

Direct Action

For workers' direct control of industry

Inside—Gloves off in Ireland
Canadian TU convention
Wilson and Vietnam war
Why Cousins quit

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWMA)

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Fourpence

SMASH THE WAGE FREEZE!

WAGE-FREEZE Wilson's latest blitz on British workers (announced July 20, just as we go to press) is certain to have one speedy effect. As the "Daily Mail" (21.7.66) put it editorially: "It is not a 'shake-out' we are heading for, but drab, old-style unemployment." Elsewhere, the "Mail" warned that the Prices and Incomes Bill, which we analyse below, is likely to be strengthened. During the 1945-51 Labour Governments the wage-freeze was demolished by militant industrial action. The chips are down now. It is up to the workers.

* * *

It is obvious that only a Labour Government would dare to implement a wage-freeze policy and arm it with heavy penalties for non-implementation.

Labour was elected on the basis of a strong government, which would pull the unions into line by wielding the big stick. Edward Martell has advocated this form of policy for

years, possibly in far blunter terms. Even he never dreamed that his propaganda would rub off on the Labour Party.

The opening attack on workers' wages and conditions came with George Brown's Joint Statement of Intent on Productivity, Prices and Incomes. On introducing it, he declared the class war was over. The joint signing by the TUC and the employers' organisations signified to him that a truce had been declared, although in fact the TUC have never been at war with the employers, only with their own rank and file. So in essence the signing of the Statement underlined the *status quo*.

Following the Statement came the Wage Freeze (Voluntary). Unions were asked to submit intended wage claims to the TUC. Some did, some didn't. The submission of price increases was backward in coming forward. The master bakers had a brief price standstill on bread, but increased the prices of their other products to cover this.

Did George Brown honestly think the workers would voluntarily freeze their wages for a Labour Government, after MPs had increased theirs far above the 3½% norm? This was not to be, so came the decision to wield the big stick.

"ADD NOTHING"

The object of Part I of the Bill is to put the PIB on a statutory basis. Part II is the compulsory notification of wage increases, prices and a new red herring: dividends. The estimated cost of running the PIB is £335,000 in the first full year, for remuneration, travelling and other expenses. Administration costs are an additional £175,000 annually. If Part II is brought into operation, no one will dare to estimate the cost.

The new addition to the Bill is the section on Company distributions. The *Financial Times* (5.7.66) treats it more or

cont. on page 2 col. 1

BLACKLIST EXPOSED

W. A. SOUTER & CO. LIMITED
THE STEAM SHIPPING CO. LTD.
THE HEBBURN S.S. CO. LTD.
THE BAMBURGH SHIPPING CO. LTD.

BANK CHAMBERS
15 SANDHILL
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE
ALSO AT SUNDERLAND,
BLYTH AND AMBLE

30th October, 1961.

[addressee deleted]

Dear Sir,

We have recently been informed that J. H. Slater, A.B., Dis. A.No.R.234441 and [name and number deleted] have been reinstated as unestablished seafarers. You are hereby instructed that you are not to engage either of these two men under any circumstances.

If you are presented with either of the above as the only choice, you are at liberty to reject him and to obtain a replacement from another port.

This letter has not to be filed. After making a note of the names and Dis. A. Numbers the letter should be destroyed.

Yours faithfully,

For W. A. Souter & Co. Ltd.
(MANAGING OWNERS)

[signed] G. W. Pollard.

MARINE SUPERINTENDENT

ARTICLE PAGE 3

Italian Secret Service boss fired

ACCORDING to news-agency reports, General Allavena, chief of the Italian "Secret Service", has been sacked as a result of his unsuccessful investigations in trying to trace the anarcho-syndicalist authors of the kidnapping of Mgr. Marcos Ussia, Franco's ecclesiastical counsellor at the Spanish Embassy at the Vatican in Rome. Ussia was released on May 11, but all attempts to trace his captors have failed.

less with contempt. It states that there is nothing in the Bill to prevent normal distribution of dividends, even in the cases where compulsory early warning is required.

The Confederation of British Industry commented:

"'Early warning' on dividend increases will add nothing to the Government's knowledge of public companies and will be of no economic significance as regards 99% of private companies."

Failure to notify the Department of Economic Affairs could result in a fine of £50. Dividends *will not* be subject to a freeze: the Government feels that they are a source of personal income (unearned) and a reward for capital investment. Only a few months ago Brown and Wilson were rucking industry for not investing in new machinery, now they are rewarding them for doing just that.

The section on Dividends is a bromide for the opponents of the Bill—evidently not strong enough for Frank Cousins.

Terms and conditions of employment, starting on page 13, contain the teeth of the Bill. First of all it gives power to the TUC to notify the PIB of intended wage claims. This is meant to give the TUC a shot in the arm in general and George Woodcock in particular. The only objection Woodcock has to the whole idea is that the TUC hasn't the power to impose the wage freeze, instead of the Government.

Failure to notify the appropriate Minister within seven days of the claim being lodged entails a fine not exceeding £50.

If an award or settlement is made there is a freeze on implementation for 30 days, unless ruled to the contrary by the Minister. If the wage claim is referred to the PIB the award cannot be implemented until the date of publication of the Board's report.

