

# Direct Action

For workers' direct control of industry

Inside—Children of Aberfan  
SWF Conference : FIJL  
militants arrested  
Organised witch-hunting

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWMA)

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## SACKINGS—WHOSE TURN NEXT?

THE cost-of-living index has moved up to a new peak and is expected to rise higher shortly. The excuse put forward is "seasonal changes". Meanwhile, the cost-of-living bonus for thousands of workers remains frozen. So much for a WAGES and prices freeze. The policy of the Labour Government is exposed for all to see: they spell it out in hard cold terms—a *wages cut*, no matter how they attempt to contradict it. And, if this is not enough, interference now and in the future in the process of collective bargaining.

The question is, what are we organised workers prepared to do about it? If our actions to date are any criterion then I would say—precisely nothing! Oh, sure, we have held conferences with the promise of more to come, but where do they get us? Exactly where we started.

### IN WHOSE INTEREST?

The Communist Party are trumpeting loudly about a conference on December 3. Certainly there will be some yackety-yack, the militants will hold forth in a blaze of glory, but pose the question about action, and we will get lobbies, letters to MPs and resolutions at branches, the usual tactics employed

## No busman's holiday!

SUDDENLY everyone wants to be a London busman—it must be all that fresh air, high wages and good conditions! Because a London bus driver tells us that London Transport now has its full quota of drivers for the first time in years. At his garage two men have already been suspended for two days, for failing to keep to schedules—something the management could not have done two months ago simply because of the chronic shortage of drivers. Overtime for London's bus drivers has also been restricted and rest day working has been cut to the minimum.

It seems from this that London Transport can now successfully go back to the days of spit and polish, and sackings for non-compliance with piffing rules. "Get the whips out lads, with Harold's help we've got the workers where we want them. If they don't like it we can always find someone else."

The only conclusion we must draw from this fact is that things must be worse than anyone could imagine, because if we go on past experience, men have taken on practically any other job in preference to bus driving.

to detract from real action. Meanwhile the freeze and sackings go on.

It really is surprising, the amount of loyalty the Labour Party commands from its rank and file. It is true to say that in some cases loyalty to the Labour Party is an excuse for doing nothing, but on the other hand many workers genuinely believe that the Government policy is in the interests of the ordinary Joes. The stock phrase is: "They know best, they have all the facts." What unadulterated bull this is! The only fact they know is that they can take you on in your own interests. Another parrot phrase used by loyal labour supporters is: "Give them a chance to govern, we must have a planned economy." The question they forget to ask is "In whose interest are they governing and planning?" The answer is plain and proven—not mine or yours, but in the interest of the stinking system we live under.

On November 4, 12,000 car workers were sacked: no amount of lobbying or chats with Wilson could save them. The union leaders involved went around in circles, and wound up rowing amongst themselves, and their members wound up on the industrial slag heap.

AEU and T & GWU members at Morris Radiators attempted to carry out their unions' policy of work-sharing but were slapped down by the great Bill Carrion. The T & G (whose members were a minority of the workers involved) said nothing; they let the AEU Pope walk all over them and the sacked men remained sacked.

### WORK-TO-RULE

Eight weeks ago Longbridge Group of Delivery Agents (LGDA) sacked half its 650 drivers. Since that date the drivers, members of the T & GWU, have been on a strike which has now been made official. The amount of chatting that has been done is nobody's business, but despite it all the lads are still out. Even the Austin management whose cars LGDA deliver are known to be critical of the swiftness

*cont. on page 2 col. 1*

## QUIET FALLS THE BOMB...

THE *Oakland Tribune* (California, 15.11.66) reported that a USAF bomber dropped an H-bomb off Puerto Rico last August. It was recovered by divers. The Congressional Atomic Committee denies the report, and says the bomb was "an unarmed training nuclear weapon."



# Yesterday's Left

"WHEN we speak of men who stick by their beliefs, he [Wilson] deserves our tribute."

**Ian Mikardo, MP (Left Labour), Poplar, 11.11.66**

THE week before these words were uttered the Parliamentary Labour Party banned unofficial organised groups of MPs. The main target was the group chaired by the man who spoke them, Mikardo. In 1952 the same ban was imposed. The main group then was the "left" Bevanites, who included four present ministers and Wilson himself.

Wilson wrote in protest to the *New Statesman* (1.11.52). He stood on principle. He said the ban was (1) illiberal,

## SACKINGS (cont.)

of the sackings. Here is a classic example of an employer climbing on the sackings bandwagon.

Workers at the Vauxhall plant at Luton are attempting to spread their work-to-rule policy in opposition to short-time working. The men, by working to rule, are working to standard times set by the company years ago. Over a period of time the job has been speeded up, thus contributing to the present situation of short-time working. Therefore the men have reverted back. Their claim in effect is: "If speed-up means less in the wage packet, then the management can stuff it."

On December 30, Rover Company at Solihull are sacking 300 staff and other workers. Production workers are not affected. Workers on Land Rover production have been on short-time working since August.

And so the whole sordid story unfolds. Attempts to fight the sackings in the car industry are few and far between. The word "inevitably" appears to be on everyone's lips, with the background thought of "will it be my turn next?"

