

# Direct Action

For workers' direct control of industry

Inside—Release Hugo Blanco  
Printworkers must unite  
Rhodesian roundabout  
Ireland's Trojan horse

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWMA)

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## GREEN LIGHT FOR PROFITS

"HAPPY Wage Freeze, suckers!" is this year's official season's greeting to useful or would-be useful people in Britain. While employers have been reassured, "Carry on business as usual."

It doesn't take too much brainpower to see that any restraint on wages is first and foremost in the interest of the bosses as the wages not paid stay in their pockets. In fact the so-called wage freeze is really a wage cut since prices continue to rise almost without restraint.

Appearing towards the end of November, the White Paper on "Prices and Incomes Standstill: Period of Severe Restraint" laid down the "zero norm" (first announced last July) for payrises in January-June this year. Unless workers are near starvation on or about £10 a week, or unless they agree to do the work of others on top of their own (a

"genuine productivity agreement"), increases are many miles away.

Prices, on the other hand, may be raised: (1) Where employers cannot absorb rising costs due to more expensive imported materials, to "changes in supply for seasonal or other (our emphasis) reasons" or to increased taxation, etc. (2) Where an enterprise faces "increased costs which it is unable to restrain, and which are too large to absorb fully, such as the cost of bought-in components" on which it relies heavily.

(3) Where receipts do not otherwise meet the need to "maintain efficiency and undertake necessary investment." (4) Where "efforts" have been made to absorb higher costs and "overall profitability" is slim.

So, in the end, it is profit that decides. This was underlined by Stewart in the House of Commons when he said that where profits were increased "without improper effects on prices, that is to say, by better management, they must be regarded as a legitimate form of income. They should not be discouraged." (22.11.66).

The White Paper crows that the "national response to the call for a standstill has been extremely encouraging," and the government "hopes that the same general responsible attitude... will continue." In plainer words—"Thanks mugs; keep it up!"

Principal agents of the Great Swindle have been the TUC General Council. At the outset the TUC stepped aside from its role as middleman in the labour market concentrating on another favourite role in promoting the age-old myth of the brotherhood of labour and capital—currently dubbed "the

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### Threat to five militants

THE CASE of the five Spanish anarcho-syndicalist militants arrested in Madrid is to be heard by a military tribunal, not one of Franco's civil courts. This means that 37-year-old painter Luis Edo, 28-year-old laboratory worker Alicia Mur Sin, 32-year-old sculptor Jesus Rodriguez, 26-year-old turner Alfredo Herera and 51-year-old cabinet-maker Antonio Cañete will be liable to far heavier sentences, for allegedly plotting to kidnap American Ambassador Biddle Duke and that their "defence" will be nominated by the court.

We recall that our comrades Francisco Granado and Joaquin Delgado were sentenced to be garrotted by a Madrid military tribunal in August 1963; Stuart Christie to 20 years and Francisco Carballo to 30 years by another in September 1964.

Big demonstrations of solidarity with the arrested anti-fascists have been organised on the Continent. In Amsterdam, windows were smashed in the Spanish Consulate and more than 12,000 leaflets distributed. As a result, the Dutch Press reported the arrests for the first time and a comrade was interviewed on the radio about the case.

In Milan, thousands of leaflets were distributed. Young Communists, Socialists and the Party of Proletarian Unity had agreed to take part in a demonstration on October 31, but none of them did so—probably on orders from their leaderships. However, the demonstration took place and on

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### MAKE WAY FOR THE GRUNTERS!

OF COURSE, we are all very pleased, jolly thrilled in fact, the way exports are going; the trade balance is almost catching up with the unemployment figures. Again, in accordance with the Planned Decrease in Incomes Policy, retail prices rose  $5\frac{1}{2}$  points (4.8%) from November of 1965 to the same month of 1966. Bacon in particular has just gone up 15s. a side. So far just as we expected, but there is one strange thing. The reason given is shortage of pigs. But this ignores the new breed of Gray Grunters with their famed higher reproductivity; and what about the Prices and Incomes Gauleiters (PIGS). It can't be true—there are plenty of swine around.



national interest". Woodcock commented that the TUC would not be rigidly bound by the zero norm, but would however accept it as a yardstick in its own unofficial scheme for keeping wages down. Sure enough, the day after the White Paper, the TUC "rejected" nearly 40 out of 51 pay claims that it vetted.

The TUC hopes that the government will allow its scheme to take over from the official freeze on July 1 and this will be the subject of a special conference on March 1. The TUC says it must itself adopt a more positive approach to incomes policy if it is to convince the government that the collective actions of unions will not prevent the achievement of national objectives.