Therefore the Bill freezes all settlements for a month and could freeze all claims for four months.

LOCAL CLAIMS AS WELL

If an employer should pay up before the legislated period, he can be fined from £100 to £500. And on the other hand, if a union or rank and file trade unionists take action to force the implementation of the award, they, too, can be fined from £100 to £500. *Local* as well as national claims are subject to the Bill.

Therefore, shop stewards wishing to improve wages and/or conditions in their plant, are subject to the penalties of the Bill. The officials of their respective unions can also be penalised.

The intention here, of course, is not only to clamp down hard on unofficial action. By involving the union official, he will enforce stricter discipline over members to protect himself.

The Bill is a five-pointed attack against the rank and file by:

1. Freezing all settlements for a month.
2. Freezing all claims for four months.
3. Threatening penalties on the employers which strengthen their resistance to ANY claims by 100%.
4. Strengthening unions in imposing firmer discipline on the rank and file.
5. Endangering militant shop stewards and reducing them to fee-collecting agents for the union bureaucracy.

The only point left out in the Bill is how the Government intends to implement the non-payment of the fines. The idea has been mooted that employers will be given power to deduct the necessary amount from wages. Everything has been taken care of, *except* the necessary co-operation of the rank and file. If we stand for this lot, we shall be as hamstrung as the Swedish workers—and they are only just beginning to discover their mistakes of the past. We cannot say we don't know the score.

BILL CHRISTOPHER

NORTH-EAST NOTES

Two kinds of strikebreaking

Old Style: John H., ship's pilot, of North Shields. On June 25: the agents for the vessel *Sapele Palm*, "officially" blacked by NUS local strike committee, undertake that no attempt will be made to sail her. 5.00 p.m.: she is "ordered" to move from South Shields across to North Shields to make room for another ship. 5.30 p.m.: assisted by tugs and foyboats she starts the manoeuvre. John H., who is not wearing his pilot's uniform, phones his wife from the bridge telling her to take their two children south. He then hoots "full speed astern", and orders the foreign crew to cast off the tugs. This unexpected action puts the tugs and foyboats in great danger. Instead of returning to the pilot's cutter, he stays with the *Sapele Palm* to Bremen. Long may he rot there.

New Style: On June 23: NUS Disputes Committee request Alderman Cunningham, Regional Secretary of the NUGMW (the local dockers' union) and member of the Labour Party National Executive, to black the *City of Exeter* at Newcastle. Her British crew had been refused leave to sign off under the "14 day" rule. The ship had been moved from London to Hull to Rotterdam previously. Ald. Cunningham: "The seamen's dispute is only concerned with their own working conditions and the sailing of ships. The discharging of cargo should go ahead and I have instructed *my workers* to start unloading tomorrow. By discharging we are not hurting the cause of the seamen." On June 24 an NUS official: "I understand that Alderman Cunningham's national headquarters will contact him this morning to tell him to co-operate a little more with the seamen."

THE TWO SIDES OF THE COIN

NEWCASTLE dockers have recently come in for abuse by a stevedoring and shipowning firm because for the past 18 months they have banned night working, so far the only dockers in Britain to do so.

Go to, variets! How could you stay at home with the family when you could be breaking your backs to keep warm shifting profits for the owners on a winter night!

To celebrate the new driver-only bus system at Sunderland, which was brought in as an economy, a civic banquet in honour of Barbara Castle is to be held. Cost: £500.

In accordance with the Labour Party's Incomes Policy, Newcastle's Labour-controlled Council is giving ten of its chief officials a £10 a week rise.

Meanwhile the Duke of Northumberland in his new role as gongster handed out another British Empire Medal to AEU steward Alfred Wood "for services to exports." The firm has not had a strike in 36 years.

NOW WHAT ABOUT STUART?

FRENCH libertarians Bernard Ferré and Guy Battoux, who were condemned in October, 1963 to 30 and 15 years' imprisonment respectively for "subversive" activities by a Spanish military court, have been released. This followed the front-paging in newspapers throughout the world, of the demand for the release of Spanish political prisoners, as a result of the kidnapping of Ussia. This month our own comrade, Stuart Christie, completes two years of a 20-year sentence in Madrid's Carabanchel jail. Thousands of Spanish anti-fascists are likewise detained. Demands for their release must be redoubled everywhere.

GLOVES OFF IN IRELAND

THIS YEAR of celebration in the Republic is developing into a severe crisis. The Minister for Finance has gone begging all over the world for loans, having squeezed dry all that was available from Irish banks prior to the strike/lockout that hit them three months ago.

The Fianna Fail government has been faced with a labour dispute situation of vast proportions resulting from its attempt to peg wage rises to 3%—but not dividends and profits. Apart from the banks dispute, this year has witnessed strikes in the Electricity Supply Board (ESB), docks, papermills and innumerable other sections of industry. Each day brings new strikes or threats of strikes. The ESB mechanical fitters recently returned after accepting an offer. They did not return to work, however, before the government had passed a law giving it the authority to make an order declaring strikes in the ESB illegal. This jackboot legislation remains in the statute book though the strike in question is over.

