

# Direct Action

For workers' direct control of industry

Inside—London busmen  
Rail strike that never was : Easter Rising 50th anniversary : Miners

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWMA)

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British investments and the 'East of Suez' policy

## GIVING THE GAME AWAY

As Labour prepares to launch the new-look "Defence" Programme, the watch-word is "maintaining Britain's peace-keeping role". This sounds just lovely—all humanitarian. But the Tory right-wingers insist on giving the game away. "Defence" is the defence of the material interests of the boss class.

One of them, Julian Amery MP, wrote recently (*D. Telegraph* 24.1.66):

"What are Britain's economic interests East of Suez?"

"More than any nation in the world Britain depends for her livelihood on assured access to [overseas] raw materials and markets. Some of our most important raw materials—oil, rubber, tin, copper, jute and wool—come from the arc of countries stretching round the Indian Ocean from Australia in the east to South Africa in the west. Some of our most important markets are situated there."

"... We do not simply exchange goods with the countries concerned. We produce, out there, many of the raw materials we need... The production of these raw materials is largely the result of British investment."

"We also carry much of the trade in British ships; very often from wharves owned and equipped by British companies. This is another substantial British investment," he goes on.

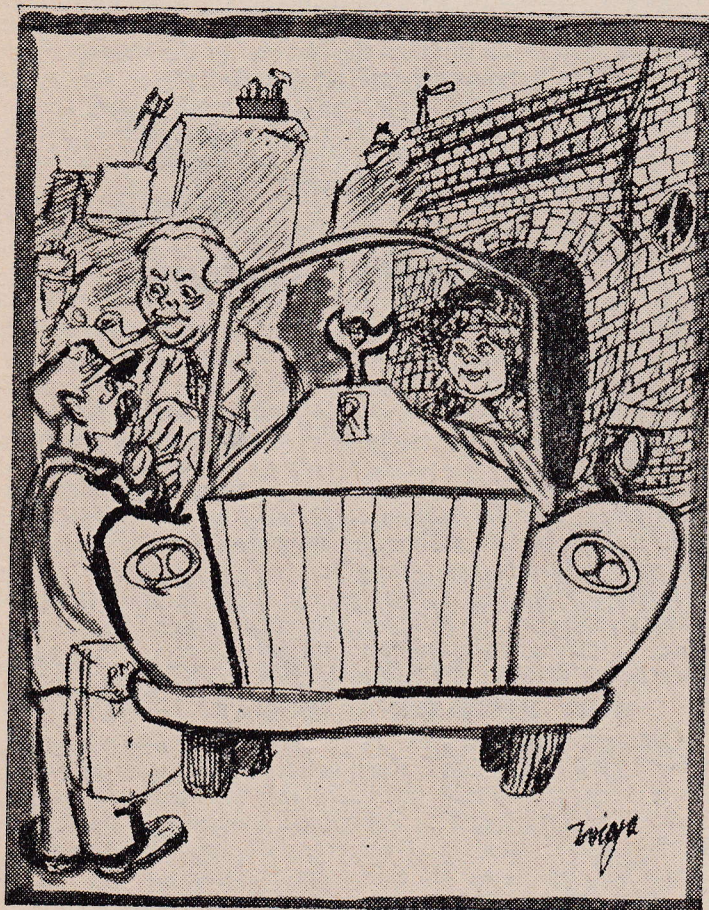
"... Some of the companies concerned, moreover, especially those with big concessions [from so-called independent governments], plan big expansions to their business. One way and another, the present and potential British investment east of Suez must be worth several thousand million pounds."

### COMMERCIAL RUIN

Mr. Amery goes on to point out that while British investments have been confiscated by so-called Communist regimes in Russia, Eastern Europe and China, they have suffered much the same fate under nationalist governments in Indonesia, Egypt and Iraq. The best way to protect them in the future, he says, is to stop "friendly regimes from tottering. Even if no property is lost, chaotic civil conflicts as in Burma and the Congo have "brought commercial ruin". Thus the mutinies in Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika in 1964 were quickly suppressed, thanks to the nearby British base in Aden.

Despite the "twenty years of peace" since 1945, Mr. Amery reminds us that British military, naval and air strength has paid off directly or indirectly for other countries as well—not only the United States, which (as there is no need to

cont. on page 2, col. 1



"MY GRANDFATHER WAS A RAILWAYMAN TOO"

Wilson to the NUR (see page 3)



## Conditions hit all-time low for London busmen

WE ARE told that London's busmen earn upwards of £1,000 a year. No one denies this. But what niggles the busmen is what they have to do to get it!

Before the war you couldn't get a job on the buses—you had to put your name down—their pay and conditions were as good as the best. And this is not just grandad at the stories again, this is the bloody truth. Yet, in 1966 they can't get men who want a £1,000 a year, they're crying out for staff. Why? Because conditions have never been so bad.