Unemployment figures continue to soar, meanwhile, and Callaghan has said he wants them higher before there's any easing on the squeeze. Under "13 years of Tory misrule" the union officials failed to discipline the rank-and-file sufficiently, so the Labour government has stepped in with the big stick. The bosses use this as cover for destroying shop organisation and/or sackings (as reported elsewhere in this issue). Now the TUC bleats for another chance.

The wage freeze has exposed the parliamentary myth, which is why there is a growing demand for union disaffiliation from the Labour Party, as voted by Croydon No. 1 NUR Branch and Harrow (London) busmen. It has also exposed the pro-boss antics of union leaders, which is why more and more workers are coming to see that capitalism can be fought only by their own efforts, starting at shop level. They must also see that the freeze is a class issue calling for the linking of rank and file bodies throughout industry.

MARK HENDY

## FIJL PRISONERS (cont.)

the following day a march was headed by the reproduction of a garrotte.

In Brussels, on November 19, a "Provo" demonstration in solidarity with the arrested comrades mimed a garrotting. It was broken up by police violence, a Press cameraman trying to film the scene being among the victims.

In Paris, more than 10,000 leaflets were distributed, especially at a mass meeting called by Left-wing organisations to denounce the Franco regime, at which only Daniel Mayer, among the speakers, mentioned the Madrid arrests. During the meeting a group of 60 Anarchists left to stage demonstrations outside the Spanish Embassy and Tourist Office, where windows were smashed, leaflets broadcast and slogans painted on the walls. One comrade was arrested, but released some hours later.

Proceeds from the SWF's London Group Social on December 17, totalling £18 9s 3d, have been sent to the fund in aid of the five arrested comrades. More money is urgently needed—and donations should be addressed to:

A. Ordoñez, 15 Barlby Road, London, W.11.

Another way to help the struggle against Franco is by boycotting Spanish tourism, one of the main sources of revenue for the fascist regime. This is the time of year when holidays are arranged. You can help by distributing the SWF leaflet against tourism to Spain ("A Cheap Holiday"), price 2s. per 100, and by using the CNT's colour postcards, 9d postpaid or 6s. 5d. a dozen, both obtainable from SWF, 34 Cumberland Road, London, E.17. The call for a tourist boycott originated from the organisation to which the five arrested comrades belong, the Iberian Federation of Libertarian Youth (FIJL), inside Spain.

KEN HAWKES

Subscribers who are about to change their addresses are asked to notify us of the new one in advance. This way, we keep track of our subscribers and they go on getting "Direct Action" without any interruption.

## FREE HUGO BLANCO!

FOLLOWING a military trial in Taena province, southern Peru, nine men have received long prison sentences. The most savage are 25 years, given to Hugo Blanco, and 22 years to Pedro Candella.

These men with about 30 others, were arrested in May 1963, following peasant revolutions in Peru, and held in jail for three years. Now, in face of mounting protests about their sentences and possibly in response to US pressure, the State prosecutor is demanding the death penalty for Blanco in a second trial.

The Peruvian peasants are Indians, descended from the Incas, and among the poorest people in the world. They are six million out of Peru's ten million inhabitants and live mainly in the highlands of the Andes. They are forced by feudal landowners to work from dawn to dusk for a tin of beans or grain, a ration of coca leaves and, in the worst cases, only one penny (20 Peruvian cents) a day. Without the cocaine, obtained by chewing the coca leaves, they would be unable to perform the work required of them and, because they get addicted to the drug, they become even more tied to their masters.

Hugo Blanco was a young agricultural student who had studied in Buenos Aires and spoke the Indians' language. In 1962, in Cuzco province, he organised a peasants' union for agrarian reform. News of this and subsequent campaigns spread very slowly as almost all the press attempted to hush it up and denied its existence. One exception was *La Prensa*, a conservative Lima newspaper which warned its readers of the "red peril" in Cuzco province. Reports from its correspondent, Germán Alatrística, were denied and jeeringly discounted by the authorities.

Much of the province came completely under the control of the peasants and on November 9, 1962, 8,000 marched on the capital under the slogan, "Land or Death". They overcame the security forces, but in a demonstration in the city one of them was killed and more than 50 wounded. 900 put up barricades in the central square and they left only after the police had handed back their prisoners.

After these events, news spread to other parts of Peru, but the police and armed forces began a series of savage reprisals, killing many people and, because of the isolation of peasant communities and the internal quarrels among "imported" foreign revolutionaries in Lima, who were attempting to direct a nationwide revolution, the revolts were finally crushed. In May 1963 Blanco and some 30 comrades were captured by police and imprisoned.

At the trial, Blanco was charged with treason, distribution of literature and involvement in the deaths of three policemen. The other accused stated that one guard had been killed after he had killed a young boy and the other two when police had attempted to capture Blanco and his comrades.

