

Direct Action

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWMA)

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THE JUDAS CONGRESS

THERE WAS A TIME, not long ago, when officials of the trade unions were wont to orate, recalling the men and women who had suffered jail, torture and death by hanging and the countless thousands who bore victimisation and eviction from their homes to establish certain simple principles vital to the existence of their fellow workers. These principles were: the right to bargain wage rates and hours, the right to strike to

give power to these demands and the right to organise unions to ensure these primary rights.

Yet at this year's Trades Union Congress, the largest, richest, most influential union movement has publicly committed hari-kari and, with scarcely a murmur, surrendered everything without even asking the prostitute's price, without even Esau's mess of pottage.

Almost every speaker, even those who began by saying, "I am opposed, but—", or "With great reluctance—", supported the compulsory wage freeze, with its sanctions of fines and imprisonment. Half the TUC delegates even sprang to their feet to give idolatrous applause for Wilson. Some even tried to sing what sounded like, "Freeze a jolly good fellow." To be sure, if Wilson had ordered their execution, the degenerate creatures would have applauded their own hangman.

POOREST EXCUSES EVER

Surely, the excuses were the poorest ever heard at any congress. "We are doing it to protect the lowest-paid worker." Some men earn £10 a week, some £20, others £30. How, by freezing the three at £10, £20 and £30 respectively, does one protect the man with only £10 a week? By kindly preventing these lower-paid men creeping up into the higher brackets? How does one protect a £10 a week man by keeping him nailed down to £10 and raising, by taxation and extra profit, the price of everything he buys?

Many women doing the same work as men receive a lower wage. One may assume that the fat men of the TUC and the Labour Party are gallantly protecting these women, when

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A sense of proportion

"FOR the memorial service at Westminster Abbey accorded the three shot policemen the authorities have the distant but exact precedent of St. Paul's 56 years ago.

"The King did not attend the funeral service for the three policemen killed in Houndsditch, but he was represented.

"Among those still living who will remember that impressive affair is Lady Spencer-Churchill. She was present as the wife of the Home Secretary of the day.

"Although a big mine disaster had just occurred in Lancashire, killing 350 men, the *Daily Telegraph* of Dec. 23 gave the best part of 10,000 words to the funeral."

Daily Telegraph, 25.8.66

they say, "Down there you are and down there you will remain."

There are many old age pensioners who must eke out their scanty pension by part-time work. Such part-time work is especially in the category of jobs which SET, the Labour Government's employment tax supported by the TUC, is aimed against. Many will lose these jobs, which mean the difference between bread and bread with jam. Heaven protect us from the protectors, protect us from the TUC.

A check against higher prices is promised; not yet, sometime in an undefined future. But the wage freeze was applied at once, it even reached backwards. Of course, we are told we can report the rising prices which daily confront us. Report them without malice or misgiving, for there is no punishment or restraint on any manufacturer, wholesaler or shopkeeper who ups his prices. In any case, if prices were frozen some fine day, by that time they would have soared far, far above the level of July 20, wage freeze day. Indeed, even the feeble threat to control prices would send them soaring up to adjust the freezing point on Wilson's market thermometer.

NO END TO APARTHEID

VERWOERD is dead—the archpriest of apartheid has left us.

But what of apartheid: is that now lost?

The reason why apartheid has been introduced in South Africa is obvious. Simply it is the perfect answer to all the problems South Africa has to face. It ensures the rich white minority of complete power to increase their great wealth. It gives the "poor whites" a scapegoat for their appalling existence. It crushes brutally the black majority into submissiveness, and leaves them with virtually no opportunity to fight. In other words apartheid is a very successful way of governing the great South African Fatherland.

So far no one, not even the so-called left wing press has attempted to answer the question, what is apartheid? It's not only the physical separation of one human being from another because their skins don't happen to be the same colour—far worse than the physical tortures and deprivations involved is the effect on the minds of all those concerned in its operation. Its main danger lies in that it brainwashes both the non-whites and whites alike—as Bloke Modisane, the black South African writer says, in the end you start thinking, well, there must be something wrong with me, something isn't quite right in my mind. Modisane saw this happening to himself and he got out.

But what of the blacks and whites who remain, most of whom have no possible hope of getting away? What is going to happen to these people? Even more enlightened whites are now beginning to wonder—"Well, perhaps there is something very different and wrong with these blackies." And with the blacks living separated from the white community, even using different roadways in some cases, the gap that was always there instead of closing is widening. Apartheid year by year takes enormous leaps backwards.

Hitler proved that a whole nation could be brainwashed successfully, providing that the lie is well told and for long enough. Apartheid is just as positive as Hitler's ovens—except it is destroying minds in South Africa, not bodies. It is not just a word bandied about meaning separate living accommodation, it is a new way of life for South Africa. No attempt is made to integrate the white and non-white population, in fact the complete opposite is happening, economic compulsory segregation.

