediate reason is the greed of landlords who have evicted them. But they are really the victims of a rotten society. The bosses of the political parties all agree about spending £2,000 million on means for waging war. Shareholders make fantastic profits out of it. While thousands are homeless, millions of pounds are spent on luxury flats and houses, and gigantic office blocks. While all this continues apace, the homeless at West Malling must suffer the intimidation and blackmail of the local and County authorities. Take the case of Stan Daniels and his family.

They lived at 6, Sandford Road, Bromley, Kent. Earlier this year, the house was sold. On May 5, they were evicted by the new owner. Now homeless, they went to Bromley Council for help. All they got was an offer of temporary accommodation over 20 miles away at West Malling, for

Mrs. Joan Daniels and the four children only. They refused. They didn't want to be split up. Stan Daniels was then threatened with prosecution for not properly caring for his children—because they were homeless! King Hill half-way house, with all its militaristic rules and conditions, was accepted and Stan Daniels dejectedly sought digs elsewhere.

By the end of the three months, neither Stan nor Joan Daniels had been able to find anywhere else to live, although they were prepared to pay a reasonable rent. Now Stan fought back. The family did not move out. Stan moved in.

On August 31, officials of the K.C.C. arrived to evict the Daniels. They barricaded themselves in. Intimidation was used. The water supply to all huts was cut off. Other residents in the Daniels' hut were told to leave, so as to isolate them. Mrs. Carol Dore says she was given three days' notice to quit when she refused, although she had been there only two weeks. A council official, Mr. H. Brown, said that "thirty women and eighty children crowded into the corridor in a solid mass . . . and the entrance to the hostel had been barricaded by dustbins." Mr. Brown concluded that efforts to force the Daniels out therefore had to be abandoned. With the solidarity of the other residents, Stan and Joan Daniels won the first round.

In the High Court on Monday, October 4, Kent Councillors got an interim injunction, which enabled them to use force to separate the 14 husbands from their wives and children if they were still there after mid-day on Friday, October 8. On October 8, an appeal was made against the granting of this injunction before the Court of Appeal. Lord Denning, Master of the Rolls, rejected the appeal.

On November 5, a letter was presented in Court by Brian Lomas and Roy Mills to Mr. Justice Lawton, Queen's Bench Division, Court No. 5. The following is a very brief extract from the letter:

"Your Lordship, We, Brian Lomas and Roy Mills, will be attending your Court at 10.30 on November 5. We respectfully request you to consider the following statement:

"In your Court on Monday, November 1, you pronounced us guilty of contempt of court. You did not believe us when we said we had not flouted the Court Order of October 4 by living with our wives and children at King Hill Hostel for homeless families, at West Malling, Kent.

"We feel that you came to the conclusion that we were in contempt, because we openly admitted that we had been visiting our families regularly. We do not think that the position regarding visiting was adequately explained to you by those representing us. We would like to explain this to you personally and properly now."

The letter goes on to explain the position regarding visiting and concludes, "On carefully reconsidering our actions of the past weeks, we are now convinced that we have committed no crime. On the contrary. We believe we have done the right, proper, and moral thing, which ought to be the natural duty of every good citizen and husband.

"We feel we must continue to do our duty. We must continue to do what we consider the right thing. We must therefore inform your Lordship of our intention to be free from now on to visit our wives and children whenever possible, to comfort, console, reassure and help them."

On Saturday, November 13, 11 men, including Roy Mills and Brian Lomas, decided that a further dose of direct action was needed and agreed to have a "sleep in" with their wives. As this was a surprise tactic, no one interfered. The press and cameramen were out in full force, pictures were taken

cont. on page 6, col. 2

## AFL-CIO back Johnson

THE LARGEST labour union group in the USA, the AFL/CIO, has denounced demonstrations against the Vietnam war and called on its members to actively oppose these demonstrations which, it says, "in effect, aid the Communist aggressors." The group urged local unions to stage counter demonstrations on, or before, the November 27 anti-war rally in Washington.

In a speech to the ultra-reactionary American Legion, George Meaney, AFL/CIO president, said "Our organisations can do much to help our country in its efforts. . . . The present critical hour calls for close co-operation between our organisations in the pursuit and support of the aims proclaimed by President Johnson." The full role played by the AFL/CIO as a buttress of American capitalism is excellently exposed by Douglas Kepper in the *Socialist Leader* (6.11.65). Further reports and comment are in the *National Guardian* (USA) (issue of 9.10.65).