On November 5, 1966, after the trial, seven of Blanco's fellow prisoners, learning of the attempt to get him sentenced to death, wrote to the Council of Military Justice demanding that, being equally responsible, they should receive the same treatment.

The latest news we have from Peru is of strikes by students and hunger strikes by political prisoners throughout Peru, protesting against the sentences.

Blanco and his comrades have been variously described as communists, trotskyists, anarchists, but we must support their ACTION in organising and working with the peasants

We hope that world-wide public pressure will obtain their release and prevent Blanco's execution.

ROGER ETHERINGTON

(Sources: *La Prensa* (11.11.62); *La Cronica* (4.9.66); *Monde Libertaire* (Dec. 1966); *Umanita Nova*, Italy (22.10.66).)



# PRINTWORKERS MUST UNITE NOW

THE Newspaper Proprietors in Fleet Street appear to be in a flat spin, with talks of mergers, closures, and economy cuts. Looking behind the panic facade one sees the outline of a deliberate policy to cut costs by reducing the labour force and cutting the earning of printworkers.

Over the past two years or so printworkers have bathed in the light of attempted adverse publicity. They have been painted as the criminals who are bleeding the newspaper industry dry.

The Labour Government's Incomes Policy has come as a godsend to the newspaper proprietors; it is the excuse they have been waiting for to attack the printing workers.

The agonising cries from the International Printing Corporation (IPC) and Associated Newspapers have to be heard to be believed. The *Sun* is losing money, cries Mr. King, the *Sketch* is in a precarious position cry Associated Newspapers, and the other newspaper proprietors add their whimpers. Through their tears they make their position crystal clear: "Economy cuts or we may have to close". One doesn't have to stretch the imagination to great lengths to realise we printworkers are being blackmailed.

It was only recently that the printing union leaders were called in to hear the IPC's proposed economy cuts for the *Sun*; believe you me, they were not surface cuts but bit bloody deep. The IPC were, in fact, saying, "Accept these cuts or face the responsibility of closing the *Sun*."

On December 7, journalists employed on the *Guardian* had a two-hour discussion with the management who proposed 25% cut in costs in each of the paper's departments. The aim of the *Guardian* management was to save £500,000 a year. Failure to agree in principle could mean the closure of printing in London. This was the paper which was considering joining a consortium to take over the *Times* as an alternative to Lord Thomson's bid! What did they propose to use for money? Bundles of back numbers?

While Associated Newspapers have not publicly announced any intended economies, and the bailiffs are not knocking at the door, one can sense the economy bug spreading; he must be the busiest insect in Fleet Street.

It is evident the newspaper proprietors feel in a position to take on the printworkers. The spadework propaganda has been done, by the Royal Commission on the Press and by the Economic Survey Units to attempt to prove what layabouts printworkers are. The public have been well informed as to the wages and conditions of printworkers, and how they operate "restrictive practices"; with the help of government legislation the battle is planned.

The newspaper proprietors' case is, "We are doing rough; agree to economies, or face possible closure". Taking this at face value it looks fair enough, but probe deeper and it's eyewash. IPC, one of the richest organisations in the country, can't afford the *Sun*? Rumours that Associated Newspapers are having difficulties with *Sketch* and *Mail*, BUT IPC and Associated Newspapers are doing very nicely thank you, they have fingers in many pies.

## 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.

Faced with cuts or threatened closure—what's the answer? One is forced to fall back on a so-called old-fashioned cliché "An Injury to One is an Injury to All." If the lads at the *Sun* come under the chopper, then the lads at the *Daily* and *Sunday Mirrors* must take action; same employer. If the lads at the *Sketch* and *Mail* get hammered, then the lads on the *Evening News* and *Weekend* must take action—same employer.

Unfortunately printing chapels are notorious for their parochialism. If printworkers are to survive this must be broken down. Craftsmen, non-craftsmen, engineers, electricians, warehousemen and clerks are only bloody names, we are all printworkers. In the final analysis, the sack or wage cuts mean exactly the same to all. This fight has been brewing for a couple of years. Unfortunately the employers have been allowed to pick the time and place. Who wins is up to the printworkers themselves.

### ENV STEWARDS FIGHT BACK

THE struggle at ENV, the American-owned engineering company in Willesden, London, is to continue.

Four months ago the company announced that it would have to shut the plant claiming non-cooperation of the stewards. Since that date the labour force has been reduced from 1,450 to approximately 800, with a further 76 to go.

Mr Townsend was sent over from the States, specifically to "sort out" the shop organisation. The official explanation for his coming was to turn the Willesden factory into a profitable concern or close it.

The dispute has gone through all the official rigmarole, everything has been done according to protocol, including going through the engineering industry's disputes procedure. The management all through the piece have stuck firm. Their line was simple, "economy cuts or closure" (printworkers please note).