A busman's day can start at 4 a.m. on one shift, or finish at 1 a.m. on another and for this he gets no extra cash. Of course in the bad old days, he would get "penalty payments" (extra money for working these hours) but, in these good days the union saw fit to let London Transport Board do away with these "old fashioned" ideas. Some shifts are spread over a whole day, which means that they might have to work from 8 a.m. till 12 midday, have four hours off, and then go on again at 4 p.m. and finish at 8 p.m. To make up the extra they have to do overtime and rest day working, which means that our £1,000-a-year busman gets his £1,000 a year alright. But he has to work seven days a week; tear around in London's traffic to keep to schedules (if he can); have the knife of TGWU in his back and all this earns him the gigantic sum of £1,000 a year before stoppages!

### PEANUTS

Up until a short time ago a busman doing his specified eight hour shift would put down for overtime and would get paid "bridging money" for the time between finishing his normal day's work and starting on overtime. Now, as you can guess, this was when the union was "old fashioned"; "bridging money" has been done away with by the new, progressive TGWU.

London Transport Board have recently introduced, on a few routes, the hot and cold folding doors bus, which will seat 72 passengers instead of 56. How much extra cash has

the new progressive union got for its members for all the extra work entailed? Peanuts.

What's gone before belongs to that diabolical thing they call history, or so they tell us. But today, 1966, a busman's lot is a flat rate of £15 odd—before stoppages—and rotten conditions. What's happened to the £1,000-a-year busmen? What's happened to the "good job with excellent conditions"? Has the union been asleep? No mate it was in on all the discussions to axe privileges—privileges (in case anyone's forgotten) that were fought hard for, inch-by-inch, by the rank and file and, incidentally, won at cost. It's just that they were bought over a long time ago—it's you that's been asleep.

### TRANSPORT UNION

And now the champions of the rank and file, the great TGWU, are letting LTB have its way. And who is the LTB? It's the State machine bringing the workers to their knees and in the process, running London's buses into non-existence. While the men are operating an overtime ban, LTB are no doubt keeping a close eye on the effects—wondering how many more buses they can cut out, and which ones to add to the more profitable routes. Doubtless seeking the union's advice on "the best way to put it to the men."

It seems obvious to me that the union is no longer serving its rightful purpose—it's gone over to the other side. It's high time we had a Transport Union, taking in the buses, railways and underground. The busmen have had it in the back time and time again. Are they waiting to have their throats cut like their comrades on the railways? It's time for the men to take over—the TGWU has had its chance a long, long time ago. Too long.

There is, in conclusion, one big question. Why are London Transport running down services? Why are buses getting rarer and rarer on the streets? Is it really because of the staff shortages? Do they, in fact, really want staff? But here London Transport supplies the answer to the drastic cuts! "... either because the traffic had fallen off, or because it was necessary to match the timetables more closely to the staff available and so give a more regular service to the public." Well if this is what they call regular service—I'd hate to get onto an irregular service!

MARYLYN HUTT

## Transport workers

WHAT is it like to go on strike with no chance of winning?

At the moment this is the situation that faces all passenger transport workers.

Busmen strike, tubemen carry on working, and *vice versa*. Railwaymen in dispute—tube and busmen carry on working, and so on.

The government employers are more than happy with this situation! The bus section could stay out for a year, and after a short period of time the employers, having made the necessary adjustments, can dig in.

Immigrant workers should see the situation quite sharply. Through the luck of the draw, their relatives and friends are scattered throughout passenger transport, therefore they have been in the position of scabbing on one another.

### MUST THESE CONDITIONS CONTINUE?

Common sense says NO. Why not make contact purely on a work basis? One industrial union for all transport workers. As a very preliminary first step, the Syndicalist Workers' Federation is prepared to inaugurate a meeting if interested workers will contact us. Once contact is established our job is finished, unless we are called upon to assist.

### WHAT ABOUT IT TRANSPORT WORKERS?

© This is the text of a leaflet, the other side of which gives a general outline of what the SWF stands for. Copies are available from 34 Cumberland Road, London, E.17. Price 2/- per 100 (post paid).

## EAST OF SUEZ (cont.)

remind you) is heavily "committed" in the area, but also countries like Germany and France, whose trade and investments are protected by Britain east of Suez. This last fact has been described by Prof. Hallstein, architect of the Common Market, as Britain's "dowry"—an important bargaining counter for gaining entry into Europe.

When Mr. Amery speaks of "we", he means, of course, the British ruling class, which like all of its kind magnanimously identifies itself with those it exploits. The workers have nothing invested east of Suez, and nothing to buy or sell there. Moreover, the British capital invested is there in the first place thanks to the systematic exploitation of workers in Britain. Extracted from their toil, it now lives on the unpaid sweat of darker skins.

Mr. Amery concludes that it would be "folly" to cast away all this. As he points out, conditions are now very favourable towards Britain. For many years, America tried to push Britain out of her overseas bases, so that American business interests could move in. Now, with the growth of American overseas expenditure (especially on Vietnam) Washington positively welcomes our presence in Aden and Singapore, to help protect American interests in the Persian Gulf and India.

MARK HENDY



# 'ONLY AN EXERCISE,' Sidney Greene

FRIDAY, January 14—it was on this fatal day that the Prices and Incomes Board's report was published on rail pay. The report shook the railwaymen rigid. It was completely foreign to their aspirations and demands.

According to the PIB, the present basis of negotiating railwaymen's pay, based on Guillebaud comparisons with wage rates in other comparable industries, should be abandoned.

