

Direct Action

For workers' direct control of industry

Inside—Glasgow busmen on the move : Miners shot in Belgium : Legislation against rank and file

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWMA)

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HOW WE CAN END WAR

WAR seems part of life today. And every hour the arms race continues we draw nearer to the final bonfire of the earth. Each new local war, besides the suffering it brings, quickens the pace towards global ruin. What can we do to stop it?

The efforts of politicians are of little avail. The Labour Government has kept the H-bomb. £2,000 million is to be spent on war preparations every year. There is little dispute

with the Tories except over the details. On the international level, the 1963 test-ban treaty has not stopped French and Chinese tests in the atmosphere. Europe still bristles with nuclear weapons. Not one H-bomb has been dismantled. More are being produced every week.

SORE FEET

In January this year an American H-bomber crashed over Spain, scattering its radioactive load. The same thing could happen any minute in Britain, in a densely populated city.

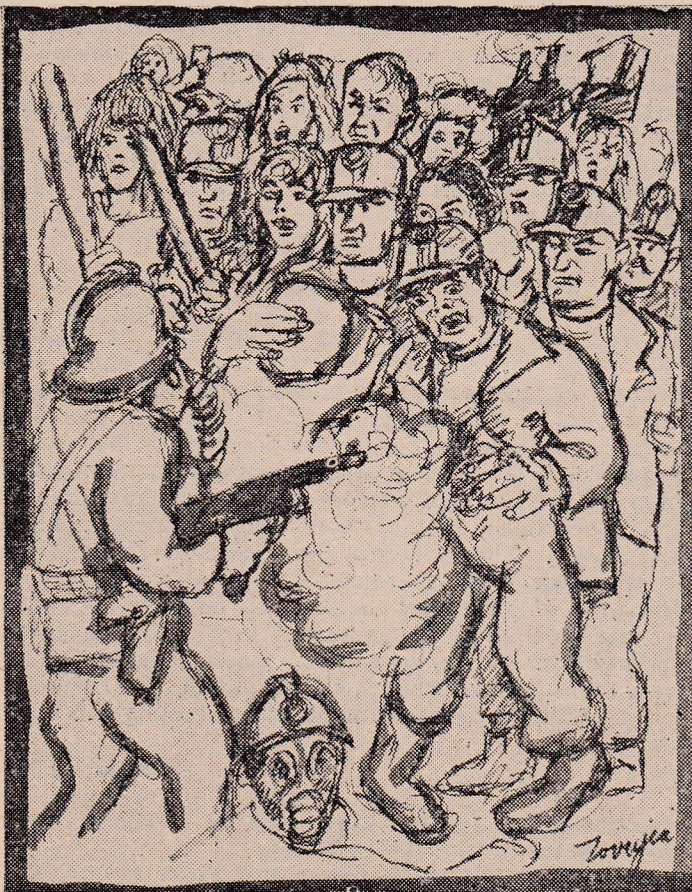
For many of us, such events seem far away. We feel powerless to influence them, whatever we do. In 1966 the Easter March against the Bomb is nine years old. It has achieved nothing material except sore feet.

Most working people have neither the time nor the inclination to think deeply on such matters. The struggle for a living is hard enough. Set free from the daily prison after work, minds turn to less depressing matters. But the daily life of the workers and the H-bombers in the sky now have more than air between them. They are the two ends of the chain that binds humanity. That chain is the class society in which we live.

Read what one leader of the most powerful nation on earth said of the causes of war:

"Why, my fellow citizens, is there any man here, or any

cont. on page 2, col. 1



STRIKING BELGIAN MINERS SHOT (SEE PAGE 3)

Threat to Spanish militant

FRANCISCO ABARCA, who was threatened with extradition from Belgium in 1964 and released after widespread international protests, is again under arrest—this time in France. Abarca, a militant of the Spanish Libertarian Youth in Exile, was picked up on February 26 while crossing the Franco-Belgian frontier with propaganda material destined for Spain. He was later transferred to prison at Douai, where he is once again threatened by the request for extradition by the Swiss Government, on charges of anti-Franco activity in that country. Protests against this latest attack on freedom of anti-fascist activity should be addressed to the French Government immediately.

Seamen debunk phoney deal by Hogarth

OUR call for a National Conference and a National Committee of Seamen to end the 56-hour week has got certain people worried. It will not reduce their worries that rank-and-file seamen are getting solidarity-aid from the working class press. Already two Labour Movement periodicals have presented the true facts about the seamen's struggle to their readers, and have called for unity with the seamen by means of all possible support. It will not be long before the two aforementioned journals are joined by others, and as our struggle grows so will the strength of our allies in the rest of the Labour Movement. Even though our official Union is used against seamen, seamen are not alone and never will be alone in the fight against injustice. . . .

* * *

The prospective Labour Parliamentary candidate for Southport (Lancs.) is one John Prescott, and Prescott's candidacy was sponsored by the National Union of Seamen. In 1960, Prescott was a member of the Liverpool Strike Committee and in the payroll of the National Seamen's Reform Movement. During the grimmest period of the second strike, Prescott deserted in the face of the enemy. He scabbed in the "Britannic" while her crew were still doing their bit manning the picket lines. . . .