The AFL/CIO look very sick against our American sister organisation the IWW, which, like ourselves, stands firm against all capitalist war, and holds that the only way to end war is to organise industrially to end capitalism. The address of the Industrial Workers of the World is 2422 North Halsted Street, Chicago, Ill., 60614, USA.



# Direct Action

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

## SWF's 7th Conference meets in London

MORE than 50 comrades from London, Bristol, Glasgow, Hull, Bilston, Dublin, Tyneside, Manchester and Oxford attended the 7th National Conference of the SWF, held at the Shaftesbury Hotel, London, W.1. on Sunday, November 14. Fraternal delegates included fellow workers from the National Union of Port Workers, CNT of Spain in Britain, FIJL, Mujeres Libres, Natsopa, the Union of Industrial Youth, Wandsworth Libertarian Group and the Anti-Conscription Committee.

Messages of greeting were read from the SAC (Sweden), Bulgarian CNT in Exile, Japanese Anarchist Federation. Apologies were received from members in Bangor, Gateshead, Glasgow, Rochdale, Southampton and Stoke-on-Trent.

The reports of general secretary Bill Christopher and treasurer Mark Hendy were adopted. The former noted an increase in circulation of DIRECT ACTION, the reprinting of our pamphlet *Workers' Control* and the distribution of four leaflets—*Unite at Work to End all War* on the Easter CND March, further substantial reprints of the *Cheap Holiday* leaflet attacking Spanish tourism and two produced by the Industrial Action Sub-Committee, for catering and transport workers. The report ended: "The coming months can and must be a golden opportunity for Syndicalist propaganda. I am sure the Labour Government will not let us down. If they get slung out we can rest assured the Tories will carry on their good work, ably assisted by the Trade Union bureaucrats."

Local reports were given from London, Glasgow, Bristol, Oxford, Tyneside, Manchester and Oxford. The Manchester report noted the activity of the recently-formed Union of Industrial Youth, whose Secretary called for the SWF to redouble its efforts among young workers.

Three amendments were made to the SWF's Organisational

## Fewer visitors for Franco

THE NUMBER of British tourists visiting Franco Spain during the first seven months of this year dropped by 23.3% compared with the corresponding months of 1964. Help reduce the number still further by distributing the SWF leaflet, "Cheap Holiday" (2s. for 100; £1 for 1,000) and ordering from us quantities of the CNT two-colour postcard, "Spain today." (6d. each, 6s. for 12, plus 2½ postage on single copies, 6d. per dozen). Last year several comrades used supplies of this card for Christmas and New Year greetings: why not do the same? Orders to SWF, 34 Cumberland Road, London, E.17.

Subscribers who are about to change their addresses are asked to notify us of the new one in advance. This way, we keep track of our subscribers and they go on getting "Direct Action" without any interruption.

Basis. After a lengthy and lively debate on TU membership, it was resolved that "Members shall, where consistent with Syndicalist activity, work within their appropriate trade union and, where possible, become shop stewards." The weekly minimum dues payment was raised from 6d. to 1s.

The outgoing national committee's proposals for buying a new flatbed press, which would make possible a larger and more attractive DA were warmly welcomed. A number of proposals for new pamphlets, including a Syndicalist handbook and a series directed to particular industries, were agreed.

The Industrial Action Sub-Committee's report raised discussion on the need to oppose phoney schemes for "nationalisation with workers' control". Concerted CP action against our members on a big London construction site was reported.

"International relations" brought a report by secretary Acracio Ruiz on recent developments within the CNT of Spain. In reply, Sid Senior, general secretary of the National Union of Port Workers, said the best support workers abroad could give to the struggle against Spanish fascism would be a trade boycott enforced by dockers and seamen.

The National Committee elected for the coming year was Bill Christopher (secretary), Mark Hendy (treasurer), Marylyn Hutt, Bronia Macdonald, Roger Etherington and Ken Hawkes. It was agreed that quarterly meetings should be held with regional delegates, between conferences, to bring provincial comrades more in touch with what was being done nationally. The 8th National Conference would be held in Manchester during November, 1966.

A successful eve-of-Conference social at the Lucas Arms, WC1 on the previous evening raised more than £9 for the Press Fund.