Since its publication, the Guillebaud Report has been the railwaymen's wage handbook. The "comparability clause" has assisted them in their wage demands, although on each occasion when a wage increase has been awarded it has never been enough to bring railwaymen's wages up to the level of comparable industries. Mr. Greene, the NUR General Secretary, estimated that railwaymen's wages would be in arrears by 3½% by next April.

## BROWN

The PIB report stated quite bluntly that railwaymen (with the exception of clerical workers) should receive no further pay rise for the time being, and that future increases should be linked to productivity improvements. In layman's language, this means "You can have a wage increase *provided you pay for it yourself*".

Greene's first comments were to repudiate the report in its entirety, and he expected his Executive to do the same. He was not disappointed. The executive called a national stoppage, to commence on February 14, by 20 votes to 3. On January 28, at an Executive Committee meeting, a proposal to suspend the strike threat was defeated by 14 votes to 9. This was *after* George Brown had appealed to the NUR to come off it. Also, at this stage the railway union agreed to meet Stanley Raymond (Chairman of the British Railways Board). This move was slightly unusual; the normal form is for a management to demand the withdrawal of the strike threat before meeting the union. Even at this early turn of the proceedings, it was speculated that the PIB wouldn't say no to *early improvements in holidays and pensions*. The width of disagreement was starting to narrow, in the hope that the crumb would be big enough for Greene to throw to his executive, and faces could be saved.

Ray Grunter, Barbara Castle and George Brown had talks with the three railway union leaders, NUR, ASLEF, and Salaried Clerks. One can imagine the pressure being applied to Greene by the other two unions to call off the strike, though Greene himself was never in favour of striking.

## WOODCOCK

On February 2, another vote was taken by the NUR executive on strike action, and the vote was 11 for and 11 against. George Brown spent 3½ hours with the Executive on this occasion, but obviously the curtain was not due to come down. On February 7, Greene had a chat with George Woodcock, General Secretary of the TUC. Everybody was getting in on the act. The following day the NUR gave official notice to London Transport that London's Underground would also come out on February 14. ASLEF and Salaried Clerks were not coming out.

All the way along the line the Government, through its numerous mouthpieces, made the point that they had nothing further to offer—they were going to stand firm even if the

NUR had to go to the sacrificial altar of the PIB. On February 11, the unions had a further meeting with George Brown, Ray Grunter, and Barbara Castle. Brown made two concessions: (a) a pay rise of 3½% due in October back one month to September; (b) railwaymen with 10 years' service should have a third week's holiday each year. The executive took another vote on the strike decision—18 for, 5 against.

Time was getting rather short. Three days to go and all the national press was rooting for the Government. The *Daily Mirror* took its usual patronising approach towards the workers and, for good measure, in its February 10 edition gave the clown of politics Woodrow Wyatt MP a middle page spread to cast his pearls of wisdom on the railway situation. According to him, railwaymen will have had a 25% rise between the end of 1964 and October 1966—when in actual fact the real figure is nearer 10%! Even if Wyatt was right, railwaymen are still only earning peanuts so his smear doesn't mean a thing.

The Labour Government must have felt patriotic and proud that the national press were backing them, and (to be honest) they will get this backing in the future providing they stand firm and fight the workers.

## WILSON

By this time, all the minor actors had played their part. Now was the turn of the star. Harold (The Good) Wilson, Prime Minister of Britain, intervened. He chatted the NUR executive for seven hours at Downing Street, and in the early hours of Saturday morning the strike was called off by 13 votes to 10.

What was magic about the Wilson touch? (a) Early enquiry into the entire wages structure and the industry's negotiating machinery under Wilson's chairmanship. (b) How the Guillebaud principle for keeping the wages of railwaymen roughly in line with pay rises in other industries could be replaced by some other system of "comparability". This latter is the most important concession of all.

The final curtain was rung down, leaving Wilson to receive the usual bouquet of flowers. What of the play itself? It was an abortion. Had the NUR any intention of taking the government on? According to Sidney Greene, NUR General Secretary, NO! Saturday was to be the deadline (*News of the World*, 13.2.66.) for calling off the strike. It then would have been called off with a large majority. Obviously, the crumbs that fell during the 14 days of to-ing and fro-ing were sufficient for the NUR executive's small appetite. Who has gained? Railwaymen very little. Wilson & Co. a great deal in political kudos.

Railwaymen are, and always will be, near the bottom of the wages ladder while public transport is run on a profit policy, and you can rest assured Wilson & Co. have no intention of changing that.

## A LONG TIME

The national press has queried the point concerning support for the strike by the rank and file. Great play was made of the publicity-conscious opposition from Kings Cross. They conveniently forgot the amount of area and branch support which they publicised in their previous editions when they wanted to label the rank and file as irresponsible. No strike would be complete without the "Communist" label, but this time the press found this tactic virtually impossible, and to give the press their due they did try.

The whole affair smelled of political and union collusion. It will be a long time before an official rail strike threat is taken seriously again.