With the magic unassuming word apartheid, Verwoerd and his henchmen have succeeded in persuading enough people that they are being rational and doing the right thing for the sake of their fellows and their country. **MARYLYN HUTT**

The last persons to attempt legislation to affect prices were the Tories under Heath in early 1964. The Act against Retail Price Maintenance was meant to protect the shopkeeper who wanted to sell high-profit-margin goods at a price lower than that fixed by the makers. At first a few commodities were reduced in price; now after 2½ years, the Act seems to have been dumped. There is no visible effect on prices and the "out of step" shopkeeper is not protected. Very recently a shopkeeper, William Bartfield, had to pay £700 in legal costs for selling a 6s. 8d. gramophone record for 6s. Aptly, the record was called "The Carnival is Over." So much for price freezing.

Then comes the feeble excuse, "But State wage control is only a temporary measure. It is only for six months, plus six months." If it were for only six weeks we would oppose it, but from the beginning of the affair we have warned workers that such legislation always has the tendency to be permanent. PAYE was "temporary" when introduced 25 years ago. Income tax itself was "temporary" when introduced in the 19th Century. Now the beans are spilling. On the Friday of Congress week, Callaghan, Labour's Chancellor of the Exchequer, said that Britain would never go back to the system of free negotiation of wages.

Crossman, Labour's Leader of the House of Commons, in a recent speech at Coventry, said that, "there would be no going back to the pre-freeze system of free collective bargaining." Russell Kerr, Labour MP for Feltham and an EC member of the foremen's union, ASSET, replied, "If Mr. Crossman's views are those of the Government, they make monkeys of those of my parliamentary colleagues who reluctantly supported the Government's austerity measures, in the perhaps naive belief that they were temporary and exceptional." Monkeys as MP's have long been prophesied.

When a boy I read a novel cast in the future, when capitalism had been swept away and men and women were free, healthy and without care or fear. Our castaway in the future was being shown around the Golden City, when he came upon a statue of a man bent with toil, ragged, fearful and careworn. It was called the Wage Slave. "Why do you have such a reminder of the bad old days in such a beautiful square," he asked his guide. "It is there in case any of our young people wish to return to slavery," the guide answered. How foolish, I thought when I read this; no one would wish to return to slavery. I was wrong . . . the representatives of nine-million trade unionists want it.

What caused the male impersonators to act thus? Treachery, cowardice, idiocy? Something of all three in each of them, probably, but another factor must be recognised—the complete intellectual bankruptcy of the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress.

What of those who said to the workers, "Get into the Labour Party, Vote Labour, Return a Labour Government"—the Communists, the many brands of Marxists and Trotskyists? They are doubly guilty, because they now repudiate their own propaganda.

We can expect nothing from them or the trade unions. Resistance must come from the job, from the shop floor. The shop steward and factory committee movement, which had its origin in Syndicalist propaganda and ideas, is the only force which can defeat Labour's deep freeze. Not in industry alone, but in schools, offices, shops, wherever men and women produce commodities or give service, workers must meet, make decisions, elect delegates and devise ways of resistance. The workers' committees must unite in federation on a nation-wide scale, confronting the discredited, hollow elephant of the TUC with a live, fighting movement.

But such a movement must be free from all control by party or government and turn its back on the TUC, which might be pictured as an empty can tied to the shirt tail of a flat-voiced, sloganised tape recorder.

TOM BROWN

NOW, OR ALMOST NEVER!

"AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL", is an old working class slogan, which regrettably has been either forgotten or ignored over the past few years. This slogan has always had real meaning but never more than now, and in the months to come.

The Labour Government policy of higher unemployment is beginning to show. They choose to call it "re-deployment", in which case one is forced to ask, *re-deployment to what and where?* Unemployment saved the capitalist system in the 30's off the backs of the workers. They hope to do the same again.

The British Motor Corporation has announced that several thousand workers would be dismissed as redundant on November 4. In the meantime, short-time working would be introduced, some 30,000 workers will go on to a three- or four-day week immediately, to be followed by others in the following weeks.

The union leadership reaction is philosophical to say the least. Carron, President of the AEU, when informed, remarked: "While we are not happy about the situation we are pleased that BMC have brought us into consultation right from the beginning. And our assessment is that, as far as ever it is possible for BMC, they are going to do all they possibly can to cushion the effects of this adverse circumstance".

Carron continued: "We are rather encouraged that BMC are keeping a watchful eye on the future in order that, when the present crisis has eased, the Corporation will be equipped and ready to meet the challenging situation which undoubtedly the future will pose."

EMPTYING OUT

This last remark of Carron's is of the utmost importance. Taking it at face value, "Equipped and ready" implies the technical sense, but the real significance is (1) In the process of "emptying out" the militants will go, and if and when restaffing begins they will not be among the workers re-employed. (2) A minimum labour force will be re-employed for the same productive output.