ENV have come forward with a plan that the labour force should be "stabilised" at 400. Men paid fixed time rates based on time and motion study. Nothing has changed; this has been the ENV management's objective all the time, irrespective of the fanny they put out originally, about "cuts or else".

ENV stewards have met to discuss the proposals, they want sackings suspended while talks continue. It is reported that several Labour MPs are disturbed and are planning to discuss the situation with officials of the Board of Trade and the Ministry of Labour. More discussion; as far as I can remember Douglas Jay has been tackled on this question and he as good as said "hard cheddar!"

Geoff Mitchell, ENV shop stewards' convenor is quoted as saying that Left MPs "gave us the elbow" in an anti-closure fight. That's not surprising; industrial struggle is not for MPs, even when some have fought hard in their youth. Take an industrial struggle out of its birthplace and into the political arena and all is lost, did not the seamen's and the railwaymen's struggles prove this? Left, Right and Centre, no matter what type of political animal, the only people who can do anything is rank and file Joe Soap in *solidarity with others*.

This is the very thing the politicians and some trade union leaders are dead scared of, because once this happens power is transferred to the rank and file, who can then enforce their own demands.

ENV shop organisation *might* be on its knees, but it is not beaten. Assistance in terms of solidarity action is not too late.

It could be our turn next.

BILL CHRISTOPHER



# Direct Action

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

## Rhodesian roundabout

**"It is time for people in England to realise that the white man in Africa is not prepared and never will be prepared to accept the African as an equal, socially or politically."**

Lord Malvern, first Prime Minister of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

\* \* \*

BEHIND the smokescreen of lies and half-truths, to which we were treated for the whole of 1966, here is the clear statement on which Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front Government and its Unilateral Declaration of Independence was based. One might have thought that British Prime Minister Harold Wilson was equally unequivocal, immediately after the declaration of UDI:

"... As I have warned the House, the differences between us have not been the difference of normal political interchange. They have represented a deep difference of philosophy—a gulf that we now know could never be bridged because it was a gulf covering all the differences between different worlds and different centuries." *Hansard*, 11.11.65.

Or when he said on the same day:

"The British Government will, of course, have no dealings with the rebel regime."

Or, a day later, when he said:

"The question... is whether it is our policy to restore Rhodesia to the rule of law at the earliest possible moment, or whether we want to drag out the agony. This can be done, in our view, only by bringing the Rhodesia regime to an end, by making that regime unworkable and, indeed, creating a situation where the people of Rhodesia, acting through the only legal Government there—the Governor—themselves want to see and ask to see a lawful Government in its place." *Hansard*, 2.11.65.

## Rank-and-file papers

### PRINTWORKER

Journal of the Association of Rank and File Printworkers. Issue No. 1: Aims and Motives; Cuts and Closures; Craft Union Problems; TUs and the Labour Party—Growing Demand for Disaffiliation; Journalists Fight the Wage Freeze; "Daily Mail" Staff Chapel Isolated; Wage Freezes in the Past. Price 3d. (6d. postpaid) from Association of Rank and File Printworkers, 29 Love Walk, London, S.E.5. The Association aims: (1) To fight the wage freeze and anti-TU legislation by joint action in the printing industry; (2) To encourage sympathetic industrial action if the Prices and Incomes Act is used to penalise militants; (3) To campaign in the print unions for a ballot on continued affiliation to the Labour Party; (4) To campaign for one union in print; (5) To associate with similar movements in other industries.

### SEAMEN'S VOICE For Militant Seamen

For a genuinely democratic seamen's union; For repeal of the Merchant Shipping Act (1894); For rank and file control of the shipping industry. Edited and published by George Foulser AB.

New Series, Issue No. 1: What the Hell is Syndicalism (Editorial); The Wage Freeze; North East Colliermen Win "All Night In"; Unholy Alliance (Part 1 of "Direct Action" pamphlet in serial form); Ending the Merchant Shipping Act; N.E. Coast News; The 4-Watch System; Hull Seamen Beware! Price 3d (6d postpaid) from "Seamen's Voice", c/o Bill Christopher, 34 Cumberland Road, London E.17.

Ian Smith, declared Wilson, was "a private person" and, as such, one with whom he could not negotiate.

And the point was emphasised a month later, again by Harold Wilson:

"Her Majesty's Government are not prepared, directly or through the Governor, to enter into negotiations with Mr. Smith on any basis which involves dealing with an illegal regime, or on any conditions other than procedure conditions, for a return to constitutional methods." *Hansard*, 10.12.65.

As to the question of continued rule in Rhodesia by Smith and his unholy cabal of racials, Wilson was equally definite.