### LINKING UP

Even the aristocrats of industry, the printworkers are feeling the "cool breeze of change". On Monday 14 the cost-of-living bonus for many printworkers was frozen. Many workers in the industry are without agreements, the present ones having expired, and talks on new ones sterile due to the Freeze.

A rank-and-file printworkers' association is in the embryo stage. Its policy is to (a) Actively oppose the wage freeze. (b) Campaign for a ballot to disaffiliate from the Labour Party. (c) Link up with other rank-and-file bodies in other industries who have similar aims.

The rank-and-file will have to first organise within their own industry, and then link up with other workers in other industries. It is plain bloody common sense; the seamen's strike proved the need, the attack on the car workers proves the need. We ignore these warnings at our peril. One does not need a crystal ball to see what the future has in store. Harold has stated "you will do this or else."

**BILL CHRISTOPHER**

**DIRECT ACTION PRESS FUND—October-November, 1966**  
Hyde Park Sympathisers, 2s 6d; Saltcoats, Ayr, D.C. 4s 4d; Liverpool 13, P.R. 2s 6d; Northolt Anarchists 3s; U.S.A., N.P. 14s; Glendaruel, Argyls, H.D. 13s 6d; Paisley, W.H. 5s 5d; London S.W.10, M.S. 10s; London W.2, J.T. 3s 6d; Hull, J.Y. 2s 6d; London N.W.3, K.H. £2 10s; Aberdeen, I.M. 2s 6d; Tadworth, Sy. D.W. 8s; London N.16, M.V. 3s 6d; Tynemouth, P.R. 10s 3d; Woodstock, Vt. E.S. £1 15s 6d; Sydney Anarchist Group 10s 6d; London W.1, J.D. 5s; Libertarian League, N.Y. £3 10s; Belfast, K.G. 3s 6d; Sales of CNT "Spain Today" Postcards, 10s; Putney, P.O. 5s; Newtownabbey, P.S. 1s; Witney, L.O. £2 2s; SWF London Group £3 1s 3d. Total £19 8s 4d.

(2) based on untruths (allegations that the Bevanites were trying to form a party within a party) and (3) prejudicial to party unity.

The same statement from the group appeared in *Tribune* of that week. The four who have become ministers since are R. Crossman (Leader of the House of Commons), B. Castle (Transport), A. Greenwood (Housing) and J. Lee (Arts). Now these rebels of yesterday sit on the front benches and ban the rebels of today—who praise them for it.

Crossman is reported to have said of the recent ban: "It's not *me* that's changed. It's the situation." There speaks the successful politician, of whatever party. With similar words Lenin fastened his grip of blood and iron on the Russian Revolution. China today, dictators Lin and Mao—"let a thousand flowers bloom"—close the ranks from above.

In 1952 Wilson & Co. protested their principles. But they closed with an abject surrender: "Nevertheless, we accept the majority decision of our colleagues and, for our part, we will abide loyally by it."

We should note that the "loyal" surrender was not to avoid a party split. In the view of Wilson & Co. the ban was causing one! So if Wilson believed this in 1952 he would not have surrendered to the ban. If Wilson believed such bans were unjustified and stuck by that belief, he would not have imposed the present one.

The reason Wilson & Co. surrendered was to save their political skins. The politician's only true loyalty is to his career.

To speak, as Mikardo does, of Wilson sticking by his beliefs does not say much for Mikardo's ability to stick by his own. In reality such phrases are just part of every politician's standard wriggling-kit. The TU political levy guarantees that those of the Labour brand have plenty of opportunities to use them.

### NORTH-EAST NOTES

## Note the 'any'

"THERE is no need for strikes or production stoppages and industry should grasp at any method which would eliminate them."

**Ald. A. Cunningham (Northern District Sec'y, NUGMW, 11.11.66)**

### BROWNED OFF AND BITTER

AT Stanley (C. Durham), 100 regulars used a boycott to back a petition to the new management of the Harperley Mill Hotel demanding the reinstatement of barman Alan Walker who'd been sacked. He was back at work in the public bar after six days on the dole.

### BLUEPRINT FOR HANDLING THE FREEZE

DRAUGHTSMEN at Parson's, Newcastle, have just won a successful strike for four weeks' holiday. The strike began 15 weeks ago at one of the three works and snowballed till one-third of all draughtsmen were out—on full pay—supported by their mates working to rule on the job. As reported *DIRECT ACTION*, Aug.), draughtsmen at Reyrolles, Hebburn, won the same demand but since this was frozen, action is now being taken on the job by all 500 draughtsmen.

### RAVAGES OF TIME

SIXTY women at Vickers, Elswick, are celebrating the half-centenary of the birth of the shop-stewards' movement in Britain with a sophisticated kick at the freeze. Piecework rates have not been changed in five years and a demand for an increase was refused by the Ministry of Labour. So last month the women changed to time rates. This means a drop in wages of up to £4 p.w.—but cuts production by half.

**DIRECT ACTION REPORTER**



# THE CHILDREN OF ABERFAN

THE miners of Durham still sing an old song with the grim, true refrain: "There is blood, blood on the coal." In Aberfan it is the blood of children. Massive disaster has produced the same effects as other communal tragedies, widespread human sympathy and a temporary awakening of social conscience.