This is a heaven-sent opportunity for both employers and unions to get rid of trouble-makers. It will be argued that under the policy of "first in, last out" militants may not be affected, but Brother!—with this amount of redundancy the sack will penetrate deep.

George Barrett, general secretary, Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, described the news as a "little bit of a setback, but synonymous of what is happening due to Government Policy." It's more than a bloody setback, if you are one of those out on the stones.

The Government is fairly happy about the situation, because there is a shortage of skilled men in the Midlands. Without wanting to detract from any car worker's ability, have they the skill for the implied vacant jobs? Plus the question of distance from their homes, and the question of accommodation.

Mr. Harry Unwin, secretary, Midlands T & GWU stated: "We shall *actively* oppose any redundancy until we are satisfied there is no other way of handling the problem". Which means active prolonged natter and final acceptance of the situation.

Recently on "This Week" (ITV) Harry Nicholas, Assistant General Secretary, T & GWU, said that it was *not* going to be official T & GWU policy to fight all sackings; each case was to be considered on its merits.

Who determines the "merits"? Surely, to quote only one case, the 1,000 ICI workers at Doncaster, who received nothing, rate more merit than sympathy, which is all they received from both Sir Paul Chambers and Nicholas. This is the "militant" T & G policy. In opposing Government policy they support it. Wilson has stated quite clearly **NO WORK SHARING—SACK THEM!** T & G reply "take each case on its merits".

YOUR TURN TOMORROW?

Looking through the employers' daily bible, the *Financial Times*, over the past few weeks, sackings and short-time working are reported throughout industry—Engineering, car workers, foundry, aircraft workers in Belfast, textile workers in Preston, grocery workers in Kent, railwaymen in Derbyshire. They all have something in common, either the sack or reduced earnings. The only way other workers can help them is by active solidarity. Who knows, if the rot is not stopped now, it could be your turn tomorrow. "One out, all out."

The situation is not going to get any better. Many workers believe that, for 12 months at the most, wages and conditions are going to be rough, but after that we all steam in for wage increases. Some even hope for back pay to cover the standstill.

Let's get things in their right perspective. Under the first six months of wage freeze we get NOTHING. The second six months of "nil norm"—again NOTHING and the next two years of "severe restraint" may be peanuts.

END OF FREE BARGAINING

Plus the very important fact that the free type of wage negotiations experienced before July 20, 1966 will not be continued. Richard Crossman, Lord President of the Council, said that after the wage freeze ended the Government would still not allow a return to free collective bargaining. In a later speech he attempted to amend this statement by saying he did not think it meant collective bargaining had "gone for ever". Richard, you were right first time; the damage is done, you won't capture the Left Constituency vote now.

Jim Callaghan has the future in the right perspective (if we allow it) when he stated that an incomes policy would be needed more than ever when the present standstill was over. He went on to explain that until the CBI (employers) and the TUC were able to handle the problem between them, the Government would intervene.

The *Financial Times* editorial (13.9.66) got the message immediately with the banner headline "Wage negotiations Swedish style". In the fourth paragraph it reads: "When Mr. Callaghan last week hinted that the Government would have to continue running its incomes policy until the CBI and the TUC were able to handle the problem between them it was presumably the centralised method of striking a bargain which he was thinking of—minus the acceptance of wage drift, presumably. But what must be realised is such a system can only work if the trade union movement as a whole enjoys

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SMASH THE WAGE FREEZE!

by **BILL CHRISTOPHER**

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Direct Action

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Bending the law to fit the coppers

IF the Prices and Incomes Act aims to tie us all up on the industrial plane, there are also increases in oppressive State power threatened elsewhere. In the autumn Labour presents its Criminal Justice Bill, and the scene has already been set by the ballyhoo around the shooting of the three London detectives in August as well as statements by various well-paid windbags.

The shooting of three policemen and the resulting manhunt held the headlines for a good fortnight. It gave the hang-'em-and-flog-'em brigade led by Drunken Sandys, MP their biggest spree for years. (We wonder that Sandys, such a picturesque figure, does not prefer beheading!). Labour politicians took a more moderate line and Wilson was content with attending the memorial service along with other government members. At the service the Dean of Westminster said: "The death of these three servants of the law and order of our country will not have been in vain if it marks a turning back into a discipline for which I believe the soul of this country is now more than ready."

Just as there has never been a year within human memory when we have not been told that we should work harder and earn less in order to get the "country" out of one supposed "difficulty" or another, so there has hardly been one when crime has not been on the increase, with a gallant band of police, magistrates and judges doing their best to uphold the law of the land over the surging crime wave. Lately, however, the police have been shown up by events in a thoroughly unsavoury light and their image is a bit murky to say the least.

A few short years ago, it came out that in Sheffield rhinowhairs had been used in the process of "interrogation" and the extraction of "confessions". Then Det.-Sgt. Challenor of London West End Central was proved to have regularly planted "evidence" on a number of persons, some of whom were subsequently acquitted or released from jail. And there was the case of Hal Woolf, a Soho artist who died in police custody of head injuries.