"We cannot negotiate with an illegal regime... We cannot negotiate with these men, nor can they be trusted, after a return to constitutional rule, with the task of leading Rhodesia in the paths of freedom and racial harmony."

"I do not think these people can be trusted to bring Rhodesia, in the much more bitter atmosphere that followed events of the last few weeks, into harmony and constitutional rule in the future. The fact that they have twisted the Constitution in the way they have and have introduced a police State—means that they are not people who can be trusted with this job." *Hansard*, 10.12.65.

What a difference a year makes! During the first week of December, following months of protracted discussion by intermediaries, and a totally abortive policy of strictly limited voluntary "sanctions", Wilson flew out to conduct his own personal negotiations with Smith on board the Tiger. The terms he offered Smith would almost certainly have guaranteed continuance of racial rule in Rhodesia for the rest of this century.

"Was it a sell-out?" asks *Observer* Diplomatic Correspondent Robert Stephens (11.12.66). His closely-reasoned article, illustrated with a cartoon showing Smith as a grinning street salesman with little clockwork figures of Wilson walking in all directions, makes it quite clear that Stephens believes it was. Talking of the Wilson plan, he says: "It is hard to say which is the more astonishing—that the Smith Cabinet rejected it or that the British Cabinet accepted it."

And now we have the farce of United Nations sanctions against *some* Rhodesian imports and exports, with the sting neatly removed by the British Government, who—in deference to British capitalist interests—have vetoed any confrontation with the fascist governments of South Africa and Portuguese Mozambique.

Wilson, in one of his more lyrical moments, once referred to the racist settlers of Rhodesia as "Our kith and kin." *Private Eye*, in a brilliant front-cover cartoon, responded: "Kith my arse", showing Wilson doing just that to Smith. Times haven't changed.

## GROUP NOTICES

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

BELFAST—Contact Tony Rosato, 103 Deer Park Road, Belfast 14.

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.

Jan 4—More Light on the Kennedy Killing—Roger Sandell.

25—The 14th Century Communist Movement—Tom Brown.

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.



# JOHN BALL AND THE WAGE FREEZE--2

AS THE WORKERS' revolt went on, its aims became clearer: they were not limited to the softening of their lot, an end to wage freeze and job control; a great social awakening developed. The rulers, spiritual and temporal, taught, with some effect, that society as it then was must continue so for all time, that social relations were eternally fixed, frozen. Mediaeval orthodoxy should not be too strange to us, for daily we hear from *all* parties, Fascist and Communist right through to Liberal and Tory, "There must always be leaders and led, always governed and governors."

The XIV Century rebels would have none of this. The rebel aim was complete social equality and the social ownership of the means of production and distribution. To this end the rebels organised a vast propaganda. Speakers travelled most of England carrying the message, which was given in the form of sermons, parables, songs, rhymes and tags, which the people could understand, remember and pass on.

From what has survived in the records, it is certain that workers in town or country could today at once understand and apply the message to their own condition. It is a grim thought that they could not, however, equally well understand the ideas and phraseology of the contemporary Left without a long period of indoctrination.

Best known of the rebel speakers was John Ball, described as "a mad priest of Kent" by the courtier Jean Froissart (1337-1410, *Chronicles*). For 20 years John preached, usually in churchyards, England's first recorded statement of equality and the rights of man.

## 'WHEN ADAM DELVED . . .'

"Good people, things will never go well so long as goods be not in common and so long as there be villeins and gentlemen. By what right are they whom we call lords greater folk than we? On what grounds have they deserved it? Why do they hold us in serfage? If we all came of the same father and mother, of Adam and Eve, how can they say or prove that they are better than we, if it be not that they make us gain for them by our toil what they spend in their pride? They are clothed in velvet and warm in their furs and their ermines, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and fair bread; and we oat cake and straw, and water to drink. They have leisure and fine houses, we have pain and labour, the rain and the winds in the fields. And yet it is of us and of our toil that these men hold their state."

John was a dangerous man, such words could bring crashing down the well-arranged system of mediaeval society, but neither jail nor threats of death deterred the preacher. Who has not heard his tag, "When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?"

In 1377 Edward died and the boy Richard II took the throne. This event raised the hopes of what has been called "the popular party", or "party of progress" in Parliament, but nothing changed, except for the worse. Their reform was to get some share of control or check over subsidies to the king. Ball and his comrades were not disappointed, they had expected nothing. Soon the populists tackled the social problem.

SET, the Labour Party's poll tax on employment is not exactly original. In 1380 Richard's parliament revived the poll tax, which previously had not been applied to labourers and artisans. It was a new and grievous burden on already overloaded shoulders.

Cryptic messages went out, from man to man, in street and field and church. "John Ball greeteth you all and doth for you to understand he hath rung your bell, now right and

might, will and skill, God speed every dele." Messages, even more cryptic, came from Jack Miller, Jack Carter, Jack Trewman and others. It seems everyone was called Jack, but much of this was use of *nom de guerre*, which the people understood. England was in revolt.