The week-end of November 13-14 marked another forward step by the SWF in its development of Syndicalist propaganda and activity in Britain. If plans made for the coming year are effectively carried out, the Federation should be in a considerably stronger position by its next Conference.

## 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.

December 3: Mark Hendy—Parliament or Revolution

10: Bill Corr—Why I Left the Young Communist League

17: Ralph Rosenbaum—An Aspect of U.S. Labour History

31: NEW YEAR'S EVE SOCIAL—Starts 8 p.m. Admission 2s. 6d.

January 6: Tom Brown—Methods of Struggle

**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 Adam Nicholson, 113 Redland Road, Bristol 6.

**GLASGOW:** Contact R. Lynn, 2B Saracen Head Lane, Glasgow, C.1. Meetings at Horseshoe Bar, Drury Street, Tuesdays, 8.00 p.m.

**HULL & E. YORKS:** Contact Jim Young, 67 Sandringham Street, Hull.

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

**POTTERIES:** Contact Bob Blakeman, 52 Weldon Ave., Weston Coyney, Stoke-on-Trent.

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

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

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



# PARLIAMENT IS A CONFIDENCE TRICK

SOME Labour MPs have said they will oppose the Immigration White Paper and anti-union legislation. They are being hailed by some of the Party's left-wing supporters as being "men of principle" who will "stop the rot". But all MPs are "men of principle". That is just what is rotten about the Labour Party.

An MP is elected to Parliament to represent the interests of his constituents. He does this according to his "principles", "conscience", "honour", and so on. This is the only way Parliament can function as the supreme law-making body. The personal discretion of the MP is the cornerstone of the parliamentary system.

The theory of this system is that making decisions about the general regulation of society is best left to a small minority. The decisions come down to the rest as laws, enforced by the executive branch of the state—police, armed forces, and the rest. Parliament is the legislature. The final sanction for law is its enforcement.

While MPs make laws, we ordinary folk go about our tasks. Parliament is very remote. For the vast mass, the working class, life revolves around the job, for this provides the wage packet that we need to live. The job is the basis of the worker's position in society. The basis of society is production, and one's place in society is basically one's place in production.

Life for the MP is different. With others, he belongs to a party, the better to pursue common policy—according to common "principles" and the rest of it. The party struggles against opponents. Through victories and defeats it develops a life of its own, which it defends when attacked. The voters who have returned the MPs to Parliament have no say over what they do when they are there.

Every so often, elections come along. For most of us they are not very real. MPs visit their constituencies a lot—they "go to the people". The constituencies are residential districts where the voters make their private lives. Their work may be miles away. They may never have spoken to the man next door, yet with him and the other occupants of the geographical doss-house they must choose a man or woman to represent their interests in society at large. Their workmates may live five, ten, fifteen miles away or more. The man next door may work in an entirely different place, producing entirely different commodities. Or he may even be an employer. Yet, according to parliamentary theory, neighbours have the closest possible political interests.

Workers vote and go to work. Here there is no problem in finding their common interests, in a common struggle against the boss and in a common task of production. Through this struggle, its ups and downs, calms and storms, they evolve their own organisation.

This is basically opposed to parliamentary organisation.

It makes no sense to leave the running of affairs to a select person or persons removed from the realities of the daily struggle. The struggle starts *there*, on the shop floor, *at the point of production*. Any representatives are direct delegates, chosen to carry out a specified task and to carry it out only for so long as they represent the will of those who appoint them.

While conducting the inevitable struggle from day to day, the workers have evolved the method of representation that will be used in the society based on production for use that will replace capitalism. Parliament is good enough for a society where production is for the benefit of the few. Political government exists in the first place to safeguard the property rights of those few. (Today governments have taken on a growing amount of administration of economic affairs, but this does not hide their basic political task.

In a society where production is organised to satisfy human need, political government will disappear. Making decisions will not be the work of a few, while another body sees they are carried out. All will make the decisions and all will carry them out—all who work, that is. Where it is impossible for all to meet, representation will be by direct delegation, subject always to immediate recall. The task of the factory delegates will be to co-ordinate the running of production.