Inquiries were held, disciplinary actions were taken. Challenor was found insane. Whitewash was also slung by the bucketful. But despite the scapegoats and the whitewash, the scandals, like all scandals, only showed up the whole institution involved. Television programmes exposed "ordin-

ary" police treatment of suspects—not much different from the scandalous.

None of this did much more than confirm what most workers knew or suspected already. But it was now out in the open. Only something like the violent death of three men and the pitiful bereavement of their innocent families could provide the rallying point for the sympathy for the "servants of law and order" to which we have recently been urged.

In the context the social intent of the Dean of Westminster's remarks are quite clear. In class society "law and order" means first and foremost the protection of the property and privilege of the rulers. The vast majority of acts called crimes are against property. Workers are robbed *legally* day-in and day-out at the point of production, but cross the line of legality at your peril . . . remember the train robbers' sentences.

The rich and powerful expect the sacrifice of life and liberty in their interests, which makes their grief meaningless. The owners and bosses even send their own sons off to die in their wars, so what can they really care for three policemen—three "servants"? The pursuit of power and respect for human life work in opposite directions.

In the field of legal "reform", the Lord Chief Justice claims that many criminals escape conviction and this is due to the jury system. The Home Secretary is therefore to introduce majority verdicts in the Criminal Justice Bill. Milords Dilhorne and Doublecross consider that the guilty are favoured by present court procedure. Suspects should no longer be cautioned, all confessions or statements should be admitted as evidence unless otherwise seemingly unreliable, etc. The Judges' Rules, which supposedly protect a suspect from unfair questioning may also have to go, warns R. Taverne, junior Minister at the Home Office, and "It may well be that we have to reconsider such questions as the silence of the accused . . ." That is to say, it is possible that the Bill will remove the laws which prevent refusal to enter the witness box being used as proof of guilt.

Nothing changes much, whichever politicians are in office, but in the case of Labour things often get a bit worse.

GROUP NOTICES

SWF 8th CONFERENCE

Manchester, November 13, 1966

Social previous evening.

For details contact Secretary SWF, Bill Christopher, 35 Cumberland Road, London, E.17.

ABERDEEN: Contact Ian Macdonald, 15 Colton Street, Aberdeen.

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.

LONDON: Weekly meetings at Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Road, W.C.1 (5 min. Kings Cross) at 8.30 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 5. Group business meeting to discuss National Conference.

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.

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

NEWCASTLE: Contact M. Renwick, 122 Mowbray Street, Heaton, Newcastle 6.

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

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

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

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

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IRISH TRADE UNIONS UNDER FIRE

THE PROPOSALS for revision of trade union legislation and industrial relations in the Trade Union Bill and Industrial Relations Bill are the most serious attack on the trade union movement in Ireland since William Martin Murphy threw down the gauntlet in 1913.

There is a difference as we are confronted with a direct comprehensive assault by the State itself and in 1913 Larkin faced Murphy who was backed by the State. A slender difference, but one which demonstrates that O'Casey was not one degree off the beam in the analysis of the "national struggle".

These Bills, with the Electricity Supply (Special Provisions) Act, of June 1966, demonstrate how close we are to the precipice and only widespread industrial action can show the Fianna Fail Government that workers will not tolerate interference with the freedom of the trade union movement.

CLEAR MESSAGE

Fianna Fail has determined to show the Irish middle class they have a government with the will to govern and lead—into the Common Market, whatever the consequences for the workers. If an Ireland satisfactory to British and West German capitalism is to be created on the sacrificial altar of the Irish workers, then Fianna Fail is prepared to do it with Fine Gael support. This is the clear message from recent speeches of Fianna Fail leaders, semi-State managing directors and middle-class professional interests. Is the labour movement prepared to meet this clash and smash it? This is the vital question.

It is proposed to withdraw the protection of the Trades Disputes Act, 1906, from unofficial strikes and strikers, and from unions involved in a strike within the three months following a Labour Court recommendation. Thus unofficial strikes will be virtually illegal and the Labour Court will become an Arbitration Court with its findings binding on both sides. The Court will base its findings on "the national interest" and not, as at present, on seeking a settlement on what is fair and just. This leaves us to interpret "the national interests", which is always the employers' and State interests. The Labour Court will be expanded and hear disputes on condition that its findings will be binding.

Before a strike, a secret ballot must be held, and even then the executive may not issue strike notice; the Court must be given a statement giving details of the ballot and certifying it was secret. The negotiation licence will be raised to £3,000 from the present £1,000, and will be granted only after the Government has consulted with the "appropriate representative organisations". Group licences will be granted to a particular group of unions in any industry and this will exclude any other unions. These proposals are aimed at recent breakaway unions and at averting any future breakaways.