Norfolk, Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent and Cambridge, the centres of population, led the insurrection, which soon spread along the south coast to Devon and even to the remote north. In Kent the first blow was struck by a tiler, whose young daughter had been raped by a tax collector. The tiler slew the tax man and the whole shire arose. As the people marched on Canterbury the townsfolk opened the city gates, much against the archbishop's orders, for good measure they sacked his palace and released John Ball from its jail, where the prelate had imprisoned him. June 5, 1381.

## 'SEEKERS AFTER TRUTH'

Kent was more economically advanced than most counties, villeinage being unknown there, but this did not cool their ardour: 100,000 Kentish folk, with John Hales of Malling and Wat Tyler of Essex, marched on London, armed with staves, bill hooks and bows. As they marched, every lawyer they found was killed. "Not till all these were killed would the land enjoy its old freedom again", the workers cried. Fear paralysed the nobles, as the rebels methodically burnt every steward's house and all the records of the manor courts. It is worth noting that in our own time Spanish peasants in revolt, especially Anarchists, have usually destroyed land title deeds, records and dossiers.

To East Anglia, royal commissioners with armed forces had been sent to suppress the uprising, only to be driven off in disorderly retreat. The Essex men marched on London from one side, while Kentish men approached from the other and city workers flung open the gates. Soon flames leapt from the seats of tyranny and theft, the Savoy Palace of John of Gaunt, rich merchants' mansions, the new home of lawyers at the Temple. The rebels did not loot—"we are seekers after truth and justice, not thieves," history records—and one looter, carrying silver from the Savoy, was executed. June 13, 1381.

By June 14, many of the Kent men had moved from their camp on Blackheath to the south bank of the Thames opposite London. The Essex men were in camp at Mile End and the Hertfordshire rebels possessed Highbury. That day Tyler and a band of peasants forced their way into the King's fortress, the Tower of London. After treating some knights to rough jest and horse play, they sought the king. They found him not, but dragged from their skulking places the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Prior of St. John. The Primate, the evil Sudbury, was the leader of the King's Council and chief enemy of the people; he was at once beheaded. The Treasurer and the Chief Commissioner for the poll tax were next caught and beheaded.

## 'LIKE BLESSED BREAD'

The King was now at Mile End, where he spoke to the Essex rebels: "I am your king and lord, good people, what will ye?" "We will that we be free forever, us and our lands, and that we be never named nor held as serfs," roared back the answer. "I grant it," Richard replied and urged them to return home, promising at once to issue charters of amnesty and freedom. Nearly two score clerks worked throughout the day and night, writing the pledged documents; with these the next day, most of the Essex and Hertfordshire men returned home.

To St. Albans returned Will Grindecobbe, with a charter,

cont. on page 6, col. 1



## NORTH-EAST NOTES

# Nationalisation and the new boss class

MINERS at Ryhope, Co. Durham, must know by now that nationalisation and a Labour government mean an intensification of capitalism, not the reverse.

Ryhope has no industry other than its pit, and pitmen must have felt secure at last when in summer 1964 Harold MacWilson unfurled their new banner at the Durham Miners' Gala and the Coal Board began to spend thousands sinking a new shaft.

But now all has changed. MacWilson has moved house and Ryhope pit has closed. That new banner is "buried" at Durham, the new shaft has never been used and 56 million tons of coal lie wasted underground. 565 Ryhope men travel away to other pits or, in some cases, have gone to other coalfields, and 200 are redundant, that means out of work.

All right, you may say, at least two-thirds did get work—albeit miles away; they were "redeployed". Then consider this: those men who got fixed up in advance had to take their equipment to the new pits on their days off, without pay. Consider this: the men who came off shift at 6 a.m. on November 24 had to report to the Coal Board for interviews at 9 a.m. This went on all day in some cases, yet men had to be back for the last shift ending 6 a.m. on November 25, just in time to get the bus to their new pits to report for work. And all that with full consultation with union officials.

ONCE again Tyneside dockers are under fire. A couple of months back it was because they will not work nights at Newcastle. Now, at North Shields, it is because they will not work in the rain. Don't they know that exports are more important than the odd docker or two slipping off a greasy plank into the hold?

DIRECT ACTION REPORTER

## JOHN BALL (cont.)

and led the burghers to the abbey, forcing the abbot to hand over the charters which gave the town in bondage to his house. Within the abbey was the mill where peasants had to take their corn to be ground at heavy cost, for no man had the right to make flour elsewhere. Now the people broke the mill stones into tiny pieces, "like blessed bread in church," and each took away a fragment as a token of his liberty.