The future holds a challenge to this law from the ETU (Ireland), which is outside the Congress and so not bound by the Congress limit on pay-claims. The ETU(I) threatens to strike for reduced hours and an increase of 1s. an hour. At

time of writing the strike notice has been suspended pending talks.

Another strike is threatened for July 22 by the National Busmen's Union for a 40-hour week for busmen. Strike notice has been served and looks likely to bring out trains and road haulage too.

Fianna Fail's answer to these economic problems, which were the subjects of motions of no confidence by the Labour and Fine Gael Parties, is to make a scapegoat out of the workers. Apart from the repressive legislation outlawing strikes in the ESB, the government has introduced a bill curtailing the freedom of TU organisation and outlawing "unofficial" strikes. This Bill will be dealt with fully in next month's DIRECT ACTION. At present, the Dail has adjourned till September. It is to be expected that the Bill will be supported by Fine Gael, like the Electricity Bill. Opposition from the unions has not been very clear as yet, though undoubtedly it will be fought by strong shop-floor organisation in its operation *once passed*—though not before, unfortunately.

PREPARE FOR CLASHES

Space does not permit a longer review of the worsening position of the Irish working class. The housing situation remains one of the worst in Western Europe. The cost of living soars, making for greater clashes in the future. Behind all this lies the grey eminence of the recently concluded Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement and the coming of the Common Market.

Clearly, then, the trade union movement must prepare itself for these clashes. But at least an influential part of the TU movement is preparing to do a deal and help Fianna Fail out of its difficulties. This, of course, is not a new development, but what is new is the seriousness of the crisis for native capitalism and the apparent indifference of a large part of the TU bureaucracy would seem to want a new "Act of Union" for Irish Workers.

This situation must be met with a reformed TU movement certain of its aim and militant in the struggle to prevent the Irish working class from being sold into the arms of struggling capitalism. Will the TU movement in the Republic face up to this challenge? Obviously, some members will; their hands must be greatly strengthened if they are to win.

The forthcoming Bill to curtail the freedom of TU organisation, seen with a tighter industrial relations setup, will not only deprive workers of their hard-won freedoms. These Bills will open up Ireland to foreign financial exploitation on a scale hitherto unseen. There is not only the bare TU question involved but the whole future course of the independence that Fianna Fail politicians have not ceased to talk about since the beginning of this anniversary year.

The organised working class must put an end to Fianna Fail anti-trade union legislation.

PAT KELLY

Blacklist exposed

THE "SUNDAY TIMES" (26.6.66) reproduced the letter published on our front page, thereby doing an excellent public service by this cast-iron testimony that the blacklist, whose existence is denied by employers, trade union bosses and politicians, is still in force. The *Sunday Times* was told by D. W. Souter, managing director of the company which blacklisted Seamen's Reform movement militant, Jim Slater, "We have no blacklist, but we don't believe in employing seamen who are active in the union . . . we would probably not employ Slater now. I am surprised he has found a job at sea."

Members of the SWF, in common with many shop stewards and militants, have suffered from the "black book" and the faceless men who whisper into telephones. Rarely do these vindictive creatures allow their anger open expression and the telephone is used more than the written letter. One of our comrades, a seaman, only this year, got a job aboard a ship in a West Country port, arrived there, boarded the vessel, was welcomed and unpacked his gear, when the skipper sent for him and told him he had been blacklisted. The skipper was genuinely sorry and wanted him, but could do nothing.

All sorts of employers use the "underground telegraph". Another SWF member was employed by Tory-controlled Marylebone Council at their power station, just before the State took over. Leaving the job after protesting against the bad pay and conditions, he was told, "You will never get another job in a power station as long as you live, unless you drop your opposition." Directed to Labour-controlled Fulham Council's power station (there was direction of labour at the time) he was given a job, but before he could start later that week, the telephone rang with a message from his last job and he got the sack. A supervisor at Marylebone Labour Exchange, acting between the two councils, testified to this.

We know of many cases of our own comrades and other militants who have had inflicted on them evidence of the Black Book. Using the Gallup Poll principle of generalisation from public samples, tens of thousands now suffer from it, but its existence will still be denied.

WARREN REPORT

THIRTY BUNNY GIRLS are reported to have walked out over unsatisfactory conditions.

They receive £35 per week for a 10-hour stint, finishing around four in the morning. Their stockings have to be perfect at all times, which means they have to pay £1 1s. a pair frequently. Their shoes have 4" stiletto heels, which are not conducive to comfort. So all in all the bunnies' lot is not a happy one. Anyway, good luck to them—let the boss search some other warren for his bunnies.

Direct Action

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Red-baiters and blood-suckers

RED BAITING has always been the favourite pastime of some trade union leaders and MPs, sometimes under the guise of straight anti-communism and even under the guise of anti-fascism.

What it really boils down to is a witch-hunt against industrial and civil militants. Throw a load of muck and some is bound to stick—enough, anyway.

Wilson's attempt during the seamen's strike was pathetic, his information was as stale as last year's hot cross buns. One can imagine the boys at King Street rubbing their hands, as any publicity is good publicity. But for the seamen named, this could put them on the employers' blacklist.