Compared with such a system, parliamentary democracy is a hollow sham: it is democracy only in name. Parliament as we know it today is a trick evolved by capitalism to delude the workers into believing that class society can work in the interests of all. But it has been a very successful trick. Parliamentarism has played havoc with the working-class movement. In most capitalist countries, so-called Labour Parties have claimed to represent the workers in Parliament. Saying "leave your problems to us", the Labour politicians have left the constituencies with their mouths full of promises and their minds full of parliamentary politics. Sincere perhaps at first, they have found it impossible to represent the interests of the working class because their tasks are no longer those of the workers, but of legislating for capitalism.

Further, the unions today are largely run by full-time, well-paid officials who are often as remote from the factory floor as are MPs. Like MPs they are under no control by those who elect them and are often appointed for life. In the struggle against this corruption of the unions the workers have thrown up the shop-steward system, based on direct delegation, which usually finds itself in conflict with the officials.

The Communist Party has sometimes denied that Parliament is of any use to the workers, but this has only been to substitute for the parliamentary politicians another bunch of self-proclaimed leaders. The structure of the Communist Party is just another political society in embryo, with central committee (legislature), organisers (executive) and rank-and-file (voters in periodic elections).

Like the Labour parliamentarians, the so-called Communists, including Trotskyists, have perverted the original revolutionary working-class aims of common ownership and workers' control into State ownership and State control. For those who look to the State to solve the workers' problems this is inevitable.

No means exists under the sun of reconciling parliamentary fake democracy with workers' direct democracy. The one is completely opposed to the other. They are the systems of two completely opposed classes.

**MARK HENDY**

## SWF CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18

LUCAS ARMS, 245 Gray's Inn Rd., London, W.C.1.

(5 minutes from King's Cross station)

8.0—11 p.m.

ADMISSION 2s. 6d

MUSIC—ENTERTAINMENT—BAR—GOOD COMPANY



# Labour Government's betrayal echoes Austria

*The following letter was rejected for publication by Peace News.*

DEAR EDITOR,

In response to your invitation in your article, "Wilson's National Government" (*P.N.*, Sept. 24), to contribute towards discussion on the problems raised, first, let me state that the betrayal of socialist principles by the present British Labour Government differs in no way from the betrayal by the Labour government in Austria, my home country, after world war I. Then, as now, the main aim was to bolster up capitalism and to frustrate the Left. It confirmed to me H. de Balzac's dictum that "popular revolutions have no more implacable enemies than the men they raise to power." As a consequence, I adopted the philosophy of anarchism as the only pointer towards human liberation. In watching today the British Labour Government's actions, I cannot say that I made the wrong choice.

But in this letter I am not concerned with "isms", solely with reason and commonsense. "But what is reason and commonsense?" I hear people demand. "Is not one man's meat the other man's poison?" Yes indeed, so it is. The "poison men" oppose reason and commonsense, disregard decency and morality and bar the way of human progress, for no other reason than to preserve their position of power and privilege. These people, appropriately named Vested

## KENT HOMELESS (cont.)

and statements given. To make the evening complete, along came a bailiff and presented a Writ to one of the men. The photographers seized on this incident, much to the bailiff's displeasure.

On Wednesday, November 17, members of King Hill attempted to attend a full meeting of the Kent County Council at Maidstone. Unfortunately, they were out-manoeuvred; the public gallery was deliberately packed full with councillors' wives and friends, etc. The place was swarming with police, one or two people did actually get into the chamber but were promptly thrown out. The Council agenda was rigged, so that the King Hill dispute did not come up, and the meeting, after lasting all day, was adjourned to the following Wednesday. This is unprecedented—it has been known for the Kent County Council to finish their business in the morning.

One interesting point has arisen, it was noted that six plain clothes men were in the public gallery and when this fact was pointed out to some of the Tory councillors, even they were disturbed.

The small Labour Party group on the Council agreed to meet speakers from the Hostel on Wednesday, November 24 morning, but only members from the Hostel. It is reported that the Labour group's policy is the *status quo* until a full enquiry has been held.

In the High Court on November 19, Mills and Lomas were committed to jail for disobeying the order restricting visits to their families. Joseph Gibbons was released, the case against him not being proved.

Donations are urgently needed for the King Hill Fighting Fund. They have been refused legal aid. Monies should be sent to Dr. Don Bannister, 27 Meadow Walk, Wilmington, nr. Dartford, Kent. All donations will be acknowledged.