* * *

If you glance through the various issues of *The Seaman* that have appeared since the first announcement of the 56-hour deal in February 1965, you will notice how the line of boloney eternally peddled by *The Seaman* is materially affected by rank-and-file activity. For a long period every issue of *The Seaman* was nothing but a panegyric of praise for Hogarth's Wonderful Week. It described vividly the glorious new outlook opened for seamen by the 12-hour lengthening of the working-week, in contrast to the miserable lot of shore-workers, whose unenlightened leadership, lacking the moral vision of a single ballottrigger, could only provide the membership with humdrum working weeks of 40, 38 and 36 hours. Surprisingly enough, at no time did *The Seaman* refer to Hogarth as "The Redeemer".

The Seaman's views on the 56-hour week have suffered a bit of a sea-change during the last few months, haven't they, Redeemer? The NUS executive has begun shadow-boxing with their mates the shipowners, and if the rank-and-file movement lets them get away with it, they will be shadow-boxing for the 40-hour week for the next ten years.

The rank-and-file stirrings originated by the Bristol Channel Committee's call to UK seamen was sufficient to cause the swift and nauseating changeover from "GOD BLESS THE 56-HOUR WEEK" to "EXECUTIVE IN ACTION FOR SHORTER HOURS".

—Reprinted from the *Bristol Channel Seafarers' Liaison Committee News Report*, published by G. Foulser, 36 Whitaker Road, Termorfa, Cardiff.

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS

WHAT'S UP WITH THE APPRENTICESHIP?—New Union of Industrial Youth pamphlet, 5d. (postpaid) from U.I.Y., 4 Long Walk, Partington, Urmston, Manchester.

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.

The seed of war (cont.)

woman—let me say, is there any child here—who does not know that the seed of war in the modern world is industrial and commercial rivalry?"

President Woodrow Wilson, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A., September 5, 1919.

"EXPORT OR DIE"

What makes for this "industrial and commercial rivalry"? It is the society in which we live. Just as a farmer exploits the fertility of the soil, so the employing class exploits the energies of the workers, who produce far more than they can buy back with their wages. To realise a profit the employers, the capitalist class, must sell the surplus. Apart from what they consume directly in lavish living, the capitalists of all nations are dependent on the world market. Competition in this market from other countries means, for each, producing on an ever-greater scale, to flood the world market with its goods at the expense of competitors. It is a case, as Hitler put it, of "export or die". And this constant drive means also a drive to find and secure sources of new and cheaper raw materials overseas. Where peaceful competition fails, war must result.

Because wars have their origin in the fundamental division of society into exploiters and exploited, class-conscious workers in every land tell their fellow-workers: "THE GREATEST ENEMY IS IN YOUR OWN COUNTRY".

The workers of the world will remain an exploited class and suffer all the evils of that position, including war, until they act to end capitalism. The employing class is able to exploit the working class because it owns and controls the means of production. To end capitalism the working class must take over and run the means of production, and abolish the wages system. Nothing short of this will end exploitation. In Russia and elsewhere, the government officials and State managers run the economy, and with it society at large. This State capitalism makes no change—the workers remain wage-slaves while the bosses ride round in big cars. Russia too is faced with the constant need to struggle for and maintain markets and sources of raw materials. Hence the Cold War.

INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

Only the direct expropriation by the workers of the means of production—their places of work—can bring an end to the threat and reality of war. It will also bring an end to the war on the home front. Instead of the relentless pressure on the workers by the owners of the factories and all other places of work, instead of the constant bossing and harassing by the managers and foremen, the constant squeezing of ever more production from the workers, the workers will organise democratically and co-operatively shop by shop, factory by factory, industry by industry. They will elect their delegates, subject always to immediate recall, to meet with others to decide on the best ways of performing the common task—production not for sale but to meet human needs. In place of our outworn Parliamentary system, spreading a veneer of political democracy over industrial tyranny, will be an Industrial Democracy for an industrial society—and an end to bossing and bosses' wars.

MARK HENDY

WANDSWORTH LIBERTARIAN YOUTH — Contact Adrian Morris, 26 Openview, Earlsfield, S.W.18.

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

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

MURDER IN THE 'BLACK TRIANGLE'

Brussels.

CLOSE down a pit without notice. Send strong police detachments into the area. Throw in a dash of right-wing extremists for colour. Let an incompetent government and irresponsible trade-union leaders mess around with it, and you have the Zwartberg incidents. Add in the fact that the gendarmes were armed for the party with tear-gas grenade throwers, automatic rifles and pistols, a full warrant to maintain "peace and order at any cost", and you have two unsuspecting miners laid out stone dead on the paved roadway. This is in essence what transpired in the suddenly tragic "black triangle" of the Limbourg mining district: a typical example of hamhanded and ruthless interference by the authorities in an industrial dispute.

It's not the first time miners have been shot down in cold

A guilt edge?