But this disaster has also produced a new effect, a ukase (literal) of the Labour Government forbidding, with threat of imprisonment and other penalties, discussion of this event. No one can remember any other government applying such a ukase to any mining or other disaster. Keep your mouth shut or it will be forcibly stopped. The months will pass by before the complete report of the inquiry is made. Time will complete the work of enforced silence, and Aberfan and the children's mass grave will be forgotten.

At the inquest, "I ask you to return a verdict of death by being buried alive by the National Coal Board," said one man who had lost his wife and two children. He and others spoke with the simple eloquence of the oppressed, but who will listen? Could the black avalanche of death have been averted? The known facts cry Yes! The facts must be silenced. Long live the NCB.

## AWARE OF THE DANGER

People who live in mining areas know miners, often old men, who are respected by their fellows because of their great knowledge, sometimes unlettered, of geology, who know the strata, streams and hidden places of their nether world, and even the effect of topographical features upon it. They know their land as an inshore fisherman knows his waters. But even those local people who knew not the character of the hidden earth or nature of topography were aware of the danger. Why then were the children sent to school? The Law says you must send your children to school or go to jail, and most, if not all, education authorities insist that you send them to one of their choice.

A woman councillor protested the danger at a meeting of the Merthyr Planning Committee, nearly three years ago.

## SEAMAN'S VOICE

WE HAVE RECEIVED from the author as a gift a dozen copies of *Seaman's Voice*, by George Foulser (published by MacGibbon & Kee, 18s.). This describes his life as a seafarer in quite a few ships and ports, particularly British, American and Australian. It concludes with an account of the seamen's strike of 1960.

Readers with any time at all for a rare tale of the life and struggles of fellow workers afloat are urged to give this worthy book a good home. In doing so they will also help our Press Fund. Each copy has been signed by the author and will be sent post-free for the above price.

## SMASH THE WAGE FREEZE!

by **BILL CHRISTOPHER**

New Direct Action pamphlet — 2d.

SECOND PRINTING

(5d. postpaid; bulk orders 2s. a dozen)

Help fight Wilson's bid to hamstring the working class by giving this pamphlet a big circulation.

From Direct Action, 34 Cumberland Road, London E.17. Cheques and p.o.'s should be payable to Syndicalist Workers' Federation

"THE DANGERS. Coun. Mrs. G. I. Williams said there were dangers arising from surface tipping. 'We had a lot of trouble from slurry causing flooding at Merthyr Vale. If the tip moved it could threaten the whole school.'" (*Merthyr Express* 11.1.64).

Councillor Williams's plea was rejected by the Planning Committee and the Councils and the NCB were permitted to extend their coal tip. Councillor Williams died a few weeks before the disaster.

On October 23, 1966, the *Sunday Mirror* published a picture of two mothers, Mrs. Karen Symonds and Mrs. Marjorie England, handing a petition to the headmistress of the school, Miss Ann Jennings. The petition, signed by 36 parents, gave warning of danger. "The petition complained that the children had to wade thigh high through slimy flood water from the mountain tip to get home from school."

## NOTHING HAPPENED

Miss Jennings gave the petition to the Director of Education; it was passed to the Merthyr Borough Council. That was in January, 1965. "Nothing happened." But on that fateful day in October, 1966 each of these mothers lost a child in the Aberfan schol and Miss Jennings died trying to protect her young charges.

As long ago as December 23, 1958, the Borough Council received a letter complaining of the tip, Minute No. 2074, but nothing was done.

Stephen Davies, Merthyr's Labour MP, said on October 22, 1966: "We've been warning the NCB for years about what could happen, but they took no action. They continued to pile up slag, making the tip even higher. Now the disaster we warned could happen has happened."

"Mr. Davies says he does not want to put the Coal Board on trial." (*Sunday Mirror*, 23.10.66).

In addition to local lore official surveys gave sufficient warning of the dangerous practice of the previous coal owners and the present NCB, especially in respect to the water danger. On the evening of Sunday, October 23, Lord Robens, head of the NCB appeared on TV and said they had, a few hours ago, discovered that the tip had been built upon and buried two streams. These streams were known to local miners, one of whom told the judge that he had bathed there when a boy.

## CENTRAL TRUTH

On the same Sunday morning the *Sunday Times* told of these streams part of which are still visible. The Ordnance Survey of 1914 shows the streams without the tip; the survey of 1957 shows the tip built over one-third of the length of the streams. In any case, everyone knows that, where there is a hill there is water at the bottom of it, at any rate in this climate.

The central truth common to all such calamities is that the workers, the local people know of the dangers, even know their remedy, but Authority claims the sole right of taking or not taking action. Authority claims to know what is best and demands obedience. When disaster falls, then Authority, large or small, disclaims responsibility or knowledge, and complains of the apathy of the public.

So long as we do not intervene in the things that concern us, so long as we delay taking over, more and more, our own affairs, whether they be our work, our neighbourhood or the greater general issues on which our lives depend, then this condition will continue and War and Aberfan will be our lot.

IT COULDN'T HAPPEN TO THE RICH.