The laws will give the Government the authority to with-

SPANISH WORKERS STRIKE

AFTER a nine-day strike of some 2,300 workers employed in the Firestone-Hispania tyre factory at San-Miguel-de-Basauri, near Bilbao, in the Basque country, the management agreed to increase workers' wages by an average of 11 per cent. as from 15th July. At the same time, the lock-out of the workers, ordered by the factory management on 6th July to repress the strike, was lifted.

In Barcelona, some thousand workers of the Andreis Metalgraf factory struck on 15th July, 1966, in protest against the dismissal of one of their fellow workers.

TGWU Record, Sept. 1966

draw negotiating licenses. This hits at the right of union organisation and, even without declaring a fascist State, gives Fianna Fail the right to allow or disallow the legal existence of any union not conforming with its own labour, national or political policies. There is wide significance in this clause; the Ringsend branch of the Labour Party has accurately denounced the Bill as "crypto-fascist". The description is no cliché.

An expelled union member is precluded from membership of any union for six months. If he feels this has prejudiced his means of livelihood, he may appeal to the Courts. A ridiculous statement; it is not difficult to imagine the verdict of a Court. That is, presuming the worker having become unemployed, without any income and with family responsibilities, had raised the capital to employ a solicitor and a barrister. It would be futile, even if he ever raised the cash!

These clauses will strengthen the hands of TU Congress bureaucrats against so-called "splinter groups" which, more often than not, are the voice of many, even a majority. The famous case was the busmen in 1963. Regular readers of DIRECT ACTION will recall the negative attitude of the IT & GWU Executive to the busmen's demand for a meeting during five weeks' strike. These events led to the National Busmen's Union. It will be a sort of gentlemen's agreement, Fianna Fail scratching the bureaucrats' backs and they returning the compliment.

STRIKES DENIED PROTECTION

The proposals provide a legal definition of an official strike; strikes outside it will be denied protection of the Trades Disputes Act, 1906. There will be a limit on picketting in unofficial strikes and picketting outside houses will be illegal. The Labour Court will draw up Rules of Fair Employment to cover all matters other than hours and wages and these rules will be binding. Not only is unionism greatly restricted in negotiations for pay and hours; its function is usurped on matters such as hire and fire, working conditions and toilet facilities. Amalgamation of unions will be encouraged and the State will pay redundant officials.

This piece of Fianna Fail's glory will set the State deep into the rights of union organisation. The officials paid by the members will be virtual civil servants, paid functionaries of the State's labour arm. In the 'thirties, elements of what is now the Fine Gael party were noted for their support of the corporate State, which Fianna Fail "opposed". They have absolutely nothing to learn from these proposals—a comprehensive series of laws designed to throttle the unions and bring them under the State's heel—a Fianna Fail State. One labour movement, one political party, one nation!

The reaction of the Congress of Trade Unions has been pitiful. Labour Party reaction has been a little less pathetic. Consolation may be gained from the fact that the recent Congress conference in July condemned the proposed legislation, as they condemned the Electricity Supply (Special Provisions) Act. Congress has also indicated it would boycott the "new" Labour Court. However, only two unions have been vocal in opposing the Electricity Supply legislation outlawing strikes in the Electricity Supply Board (ESB), the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers and DATA. The rest seem to suffer from a disease of the larynx. Congress continues to talk to the new Minister for Labour as if nothing had happened.

Already it has been reported that the Minister for Labour is prepared to repeal the Electricity Supply (Special Provisions) Act if Congress will grant him guarantees for industrial peace in the ESB. Michael Blair of the EC of the

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Help Stuart Christie

THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY of our comrade Stuart Christie's arrest in Spain again found him featured in the British Press, but not, unfortunately with news of his release from Madrid's Carabanchel jail, where he is serving a 20-year sentence, for allegedly carrying explosives to the anti-fascist underground movement.

The Christie story this time was headlined "BRITON GETS HIS GCE IN SPANISH JAIL" (*Daily Mirror*, 5.9.66). "Stuart Christie, the nineteen-year-old [he is actually 20] Briton jailed in Spain for 'terrorist activities' was the pride of his prison today," it reads. "For Christie had triumphed in three GCE examinations that he sat in his cell in Madrid's Carabanchel jail. And everyone there is delighted. He has passed in English and Spanish at A-level and in history at O-level. The prison governor phoned the British Consulate to tell officials about Christie's success. And the consul, Miss Mildred Foster, went to the jail to congratulate him."

So everyone seems to have been happy. Apart from Stuart Christie, who still faces years in prison. "He may be freed

NOW OR NEVER (cont.)

sufficient authority to make its members accept any settlement reached. In Sweden this is possible because there are fewer unions, most of which cover whole industries, and because there is a coherence of purpose, which is manifestly lacking in this country."

It winds up by saying: "It is the Swedish unions' willingness to help ensure mobility of labour and its more efficient use which could be the model for this country." There is the desire by some of the Swedish unions to break away from this centralised setup, they realise the acute dangers of centralised control.