**BILL CHRISTOPHER**

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# Direct Action

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## Pink or blue: it's the same political paraffin

**B**ANKING on his party's ratings in the Opinion Polls, Conservative leader Harold Wilson will shortly be giving a grateful electorate the chance to put an "X" against the names of his faithful flock of obedient and prospective Parliamentary sheep. Labour's Edward Heath is gratefully accepting the challenge. And from the viewpoint of the working-class it makes damn-all difference whether the brand of parliamentary paraffin is pink or blue. As the oilman said, "The colour is different, but the cans' contents are just the same."

Tory or Labour, the nuclear strategy of Britain, as Wall Street's junior partner, will continue. Tory or Labour, the Government will still back the war against Vietnam. Tory or Labour, prices will keep on rising, while wages are pegged down. And Tory or Labour—we'd say Liberal too, but apart from nuisance value, Mr. Grimond's small and irregular army is irrelevant—capitalism will continue in Britain.

### COMRADE E. MICHAELS

**W**ITH great sorrow the SWF records the death of our comrade E. Michaels in Hackney Hospital last month, following a stroke. Comrade Michaels was one of that generation of East European Jewish rebels who sought exile in this country from Czarist pogroms. During the years before the first world war, he was active in the Jewish Anarchist and trade union movement in London's East End, where he had a close association with Rudolf Rocker. He was one of the animating spirits of the "Workers' Friend" Group, which published a libertarian journal of that name. Later the group was renamed "Freie Arbeiter Stimme" (London) and gave great support to the New York "FAS" paper, now a fortnightly. Comrade Michaels also always took a lively interest in the English-language movement and he was active on behalf of the Spanish Revolution, 1936-39. A generous supporter of "Direct Action", he was present at the 1963 and 1964 SWF Conferences as a "FAS" delegate. We mourn his passing and extend our sympathy to his family and the Jewish comrades.

### WORKSHOP TO LET?

We urgently need premises in the inner London area for our new press. We'd be most grateful if any of our readers could help us here. We'll look at anything that's allowed to be used as a workshop under town planning regulations. Until we have somewhere to install the press there's no point in buying it. We hope readers who have generously contributed towards it won't get too impatient.

Meanwhile, we still need about another £180 to buy press and new type, etc. outright—which we'd like to do rather than get stuck with H.P.

February Press Fund list next month.

The SWF, unlike the 57 Marxist varieties of the political left, will not advise workers to vote Labour or any other ticket in the coming election. We are opposed to Parliament because we believe in democracy—the real democracy of workers' ownership and control of industry, which has nothing to do with a bunch of well-paid windbags at Westminster. For us, the struggle towards a decent form of society, one in which men will be free and equal, is one of direct action. Figs do not grow on thistles—and industrial democracy will never be achieved through an institution whose purpose is to prop up class society.

Those socialists who still believe capitalism can be legislated out of existence by Parliament are living in cloud-cuckoo land. The real power in our society is not wielded by MPs. And once the controllers of social wealth feel their own position threatened, they will resort immediately to naked dictatorial rule, fascism, rather than relinquish their privilege. Mussolini in Italy, Hitler in Germany, Franco in Spain were three tyrants born of capitalist crisis, to crush the workers' movement.

Those socialists who, while understanding this, still play the parliamentary parlour game, to "put workers through the experience" are dishonest. The Labour Party has been with us for 60 years—yet socialism, real socialism, has never seemed further away.

As Syndicalists we are revolutionary and anti-parliamentarian. We recognise that the transition to a free society will be one of struggle between the workers and those who exploit them. There are no short cuts and nobody can bring about the change but the workers themselves, organised industrially. Political parties only divide the working class and divert energy from the real issues at stake. So, as the hustings once more loom on the horizon, we repeat the advice we gave before Labour's 1945 Government of strike-breakers, militarists and charlatans was voted to a crushing parliamentary majority. **DON'T VOTE FOR POLITICIANS WHO**

Red Cross the wounded,  
Wooden Cross those who fall,  
Iron Cross the heroes  
And Double Cross us all.

## GROUP NOTICES

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

**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.

**ABERDEEN:** Contact R. Comrie, 283 Hardgate, Aberdeen. Regular meetings.

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

**BRISTOL:** Contact Mike Davis, 130 Chesterfield 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.

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

**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, Mdx.

**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.

**WEST HAM ANARCHISTS**—Contact Karl Taylor, 98 Clova Rd., E.17. (MAR 0316)



# CONNOLLY AND THE EASTER RISING

ON April 25 it will be exactly half a century since the barricades went up in Dublin and the men and women of the Irish Citizen Army; Irish Volunteers; the Hibernian Rifles; Cuman na mBan and the boys of Fianna Eireann occupied the city within its 18th Century boundary of the two canals. Within three hours all public buildings were in the hands of the revolutionaries, with the exception of Dublin Castle, where a Citizen Army assault from the City Hall was held off by the garrison. It was there that the first Citizen Army man died. Seán Connolly. The first British soldier died at the top of a staircase in the GPO. He was a sentry on guard at the wireless telegraph station. We do not know his name. He was one of those tragic British workers who have so often died for the City of London in every quarter of the globe and in 1916 his pay was about 6d. per day.

So began a week which has altered the history of Ireland and the British Empire. Many people have tried to assess that seven-day revolt, from Yeats to Lenin. But like the Epitaph of Robert Emmet that assessment cannot be written for some time to come. The task was not completed.