The employment of the Special Branch raised the righteous

INTERNATIONAL LIBERTARIAN CAMP— SOUTH OF FRANCE

July 18—August 31, 1966

THE SITE is on Road D.50 which joins St. Mitre les Remparts and Port de Boue, 1 mile from St. Mitre, in the department of Bouches du Rhône. Two cypress trees mark the road to the site.

Trains to Istres or Martigues, then bus to St. Mitre.

You will have the sun, the sea, and the company of comrades from many countries. Last year 30 went from Britain.

You will need the usual camping equipment though there are some cooking facilities and an emergency tent provided.

Further information can be obtained from: Camping International, Campagne du Père Icard, St. Mitre les Remparts 13, BdR, France.

DIRECT ACTION PRESS FUND—July, 1966

Liverpool, V.J. £5 15s; Tynemouth, P. & S.R. 15s; Northolt, J.H. 3s 6d; Hull, J. & S.Y. 4s; London, S.W.6, F.A. £1 3s 6d; Wellaston, J. & T.S. 13s 6d; Washington, D.C. C.B. £1 13s 3d; Gothenburg, R.R. 3s 6d; Greenford, J.M. 3s 6d; London N.1; D.C. 4s; London, E.15, E.S. 3s 6d; Stockholm, T.I. 7s 4d; London SWF Group £3 0s 6d.

SCOTTISH READERS will be interested to know that Harry McShane has turned down the challenge to debate, made by Bob Lynn in an Open Letter we included with copies of July DA sent to Scotland. Comrade Lynn asks us to point out that the month's delay in circularising his letter was due to it having originally been scheduled for publication in the paper and held over to July, when it was crowded out by the seamen's strike.

SCRAM—A national demonstration will be held in Scotland on September 24–25 at the Faslane Polaris base, the missile store at Coulport and the bomb store at Glen Douglas, all within a few miles of each other. It is an attempt to balance a realisation of the seriousness of the nuclear situation with the enjoyment of a pleasant week-end among beautiful Scottish scenery. Organisers are the Scottish Campaign for Resistance Against Militarism and full details are available from Jim Livingstone Jr., 64 Greenhill Road, Rutherglen, Glasgow.

AMERICAN READERS—We urgently need your ZIP-Code number. Without this your copy of 'Direct Action' will soon not reach you, owing to new U.S. Mail regulations.

indignation of some MPs, Wilson had to pull that stroke to give body to his pathetic story.

One of the most vicious of witch hunting journals is IRIS. It intervenes in every important trade union election, by naming the candidates who are either communist or reputed to have communist support. The Economic League is a member of the same league.

Of course, the so-called Wilson exposure was like the hunting horn for wolfhounds. Carron of the AEU immediately climbed on the bandwagon in the July issue of the *AEU Journal*, where he virtually called for support for certain candidates. He also condemned the meeting in Birmingham, called by the innocuous *Engineering Voice*—all part of the campaign to interfere in the forthcoming AEU elections.

The whole basis of this anti-militant witch-hunt is the claim that political parties (*i.e.*, CP) should not interfere in industrial affairs. But the Labour Party has been interfering all its life—and a Labour Government is, and has been, notorious for interfering in the docks and railways, and with seamen. The Labour Party is the political arm of the orthodox trade union movement. The trade unions don't sponsor political candidates for nothing—that's why all this hullabaloo about Cousins is so much hot air. Obviously, if he remains an MP, his outlook is coloured by T & G policy.

Political parties, political groups and sects attempt—and in many cases succeed—in sucking the life blood from rank and file workers. They draw off the militants, brainwash them, betray them, then leave them high and dry. This process is continually going on, so it's small wonder that workers in a particular industry treat all outside with suspicion; they know that all politicians have an ulterior motive.

Party politics is a stinking game. Workers must purge these parasites from their ranks, no matter what shade of blue or red. Until this task is accomplished, disillusionment will be our only gain.

Both the Conservative and Liberal Parties have their industrial wings. The latter were active during the seamen's dispute. They all grind their various axes, hoping to seek their reward at the polling booths.

GROUP NOTICES

LONDON: Weekly meetings at Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Road, WC1 (5 min. Kings Cross Station). Wednesdays at 8.0 p.m. (Note: change of day and time).

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.

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

ABERDEEN: Contact R. Comrie, 288 Hardgate, Aberdeen. Regular meetings.

BELFAST—Contact Tony Rosato, 103 Deer Park Road, Belfast 14. 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—Contact Jim & Shelagh Young, 3 Fredericks Crescent, Hawthorn Avenue, Hessle Road, Hull, Yorks.

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

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

NEWCASTLE—Meetings every Thursday, 8 p.m., at The Adelaide, Newgate St., Newcastle-on-Tyne 1. Contact M. Renwick, 122 Mowbray St., Heaton, Newcastle 6.

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 Offer, 5 New Yatt Road, North Leigh, nr. Witnev. Oxon.

● The SWF has reprinted its leaflet, "A Cheap Holiday", attacking tourism to Franco Spain. Copies are available at 1s. 6d. for 100; 15s. for 1,000, postpaid.

WILSON'S PHONEY VIETNAM 'PROTEST'

THE AMERICAN BOMBING of Hanoi and Haiphong's industrial suburbs, followed by Harold Wilson's dissociation of Britain's Labour Government from the act, but not from general support of US policy in Vietnam, exposed once more the pathetic posture of the parliamentary "left".