A MEETING was convened in Glasgow recently, in an attempt to establish a rank and file movement. I understand from an SWF comrade that Harry McShane, for some 30 years a member of the Communist Party, expressed from the platform the "shame" he felt over the Fairfield's shipyard situation.

Ashamed of the Fairfield workers, or ashamed of himself for being instrumental in the lack of thought concerning workers' control, which he derided for many years as impractical? It was necessary, he told us then, to go through State socialism as a transitional phase, so that the workers could be educated to the idea of industrial democracy. Perhaps there's something to be said for Harry, though, since he did leave the CP, even though some 30 years belatedly.

In 1961, when there was an attempt to form a rank and file movement by the SWF, a section of the ILP and others, Harry and his colleagues of the Labour Worker Group didn't want to know about it. I approached Harry and Les Forster, but because the SWF had a hand in it, they ignored the very idea.

Strangely, so many groups advocating workers' control these days have still not openly challenged the Syndicalist approach to it. Surely they must see some weakness in Syndicalism? Is it because Syndicalism has such a close affinity to Anarchism that the orthodox Marxists ignore it? Have they any other rank and file industrial structure to propose? If so, I would like to know about it.

Perhaps some 50 or so years ago, when the world was less industrially developed, the Marxists may have had grounds for quarrel. Not today. The technological advance of society has ironed out any basis for philosophical differences between Marxists and Anarchists. They could find common experience within the Syndicalist Workers' Federation, if they so choose.

It must be recognised that, if Fairfield's workers have shown lack of clarity, the politicians of the past and present must share the burden of guilt. If they now realise that the idea of workers' control is correct, why not have the guts to say that they have been partly responsible for the reaction within the trades unions and for the decisions of Fairfield's workers? Why not challenge openly the aims and principles and organisational basis of the SWF? If they have anything new to offer, let's have it.

R. LYNN

blood by the Belgian gendarmerie. The history of Belgium's working class is full of such incidents and the 1960 strikes are still vividly remembered. But *it is* the first time it has happened under the responsibility of a socialist Home Secretary (M. Vranckx who, by the way, goes on pilgrimage each year to Louvain to shed tears over the graves of the miners shot down in 1902 . . .). This is the sort of contradiction that lies at the heart of the Zwartberg episode, which illustrates decisively the background of guilt that has undermined the faith of the working class in either government or official trade-unions.

Like the rest of Europe, Belgium is undergoing the crisis of coal. It has already swept the Borinage, Liège and Hainaut districts. Many of the unproductive and ill-equipped pits have already been shut down. This in itself is not such a bad thing: Spanish immigrants used to complain that the installations of many of them were even more archaic and dangerous than the Asturian pits. And it was not intended as a compliment to the Spanish mines.

LITTLE CONCERN

What really escapes understanding and brings up the question of criminal incompetence is that the succeeding governments—a series of catholic-socialist tandems—and the private family dynasties which own a good number of the coalfields, have made no serious effort to draw up a programme of labour relocation. All attempts have been half-hearted and mostly benefitted the mine corporations through substantial government subsidies. Nevertheless, if the situation has been allowed to deteriorate and the unrest simmering for over a decade, it is mostly the fault of the official trade-unions (another catholic-socialist tandem: the catholic CSC and socialist FGTB) who have shown remarkable little concern for the problem.

The desertion of the official unions has never been so manifest and scandalous as at present. The socialist FGTB never tires of paying lip service to the federalist principles (very close to Proudhonian ideals) which inspired Liège's great labour leader, Renard, and played such an important role in the 1960 movement. In fact, sovereignty and power have been surrendered to the socialist party (PSB) sacrificing the most elementary union functions to a process of integration with the regime. Both the CSC and FGTB are so closely linked to their respective political parties and so concerned with facilitating the task of governing that they have become mere instruments in the game of power politics and party prestige. They have abandoned not only any ideal of social reform, but also the elementary role of mere contestation. This was once made more clear by the refusal of the Zwartberg miners to accept their arbitration and the choice of constituting their own rank and file Strike Committees.

Government and trade-union officials have found an easy answer by passing the onus of responsibility on to the Flemish nationalist Volksunie movement. But this has fooled nobody. In any case, the political crisis which is threatening Belgium since the last national elections has disclosed such a bundle of irresponsibilities that nobody doubts the real reasons for the country's general mismanagement. On the other hand, Zwartberg has once more put in relief the fact that, in spite of an integrated and apparently affluent society, the working class has still plenty of genuine reasons to struggle against capitalism. If anyone has any doubts, let him reflect on the two dead miners.

CITOYEN

Direct Action

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

Now let's get down to the REAL struggle

BY THE TIME this issue of DIRECT ACTION appears in print, the tons of election propaganda poured out by the contending parties over the past month will have been consigned to their appropriate destinations, the incinerator or dustbin, the votes will duly have been cast, the results announced and another bunch of overpaid parasites given a spell at the Westminster Gasworks—at our expense.