DIRECT ACTION REPORTER

Interests, have been the scourge of humanity since time immemorial. Today the same vested interests are responsible for the unspeakable tragedy of Vietnam, where American capitalism is staging, backed up by nuclear armour, a daring attempt in counter-revolution.

Contemplate the sombre difference between the betrayal by the Austrian Labour Government, after world war I and today's betrayal by the British Labour Government. While the former led up to Hitler and a war which in four years consumed 50 million lives, the latter may lead to a world conflagration which can wipe out in four hours 500 millions. At that fateful moment, as on the eve of world war I and world war II, there seems to be no means of averting a catastrophe. All the peace activities and talks on non-violence are bound to remain ineffective, because they are divorced from the real issues. It simply does not make sense to talk of peace and entirely ignore the implications of peace-making. Our society is run by Vested Interests and consequently based on social friction, on violence and war. Leo Tolstoi has said: "Money in our society is not a medium of exchange but a means of enslavement." In our class-divided system you can hire a man and in return for attractive wages you can make him produce lipsticks or hydrogen bombs.

Therefore I suggest that pacifists have the courage to call a spade a spade. For peacemakers, Socialism cannot and must not be a dead letter. The socialist pioneers of the past devoted their lives to finding a solution to our problems. To ignore them today means to put the existence of the human race in jeopardy. I have listened to a good many speeches on Vietnam, but no mention was made of Formosa and Chiang Kai Shek. It is no doubt for him that American capitalism is waging the dirty war in Vietnam, to obtain a jumping board from which to lead him back into China on a red carpet of blood . . . Nor have I heard any of the speakers mention the word "socialism." For me the only way out lies in the emancipation of the working class.

Hove, Sussex.

ALFRED ROTH

## For the 16-hour week

FOR MANY YEARS the IWW has been officially and by majority vote on record to fight for a 16-hour week with 40 hours' pay, that is a four-hour day and a four-day week, with absolutely no overtime unless it is a matter of life or death for human beings, then double time must be paid.

This winter IWW members and friends must carry on an educational drive among the migratory wage slaves who, in the Northern half of the USA, will be holed up in cheap rooming houses, shacks and missions during the cold, stormy and snowy months. IWW and Libertarian reading matter must be given them, wherever they may hang out. IWW mass meetings should be conducted for them as often as possible. IWW agitators must keep themselves busy all winter, talking to these wage slaves everywhere. The IWW members must prepare during the cold winter months to stage the largest organisation drive among the migratory wage slaves in its history. How about a 3,000-mile picket line by the Agricultural Workers Industrial Union 110 of the IWW for the migratory wage slaves coast to coast in the USA in 1966???

We certainly enjoy reading DIRECT ACTION and consider it one of the best revolutionary papers in the world. We hope its circulation increases by many thousands soon. We hope our fellow workers of the SWF and other branches of the IWMA can pay us a visit in the USA during 1966.

Yours for the solidarity of the IWW, the SWF and all branches of the IWMA.

Seattle, Wash., USA

SKIDROAD SLIM



# WATCH THE BIRDIE!

ILFORD'S, the photographic firm, have signed a closed-shop agreement with the National Union of General and Municipal Workers. Many workers, recalling past opposition to closed shops, may welcome this as an advance for our class. But this is no victory: "[The agreement's] main object is to eliminate unofficial disputes. Once it is in operation, workers expelled from the union for breaches of discipline will almost certainly be dismissed. Ilford, in which ICI has a 30% interest, has had only two brief unofficial strikes in the recent past. Mr. T. P. Lyons, the company's chief personnel officer, described the agreement yesterday as 'an insurance policy' against future trouble. The company already collects union dues by deducting them from employees' pay packets." (*Daily Telegraph*, 29.10.65). The same report states that all Ilford employees will have to sign an agreement to stick to union rules, and that "peaceful persuasion" will be used to induce non-members to join.

This is indicative of the way things are going. The fact that the firm stops dues shows how it is hand in glove with the union officials. And there is a further threat. Minister of Labour (Exploitation) Ray Grunter has said recently that "If voluntary agreements for settlement of disputes fail to do the job for which they are intended, then a fundamental reconsideration of the role of government in these matters is needed." F. A. Ridley calls modern society "fascism without jackboots"—he could be right.