On one hand we have the "socialist" government, desperately trying to prop up the ramshackle structure of British capitalism—and, in the process, being forced to go cap-in-hand and finger-to-forelock for financial loans from abroad particularly from the US. On the other, a bunch of so-called "left-wing" Labour MPs and their supporters, who will not accept the fact that, in this world of capitalist values, nothing is given without something being taken in exchange.

To put it plainly, the US overlords of Western capitalism, to whom Wilson and Co. are in hock, can call the political tune. Vietnam is a good case in point. Wilson can make the meaningless verbal gesture of regretting the Hanoi and Haiphong bombing, which is only the latest facet of a cruel imperialist struggle, but it would be impossible for him to cut adrift from supporting the US in that war.

The situation was neatly summed up by right-wing Tory, Sir Gerald Nabarro: "If Mr. Wilson deserted the Anglo-American alliance, the dollar would desert the pound, which would bring devaluation and disaster." (2.7.66).

At the meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party where 46 members opposed the official Vietnam policy—the number, significantly, dropped to 32 abstentions on the subsequent House of Commons division—Wilson made great play of the fact that no British troops had been sent to help the US. We have already warned of the danger that, at some convenient point, Wilson will do an about-face and, on some pretext or other send British contingents to Vietnam, particularly if those now in Malaya are withdrawn with the end of the "confrontation" between that country and Indonesia.

Strictly legitimate

IN BOLIVIA, elections; in the Argentine, a military coup. General Barrientos, here in London a few months back to have a bullet removed from his arse, elected president, with Siles as vice-president. Siles is the brother of ex-president Siles of the MNR and his ticket was that he was not a bastard. His brother is by a different mother not married to his father. Of 3,000,000 inhabitants in Bolivia, only half a million vote and these half-million do not include the miners and the workers. As the ballot is counted by officials, General Barrientos was sure to win.

General Pistarini of the Argentine was an ex-minister of Perón. He sold land to the Perón government for the building of the airport of Ezeiza. The site is always foggy in winter and hazardous for flights but it did not stop Pistarini from becoming a millionaire. Perón sent his wife from Spain to arrange matters with his colleagues in the army. As Perón is still a myth the majority of workers believe in, especially after so many years of incompetent reactionary government, the military wooed the delegates, who in turn wooed the military so that Perón could come back.

But the young Peronists do not want Perón back, as their tactic is to use his "ideology" only and his name to get power. The military gave the blow to defend, among other things, the full pay they all get when they get pensioned. With the shout of Perón coming back in the air, if Pistarini and Onganía hold elections, the Peronist party will win. Interesting things will happen if Perón decides to appear personally.

JUAN NOVEDADES

There is another possibility: large American forces now in Thailand may be relieved for action in Vietnam by British troops . . . with the same effect. Already there is a British military "presence" in Thailand. This has been discounted by the Wilson government as merely an "advisory" force. It was not so very long ago when the American forces in Vietnam operated under the same cloak.

Let nobody be deceived by Wilson's trips to Moscow, and elsewhere, on the pretext of seeking a peace formula. This is the kind of trick we have seen before from the man with two faces.

As Syndicalists we are opposed to the war in Vietnam because it has brought, is bringing and will bring nothing but death, mutilation and misery to the Vietnamese people. We are anti-militarists—and when we denounce the bombing of workers' homes in Hanoi and Haiphong it is without qualifications. But then, the only dollar aid we ever get is from American readers, whose viewpoint is the same as our own.

SPAIN: union men on trial

THE trial against members of ASO (Workers' Trade Union Alliance of Spain) will take place in Madrid on August 3, 1966.

Trade unionists and personalities throughout the world have already sent letters and telegrams to the Spanish government asking for the release of the persons involved. This was done before the date of the trial was known. The men facing trial are:

Jesus Gonzalez Quesada, a Municipal transport worker;
Mariano Nuero, a steel worker;
Antonio Nogues, employed at the Telefunken;
Manuel Fernandez Montesinos, a lawyer;
José Buirria, clerk;
José Pallach, teacher;
Hermes Piquer, electrician.

Quesada, Nuero and Nogues face sentences of 3 years' imprisonment.

Montesinos 5 years, and Buirria, Pallach and Piquer 13 years. (These three are in rebellion abroad and have sent a letter to the Tribunal to be allowed to defend themselves).

They are accused of having attended last year's Congress of the ICFTU at Amsterdam as Delegates from ASO.

CONSCRIPTION IN AUSTRALIA

The following letter was published in recent issues of Socialist Leader and Tribune. It is from J. A. Kane, Vice-President, West Australian Save Our Sons Association, 13 Kemp Road, Mount Pleasant, Australia.

"FROM time to time one reads of British migrants complaining that before leaving Britain they were not informed of conditions in Australia. It is doubtful if people in Britain are aware of Australia's present policy of conscripting 20-year-old men to serve in the army in Vietnam, where two conscripts have been killed within recent weeks.

"We hope that you will give this letter wide publicity so that any young men of conscription age, or any parents with 20-year-old sons, will think again before coming to Australia. As soon as they step ashore, these young men are liable to be conscripted and sent off to fight and perhaps die in the jungles of Vietnam—and all in the interests of American power politics.