**GEORDIE**



# Direct Action

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

## SWF 8th Conference meets in Manchester

THE 8th National Conference of the SWF, held at All Saints Register Office, Manchester, on Sunday, November 13, was attended by well over 50 comrades from Tyneside, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Bristol, Manchester, Liverpool, London, Sheffield, Ashton-under-Lyne, York, Hull, Witney, Rochdale and Birmingham. Fraternal delegates were present from Mujeres Libres, the ILP (Manchester and Burnley), Hull, Liverpool and Ealing Anarchists and Solidarity (Manchester).

Toni Invergaard, as delegate of the SAC, brought greetings from our Swedish fellow workers.

Messages of solidarity were received from the IWW, Libertarian League (USA), IWMA Secretariat (Marseilles), Spanish CNT in Exile (Toulouse), Spanish CNT in Great Britain, Norwegian Syndicalist Federation (NSF), Dutch Syndicalist League (NSV), Japanese Anarchist Federation, Bulgarian CNT in Exile, FORA (Coronel Salvadores) of Argentina, FIJL (Spain), Noir et Rouge (Paris), Lewisham Anarchists, Harlow Anarchists, Cuddons Group and the Freedom Press Group.

The FIJL's letter expressed appreciation of the SWF's consistent support of the Spanish worker's struggle for freedom, which, it noted, was witnessed by the presence in Franco's jails of an SWF militant.

The FORA's message recorded the great difficulties the revolutionary labour movement of that country was facing, following the recent military *coup d'etat*. The Resistance Society of Portworkers (FORA), with similar bodies, had just called a general strike of all docks in the country, against a government decree which threatened to wipe out the gains made during 60 years of struggle and sacrifice by the militant waterside workers.

The Libertarian League attached a \$10 donation to SWF funds.

In his report to conference, retiring national secretary Bill Christopher said: "We hold our annual conference this year during one of the most critical periods for the working class. The shower at present in Westminster are determined to smash the power of the rank and file. As we all appreciate, Wilson was re-elected to do just that and it is with regret that one has to say that at the moment he is succeeding. Clive Jenkins and Cousins may wish to play parlour games, but we do not . . ." The report, with those of local groups and delegates, detailed work carried out during the year. London reported that, on the initiative of SWF members, a rank-and-file movement had been formed among printworkers, who were beginning production of a monthly broadsheet in a campaign against the wage freeze and for union disaffiliation from the Labour Party.

Treasurer Mark Hendy's report noted disappointing dues payments for 1965-66. A London resolution, amended by Glasgow and Manchester delegates, will—if implemented—remedy this.

Discussion on Press & Propaganda centred on the need to

produce a bigger and better DIRECT ACTION. Lack of success in finding suitable premises for a new printing press in London had so far prevented this being achieved, but the search continued. It was agreed to increase the price of DA to 6d. from January 1967. Subscriptions, however, would remain at 6s.6d. and there would be a one-third discount on orders of 24 upwards.

The new National Committee elected was: Joan Christopher (secretary), Mark Hendy (treasurer), Tom Brown, Dave Pickett, Roger Etherington, Marylyn Hutt and Ken Hawkes, with Ron Marsden (Manchester), Vincent Johnson (Liverpool) and Bob Lynn (Glasgow) as provincial members to attend when possible. Two reserve members for London and two for the provinces were nominated.

The present declaration of Aims and Principles and Organisational Basis was ratified.

In discussing industrial policy, it was agreed that the time was not ripe for attempting formation of a new National Rank & File movement. The need was for active participation in local and industrial rank-and-file groupings. It was agreed to support unemployed workers, if an attempt was made to form an organisation in their defence.

Manchester SWF comrades agreed to organise a week-end summer school in 1967, on a motion from Glasgow.

As the next IWMA Congress is planned for October 1967, it was agreed to hold the 9th SWF Conference during late September next year in Manchester.

A long discussion took place on the Vietnam war, on a resolution from Laurens Otter (Witney), but his proposal that supporters of the Vietnam Solidarity Committee should be ineligible for SWF membership was narrowly defeated.

A collection for the defence of the five recently arrested FIJL comrades during the Conference realised £15.14.1.

Conference unanimously passed a resolution stating:

"The SWF expresses its unconditional solidarity with all workers subjected to totalitarian regimes throughout the world. It remembers particularly our revolutionary Syndicalist comrades in Spain, Bulgaria and Argentina, where our organisation is undergoing a particularly difficult phase and pledges its support to them."

On the previous evening, Manchester comrades organised a highly-successful and enjoyable social at the Griffin Inn, All Saints. The entertainment of a talented local young folk singer was greatly appreciated—particularly his own song about Sacco and Vanzetti. £8.7.1. was raised for the FIJL at the social, so a total of £24. 1. 2. has been transferred to our Spanish comrades.

## GROUP NOTICES

**ABERDEEN:** Contact Ian Macdonald, 15 Cotton 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, Hesse Road, Hull, Yorks.

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

**LONDON:** Weekly meetings at Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Road, WC1 (5 min. Kings Cross). Wednesdays at 8.30 p.m.