The closed shops and the talk of legislation are only to get more discipline over us. Oh, yes, they will try to con us that it's to our benefit. They always do. Don't fall for it. If you do, I can hear the laughter already as bosses, politicians and union officials knock another brandy back together.

In a memo to the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, the AEU says, "Expulsion as the ultimate sanction, leading to the loss of a worker's job, would be more than a sufficient deterrent to an individual thinking of ignoring his union's advice." According to the *Daily Telegraph* report of this (9.11.65), "The Union argument hints at a possible agreement with the Government, giving the unions 100% membership in return for an agreement to outlaw unofficial strikes."

Sir William Carrion, Governor of the Bank of England, knighted by both Pope and Queen (the well-known song-and-dance act) is against legislation on unofficial strikes. Well might he be. The AEU's new General Pen Pusher Jim Conway says in the September issue of the union journal that "The members are taking action into their own hands. We know that there is mass absenteeism from branches." As it has been hinted that any legislation against unofficial strikes may also hit at full-time officials, Conway and Carrion have reason to be scared. So have all the other full-timers, including left fakers like Jenkins, etc. Sir William introduced apprentices to the boys in blue at the recent AEU conference. The lads had been so naive as to think that the Carrions of this world at least had some concern for them—perhaps they know better now. The tragedy is that we all have to learn the hard way—and the expensive way, too.

Our enemies must really fear "unofficial action" and "unofficial organisation"—perhaps because they can't control it. Even the "revolutionary" Socialist Labour League calls for all strikes to be made official, of course under a better leadership—the SLL.

The general line now is more and more discipline, more and more centralisation of power in the hands of the bureaucrats and pen-pushers. Unions could once be called the organised defence of the working class. This was not much,

but now even this decription does not fit them. Unions are becoming more and more tied up with officialdom and bossdom. The officials are the middle-men in the biggest market of all—the labour market. They wish to be able to guarantee undamaged and fully reliable goods, machines that won't break down or answer back. That's right: *us*. This dream, though, cannot be achieved without sell-outs, laws and, dare I say it, our agreement.

Many call for reforms. Of what and how they don't know, but they still bleat like unlearning sheep. They still have faith in the Labour Party and in Parliament. They wish to change it, but change only themselves.

Others, the fake lefts, the Trotskyists and the group that publishes *The Weak* bleat their left-reform programme and attract all the old shower plus a few bright young things who seem to believe in the pale pink policies that these grouplets offer. Ken Coates, one of their leaders, has been expelled from the Labour Party for his left-wing views; if they sack him, how long has Wilson got?

All these people call for leaders. Don't they know leaders always betray, always fail, no matter who they claim to be or who they are? History proves this. Stalin was a leader once, so was Khrushchev. Chew on that.

According to Government figures, disputes are to an ever-increasing degree unofficial. 90 to 95% are this way. Workers are waking up, we are learning to trust our own unofficial committees, ourselves. We are fed up with being pushed about by people *we* employ—at least I am, so should you be, too.

In some traditional centres of unionism (for example Fords, the docks), men are getting fed up with the old unions, lapsing or ripping up their cards, and many belong to no union. This is great so long as they are starting to build strong rank-and-file groupings to replace them. It is not so good if they drift; however if they do the main cause is trade or craft unionism.

Rank-and-file groupings are alternatives to trade unionism, but only if the end aim is to turn them into revolutionary industrial unions, or workers' syndicates. We must oppose any written agreements with our employers; we must not tie ourselves down. The American Industrial Workers of the World never had written agreements with bosses, but they won some of the best conditions ever seen. These were held by the militancy and revolutionary feelings of the members.

If you want full card-holding, do like the recent Barbican strikers did (DIRECT ACTION, November) and refuse to work with nons. Until we *as a class* build unions that we control, until we wake up to the fact that the only answer is workers' control of industry and all that it implies, we will always have our moans. Let us remember the triple slogan of the IWW (the Wobs) EDUCATION — ORGANISATION — EMANCIPATION.

VINCENT JOHNSON

## FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS

**INDUSTRIAL YOUTH**—the young workers' voice, 5d from IY, 34, Cumberland Rd., London E.17.

**RESURGENCE**—Fortnightly bulletin of Wandsworth Libertarian Youth, 3d. Specimen copy and group details from Tony Groves, 87 Ravensbury Road, London S.W.18.