"Our advice to intending migrants in this category is: don't come."

CONTROVERSY

Watch your step, brother!

WHAT a pity that Ernie Stanton should waste valuable space in DA (June) by writing an excellent article which didn't tell us anything we didn't know already. And why pick on Carron? What about Gunter, Paynter, Cooper, Dame Anne Godwin, Greene, Cousins, Chapple, Jenkins, Douglas, Lowthier, Willis, Tomkins, G. F. Smith, O'Brien, Collison, Beard, Padley, or any other random handful you can pick with your eyes shut off the TU muckheap? All shit stinks, and I personally cannot distinguish prime from common or garden.

There is little hope if our TU annual conferences really are no more than jamborees for militants who are both imbecile and innocent, and wide open for manipulation by full-time renegades. This is all too simple, as well as too disastrous, an explanation to account for rank-and-file conferences all too often supporting anti-working-class policies. Such conferences are an amorphous collection of delegates with a built-in loyalty but no prior communication, and can easily be outwitted and browbeaten by a "hard" platform; emotional oratory monopolising most of the very limited time, alternating flattery with blackmail, and a refusal to allow any subject to be discussed on its merits, will soon silence an opposition—these are the tricks of any "democratic" bureaucracy, whether CP, fascist or do-gooding Liberal. But the AEU is rather different, for its National Committee, which is the policy-making body, is neither an executive nor a conference; nor is it democratic.

The AEU National Committee is indirectly elected, four times removed from the rank and file. Of the two national delegates from each of the twenty-six divisions, it is traditional that one shall be the Divisional President. So for a start, National Committee can claim an elite status. The Divisional

Committees, which only meet twice a year, are indirectly elected from District Committees, and it is usual for the District President to be one delegate. Resolutions from the Branches, supposed to be embryonic new policy, first have to hurdle through District Committee, where they can be rejected, amended and generally mauled about at the caprice of DC until they are unrecognisable; they are then vetted by EC, who return what they approve to Divisional Committee to perform the same transmogrifying process, and finally National Committee receive what is left, to play about with in any way they think fit. So much for the legend that the Branches make AEU policy.

National Committee delegates are only rank-and-file members in the sense that they are still wage-earners in the engineering industry, with a qualifying AEU membership of seven years. They are very conscious that they are an elite, for it is almost impossible for any aspiring members to join the ranks of the full-time officers without a few stints first on National Committee. Almost without exception, every National Committee delegate is jockeying for position to join the bureaucracy. As Divisional Committee delegates are not well known to each other, the Divisional Organiser, who is also the Divisional Secretary, has a great deal of behind-the-scenes influence on who shall go to National Committee, and it is often said that the Organiser selects the national delegates rather than the Committee electing them. As most Organisers have strongly held political views, it is inevitable that National Committee polarises itself into pro- and anti-CP factions. (A game rather like a simplified form of Kremlinology, is to determine in April how National Committee will vote later, on one's knowledge of the Divisional Organisers.) The anti-CPs must be pro-Carron, whatever their personal opinion may be and the pro-CPs are anti Carron on any issue. Ernie Stanton can take his choice: CP or Carron. He should pause before he rushes in with the answer, and remember how he castigated Foulkes during the heyday of the CP in the ETU; is Chapple any better?

FRUSTRATED

And this raises the belated problem: why is Carron consistently elected AEU President? Of course, Carron is a past National Committee delegate, and was once a shop steward. It is also true that he was elected on a minority vote of about 10%. Oh! that apathetic 90%! I think they should be commended for their good sense in preferring the box to wasting an evening trying to find the difference between Carron and Birch.

Finally, Ernie makes me apprehensive that his next article in DA will be headed "Hands Off the AEU Rule Book". During my 30 years' membership, all decent non-status-seeking rank-and-file members have been frustrated by our infamous Rule Book. The rank and file who go to National Committee, which is also the Rules Revision Committee, have talked militantly of what they propose to do; but when they get there, about the only mouse ever delivered from their prodigious labours is higher salaries (not wages) for full-time officials. It is about time that AEU members realised that National Committee delegates, ambitious for bureaucrats' laurels, are the last body to savage the Rule Book. Of course, this is not exactly what Wilson really meant, but perhaps his remarks were intended to rally total support, including the SWF's, for what is a classic example of a Bureaucrats' Charter. Rather than waste time defending such a constitutional monstrosity, we should aim to rally the 90% who refuse to vote, for a genuine rank-and-file organisation. Let us ignore Carron—and Birch—and take shop-floor decisions on our conditions of employment, and implement them by direct participation of all. Instead of preserving a rotten instrument of a past generation, we must strive towards the completely new concept of Workers' Control.

AEU MEMBER

Death of two militants

BILL GAPE, once famed as the "Tramp's KC", died suddenly in London on June 19. Gape was an active IWW member in the US and Canada during the 1920's. On returning to Britain, he took up the plight of the thousands of homeless and unemployed wanderers, who were sleeping rough or in the "spikes" (workhouses). Gape, who had a deep knowledge of the law, used to advise those on vagrancy and other charges, often false, and won many cases for them—hence the "Tramps' KC". During the 1930's he published a newspaper, "Tramps Telegraph," which campaigned against persecution and for better conditions in the "spikes" and common lodging houses. Bill Gape was a frequent speaker on libertarian platforms and spoke at several SWF meetings last year.