## THE VOLUNTEERS

It could be said that the seeds were sown when Asquith's Liberal Government forced the Home Rule Bill through its third reading at Westminster. This provoked the ultra-conservative Ulster Unionists into forming an illegal armed body called the Ulster Volunteers. They had grounds to fear a Catholic takeover from the equally Tory South, which was dominated by the Roman Hierarchy and the Nationalist Party of John Redmond. The North feared for the safety of its Presbyterian liberties in an autonomous state dominated by people whose actions would be subject to the decisions of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Rome, much as people today sometimes fear the far-reaching influence of the Kremlin or the Pentagon.

The illegal arming of the Ulster Tories was connived at by their British comrades. The Liberals were too yellow to act. When there were rumours that troops would be sent to Belfast, the officer caste mutinied in Ireland. The arms of the Ulster Volunteers were supplied by that eminent Protestant monarch, Wilhelm II. And so, once again, the guns were out in Irish politics.

The Nationalists followed the precedent of the Tories and formed their own Volunteer movement to "defend the constitution"—in other words, the Home Rule Act. Their arms also came from Germany—on the yacht "Asgard", captained by Erskine Childers, a retired British Government official.

While all this manoeuvring and counter-manoevring, for Rome or London, was going on, there were two revolutionary bodies in the wings. *They felt that the breakdown in the laws on possession of arms could be put to use.* One was the Irish Republican Brotherhood, a military secret society which had organised the Insurrection of 1867. The other group was the Socialist element centred on the Irish Transport &

General Workers Union, notably James Connolly and Michael Mallin. The IRB had been under excommunication for decades. Mother Church was always on the side of the big battalions from red coats to khaki.

## IWW INFLUENCE

Connolly's Socialists were Marxists in their economics and Syndicalist in their trade-unionism, influenced by the Industrial Workers of the World in America, where Connolly had lived for many years. During the Great Lock-out and General Strike of 1913 Connolly founded the Irish Citizen Army to defend strike pickets from police brutality. They accumulated arms piecemeal from friendly working-class members of the British Forces, and were put through their arms and foot drill by Dublin workers who had served in the British Army. It is a matter of interest that the Citizen Army was formed a few weeks before the Volunteers. From the beginning the Volunteer movement of the Nationalists was infiltrated by the excommunicated activists of the IRB.

When World War I broke out in 1914, the Nationalist and Tory politicians persuaded the majority of the Volunteers (Ulster and Nationalist) to enlist in the British Army. But the IRB maintained control over a sizeable minority, who were afterwards known as the Irish Volunteers and remained in Ireland.

As the massacre in France ground on, the idea of revolution took root in Ireland. Connolly was planning to go it alone with the Citizen Army to establish a Workers Republic. The IRB were planning a National Insurrection. The climax came with the kidnapping of Connolly by the IRB. Brought before the Secret Military Council, he made such an impression on them that they invited him to join forces—Connolly to be commander-in-chief of all insurgent forces.

## CONFUSION

The date of the Rising was set for Easter Sunday 1916. Sir Roger Casement landed from a German submarine on Good Friday, with the intention of informing the IRB that the Central Powers had cancelled their plan to send a small expeditionary force, mainly of artillery. But Casement was arrested soon after he landed. The Nationalist politicians issued a proclamation cancelling the mobilisation orders for Easter Sunday "manoeuvres". The Secret Military Council worked feverishly throughout that week-end to establish a second date of mobilisation on Easter Monday. Due to the confusion of orders and counter-orders the number of Volunteers who paraded that morning was less than hoped for. The Citizen Army mustered its full strength of about 300 men and women. There were approximately 60 men of the Hibernian Rifles a minority Nationalist group, and the women and boys of the auxiliary organisations. In all, about 2,000 people.

Dublin was seized. In Galway the Irish Volunteers led by Liam Mellows took over. In County Meath Thomas Ashe led the Fingal Brigade in the most successful fighting of the week. In Cork the Ceannt brothers barricaded their farm-house and fought the police off for a week.

But the main battle was in Dublin where the tricolour flew above the GPO and the Starry Plough above the Imperial Hotel. There was no question but that the Socialist flag would fly where the Citizen Army fought.

At Mount Street Bridge of the Grand Canal 50 Volunteers held out against wave after wave of infantry until the last of them was bayoneted to death. HMS *Helga* bombarded the city indiscriminately from the river. The insurgents fought for every street, every house, every room. They had not one automatic weapon. The British troops hammered away with

## Those 'criminal' pickets

THE High Court, including the Lord Chief Justice (in the case of *Tynan v. Palmer*) has ruled that picketing on the highway is a criminal obstruction, despite the supposed protection of the Trade Disputes Acts, if more than a reasonable number are present—"two or three".

The decision would not stop two or three pickets at every entrance to a workplace. Nor does it stop stay-in strikes—it positively encourages them!



artillery, swept the streets with machine-gun fire.

As the end of Easter Week came near, it was obvious that the Rising had failed completely in the military sense. The troops of the Sherwood Foresters and the South Staffs had begun to commit atrocities against the civilian population. Corpses were later found buried beneath the floors of cellars. Connolly had been badly wounded and gangrene had infected his leg. But he still directed the fight from his stretcher in the Post Office.