"Sound and fury signifying nothing". Nothing of any value, that is, to the working class. Wily Wilson or the Blasted Heath, we are in for a period in which attacks on rank-and-file militants will be intensified. That fact was made very clear from the outset of the election campaign, with the parties vying in their expressions of horror at the "tyranny" of shop stewards who fined scabs for working during unofficial strikes. The fines, hefty ones, planned by the politicians for unofficial strikers will make those of the so-called "kangaroo courts" pale into insignificance.

It looks certain, at time of writing, that we are in for a prolonged spell of life with Wilson, Brown and Grunter. The record of 1945-51 Labour Governments, detailed in our pamphlet *How Labour Governed*, gives fair warning of what we may expect. In its efforts to keep the capitalist ship of State afloat, the British Government will be forced to step up repressive legislation and action against the working class.

This is something the Labour "lefts", as Trotskyists choose to masquerade, conveniently forget during their canvassing of votes. Their position will become increasingly ridiculous as the months go by. To advocate industrial militancy on one hand and support those who aim to suppress it on the other is a clear case of political schizophrenia—or sheer dishonesty.

Rivalling it will be the two-facedness of the Labour MPs

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Detroit, Grupo Libertad £3 14s; Minneapolis, J.R. 7s 2d; Birmingham 24, L.C. 6s 6d; New York 25, R.C. £1 8s; Motherwell, D.C. 14s; Greenock, A.L. 10s; Poland, Ohio, S.M. 7s; London W.11, M.N. 10s; London W.10, A.N. £5 2s 6d; Bristol Comrades £1; Whitley Bridge, Yorks; J.C. £5 8s; Southampton, L.S. £1; London S.W.17, R.W. 2s; Red Deer, Alberta, B.G. 6s 6d; Oxford, K.C. 13s 6d; Richmond, P.O. 6s 6d; London N.1, M.B. 3s 6d; Pré St Germain, Seine, E.E. 10s 6d; London E.7, S.H. 1s; Stoke-on-Trent, B.E. 13s 6d; Glasgow, A.H. 1s; London W.11, R.C. 10s; Birmingham 21, S.A. 3s 6d; Colchester, S.T. 13s 6d; London E.10, A.M. 3s 6d; Berwyn, Ill., A.J. 14s; Hyde Park Sympathiser 2s 2d; sales of CNT "Spain Today" postcards £3 4s 8d; SWF London Group £7 18s 11d; Total £36 15s 5d.

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who join the Easter March against nuclear weapons and the Vietnam war—yet never had the guts to stand up and be counted as opponents of these atrocities in the last Parliament, because it might embarrass dear Harold and his American masters. "Ban the Bomb—and Build Polaris" would be an appropriate slogan for them.

We cannot stress too strongly that, for the workers, Parliamentary activity leads down a dead-end road. The way to workers' control and ownership of industry is not *via* Westminster—but on the factory floor. The place to organise, with a view to building a decent society, is not the political party, but at work—in mills, docks, mines, shipyards, factories, offices, warehouses, transport garages and depots. The way to move towards such a society is not by giving a free hand to MPs, but by direct industrial action.

From now on such action must be intensified. The urgent need is for a national link-up of militants—outside political ties—so that such action may be effectively co-ordinated, not only within each industry, but by a vast network cutting across sectional differences. To help such a development is one of our immediate tasks—but we cannot do it alone.

The SWF appeals to all those who, while admitting the justice of our case, are still standing on the sidelines, either because they are disillusioned by past failures, or intimidated by the forces ranged against us. By joining the SWF and helping to make it a strong, fighting organisation you will be doing something positive towards overthrowing capitalism and introducing workers' control. Crosses on ballot papers have as much relation to this revolutionary struggle as crosses in a cemetery. Both belong to the dead past. Our eyes are on the future.

HELP SPANISH TOURIST BOYCOTT

FROM the Spanish comrades of the exiled CNT in this country, the SWF has received the gift of 1,000 two-colour postcards, in aid of our Press Fund. These beautifully-produced cards, 7×4 in., with the CNT imprint, depict four aspects of Franco Spain that Costa Brava tourists usually miss: photographs of a Spanish prison gallery, political prisoners, slums in Madrid and armed Civil Guards on patrol. By using these cards, which have the normal spaces for greetings and addressing, readers can help both the Spanish Tourist Boycott campaign and the SWF Press Fund. They are 6d. each, 6s. for 12, plus postage (2½d for single copies, 6d for 12) from SWF.

GROUP NOTICES

LONDON: Weekly meetings at Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Road, WC1 (5min. Kings Cross station). Fridays April 1 & 8 at 8.30 pm, then every Wednesday from April 13 at 8 pm. Please note change.

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.

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, Lanes.

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 Sion, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

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

Legislation is aimed at rank-and-file action

EIGHTEEN months ago the TU movement was inundated with propaganda full of the delights of a Labour Government. Forgotten was the record of previous Labour Governments and their all-out attacks on the TU movement, including the use of troops to break strikes, arrests and fines on miners, gas workers and dockers; instead, subtle references to how the first Labour Party was formed after the Taff Vale judgment against the railwaymen in 1906, its purpose to represent Labour and protect trade unions from government legislation.