HELMUT RÜDIGER, a well-known militant of the SAC (Swedish Syndicalist organisation), was found dead in a Madrid hotel room on June 9, apparently following a heart attack. Born in Germany, he was with the CNT in Spain during the 1936-39 Revolution, as a member of the group of German anarcho-syndicalists (DAS, formerly FAUD) who published a documented exposure of Nazi espionage in the Iberian peninsula. In 1939 Rüdiger went to Sweden and had since been active in the SAC. He was pre-occupied with the anti-Franco struggle and kept close contact with the underground movement in Spain.

CANADIAN TU CONVENTION

THE RECENT biennial convention of the Canadian Labour Congress, held in Winnipeg, was the usual well stage-managed affair in which the interests of the union bureaucrats received precedent over the interests of the working class.

The bureaucrats were primarily concerned with the successes of the more militant Confederation of National Trade Unions. This Quebec-based organisation has, in the past few years, almost doubled its membership, mainly at the expense of CLC-affiliated unions.

With close to 200,000 members, the CNTU could oust the CLC, with its nationwide membership of 1,286,000, as the representative of Quebec workers. Its more militant policies, its recognition of the primacy of the French Canadian in the province of Quebec and its opposition to American-controlled international unions in Canada, have all contributed to its rapid growth.

Many Quebec workers have quit CLC-affiliated unions, which had been primarily English-language, American-controlled organisations doing little more than collect union dues, and joined the CNTU. In an attempt to protect its Quebec empire the CLC has authorised its stronger unions (like the steelworkers) to raid its weaker affiliates "providing the raiding union can prove that the workers involved had legitimate beefs against services provided by their former organisation." The raided union can appeal to an impartial umpire who has 10 days to file a decision with the CLC executive council which then must make a final ruling within 15 days.

This is almost a reversal of previous CLC policy which was to keep workers tied to a particular union however badly that union may have represented their interests. The wage slave was also a slave of the union so long as the labour bureaucrats could keep it that way. Only when it started to lose its Quebec members altogether did the CLC concede the right of workers to join the union of their choice; and this not from any libertarian leanings but solely as a last-ditch attempt to stall moves to quit the CLC entirely.

CRIES OF ANGUISH

What really infuriates the CLC bureaucrats is the organisational campaign by the CNTU among Quebec railworkers and radio and TV workers, who have thus far been represented by CLC unions bargaining with the railways and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation on a national basis. According to the CLC, if Quebec workers quit the CLC rail and broadcasting unions for the CNTU, "it will take the heart and soul out of national bargaining strength."

This is hard to justify as there are already dozens of separate unions in railways and broadcasting who get together for bargaining purposes. The addition of more militant unions to their bargaining groups would tend to push them into more militant action that would do nothing but benefit all the workers concerned.

There was a minor revolt from the floor of the convention which the bureaucrats successfully squashed. This arose when, early on, a mildly-worded motion was introduced objecting to the use of court injunctions to limit picketting during strikes. It has become common practice in Canada

for an employer, as soon as he has a strike on his hands, to ask a court to restrict the number of pickets allowed outside the plant. The compliant court inevitably obliges with an order restricting picketting to one or two persons only. The employer can then bring in scabs

Delegates felt that the executive motion was much too mild and demanded a much stronger one:

"Court injunctions are a rope around labour's neck, placed there by management often with the aid of the judiciary."

"Labour cannot rely on the courts or legislature to remedy rotten law. We should have a policy of massive civil disobedience."

In the face of these objections the bureaucrats withdrew their resolution, promising to bring a much stronger one back to the convention. In fact, they waited until the last hours, when most of the delegates had left for home, to bring in and carry a motion very similar to that rejected earlier.

RAILWAY RUN-THROUGHS

One very interesting motion passed was in support of the recommendations of the Freedman inquiry. This inquiry is an example of how politicians can accidentally get themselves into a very embarrassing position.

It all started when the Canadian National Railways tried to introduce run-throughs. This meant that train crews would have to take trains over longer distances than previously and spend half their time away from home. Present practice is for crews to take trains to a convenient point where they change places with a crew from a train going in the opposite direction. Both crews then return to their starting points at the end of the day.

The railway workers were strongly opposed to run-throughs and when the CNR insisted on introducing them they all booked sick rather than work the new schedules. Legally they could not strike as they had a contract in force with the CNR. Booking sick had the same effect as striking, though, as no trains ran. So the politicians entered the picture by proposing to appoint an independent person to look into the dispute if the men would go back to work.

The idea was, no doubt, to get the men back to work, allow things to cool off, and then have a report asserting the right of the railways to insist on run-throughs. Unfortunately, something went sadly wrong. Mr. Freedman who was appointed to make the enquiry did not, for some reason, go along with the game. Instead he stated that management had no right to change working conditions without first negotiating with the unions. He recommended that labour laws should be amended to give unions the right to negotiate new work methods that adversely affected the jobs of their members. This recommendation was made for industry in general and not just the particular case of the rail workers.