**RESISTANCE**—Committee of 100 Bulletin, 6d. From 32a Fellows Road, London N.W.3.

**OXAN**—Quarterly bulletin of Oxford Anarchists. Specimen copy 1s. from L. Otter, 5 New Yatt Rd., North Leigh, Witney, Oxon.



# TELEPHONISTS SHOW WAY

THE two members of the Irish Telephonists Association, imprisoned in Mountjoy for contempt of court—continuance of picketing in defiance of an injunction—ended their hunger strike successfully with their release from Mountjoy Jail.

In a country which still remembers—and always will—the heroic deaths of Terence McSwiney and Sean McCaughey by hunger strike, the first under British rule and the second under the home-grown politicians of the Fianna Fail mini-republic, this form of protest causes a tremendous emotional impact on the public. The Government was forced to go through the formula of sending a lawyer to court to ask the judge to release the two men. The judge quite rightly pointed out that he had been originally asked to lock them up. So the attempt to shift responsibility from the Government to the judiciary was exposed.

Arrests continue, under the Offences Against the State Act, of those telephonists who picket the Parliament buildings. They are generally released with a fine and a time limit to pay, in default of which they will go to jail.

The strike is for recognition of the ITA as a negotiating body for its members. The Association is a breakaway from the Post Office Workers Union, on the part of the night male telephonists. ITA now claims more than two-thirds of these workers as its members. The POWU is a typical State employees "company union", much given to what American union men call the "sweetheart contract". They don't get very good results for their members this way.

Support for the strikers has been wide. Dockers, busmen and building workers have demonstrated and staged sympathy stoppages. Many of the girls in the exchanges—dayshifts and POWU members—have refused to pass the pickets and even joined them. Two of these girls were arrested three times in one day while picketing the Parliament. They were thrown in the Bridewell for the night, or they might have gone back to be arrested a fourth time.

The National Council for Civil Liberties have given a great deal of support in the form of public meetings and protest marches. The Republican paper "United Irishman"

has declared its full support and called for the abolition of the Offences Against the State Act, which until recently was chiefly used against members of the Republican Army and the Sinn Fein party. The Republican movement has consistently opposed this totalitarian law as the complete negation of the social and national aims of their predecessors in the Irish national struggle. They point out that it is a complete reversal of the principles of James Connolly and Pádraig Pearse.

But it is not, of course, a reversal of the principles—if any—of the majority of members of the present 26 County legislature, most of whom are renegades from the Republican movement.

The strike will end only with the recognition of the ITA. This could establish the principle of rank-and-file democracy in the Irish Unions, or set a precedent for further breakaways by rank-and-file groups. This would be an enlargement of democratic and human rights and is not an attractive prospect for the perpetrators of the Offences Against the State Act. But a leading member of the ITA has described their aim as "autonomy", and they will not settle for less.

## KP get the 'sack' at Tynagh mine site

THE Bechtel Corporation cancelled their contract with J. Kilpatrick & Sons, electrical contractors at the Irish Base Metals Ltd. mine in Co. Galway, early in November. KP tried to cut down on the freedom of action of shop stewards, feeling perhaps, that with the finishing date safely past they could turn on the Sizewell act. The electricians' shop stood firm and began a "non-stop meeting" to discuss the problem. The meeting started on a Thursday morning and was still continuing with adjournments for sleep, meals and entertainment—on Monday.

When it became clear that there was a likelihood of the Irish Engineering Industrial & Electrical Union (IEI & ETU) taking official supporting action, the Bechtel Corp. and Irish Base Metals realised that KP's notoriously bad labour relations were about to involve them in trouble, so they cancelled the contract and sent KP home. There was about two weeks' work left, mainly tidying up. But the plant was running, and the IBM maintenance men will clear up the loose ends over a period of months, with no loss to the mine. The remaining electricians, then down to about 40, are only at the loss of a fortnight of employment. KP will be the real losers, because they were, in fact, sacked. Some of the Scottish brothers have decided to remain in the country as members of one or other of the Irish unions.

As Messrs Heron, Meiklejohn and Battyu (engineer) were packing their papers and other effects for the journey home, the sparks were collecting their insurance cards and wages. In the old tradition of Irish hospitality, hands were shaken and the travellers were bid a friendly "bon voyage".

SEAN GANNON

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