1964 was a particularly good time to use the Taff Vale gimmick, as an appeal to the House of Lords on the *Rookes v. Barnard* case had just been turned down and the whole TU movement was shaken rigid. So the sprat to catch the mackerel was "Let's Go with Labour" and they will restore the law to what we through it was before the *Rookes v. Barnard* judgment. This time the slogan has been "You KNOW Labour Government Works!" Yes, but let's see how.

Just before the 1964 Election, the main speakers at a Labour Party Rally in Barking Town Hall were George Doughty, DATA Gen. Secretary and George Brown MP. Doughty explained that, as the law stood, union officials and funds were subject to legal action; and official could be held responsible for the actions of his members and damages could be awarded against union funds. So far as DATA was concerned, after 60 years' TU representation in Parliament, the unions had no more legal standing than before.

SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

George Brown said that, while in sympathy with George Doughty's point, he was not there to answer questions, but to acquaint people with Labour Party policy, Signpost to the Sixties. However, the LP had always enjoyed a special relationship with the unions and it was the duty of all trade unionists to ensure a Labour victory. Once elected, Labour would give special consideration to the unions. He then went into his act of nodding and winking. Many loyal Labour supporters were sure the Labour Party only needed the chance, but George Doughty didn't look very satisfied.

After the election, poor old George Brown didn't get the Prime Minister's job. Instead he had specially created for him the post of Minister of Economic Affairs. The first job of the new Government was to give MPs a 50% wage increase. After that they discovered a Balance of Payments crisis and Old Age Pensions had to wait—one of many disappointments to all Labour supporters. They immediately moved into attack on trade unions; with Ray Grunter as Minister of Labour this was only to be expected. Inquiries were set up to look into the Aircraft industry (result: redundancy for employees, more subsidies for employers); the Mines (more redundancy); the Docks (bigger profits for employers and more redundancy for dockers ahead); the Motor Industry. In fact, this Government did little else but set up inquiries that posed a constant threat to organised Labour—and, to top it all, a Royal Commission on Trade Unions.

The months that followed saw Good Old Mr. Wilson flying to America and throwing himself and the working class of this country to the mercy of American Monopoly Capitalism. He came home claiming there was full confidence in the new government and the International Monetary Fund was reputed to have made the biggest loan ever to a single country. Brown and Callaghan took a trip to Zurich and appealed to the Gnomes for another loan and got it—but they did not disclose on what terms.

Before the outcry at MPs wages being doubled had died

down, George Brown announced his Incomes Policy. It received national acclaim from the gutter press and employers' associations, but the TU movement held divided opinions. Just to show its confidence in the Government, the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions signed a three-year package deal, which meant the largest section of the engineering industry had voluntarily agreed, in exchange for the 40-hour week and one week's extra holiday, to be paid at the rate of one day per year for five years, that they would accept five shillings a week increase per year for the three years.

Brown was still not satisfied. By the autumn of 1965 he was gatecrashing the Trades Union Congress where, after a full day of agonising debate, the General Council recommended acceptance of the Prices and Incomes Policy and appointed itself as adjudicator on all wage claims. Brown demanded that, in return for a 4% increase in production, wages would be allowed to rise at the rate of 3½% and he would control prices. Many officials were only too ready to agree, but some, like the TGWU, reserved judgment and later refused pointblank to accept.

PRICES

By this time the Prices and Incomes Board had become firmly established. Within a period of one month it was reported that over 500 prices of household goods had risen and no attempt was made to stop them, while George Brown personally tracked down all wage claims.

It must surely be clear to everyone that, while prices, rents and rates continue to rise, wages are being devalued every day. At the same time, employers and bankers boast of record profits—and these are only the ones they condescend to declare, there being no law to compel them.

The Government intended to introduce legislation on the trade unions in December 1965, the Engineering Employers' Federation having reported their findings to the Royal Commission, but so far the TUC have been sitting on the fence. This is possibly due to certain unions refusing to support the idea; meanwhile, there is much conjecture on what form the proposed legislation will take. One view is that if members go on unofficial strike, or if union leaders refuse to recognise the Government's Incomes Policy, they could be fined sums of £500, but union leaders have stated they wouldn't pay and would rather go to jail. This is one form of legislation that might be welcomed by all militants; just imagine, on last year's record alone, union leaders in all the big industries would be serving several terms of imprisonment and, while the mice are away, the cats could play (this is why they won't use this method).

Another suggestion, from the Engineering Employers' Federation, is that each employee should have a work record. Should he go on strike or break the procedure he would be fined and the details entered on his record; this would be passed on from job to job, with the employer retaining the right to hire and fire (but again this will not stop wage claims).

The gutter press has suggested that the proposed legislation will mean the parting of the ways for the unions and Labour Party, but the LP would not risk losing its source of income; they would also have to consider that most Labour MPs have been sent there by the trade unions. No, it's an even bet that the legislation will be directed at the rank and file, leaving officials at their usual role—trying, by fair means or foul, to control that same rank and file.