There is no doubt about the future of the Labour Government's industrial policy, they are after a minimum wage which is interpreted by the employers as a maximum, as has happened in some redundancy payments.

ACTIVE SOLIDARITY ACTION

If workers are expecting any joy from the Labour Party Conference in October, they are in for a shock. No matter how many resolutions are down opposing the Wage Freeze, that's where they will be at the end of the conference—"down" Wilson has stated he was elected to govern, so no mere conference of Labour Party supporters will alter that. Russell Kerr, Michael Foot and S. O. Davies can scream their heads off, it will not alter policy. It might ensure election on to the National Executive, I suppose this is what counts most.

The outlook for the future will be bleak, if we rely on pseudo-left wing politicians and union leaders, even if they have resigned from the Cabinet. The only policy we as workers can adopt is one of combined opposition. If we don't carry out active solidarity action, we will join our mates on the industrial slag-heap.

BILL CHRISTOPHER

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS

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

PLYMOUTH ANARCHIST GROUP: Contact J. Hill, 79 Underland, Plymstock, Plymouth, Devon.

ALTRINCHAM LIBERTARIAN YOUTH — Contact Stephen Richards, 25 N. Vale Road, Timperley, Altrincham, Chesh.

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

within a few years," the *Mirror* story ends. Three, four, five, six?

We are glad to learn that Stuart has kept his mind active during the deadening 24 months of imprisonment. We shall be far more pleased when he is released and allowed to return to Britain.

A comrade who answered our appeal in the last issue of DA, by writing to the Foreign Secretary, was told in reply that "considerable activity" was going on about the Christie case. So far this activity has not produced any results, and we therefore urge all readers to bombard their MP's and the Foreign Secretary (George Brown) with letters, demanding that the British Government take urgent steps to get Stuart's immediate release.

With Stuart we couple the names of Francisco Carballo, jailed for 30 years at the same time as himself, and all those thousands who are rotting in Franco jails for the "crime" of acting or speaking against fascism.

KEN HAWKES

Letters

DEAR COMRADE,

Direct Action for Chronically Sick and Disabled

These people seem to be thrown on the scrap-heap of British capitalism. The Disablement Income Group (DIG) is to compile a list of as many disabled people as possible and to press the Government to take action and bring about a National Disability Pension, at a Conference of the Socialist Medical Association. It calls upon the Government to accept the large volume of evidence that bronchitis and emphysema should be classified as industrial diseases. But the answer is to the disabled, "We are of course very conscious of the needs of all chronically sick and disabled people."

The question of what we can do for disabled people is a complex one, and it would be wrong to suggest that we are likely to solve it in a hurry. The Social Security Bill replaces National Assistance, but still the inquisition of the Means Test remains. This is not the solution for the long-term sick and disabled but direct action to the department concerned.

Yours fraternally,

ROBERT E. WILLIAMS

Slough, Bucks.

DEAR FRIEND,

Your contemporary *Peace News* recently drew attention to the case of DYKES SIMMONS. I do not know whether anything has appeared about this case in DIRECT ACTION.

Dykes Simmons is a young American who was (apparently wrongly) arrested and charged with murder soon after crossing the Mexican border for a holiday.

He was sentenced to death, which latter has not yet been carried out and he has been kept in prison for 6 or 7 years. If efforts are not made to get his release he will be there at least 23 years more. He was offered freedom if he confesses but he refuses.

His mother and two friends visited him recently and found him lying in a pool of blood. He had been brutally beaten by the guards that morning.

The prison is the State Penitentiary, Monterey, Mexico and anyone interested in helping him should write to the Rev. Ashton B. Jones 6252 N. Golden West, Temple City, California 91780, USA.

The conduct of the US authorities has been deplorable, cowardly and evasive.

I am sure your readers will want to help him, so they should write to the Rev. Ashton Jones who will send full particulars. Please do all you can. One other point—he is kept in a tiny, sweltering cell.

Kew Gardens, Surrey.

PHILIP OSMOND

Syndicalists in the Russian Revolution, Part 2

THE ANARCHISTS were very successful with their propaganda for workers' control of production. The publication *Novy Put*, organ of the Conference of Factory Committees, was edited by the Anarchists. The Bolshevik, I. Stepanov, after a study of these factory committees that spread like wildfire, concluded that: "We are witnessing something which partakes somewhat of the Anarchist visionary dreams about autonomous industrial communes."

The Anarchists enthusiastically engaged in the socialisation of housing, forming house committees that grew into city-wide block and street committees. It is interesting to note in this connection that in Kronstadt, the Bolshevik faction left the soviet in protest against the socialisation of dwellings, because it was not controlled by them.