Many Kentish men, trusting the King's solemn pledge, returned home, but 30,000 of them stayed with Tyler. At Smithfield on June 15, Tyler and his comrades met the King, with his cavalry and men at arms. Tyler advanced alone and, while he conversed with Richard, William Walworth, Mayor of London, stabbed Tyler, who when fallen was slashed by the swords of several noblemen.

"Kill, kill, they have slain our captain", cried the crowd. The young king rode to the front, saying, "What need ye my masters, I am your captain and your king, follow me." The people believed that the nobles, especially the King's Council, were not only enemies of the toilers, but deceivers of the king, whom they now accepted, but compelled to grant to the men of Kent the same charters he had given to the Essex rebels. The letters of pardon and freedom were written and distributed and the men dispersed to their homes in Kent. It may have seemed that the insurrection was ended, but the people were not yet subdued; a longer, bloodier struggle was before them.

TOM BROWN

(to be continued)

# THE DOLLAR RACKET

THE WAR of the US Government and the Vietcong in South Vietnam is the most unpopular, with a large part of American people, this country has ever engaged in. Now the USSR Government charges the American capitalists with carrying on trade with Red China through Hong Kong, the British Crown Colony. War is the biggest racket on earth and the American capitalists are making billions of dollars out of it.

At this writing, the big political campaign is on and war is one of the main issues. The polities are saying bad things about each other and, in doing so, for once telling the truth. Who knows, the USA and Soviet Russia may yet be fighting pals against so-called Communist China. The cost of living here is so high and rising so fast that housewives are picketing and boycotting stores all over the US.

World conditions are making more Anarchists, Syndicalists and IWW's every day. Because of graft and fat salaries to high officials President Lyndon B. (Jughead) Johnson's "war on poverty" is a floperoo and colossal failure.

There are lots of demonstrators against the war and draft all over the country, as dead servicemen from South Vietnam come home in their flag-draped coffins, with thousands of wounded, maimed and sick. Many young men are being sent to jail for opposing the war. All armed forces should be pulled out of South Vietnam; let the wage slaves there decide their own destiny.

Crime and juvenile delinquency is nationwide since the war started. Drunkenness and use of drugs is very much on the increase.

Seattle, Wash.

SKIDROAD SLIM

## 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, 7x4 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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# IRELAND'S TROJAN HORSE

THERE have been some new developments in the Irish Government's plans to hamstring the TU movement. I refer readers to my article in *DIRECT ACTION* (October) on the government's proposals embracing trade union and labour court legislation. Following the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' rejection of the government proposals, it was decided to set up a working committee from the Congress and the Department of Labour. The Fianna Fail government, facing the prospect of a showdown with the TU bureaucracy, decided to sit down and see what points they had in common. This feeling was of course mutual; the last thing the same bureaucrats want is any suggestion of a showdown with Fianna Fail. Their revolutionary ideas do not extend beyond writing introductions to Connolly's books!

Now, of course, the TU movement faces a far greater danger to its freedom not only from without but also from within. The "Trojan horse" has now arranged a special consultative conference of the Congress for December 16 and upon this conference will depend the future of the trade union movement.

## Dear old pals!

"This is a plea to the Conservative Opposition to make a pact right now with the Government on a level of unemployment acceptable to both parties. The latest figures show another increase . . . The temptation to the Opposition to exploit this politically will be compelling. I say: 'Resist it,'

" . . . the root cause of Britain's economic ills has been over-full employment. It is this fact, above everything else, that has made it impossible for managers to exert the rudimentary disciplines of regular attendance, punctuality and concentrated work for the period agreed. It has made the elimination of restrictive practices and over-manning vastly more difficult. It has accorded inflated power to shop floor trouble-makers who know they have nothing to lose by disrupting the operation of the firms by which they are employed . . .

"In the United States . . . I read a recent government report which referred to an unemployment level of four per cent. as 'a reasonably fair stimulus and psychologically healthy.'

"When Mr. Callaghan spoke . . . of unemployment 'settling down' at half a million he was helping to accustom the British people to a realism on this critical issue that has been absent for a generation.

"Mr. Wilson attempted . . . to do the same—when he suggested that an unemployment level of between 1.5 per cent. and two per cent. 'might not be unacceptable' to the House of Commons.

"He was at once denounced by Mr. Heath. That was a pity . . ."

"Now they (the Conservatives) have the chance, at last, to unhitch themselves from that commitment (full employment) and to agree with the Labour Government that no argument about national unemployment should begin until it reaches a national level of, say, 2.5 per cent. The opportunity may not come again.

"By such a pact, they will be . . . laying up for themselves political treasure of inestimable worth for when they next find themselves in power."