Sixty years ago Syndicalists did not believe sending leaders

cont. on page 7 col. 1

Women workers show way in North-East

PROTAGONISTS of the sex war claim that women have no talent for industrial organisation or militancy. This myth may have originated because women predominate in sections of industry where organisation has, in the past at any rate, been poor.

This generalisation has always been strained, as anyone seeing "The Matchgirls" musical will know. In the North-East it is manifestly false. Only the other day hundreds of women workers offered support to one department at Ericsson's telephone factory, Sunderland, in an unofficial wages dispute. At the end of last year shop workers at Binns Stores, Newcastle, won a 6% rise through strike action earlier in the year; and union and non-union teenage girls at the new Rank radio factory at South Shields, struck to get their (male) steward reinstated. This month women at the Blaydon wire works came out on strike to get their steward, Mrs. Doreen McNally, reinstated; unfortunately, this dispute was made official by the union (NUGMW) and the regional secretary, Alderman Cunningham—whose name must by now be sickeningly familiar to readers—stated publicly that the union, which had only got negotiating rights because of the strike, accepted the prerogative of management over hire and fire. Only further unofficial action can get Mrs McNally back now.

Protection of shop floor delegates is basic, so is equal pay for women, so it is good to note that all the draughtsmen are supporting their three women fellow-workers on strike at Parsons Optical works, Newcastle, and they already have a token stoppage in support by 700 at Parsons Engineering, with the promise of more to come if necessary.

FIRST ROUND TO SHIP REPAIR WORKERS

THERE is a threat of a general walkout from all Tyne ship repair yards, against the new three-year package deal signed by bosses and unions.

The aim of the deal was that in future yard men shall be tied to one boss. When laid off they would be paid £10. 14. 8 a week. This is attractive to bosses and unions because it means a labour force at their beck and call and perhaps a weakening of the strong solidarity which the men have owing to working in many different yards on the river.

But to the men it does not look so rosy. For married men this sum is actually less than the dole, and even the NAB would be no help because they would still be employed. And because individual managements would keep the insurance cards, there would be no freedom of movement between yards, unless the worker asked for his cards and thereby forfeited his due redundancy payments money. What is more, some bosses are using the deal to get out of paying off long-service men under the Redundancy Payments Act. The whole thing is a direct attack on the workers' standard of living.

On February 17 there was a walkout at Palmers, Hebburn. This would have rolled down the river, but was averted when Vickers agreed that no more "suspensions" would take place for the time being. On March 1, workers at Smiths, North Shields, won a similar concession; and on March 3 a meeting of 160 stewards at Gateshead Town Hall agreed that if any man choosing ordinary laying off is refused then *all* labour at Tyne yards will be withdrawn.

There the position remains, while the unions and bosses work out another package deal in London. So far the benefi-

WHAT IS A MARXIST?

DEAR COMRADE EDITOR,

I have just received your March 1966 version of DIRECT ACTION. On page 4, in an otherwise excellent editorial on the coming farce known as a British General Election, you refer to "57 Marxist varieties of the political left" who advise workers "to vote Labour", etc.

You then go on to say you are opposed to Parliament because we believe in democracy—the real democracy of workers' ownership and control of industry. All of which, with the exception of including me among the *enemy*, I agree with.

Last year some time I wrote a long letter to *Tribune* in reply to an article by Michael "Left-Boot" Foot. They considered it safe enough to publish. The theme was "Where does power lie?" and I went on to advance the argument that power eventually lay with the majority who were workers in various fields (in industry, commerce, etc.) and that *these* workers, though largely unconscious, were potentially the *real* power. I was refuting a suggestion by Michael Foot that the only way to get anything done was by standing for Parliament. He said that any alternative meant ending up as a political hermit!

I said I was very happy to remain a political hermit along with my fellow workers until they became aware of their power and took the necessary steps to use it to their advantage.

In other words I am what used to be called (before Tories and Socialists were the same thing) a *revolutionary socialist*! I am a Marxist—I am not an Anarchist—when the chips are down. And you threw them down. What does it mean, Marxist?

Simply—one who accepts Marx's analysis of capitalism. Nothing more. Because Marx wrote very little on political action and what he *did* write was hopelessly *naïve*. But in his own field he is a giant. The field of political economy. Marx's analysis *Das Kapital* is *fundamentally correct*. In spite of vast changes in world capitalism since Marx wrote *Capital*, the basis of exploitation has not changed. The building and foundation remain. Only the superstructure has been modernised. What—you may be asking—am I getting at? Simply this—had you said "57 varieties of Trotskyists" you would, of course, have been nearer the truth, Trots are people who profess Marxism, but who fear the logic arising from the inevitable. In fact, they are not Marxist at all—in that they avoid the only means of emancipation open to workers—revolution.

We quarrel over detail. But when you misuse political terminology it is important, comrade, for me to point out that the true Marxist is at least as revolutionary as *any* Syndicalist. And more fundamentally sound in his economic and political appreciation.

Apart from that I enjoyed your article.

Fraternal greetings,

ALLEN ELLIOTT (Revolutionary Marxist).

Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.