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

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

**SOUTHALL:** Contact Adrian Derbyshire, 2 Oakley House, Oakley Ave., London, W5.

**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.



# THE WAGE FREEZE OF EDWARD III

THE BLACK DEATH, a great plague coming from the East, devastated Europe and struck Britain at the close of 1348. Wave after wave of death passed over England, until more than half its 3-4 million population fell. It is usual to describe this plague as having been the sole cause of the increased market value of labour, but this is too great a simplification. Social and economic causes were already at work and, in any case, while the labour force was halved by death, economic needs were also halved by the same fell agent. Thus, while farmers could till only half their land, the lords were forced to abandon half their rent.

At that time the manorial system covered all the rural parts of England. The "Lord of the Manor" (a term still used as a sneer by workers) held—in fact owned—the land under the king and, as well as letting most of his land to tenant farmers, he was their political ruler. The demesne, the home farm, was his alone.

## NEITHER SLAVE NOR FREE

There had never been a great many slaves in Anglo-Saxon England and the Church of England of that day had, with some success, opposed chattel slavery. Most Angles and Saxons had been freemen owning land. Under Norman rule these carls still held their land against any man except their lord and sent their representatives to hundred-moot and shire moot.

But there were many landless men, their number increasing, who, even under Saxon kings, had been forced by threat of outlawry, to attach themselves to some lord, whom they served as house servants, hired hands or rent-paying tenants. At the same time the carl had been forced to "commend" himself to a theyn (who owed military service to the Sovereign), rendering him labour payment in return for "military protection"—after himself being disarmed.

Under Norman rule these tendencies developed, until there were no slaves and no freemen, only one class of serfs, all—outside the freemen of a few towns—owing fealty to a lord of the manor. But political force could not stop economic development; manors were increasingly rented to big tenants, while the lords were at court, or at war, and the ties of the manorial master and his tenants were slackened. The carls began to claim as rights those things which had been indulgences—occupancy of cottage and plot, the privilege of pasturing cattle and geese on waste land.

## WILSON'S FOREBEARS

Commuters increased in number. These were men who had had to render the lord service at seed time and harvest, at shearing and malting, and commuted the obligation by a money payment, once for all (it is odd that the term commutator has been reimported from the US to describe a person who travels to work by British Rail). Edward III himself sent agents to sell commutations to his serfs.

The lord became as a modern landowner, the big tenants as capitalist farmers and the cottagers free labourers. By mid-XIV Century, landless men were wandering off to sell their labour power to the highest bidder.

The problem of the ruling class of that time was very similar to that of our own—and they both have sought their solution in the same theories. Mid-XIV Century was a time of full employment; wages were high, employers were competing for workers' services and the labourer made use of his opportunity. Prices were high, the economy was wasted by war, ever-greedy Government demanded more and more money.

To understand the economic theory of Harold Wilson, let us turn back to Edward III and his solution. Wages were being forced up by the competition of employers for job-seeking labourers, so Edward forbade this, decreeing that the labourer must go where directed, or stay put. He lost the right to seek work. This method was applied 600 years later by a Labour Government under Attlee, whose Essential Works Order brought in direction of labour. Attlee, like Wilson, attempted to freeze wages, though by arrangement with the trade-union bosses, not by the compulsion of law, as now.

A royal ordinance, later embodied in the Statute of Labourers, declared: "Every man, or woman, of whatsoever condition, free or bond, able in body, and within the age of three score years . . . and not having of his own whereof he may live, nor land of his own about the tillage of which he may occupy himself, and not serving any other, shall be bound to serve the employer who shall require him to do so, and shall take only the wages which were accustomed to be taken in the neighbourhood where he is bound to serve." This ordinance was made *two years before* the plague began.

## STRIKERS PUNISHED

Although breaking the freeze was punished by imprisonment, Edward's scheme, like Attlee's later, had little success, so the King published his "Part IV", the Statute of Labourers, 1351. A worker was forbidden to leave his parish in search of work; if he did so, he became a "fugitive". None but the old wage must be paid, but, as now, prices rose, until a man's daily wage would not buy his day's food. Workers were jailed and employers fined; the revenue from the many finings swelled the King's moneybags. Fierce resistance continued and harsher measures, a sort of "Part V" were decreed. The "fugitive" labourer when caught was branded with a red hot iron on the forehead. We have not come to that yet, but if we do, doubtless the TUC will vote for it and Left Labour MPs will rise in the House to say, "I am opposed to this measure, nevertheless I am voting for it. The wicked Tories . . ."

In the towns, those who harboured fugitive serfs were savagely punished. Strikes of artisans, who were often in organisations, were punished.

Commutation was ended and even—a trick picked up by the Labour Party—applied retrospectively. Edward and the lords employed hosts of predatory lawyers to "prove" invalid manumissions already granted and paid for. As the cases were tried in the lord's manor court, the lord always won.

In East Anglia large bodies of fugitives gathered, organised and resisted, often helped by employers who needed their labour. A statute of that time said: "Villeins and holders of land in villeinage withdrew their customs and services from their lords, having attached themselves to other persons who maintained and abetted them; and who, under colour of exemplifications from Domesday of the manors and villages where they dwelt, claimed to be quit of all manner of services, either of their body or their lands, and would suffer no

## SWF (LONDON) CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

Saturday, December 17 at 8 p.m.

Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Road, WC1  
(5 min Kings Cross)

Admission 2s 6d.

M.C. Desmond MacDonald

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# Seamen's strike analysed

**UNHOLY ALLIANCE**  
**The 1966 Seamen's Strike: an Analysis**  
 by **GEORGE FOULSER**  
**Direct Action Pamphlet—6d.**  
**(9d. postpaid; bulk orders 6s. a dozen)**

THE SEAMEN'S strike this year ended in a brazen sell-out by the NUS officials. Why? How? The author of this pamphlet spells out the answers in plain language. He has been in the forefront of seamen's struggles for many years. His words not only are of prime concern to his seagoing fellow-workers; they contain a lesson to be learnt by all wage earners who struggle for a better life.

Before May this year the NUS officials had not called a strike for 55 years. It was militant unofficial action by the seagoing rank and file in 1960 which won the 44-hour week and was pushing towards a 40-hour week by 1966. After 1960 the NUS officials yielded to rank-and-file militancy but in 1965 they "put the clock back to Nelson's days" with a back-door agreement with the shipowners for a 56-hour week. Immediate unofficial action was divided and unsuccessful but by early this year the call had gone out for a co-ordinated unofficial strike against the 56-hour deal.

This time the pro-shipowner union officials were threatened as well as the bosses, for it was likely that such unofficial action would not only defeat the shipowners but also destroy the officials' grip forever.

For Hogarth, the only way out was to make like a militant and call a national stoppage, in consultation with the shipowners. However there was a very great danger that this would develop into genuine rank-and-file action and this could only be prevented through rank-and-file obedience. His insurance was the loyal co-operation of Her Majesty's Communist Party who have a vested interest in bureaucratic unionism for party-political reasons. Hence the Unholy Alliance.

George Foulser sets out his arguments in detail, and also exposes the fake-militant antics during the strike of Jack Dash, chairman of the London Portworkers Liaison Committee.

In 1966 seamen took on employers, government and the TUC. But the great enemy was in their own camp. This pamphlet deserves the widest possible circulation if they again, and the rest of us after them, are not to follow the same road.

## Wage freeze (cont.)

distress or other course of justice to be taken against them; the villeins aiding their maintainers by threatening the officers of their lords with peril to life and limb, as well by open assemblies as by confederacies to support each other."

During all these years the war with France went on, draining the English economy. The historian Green in 1874 wrote of this period: "The real strength of Parliament was directed to the desperate struggle in which the proprietary classes, whom they exclusively represented, were striving to reduce the labourer into a fresh serfage." How true! I mean today.

**TOM BROWN**

(to be continued)

**CHANGE OF PRICE**—As from January next the price of a single copy of Direct Action will be 6d. A discount of one-third will be given on bulk orders of 24 and upwards. The yearly subscription rate will remain the same at 6s 6d (U.S.A. and Canada \$1.00).

# FIJL members arrested

DURING the last week of October, five Anarchist militants were arrested in Madrid and charged by the Spanish police with plotting to kidnap the American Ambassador, Mr. Biddle Duke, with the aim of arousing world opinion to the farce of the "trade union elections", then taking place in Spain, and to put pressure on the Spanish authorities to release political prisoners.

Another group of the Libertarian Youth, to which these five militants belong, had carried out a similar operation in Rome last April, capturing Mgr. Ussia, ecclesiastical councillor of the Spanish Embassy to the Vatican.

Following the arrest of Luis Edo (38), Antonio Cañete (51), Jesus Rodriguez (32), Alfredo Herrera (26) and Alicia Mur (28), the Peninsular Committee of the FIJL stated:

"1. Our comrades intended to carry out an action which would make clear the phoney 'liberalisation' of the Franco regime and to continue the campaign, begun in 1964, for the liberation of all political prisoners in our country, a campaign that our organisation is pursuing.

"2. We ratify the statements of the 1st May Group, denying the declarations of the Franco police.

"3. The FIJL Peninsular Committee is launching an urgent appeal to all organisations, groups and anti-fascists throughout the world to co-ordinate acts of protest and solidarity as effectively as possible, to stop the Franco regime committing a new crime.

*Spain, November 1, 1966*".

After three days of interrogation at the General Security HQ, the five militants are now being held in the cells of the Palace of Justice in Madrid to await the Tribunal of Public Order.

Luis Edo, a former FIJL secretary and current secretary of the Paris CNT local, organised two clandestine Press conferences in Madrid last May, to denounce the farce of the regime's "liberalisation" and the so-called "free union elections". HE HAS BEEN ON HUNGER STRIKE SINCE THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28 and his state of health is causing anxiety.

The above-mentioned statement of the 1st May Group categorically denied that any of the five accused had taken part in the kidnapping of Mgr. Ussia. The latter told the Italian Press that, judging by photographs of the five arrested militants in Madrid, none of them had been involved in his capture.

Other Press reports have suggested that the group's intended victim was Juan Peron, ex-Argentine dictator, or prominent Nazi Otto Skorzeny, both now living in Madrid under Franco's protection.

Mr. Biddle Duke has said he did not believe any attempt was to be made to kidnap him.