In Petrograd, according to Sukhanov, the Anarchists had their territorial base in the Vyborg district, where the working class masses were densely settled. The Anarchists socialised the secluded villa of the Czarist Minister Durnovo. The beautiful, spacious grounds and gardens were not usurped by the Anarchists for their own use, but rather were used for kindergartens and playgrounds for children and a place of rest for workers. Kerensky threatened to "burn the Anarchists out of the villa with red hot irons." After long hesitation, Kerensky's Minister of Justice, gave the Anarchists 24 hours' notice to leave the Durnovo Villa.

Immediately, 28 factories went on strike. Armed worker detachments and crowds of workers joined the Anarchists in defending the villa. To dislodge the Anarchists, Kerensky mobilised a reliable military unit of Czarist officers. In the

fighting, the Anarchist forces suffered many wounded and some fatalities. The workers held out as long as they could, but were forced to give up the villa in the face of overwhelming military power. The whole affair increased the growing dissatisfaction of the Petrograd workers with the Kerensky government.

These are but a few examples of the widespread Anarchist activities during this period. If the Anarchist message was favourably received, as we have indicated, because the spontaneous action and the demands of the people coincided with the Anarchist ideas, why did Anarchism fail to shape the Russian Revolution? On this question there has been a good deal of speculation. The best explanation we think has been given by the Russian Anarchist, Voline. There are spontaneous libertarian tendencies in every revolution, but spontaneity is not enough. The fact that people unconsciously, accidentally, act in a libertarian manner does not mean that they understand the ideas and principles of Anarchism. They may even be reactionaries who do not have even the faintest notion of the implications of their acts. This explains why promising popular movements are taken over by clever politicians. Voline sums up the situation in these admirable paragraphs of his book *1917: The Russian Revolution Betrayed* (pp.15-16):

"... despite the unfavourable circumstances [which Voline discusses in a separate chapter] the Anarchist idea could have blazed a trail, or even won, if the mass of Russian workers had had at their disposal at the very beginning of the revolution organisations that were old, experienced, proven, ready to act on their own and to put their ideas into practice. But the reality was wholly otherwise. The organisations arose only in the course of the Revolution.

"To be sure they immediately made a prodigious start numerically. Rapidly the whole country was covered with a vast network of unions, factory committees, Soviets, etc. But these organisations came into being with neither preparation nor preliminary activity, without experience, without a clear ideology, without independent initiative. They had no historical tradition, no competence, no notion of their role, their task, their true mission. The libertarian idea was unknown to them. Under these conditions they were condemned to be taken in tow from the beginning by the political parties. And later the Bolsheviks saw to it that the weak Anarchist forces would be unable to enlighten them to the necessary degree.

"Under these conditions, in order that the Anarchist idea might blaze a trail and win, it would have been necessary either that Bolshevism didn't exist, or that the Revolution had left sufficient time to the libertarians and the working masses to permit the workers' organisations to receive that idea and become capable of achieving it before being swallowed up and subjugated by the Bolshevik State. This latter possibility did not occur, the Bolsheviks having swallowed up the workers' organisations and blocked the way for the Anarchists before the former could familiarise themselves with Anarchist concepts, oppose this seizure, and orient the Revolution in a libertarian direction."

Voline's remarks should not be taken to mean that the Anarchists and other revolutionists, faced with Bolshevik "victory", surrendered without a fight. The Makhno movement, the Kronstadt uprising, the strikes and revolts that took place all over Russia, were heroic attempts to save the Revolution from its usurpers. These relatively "unknown" fighters have written a glorious page in the history of man's struggle for freedom.

S.N.J.

IRISH TU's (cont.)

IT & GWU, representing a majority of workers in the ESB, has rejected talks on such a basis. DATA has refused to talk with "a pistol to its head"; however, the talks are between Congress and the Minister!! What it amounts to is that if Fianna Fail can get Congress support for this widespread legislation, the Electricity Supply Act will be waived.

The labour movement, if this legislation is to be defeated, must set its sights on Fianna Fail. This party has never relented in its efforts to tame the unions to its policies since coming to power in 1932. It has used the Offences Against the State Act against trade unionists, it has intimidated the workers with legislation, and it has acted upon, as much as it dared, the Trade Union Act, 1941, designed to put "British" unions out of operation; ESB legislation of 1961 and more recently springs to mind, and finally Fianna Fail has used its influence to split the TUC (in 1944) and the Labour Party, when the latter appeared to threaten its entrenched position.

This time the Labour Party and Congress have acted with a little determination and more talk. The Congress Executive should tell Fianna Fail that the moving of this legislation will be met by a General Strike and Congress must be seen to organise and make preparations for such action.

Most important, workers (and in the last analysis the solution is in their hands), must organise shop-floor committees to meet this kind of Fianna Fail fascism. From shop-floor committees their cry must be heard at branch meetings and from there to Trades Councils, to district and regional committees up to national executive level. The demand for industrial action must be heard. It should be made clear that the consequences for the "darling" national interests and national economy of such action rests with the Fianna Fail Government.

DAVE PICKETT

WHEN WILL THEY EVER LEARN?