### SURRENDER

On Easter Saturday the insurgents signed an unconditional surrender with the British commander. The city had been gutted and the prisoners marched between smoking ruins to the jails. General Maxwell ordered a mass grave to be dug and set up a military tribunal. Then the firing squads went to work. McBride was a rank and file Volunteer, but he had commanded the Irish Brigade on the Boer Retreat from Natal. It was a time to settle old scores from other wars. McBride was shot. Mallin—trade-unionist, enemy of the boss class in Ireland, or anywhere else—shot. Tom Clarke, veteran of the '67 and 14 years in Dartmoor insisted that his excommunication as an IRB man still held good and refused the rites of the Church.

Hundreds were sentenced to death, but public opinion in America became so outraged that Britain—then trying to involve the US in her own imperialist war—halted the shootings when the fifteenth man had died. That man was James Connolly. He may have been dying at the time. He had to be carried to the wall on a stretcher and strapped to a chair, for the firing squad. His execution had been demanded in a leading article in the *Irish Independent*, the leading conservative Catholic newspaper.

Such were the events in Dublin fifty years ago.

### WORKERS' REPUBLIC

The social and economic aims of the Rising were indisputably Socialist. The IRB had not forgotten the words of Wolfe Tone on the failure of the 1798 Rising—"henceforth we must rely only on that numerous and respectable class, the men of no property". They had therefore agreed to Connolly's insistence on seeing the Rising as a Social Revolution.

Connolly's concept of a new Ireland was a Workers' Republic—not in the form of authoritarian State Socialism, but that of the Co-operative Commonwealth. He drew up a precise blue-print of such a society in his great pamphlet "The Axe to the Root". A pamphlet which is still banned in Ireland.

In conclusion let us remember some of the enemies of social revolution in Ireland who cheered the firing squads in May 1916. Let us remember the *Irish Independent* and its owner William Martin Murphy. Let us remember all the Irish bosses and rats who babbled their prayers that the British conscripts would save their necks. Let us remember the Catholic Bishops who condemned the Rising. People of this type were to be known as Quislings in other countries a few decades later. They have never ceased to flourish in Ireland.

But we only remember such scum because they opposed themselves to great men. They did not do so openly while the guns were on the streets.

The men and women of 1916 were comrades in arms of the Paris Communards; of Zapata's Army of the South in the Mexican Revolution; of the trade-unionist Militias of Barcelona and Madrid in 1936. While there is a struggle anywhere in the world for "Land and Liberty" they will be remembered. And long after that struggle has concluded in victory they will be remembered. They will never be forgotten.

SEAN GANNON

## Aberdeen bosses back Brother Brown

HENDERSON'S of Aberdeen, producing cranes and other heavy engineering equipment, is the largest engineering works in the city, employing over 300 workers. Recently they showed how much they approved of Brother Brown's Incomes Policy and the Labour Government's "socialist" policies, by issuing each of the workers a free copy of the National Plan in brief. Now deny that Wilson is propping up capitalism at the expense of the workers—the capitalists don't!

Henderson's is a factory where the workers are "apathetic" because of repeated betrayals by the Government and Union officials. There exists a vacuum and it is up to us to seize our opportunity and fill it. Although most of the workers are in the Union, working class solidarity and organisation are very weak. Many of the shop stewards, never mind the union bureaucracy, are afraid for their jobs (unemployment is high in Aberdeen, never below 4%) and are not prepared to take militant action on behalf of their fellow workers. This was shown recently when, at a meeting of the rank and file, there was a 3-1 majority in favour of strike action. The shop steward present looked terrified and mumbled, "I can't accept this decision", then openly stated that he did not want to be victimised as a former militant shop steward had been. On the previous occasion they had paid off the whole shop to get rid of the man. At this recent meeting the apprentices voted 100% for strike action, showing yet again the great need for an independent apprentices' movement. The management of Henderson's is strengthened by the fact that it belongs to the Employers' Confederation, which the AEU, under the glorious leadership of Sir William Carron, OBE (for services rendered), is supposed to fight against.

### BONUS CUT

The story behind the dispute about strike action is as follows. Recently it was agreed on a national level that journeymen were to get a £2/10/- pay rise over three years and apprentices their usual percentage. But as engineers at Henderson's, because of bonuses, are earning above the basic rate (in common with most engineering firms) Henderson's decided to cut the bonus. For example a journeyman with a basic wage of £10/11/7—making bonus of £3 a week now finds that, although the basic wage is up £2/10/-, the bonus is cut to 10/-. So he is exactly the same off as he was before. The workers feel that the question, "When is a rise not a rise?" might have something to do with capitalist economics. Most other firms paid the increase and kept the bonus at the same rate. Consciousness has been raised by this recent action, and by an event which ended in the sacking of a journeyman.

Henderson's run an incentive bonus scheme. A journeyman who has worked there a year claimed when he first arrived that he could not make a bonus—although he always did the job in the set time. At the end of November he was sacked for not making bonus and the men were discussing coming out in sympathy, some stating that they would definitely strike. But the workers at Henderson's still look to the Union, and when they took no action—not even a formal complaint was made—things died down.