Franco obviously intends his court to impose very heavy prison sentences on our five comrades. They need your immediate solidarity. The SWF, as reported elsewhere in this issue, has sent more than £24 to the Defence Fund. WHAT ABOUT YOU, COMRADE READER? Donations should be addressed to: A. Ordoñez, 15 Barlby Road, London, W.11.

## FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS

**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.

**SW MIDDLESEX ANARCHIST GROUP:** Contact P. J. Goody, 36 Norman Ave., Hanworth, Middx.



# ORGANISED WITCH-HUNTING--2

THE ECONOMIC LEAGUE, founded in 1919, in 1958 alone published 23,000,000 leaflets, held 20,801 meetings, 6,966 classes, 33,480 group talks, had published 36,260 press column-inches. It employed 23 training organisers, 38 speakers and film operators, 63 leaflet distributors and 16 part-time lecturers. It used 48 vans and cars, 11 film projectors and any number of loudspeakers and tape recorders.

In its 40th Anniversary year, of the 41 members listed as directors of the League's council, 33 are company directors holding 198 directorships between them. Firms such as Boots Pure Drugs, P & O Line, Cunard, Rolls Royce, Tate & Lyle, Hawker Siddeley, etc. We give here details of just 75 of the concerns represented:—

	Assets £ million
7 Banks ... ..	7,186
3 Insurance Companies ...	149
11 Investment Trusts ...	65
5 Steel Companies ...	383
5 Shipping Companies ...	405
44 Other Companies ...	983

GRAND TOTAL £9,171,000,000

Money talks; small wonder that in 1959 alone the League earned £220,964 for its ghastly aims.

Famous names in the League include Sir Walter Benton Jones, Lord McGowan, Lord Iliffe, The Earl of Selbourne, Andrew Stewart, Sir Harold Bilby, Sir Halford Reddish, Lord Rochdale and many others.

The Economic League claims to be ultra-patriotic, yet in 1936, at a time when Hitler had smashed the unions and was persecuting the Jews, Lord McGowan, Sir Harry Brittain, Viscount Runciman (all League members) belonged to the Anglo-German Fellowship, which according to the *News Review* (23.11.36) consisted of "distinguished representatives of British Big Business, who claim that Hitler has an unanswerable case, who plan to set up a lavishly equipped club in London at which Nazism can be preached, members of National Socialism entertained, feted."

## RECEIVED BY HITLER

Lord McGowan, for 20 years chairman of ICI and for ten its Hon. President, was one of those personally received by Hitler (source: *Evening Standard*, 12.9.38).

Sir Harry Brittain, in his book *Happy Pilgrimage*, describes how, for a week in 1936, he was a guest of Hitler. Col. John Baker White was a guest at the 1937 Nazi Party Congress in Nuremburg. In his book *Dover-Nuremburg* he wrote that Hitler "has had placed in his hands enormous power, and so far has not misused it."

That is the past, what of the present? Mr. John Parkes is chairman of Alvis, which made the Saracen cars used in the infamous Sharpville shooting. Mr. A. S. Staryard is on Yarrow & Co., suppliers of frigates for the South African Navy. Sir Halford Reddish is on the Hawker Siddeley group, whose subsidiary made the Buccaneer aircraft for South Africa.

Their attitude towards ordinary decent folk is demonstrated by Mr. Herbert Hill (Economic League Council), chairman of Hardy Spicer, who on October 1, 1964 said: "They are all very much overpaid for the work they are doing ... the poor dears have a pretty poor mentality most of them. They have a pretty poor level of intelligence." So now we know, "Lick my backside, you poor dear you!"

However, most of the League's work is secret and aimed at getting militants the sack. In this respect its activities are

not just confined to leaflets for according to the *Guardian* (30.1.64) "It derives its income from industrial subscribers all over the country and provides in return a lecture service for apprentices and supervisors and a 'counter-subversive' to employers. This is generally held by the trade unions (who on the whole mistrust the League) to consist of information about militant trade unionists."

The Economic League, like all such organisations, is a threat to the organised worker. In different districts and at different times they pose different problems. On Merseyside, Catholic Action and the Economic League pose the biggest danger. The Economic League issues its disgusting insidious pro-capitalist crap, Catholic Action plays on religious antagonisms, and thus help keep our class divided. They also, in common with all these organisations, witch-hunt militants.

We must fight back. Let us not just deplore the activities of these people, let's smash them. We must expose who is behind them. Why is it that Boots Pure Drugs can help finance both MRA and the League? There is also ample evidence that some people belong to more than one of the organisations I have mentioned.

## NO NON-STARTERS

MRA and Freedom Group can best be beaten by articles such as this, which expose their true aims and origins. All workers should know that MRA's founder, Frank Buchman, could say in the 'thirties "Thank heavens for Hitler". That the Ford family, the Vanderbilt family, Firestone, Edison are all rumoured to contribute to MRA funds. That in this country they include Austin Reeds, Stewart Sanderson, etc. People like that don't back a non-starter. Fords hardly adopts a Christian attitude to those who work for them (though what boss does?).

Catholic Action, IRIS and Common Cause, are easily beaten, and by the same means as before.