We hereby confer on comrade Elliott the honorary title of "58th variety of Marxist"—Eds.

ciaries of this dubious charity have been the yard managements, but yard men have won back their cake by the threat of direct action, continuing the struggle along the same lines will bring them laying off money equivalent to their average pay packet and even the choice of suspension or laying off.

DIRECT ACTION REPORTER

GLASGOW BUSMEN FIGHT TO WIN

GLASGOW busmen have had enough. They are fed up to the teeth both with their TGWU, and the employers. Pay is bad and conditions are worse.

In April 1964 the whole situation blew up with a major stoppage. General dissatisfaction was widespread, then came the final stroke; the union representing busmen (the TGWU) sold bad conditions for worse in exchange for a miserable wage increase, which by the time the busmen received it had already been swallowed up in the rising cost of living. The conditions accepted in exchange for the increase (revised running times, increased spread-overs, etc.) had already been turned down by the busmen in 1963. The union officials, contrary to a directive from their members, urged the acceptance of these new schedules and tried to break the strike.

This stroke so endeared the busmen to the union that some workers in Ibrox Garage decided that the T & G could offer them nothing. They held a ballot and found there was a 6-1 vote in favour of leaving the T & G. Arising from this disgruntled background, the Bus Crews Association (BCA) was born.

The important point about BCA is that it has been formed by rank and file men and women, without the influence of any political faction. *Solidarity* (Scotland) just prints their literature when requested.

"PROGRAMME FOR CHANGE"

In their first Bulletin the BCA submit their "Programme For Change", which is to be put to all members for their acceptance, amendment or rejection. The "Programme" means control from the bottom. Clause 4 states "Delegates from each garage will meet openly and observers from the rank and file can go to meetings at any time." Another important point—"No officials to be permanent." Delegates and officials to be elected by the members. One of the factors vitally important to any rank-and-file organisation is also included in the "Programme"—"Delegates and officials to be recalled at any time by majority decision of members." And finally a clause to prevent any aspiring official from becoming a millionaire: "Officials' wages to be comparable with Busmen's."

As was to be expected the BCA have come under fire from all directions, particularly from the TGWU. Members of the BCA have been threatened with official expulsion from

the T & G which could mean at this stage the loss of his or her job. The Corporation decided a year or so ago that all members of the staff must be in a union. In view of these threats, the BCA has checked with the Establishments Section and according to them "The Corporation does not lay down which Union an employee must be a member of. The Corporation simply deals with any *bona fide* trade union which represents employees in the Corporation service. At no time would the Corporation or Heads of Depts. be called upon to determine what was an appropriate trade union or association."

This all sounds very nice and democratic, "freedom of association" and all that jazz, but obviously the Corporation, until forced otherwise, is going to insist on recognising the organisation that will cause them the least amount of trouble, and, according to reports the TGWU fits their requirements very nicely.

Up to the beginning of February this year the BCA could claim a membership of 600 with the possibility of this increasing tenfold. Contact has been made with the employees of semi-private companies outside Glasgow, many of whom wish to join.

On Sunday, March 6, there was a meeting of the BCA. 64 men and women delegates attended from almost every garage in Glasgow, plus two from outside Glasgow. The delegates decided to hold a march to Transport HQ in protest against the dismissal of Jimmy Scott, a BCA member. During the march, on reaching the TGWU offices a parcel of T & G membership cards belonging to BCA members were to be handed into whoever is on duty. Arising out of the discussion on action to take in defence of Jimmy Scott the idea of non-collection of fares was discussed.

CRITICAL STAGE

At the time of writing, the dismissal notice has been withdrawn pending an appeal. Another member of the BCA, Donald Hutton of Partick Garage, has been threatened with expulsion from the T & G which in turn could mean the sack. The motion to expel him was raised by the shop steward at a branch meeting. Normally, Hutton would have been unable to attend this particular meeting due to his shift, but by some strange coincidence he got to hear of the meeting and attended.

Also, by another strange coincidence the Glasgow Secretary of the T & G happened to be passing the door and he popped in, despite the fact that the meeting was being held elsewhere than the usual place. Mr. Grant, the Glasgow Secretary, certainly made his presence felt by stating that he would see that D. Hutton went before the General Executive Committee despite any decision the branch might make. The meeting broke up in complete disgust with most of those present walking out. The branch, in fact, opposed the expulsion.

The continued existence of the BCA is now at its most critical stage; if threatened members of BCA are sacked and not reinstated then the BCA is finished.

In a leaflet advertising the march the BCA made this point. "A man's right to join the union of his choice. The TGWU would deny you this right. Just like in Russia where you must belong to the Party or else—the "Party" in this case being the TGWU."

On the basis of its "Programme", the BCA deserves all the support it can get, and judging by reports of progress so far, the BCA will certainly get that support despite the bitter struggles it will have to face.