A sop has been thrown to the workers in the form of a Productivity Committee on which they are represented. So far the only innovation is a coffee machine! We hope workers will not be deluded by this apology for factory

cont. on page 7, col. 1



# BEYOND THE STRIKE

"SUCCESS is more difficult to bear than failure," said the pessimist, perhaps because he expected too much too quickly. Some working class militants are showing signs of falling to the spell of this aphorism, even after a series of successful strikes and threats of strikes. "We are just fighting on bread-and-butter issues. We are winning, but is it worth it? Surely, we should have higher aims than that." Certainly, "man does not live by bread *alone*," but he cannot live without bread. This is something we have to consider in perspective, remembering that history is greater than man's longevity.

Turning back in thought to the beginning of this century, or even 40-odd years ago, a time that is in the memory of millions of persons now living in this country, we see tremendous progress made, largely by workers' direct action, in even half a lifetime. In 1900, even 1920, millions were short of bread, *without butter*. In 1910 there was no dole, no sick pay or national medical care, no old age pension, these were brought in later, as Lloyd George said, "as an insurance against revolution". Children from overcrowded homes were often cast out or deserted to live in the streets. Families were evicted from their poor homes, separated, and imprisoned in the dreaded workhouse.

Jack London in *People of the Abyss* wrote with horror of his visit to London, where he saw "men pick up orange peel from the spittle-drenched pavement and eat it." Hunger, not as an appetite to satiate, but an agonizing pain, was the experience of millions. I recall seeing a deadly-pale young man carried away from a dole-queue and hearing the gloomy remark of his mate, "It's the Hunger." I believe the capital letter is justified.

## GREATEST WAS APATHY

Against these vile conditions only some workers were rebellious. Others were without hope: "It's always been like this, it always will." Many lived a traumatic life of toil, drinking, quarrelling and unstudied copulation. Others, in their proud poverty, were ever willing to die for their King, their mythical country or that wonderful Empire—which they would never see except along the sights of a rifle—even in 1920 after the greatest and certainly the least justified blood-bath yet known.

These were the powers the agitators fought against, and the greatest of these was apathy. Without the work of thousands of unknown agitators, nothing would have been accomplished. Not always clever, not always right, yet, by and large, all the work of these agitators, spoken in eloquence or crude phrases, in anger, hope, hatred or compassion, by word and deed, was to one end, to arouse hope, combat and confidence in their fellows.

They might be forgiven if they had spoken only of bread—without the butter—but they pointed their propaganda even beyond this necessary to the hope of a new society, in an

## ABERDEEN BOSSES (cont.)

democracy, and be deflected from what must be their ultimate aim—workers' control. We think the time is ripe for an extension of Syndicalist ideas into industry and towards this end we have formed a syndicalist group. As well as young workers from Hendersons, we have support in the power, chemical and motor industries. We engage in large-scale newspaper selling and have produced an industrial leaflet calling for direct action and workers' control. 1,000 of these will be given out at the gates of Aberdeen's largest factories.

From Solidarity (Scotland)

almost evangelistic spirit of "These things shall be."

Perhaps we tend to forget that the first century of working-class organisation affected only certain occupations and regions, the very poor and the very respectable remained, largely, unmoved. Now everyone is learning the value of organisation and direct action. Some jobs which were once the lowest paid are becoming the highest. "Salaried" men, once too proud to rebel are using Syndicalist principles to pay off their mortgages; jockeys, teachers, bank clerks and technicians use the strike weapon, rabbis and cantors have just joined the surging throng.

## OUTSTRIPPED IDEOLOGY

We have won, not only a larger slice of the national cake for less toil, but greater protection, more job control, more respect. There are even places where the old order is reversed, and the foremen walk in fear of the men. But all this is not enough. The next big step is overdue. Already, it seems that the limit of real wages has been reached, that higher prices and steeper taxation will rob us of every wage advance—the latter is the avowed aim of the Labour Party. Even from a narrow, materialist point of view, a new aim and strategy is needed. Most shop stewards must feel this malaise. Now we have won this round, what next?

The present shop stewards' movement (I here use the term movement in the sense of a social tendency, a series of incidents moving to one end) differs from that of the second and third decades of our century. The earlier was a conscious, planned, and purposeful movement; the latter sprang from the earlier, but at such a speed and so widespread, as to evoke the term "prairie system". Because it was, originally, so well laid and so suited to our present needs, its growth outstripped any existing means of ideology and social propaganda. This is more painfully evident when the need of a radical social change and a rational social philosophy are considered.

If the workshop movement is to be anything more than a blind giant, a conscious, reasoning, studying, acting organisation is necessary. We need the scientific method in our class relations at work as much as we need it in our technical problems. This cannot come from men acting in personal isolation. Ideas, philosophies are social products. The workers of Britain lack that organisation; those who refuse to help bring it to stature should not sneer at the fruit of their own indolence and self-seeking.

## FORMIDABLE THREAT

We of the SWF are seeking to build such an organisation. It can start only in a small way. "Great oaks from little acorns grow", we wrote in our school copybooks, and it is true. We know of the comrade who is tired of being, apparently, the only rebel in his small town, but the steadfast witness of one most often, in the long run, attracts others, sometimes those who themselves are self-styled lone wolves.