However, the Economic League is more slippery. That it is growing is shown by the fact that its 1958 income of £220,964 had increased by 1964 to £252,034 and yet more organisers were employed.

If these people get inside your place of work, one answer is to strike in protest. Other forms of action are also effective. In the last Election, Sir Gerald Nabarro was due to speak at a factory canteen, the lads waited for him to enter and, as he did, just turned their backs on him and read their papers or played cards.

Often these people get in under the pretext of education. If your boss tries to pull this fast one, see that your Works Committee enforces that it take this task over (if you haven't such a Committee, form one). Then you could have lectures on many topics, such as education, economics. Should you want a speaker, the SWF would happily oblige.

That the Economic League bites is shown by the number of militants sacked and blacklisted as a result of it.

It even stoops to getting young workers the sack. Recently a young lad connected with the militant apprentice paper *Industrial Youth* was sacked. *Industrial Youth* ran a very good article on the League; the headline reading "The Rat-Bags"; very apt, for when their propaganda does bite, it's always verminous.

The organisations I have mentioned all use different fronts. The Freedom Group (Martell's) can even quote the anarchist Thoreau! But they all seek to perpetuate class rule. The only real way to end them is to end class rule.

VINCENT JOHNSON



# RACE LAW BACKFIRES

TRY to use a weapon for something it was never designed to do and you or your friends are apt to wind up as the target. Left politicians called for laws against racials, but the first use of the Race Relations Act (1965) that resulted was on two peaceful demonstrators against the Bomb.

On October 2 Ernie McDonald of Birmingham and Tom Carroll of London went Brighton for a CND demonstration at the Labour Party conference. They accidentally joined a Trotskyist march. They carried the banner of Birmingham Council for Peace in Vietnam. Finding they were on the wrong march, says McDonald (*Sunday Telegraph*, 6.11.66), "we rolled up the banner and walked on to the pavement, alongside the march. Carroll began shouting at people he knew on the march to come out of it and join the CND demonstration. Meanwhile, I asked a policeman where the CND march was and he directed me to the seafront."

Then a motorcycle policeman came up along the pavement and shouted: "Charge them for obstruction." They were arrested and when the case was heard nine days later were found guilty of "offensive behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace". Carroll got probation and McDonald a £20 fine. They were ordered to share 3 gns. costs.

During the nine days, bail was refused (despite intervention by three Labour MPs). This added imprisonment to the sentences. Neither man suffered immediate loss of earnings, though only through chance. In evidence the police said Carroll had been shouting but could not say what.

The treatment of these innocent men was not unusual. But they were the first to suffer under a law made supposedly against racials. Section 7 of the Race Relations Act enlarges and replaces section 5 of the Public Order Act (1936). The 1936 Act was supposedly made against fascists

—but it has been used countless times against anti-fascist and similar demonstrators.

Racialism is a product of class society. It divides workers against one another on superficial lines of colour and conceals their vital class interest. Even in "enlightened" countries like Britain it is served by the capitalist press; racial disputes are exaggerated and only token murmurs of disapproval made.

Racialism is effectively fought only by spreading working-class consciousness, not by the laws of politicians, police and magistrates who, as the paid henchmen of the ruling class, have no interest in combatting it—the reverse in fact.

With the Public Order Act and now the Race Relations Act in mind we should recall the words of Durruti: "No government fights fascism to the death." The same is true of racialism. Both evils have a common cause—class society in decay.

MARK HENDY

## They haven't changed !

"THE Golden Promises which those Grandees, who are the heads of Parties, make prove for the most part a Fairy-Land. For instead of being able to assist others, these empty Politicians are overwhelmed with every revengeful Calamity. They precipitate those who adhere to the Wheel of their Fortune; and both, at last, sink under the Punishment which they have taken such pains to deserve."

From the English translation (1694) of Rémond des Cours's *The True Conduct of Persons of Quality*.

## HELP SPANISH TOURIST BOYCOTT

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

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## 'Lynch law' in Ireland

IN Ireland, the house came tumbling down around the ears of Lemass who resigned as Prime Minister. The death of a TD reduced his government majority of two to one. This was balanced subsequently by the death of a Fine Gael TD, but the result was two by-elections, two by-elections. Also, 50,000 farmers marched into Dublin. Prior to this the Labour Party held a successful conference and amid plenty of left-wing noise and resolutions determined to abandon its passive role and make an all-out bid for power at the next general election.

After a display described by one TD as "Patagonian politics" Lynch became Prime Minister, but the same old and young inept men will continue the same old inept policies. One thing is clear. We can expect an increase in Special Branch intimidation of all opposition, not because Lynch wants it but because he can't control it. Haughey is effective second-in-command and has nothing whatever to learn from Franz Josef Strauss.

Also, the plans for new anti-trade union legislation will continue. These are in jeopardy only because of Fianna Fail's situation, not because of TU opposition. The danger to the TU movement remains whatever the government in Dail Eireann, as experience in Britain has shown.

The situation will be dealt with more fully in a future article. Meanwhile much remains to be done. At a Dublin meeting the chairman of the National Civil Liberties League said the League was doing what the TU movement should be doing.

DAVE PICKETT