AS PART of their campaign against the Labour Government's Incomes Policy and Wage Freeze, five Technicians' Unions, (ACTT, ASSET, AScW, DATA, STCS) held a meeting at the Conway Hall in London on September 1, where their General Secretaries presented their case.

Both in their speeches and the pamphlet *The Bad Package*, they showed the controlling influence of the international banks, the United States and the International Monetary Fund. As in the *Financial Times*: "It [the proposed early warning legislation] was, quite simply, the condition laid down by the International Monetary Authorities, and, in particular, by the US Secretary of State for the Treasury, Mr. Fowler, for the support operation of sterling".

Britain has a commercial trading surplus of £300 million p.a. while overseas military expenditure amounts to £600m. So much for those who still believe in that mythical creature "the lazy British worker living beyond his means".

HAS NOT HELPED LOWER-PAID

It was pointed out that the Policy has not benefited the lower-paid. How could it? If one group of workers refuse a rise, the employer keeps it as profits. The railwaymen and farm workers will never see it. The Freeze not only preserves the present unequal distribution of wealth and income (7% of the population own 84% of the wealth) but actually worsens it. Wages lost now are lost forever, while profits thereby rise, and even if dividends are frozen, which is not compulsory under the Prices & Incomes Act, they stay as profits, to be paid out later—"a piggy bank for the rich", as Clive Jenkins of ASSET put it.

Prices would be scarcely affected, as pointed out in last month's DIRECT ACTION. They are allowed, under the White Paper to increase if demand rises, materials or transport cost more, or if costs go up due to Government action (we've already seen the effect of increased purchase tax and the Selective Employment Tax in this context).

In the pamphlet, wide differences, sometimes amounting to complete reversals, were shown between the statements of Labour MPs in opposition and their actions and policies in power.

Yet, while we were told: "Maintain your loyalty to the principles of the TU movement, not to individuals or governments," Mr. G. Doughty said the remedy for the situation was to work to change the Labour Party's policies! So once again we are urged to write to and lobby MPs, work in the local branches and trades councils. Jenkins opened his speech with nauseating congratulations for those 22 MPs who had had the courage to abstain on something they are supposed to be implacably opposed to.

Their alternative policies to overcome the "crisis" were as follows: (1) Cut in military expenditure; (2) Selective Import

controls; (3) End sterling's role as an international currency; (4) Increase productivity and wages; (5) Control overseas investment. There is no space here to discuss all the implications of these, but apart from the first, they look to me like the measures urged by the modern capitalist theoreticians. As for higher productivity—who's going to buy all the extra goods and what if the other industrial countries do the same thing?

All these policies, even if adopted, leave control exactly where it is now. Why should these employers, bankers and politicians put into effect any policies that would act to their disadvantage? Whenever workers hand over responsibility for promoting their interests to other people without keeping them under direct control, the workers' interests will suffer, as successive Labour Governments have demonstrated (see *How Labour Governed 1945-51*).

Not one of the Secretaries suggested militant industrial action to smash the freeze, though the Annual Council of at least one union, the AScW, directed its executive to oppose the Policy and legislation "by all means appropriate."

Direct action broke the Freeze in 1947-48 and that's the only way it can be done now. In fact, any one who reads *How Labour Governed* can see how, time after time, the Labour government are using the same methods now as they did just after the war.

While ASSET's Court actions against some firms have had limited success and, as Jenkins contends, may publicise the fact that employers are breaking wage agreements, even though it's not yet illegal to pay increases, it will encourage workers to leave things in legal, official hands when the Government clamps down.

OFFICIALS LOATH TO ACT

What will the officials do when the Prices and Incomes Act is invoked? No-one committed himself. Clive Jenkins, at a public meeting before the last election, said he would risk fines and imprisonment by defying legislation which would control wages and restrict the right to strike, but both he and the others at the present meeting were loath to advocate direct action to break the freeze and make the whole Act unworkable. They must realise that workers won their limited freedoms in the past by breaking anti-working class laws (which were later sometimes repealed). This government won't repeal the Prices and Incomes Act unless it's forced to.

There was not much time at the end for contributions from the floor, but the disillusion expressed with the Labour Party was encouraging. A building worker's suggestion for a national work-to-rule didn't get much support from the platform, though it must be admitted they are not mandated by their members to advocate such action.

On September 13 Michael Stewart, Minister for Economic Affairs predicted inevitable price rises of 5%, allowed by the Act, due to government taxation. This makes a cast-iron case for immediate cost of living claims, including demands for the implementation of cost of living agreements, e.g. the increased London Weighting (now frozen) which was promised to the grossly underpaid Junior Technicians in London University.

Where employers have broken wage and conditions agreements, workers can do the same. Also they should pledge immediate industrial action should any one of their number be arrested by the State, or victimised by their employer for action against the law, in furtherance of workers' interests, and should demand their release and reinstatement.

DIRECT ACTION REPORTER

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