This country is divided into about 630 parts, almost equal in population, about 84,000. Surely there is one militant in each of these areas. 630 revolutionaries, in a hundred groups, working together while at the same time generalising and preserving every valuable experience of our class, would be a formidable threat to the ruling class, because its work and the ideas given to it by the experience of the masses, would be adopted by the people.

But if you neglect this struggle, then others will, too, and that will be the fruit of your arid cynicism? Reaction, War, Nazism. Is that better than a "mere bread and butter struggle"? Remember, social revolt has often started over a fight for bread. But don't blame the other fellow, he's blaming you.

TOM BROWN



# REDUNDANCY IN THE N.E. PITS

A CERTAIN amount of activity is under way in the North-East at the moment, largely confined to the coastal pits and mainly, but exclusively, among craftsmen. Morale in the inland pits is low; such pits, being on the edge of the coalfield, are shallow and the seams are short, making working and modernisation difficult and costly.

Pitmen struck at Annfield Plain, Consett recently over equal pay and the terrible working conditions. It is pits like this which are closing fast—it is estimated that there will not be one left to the west of the Great North Road by 1970, a staggering change in the economic and social life of Durham. No doubt, some of the deeper pits can be converted into War-Game Shelters for redundant people!

At Consett, modernisation has been particularly hard on men who had already lost their jobs in the pits. They got work at the open-hearth foundry—in the old days when one company owned all Consett this mobility was forbidden, but that, too closed down for the new oxygen process at Christmas: naturally, their redundancy payments were meagre, as they had not been there long. Protesting, they were removed from the pay-office by security guards.

The Labour-controlled Council here was reluctant to allow a new prefab-building factory in, possibly because local union officials feared their vested interests would be disturbed.

Durham Mechanics Lodges refused to join the Yorkshire pit craftsmen's strikes for equal pay for all grades. Cllr. Sudder, Lodge Secretary at Bradley, Consett, described the strikes as unconstitutional. At least he did not call them unprincipled. However, the Yorkshire strikers had not sent delegates north to communicate the situation to their Northumberland and Durham brothers.

On the coast, things are different, because new drainage methods enabling safe undersea drilling have been developed and because the pits are larger and seams longer; there is even a labour shortage. Craftsmen of all grades at Ashington will be banning overtime if they do not all get the highest rate within the month. 49 face-workers were supported by all shifts at Bates Colliery, Blyth over a pay-claim walk-out; and a strike threat by 2,700 miners at Easington has been suspended temporarily. Again the dispute is over differentials. All these claims are currently being negotiated. Coastal pitmen must win these just demands for their inland brothers

as well as for themselves.

The Lodge Secretary at Easington: "We have men in this pit taking home only £8 15s. a week, out of which they have £2 to £3 a week rent to pay, and if they live in Peterlee, there are bus fares too. There are men today who get more money for lying in bed than some who are working in the pit. We have men working on jobs described as "borstal" on stone flight work and on the belts. These men are only receiving £1 18s. 11d. a shift. We feel that Lord Robens should . . ."

DIRECT ACTION REPORTER

## Sauce for the goose . . .

CANADA is experiencing a boom in the construction industry.

Where, a few years ago, a dozen firms would bid for every job available and often take jobs at a loss in order to obtain work, now they can pick and choose among many.

In many cases, only one or two firms are interested enough to bid on a job and they often increase their profit margin so much that their bids are not accepted because they are excessively high.

One would think the capitalists would be pleased with this state of affairs, but no. It seems the workers are unsportingly spoiling things by demanding—and getting—much higher wages.

When things are slow, the construction worker is thankful to have work and not in a position to demand higher wages, but when there are more jobs than men to fill them it is a different story. With the industry crying out for tradesmen, workers have forced wages up, so they can get their hands on some of the profits. Plumbers, carpenters, sheetmetal workers, electricians, etc., have all recently obtained substantial wage increases.

The construction firms have had to go along with this, but with very bad grace. After all, it's one thing to screw the public for record profits, but another to hand over some of the lolly to the workers who make it possible.

Construction bosses feel the workers should be more "responsible" and refrain from demanding high wages in times like this, when there is an acute shortage of skilled workers. The workers, needless to say, are going after all they can get while the opportunity lasts.

Another queer thing about this capitalist society is that the government is worried about the construction boom. Apparently if you do not have mass unemployment, you have the danger of inflation and this is something all good capitalists try to avoid. So the government has reduced its bulding programme for 1966, to try and slow things down.

Two headlines in our local paper caught my eye the other day. One read, "Indian students lead hunger riots." The other, "Quota exceeded, 25 fined." While millions starve in India, the Canadian Government fines farmers for trying to sell more grain than the Government-established quota allows.

Canadian farmers, with grain to sell, are prohibited from doing so, while the people of India die for lack of it. Ironically, Canadian farmers also face hardships by being prohibited from selling their grain.

One farmer said he was "in desperate need of money. I've got seven kids in the family. I can't sit around and wait for quotas." Another said he "had been battling outstanding bills for the last three years, due to losses by hail and drought. It was the only way I could get any money."

The farmers starve, the people of India starve and the grain rots in storage bins. Ain't capitalism wonderful?

BILL GREENWOOD

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