BILL CHRISTOPHER

LEGISLATION (cont.)

leadership breeds corruption. The rank and file should not be conned into accepting the usual excuses by union officials that the Labour Party may not be good, but they are the best we've got and the only alternative is to vote Tory. The best alternative is what we Syndicalists did on March 31: not vote at all and concentrate on reorganising our own unions into industrial unions, with delegates in place of officials, who would be subject to recall at all times. This would ensure that corruption does not creep in; at the same time bringing workers closer together. Strikes could be developed into sympathy strikes, this in turn could lead to the social and general strike, when we could do away with Parliament altogether. One thing is quite clear: we couldn't make a bigger muck-up than the one already made. to represent them in Parliament would solve the problems of the rank and file, or lead to a just and equitable society. The record of the Labour Governments only proves that

E. STANTON

SCOTTISH WORKERS: DON'T DIG DOOM!

THE Labour Government, in power for the past one and a half years, has carried out Tory policies ever since it took office. Not only has it attacked the working class by various rigged "reports" (e.g. Devlin, Geddes) and by the proposed legislation against unofficial strikes, which are the only true form of industrial democracy, but it has continued the insane nuclear policies of the previous administration, which are daily leading us nearer to a nuclear war and the extinction of humanity.

Although Wilson promised that the British Polaris programme would be scrapped, Scottish workers are still building the £40,000,000 Faslane Polaris Base on the Gareloch.

War expenditure has remained pegged at £2,000,000,000 a year. Think what this means in terms of social services, housing, health, education, industrial training, etc. Think how this expenditure could be channelled to other directions, the elimination of world poverty, which is the common interest of the international working class.

We still remain financially dependent on the Yankee capitalists, with the result that Wilson must lick LBJ's stinking feet and endorse his genocidal fascist policies of war against the workers and peasants of Vietnam. This could well be the trigger which sets off WW3. A fat lot of good the high wages paid to arms workers in places like Rosyth and Faslane will be then. You, the workers of these places, are digging your own graves.

POSITIVE ALTERNATIVE

We syndicalists do not merely say "Stop War Production". We offer a positive alternative. The only solution to real international conflict (workers everywhere v. bosses everywhere, "socialist" Russia included) is workers' control of industry and the abolition of the State. The State is the executive committee of the bosses. You, the workers, know how to run places like Rosyth. Take them over, expel the military and the civilian bosses and use these places not for their intended uses of mass murder, but as ordinary industrial plant, producing for the people of Scotland the things needed to make life good. Homes, cars, clothes, furniture. If we embark on a massive programme of aid to the poor countries of the world the workers of Rosyth could build and repair the ships to carry the goods so badly needed by two-thirds of the world's people. You the workers of Rosyth could play a great and honourable part in this new future. Instead you will die, in WW3, along with the people of

Russia. And you are using your skilled hands to build their death.

The industrial struggle and the fight against nuclear weapons are expressions of the same basic conflict, the people *versus* the bosses and their State. Until the first is solved there can be no hope of a solution to the second. Only the advent of workers' power and free society, by a real revolution, can mean a final end to the bosses and their bombs.

War production is the most immoral and degrading trade any worker can perform. It makes him little more than a willing accomplice to the greatest crime on Earth. The murder of his fellow workers.

War production is obviously morally wrong—what interest can you have to kill the workers of other countries?—but we know that an appeal on purely moral grounds will fall on deaf ears. We offer a definite alternative to the madness of State politics. Time is running out; the workers of all countries must combine to overthrow capitalism (both the Western and Eastern varieties) and the State, replacing them with a truly human society, where the means of production are held in common and the products are for use, not mass destruction.

ABERDEEN SWF GROUP

Cuban Libertarian call

THE Cuban Libertarian Movement in Exile held a plenary-session in Miami on Feb. 19 and 20. Reports of activities of the organisation were discussed at length and policies for the forthcoming period formulated.

The situation of our comrades inside Cuba continues to be extremely difficult, and each month finds more of our comrades and sympathisers in Castro's prisons and in need of our solidarity. At present, between thirty and forty members and close sympathisers of our movement are serving prison terms, in almost all cases ten years or more. Several are serving 30-year sentences. Several with shorter sentences have been released already. In addition to the above, a group of 15-20 of our close collaborators in the labour movement, who were arrested last November, are still awaiting sentence. All these prisoners and their families receive assistance (*financial and medical*) from our *Comite Pro-Presos* to the extent of its possibilities. The Cuban comrades in exile contribute regularly and generously and international solidarity received in the past has been most helpful. But it is still not enough really to cover the needs, which continue to increase. We appeal to you to help us in the solution of this problem. Whatever we are able to send to Cuba will not help comrades VENTURA SUAREZ and AUGUSTO SANCHEZ, both of whom have been executed, but it can truly alleviate the agonising situation of those who suffer a living death in Communist prisons.

Contributions should be sent to: FLOREAL DIEGUEZ, P.O. Box 241, Riverside Street, Miami, FLA, 33135, U.S.A. Cheques and Money Orders should be made out to Floreal Dieguez.

We take this opportunity of thanking in advance all those who thus express their solidarity with the victims of the Cuban counter-revolution.

Consejo de Relaciones M.L.C.E.

FLOREAL DIEGUEZ
(Treasurer)

JUAN R. ALVAREZ
(Secretary)

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