This was what unions had been demanding and management refusing. It put the politicians right on the spot as they had themselves called for the enquiry and appointed Mr. Freedman to conduct it.

In the face of enthusiastic labour support for the Freedman recommendations they dared not repudiate them, nor did they have any desire to implement them; so they resorted to procrastination. They are now considering the appropriate steps to be taken in the light of the Freedman report. They will undoubtedly try their best to wriggle out of the implementation of the Freedman report but must find a way of doing so without arousing an outcry from organised labour. On the face of it this is an impossible task, but then politicians are a cunning lot of bastards and the workers must be constantly on the alert for a double-cross.

BILL GREENWOOD.

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS

OFFICIAL SECRETS from Ipswich Anarchists. Pamphlet price 9d. (incl. postage). Contact Tony Reeder, 68, Christchurch Street, Ipswich, Suffolk.

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

WHY COUSINS RESIGNED

FRANK COUSINS, the most powerful trade-union boss, head of Britain's biggest union, the Transport and General, joined the Labour Cabinet in 1964 on the crest of a propaganda wave of "Get Britain moving," "Let's Go With Labour", "The Space Age", "The Age of Automation" and all the blah of the cheaper sort of science fiction. The gas wave carried him into the newly conceived Ministry of Technology, among whose corridors he seems to have wandered lost for 19 months, until, finding the front door, he emerged to resign, stripped of all his man-on-the-moon technology.

The SF enterprise was a complete failure, carried out in dead silence. Explaining (in the *Daily Mail*, 8.7.66) his flop, Cousins says, "It was based on frustration on the way government in this country, ALL government, seems powerless to come to grips with the really crucial problems that confront us . . . We have fallen into a national habit of sloganising and cliché thinking about this. And this government, like all its predecessors, has made the same mistake. We were going to be different, we were going to catch the mood of the British public and get them to join with us in a Great Adventure." Alas, he went up like a Guy Fawkes rocket and came down like a stick.

Clearly experience has taught Frankie that Government is not a body suited to the solving of economic and technological problems. Syndicalists could have told him that for nothing. But Labour's Prices and Incomes Bill is his chosen issue, his precise cause of resignation. Yet the Labour Party's intention has always been open. Cousins himself was returned to Parliament on this same Prices and Incomes Bill and again, at the last election, he accepted the Bill and was returned as an MP on that platform. Now he attacks what he publicly accepted, as every Labour candidate accepted it. Cousins says he could no longer remain silent on this issue, but he has long been a nuclear disarmer and, since taking office, has managed to remain silent on that issue, while accepting, by deed, the anti-CND policy of Labour's Cabinet, as well as ministerial responsibility for Aldermaston.

There had to be another factor, even unspoken. That factor is the office of general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union. An old music hall song told of the fears of a man who was too long away from home. "Guess I'll hurry back, hurry back, 'Cos someone else may be there while I'm gone."

The plain truth is, the union was ready to make a show-down: loyalty to the party, or loyalty to the union. The majority of the union are unskilled workers, who were, or are, lower paid than the skilled but, by their own efforts and militancy, are rising up to, even past, the skilled men's pay. Under Labour's "No one gets more than 3½% advance," a £10 a week man gets 7s., a £20 man 14s., a £10,000 a year man, £350 a year. Under the PIB, the lower paid are doomed to remain low paid. This they will not have. They are making their will felt at job level and this the TGWU bosses know.

Cousins has had to decide what he wants to be, union official or full-time politician. He chose the regular job, but his union has killed the fatted calf for the returning prodigal: he gets a rise of £500 a year, making £3,750 a year, more than 15%—and considerably better than the 7s. a week of some of his constituents.

TOM BROWN

'White collars' lead way

FOUR HUNDRED draughtsmen (DATA) and technicians (ASSET) at Reynolds switchgear works, Hebburn, have won themselves a fourth week's holiday per year by going on strike for a total of six hours. Draughtsmen have been on three weeks' holiday since before the war, so talks started in February for the further week. The management had made no offer by June and were obviously stalling so as to miss this year's holiday season, so they started holding lightning strikes once a week by going home two hours early to miss the rush hour.

After the second strike the same tactics were started separately by the six hundred clerks (NACSS) who won the same demand after two such walkouts, the second being jointly with the draughtsmen and technicians. Their tactics hit the management even harder than the draughtsmen's, whose designs take some time to reach the line, whereas a whole day's output of correspondence is delayed if clerks take the end of the afternoon off.

These ideas did not take long getting through to the "manual" workers, who currently are lumbered with only two weeks off a year. Naturally this, combined with a working temperature of 80°F, (you can grow tomatoes there in a fortnight) made 150 labourers and fitters, in the old part of the works, hot under the collar, so they too walked out early another day.

A week later when the white collar dispute was settled the remaining 5,000 workers (in 15 unions) held an extended lunchtime meeting in the Dene Park to discuss action to get the further week (why not two?). They will have to hurry their claim along if they want that extra week this year, and that will involve keeping the works convenor, South Shields Labour Councillor Vincent Fitzpatrick, tight on his mandate—he was singularly unenthusiastic about the whole thing at the meeting. Perhaps the draughtsmen, technicians and clerks could help?

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