From an open letter to Tory leader Ted Heath, by Tory candidate Tom Stacey, London *Evening Standard*, 24.11.66

At this conference, the recommendations of the working party will be put to Congress. These recommendations were published in the *Irish Times* (30.11.66) and became the cause of Dr Hillery, Minister for Labour, launching a savage attack on the *Irish Times*. He accused the *Irish Times* of giving a platform to subversive elements. "We must not fool ourselves that everyone wants industrial peace and industrial progress, in this country forces are at work to frustrate us and we must be on our guard. These subversive elements, who can get a platform in the columns of the *Irish Times* . . ." (he means any opposition; as with the Nkrumahs of Africa, this accusation is becoming the Fianna Fail custom).

The recommendations represent a horse deal between the "Trojan horse" and the Government. The proposals regarding the Labour Court have been dropped and, instead, stress has been given to "groups of unions". These have been set up in a number of industries in recent years. A group represents all unions affiliated to Congress in a particular industry, such as the "Aer Lingus group of unions". The object is to strengthen these "groups" at the expense of individual TU freedom and, of course, any rank and file expression.

They will be granted a negotiating licence collectively. In industries where the group numbers more than 60% of TU members other licences may be declared invalid. It is felt that the regulations would "remove much of the incentive to establish break-away unions". The *Irish Times* reporter says, "Greater co-ordination and the discouragement of breakaway unions are evidently prime aims". These two sentences sum it all up! This is the common interest between the bureaucracy and the government. In short, neither wants unofficial strikes or breakaway unions and, since they cannot prevent this democratically, they will introduce legislation to enforce their power.

Speaking at an Amalgamated Transport & General Workers Union regional conference on December 12, Mr Matt Merrigan, District Secretary, passed remarks which would appear aimed at these proposals and their backers—the "Trojan horse". He said what the Unions wanted was "more power to their elbow industrially socially and politically and not a diminution of power as proposed." Further, it was "not the function of trade unions to discipline or restrain their members to ensure a continuance of capitalist domination of the economy or the political process, or to make life pleasant for general officials or executives". He added, "Our claims are modest, we want the earth for working people."

I am writing this prior to the special consultative conference. Perhaps it is too much to hope that delegates will see it the way Matt Merrigan does. The alternative seems to be a gradual encroachment by Fianna Fail over the rights of the people won after so much struggle. I am thinking of 1913, not the political change eight years later.

DAVE PICKETT

## UNHOLY ALLIANCE

The 1966 Seamen's Strike: an Analysis

by GEORGE FOULSER

Direct Action Pamphlet—6d.

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



# THE CRUNCH AT BMC

**B**ILL CHRISTOPHER drew attention, in the November issue of **DIRECT ACTION**, to the possibility of the BMC management using the present slump as a means of ridding itself of its militant shop stewards and the forcing of higher work loads on the remaining labour force. The actions of the management tend to show that this—though it started as a by-product of the recession—has now become its main objective.

For weeks before the redundancy notices became operative the press, radio and TV were busy reporting the way in which various strikes against redundancy—notably that of the Long-bridge transport drivers—were affecting the earnings of thousands of other employees. They all paid glowing tribute to the efforts of the firm in reshuffling and stacking completed vehicles in order to keep its men at work.

Unfortunately, none of them happened to notice the extraordinary coincidence that these noble efforts succeeded in keeping everyone at work for just long enough each week to earn the guaranteed wage they were entitled to under union agreements. The net result being that, after deducting fares, etc., the majority of men were losing money by working. Now comes the crunch—with the sacked men gone and the strikers back, work programmes are in no case more, and in some cases less, than what there were when the strikers were allegedly “holding the firm to ransom”.

The first day back saw the management begin its attempt to reduce piecework prices, get extra work done for no extra payment, or the same work done with a reduced labour force. This has already resulted in minor strikes and skirmishes.

## Anti-war action in Japan

**W**IDESPREAD ACTION against the Vietnam war is reported from Japan. Our comrades of the Japanese Anarchist Federation write that: “The Federation of Young Anarchists organised a Committee of Direct Action against the Vietnam war with students from the university in Tokyo and held a meeting on October 15, at which disclosures were made about munitions supplies to the US. It is reported that a group of young students assaulted a munitions factory and damaged it. Three of them were arrested and further arrests are expected.”

From Zengakuren, the militant anti-Stalinist student federation, we learn that more than 700 young workers and students took part in the Anti-War Assembly on August 4. As a result, Zengakuren began in September activity against the docking of US atomic submarines at Yokosuka and Sasebo. Despite the summer vacation, 1,500 students took part in the protest demonstration against the US military base at Yokosuka, near Tokyo, resisting police attacks. Thirty students were arrested, 50 wounded and seven indicted.

On October 20, Zengakuren organised national united student action against the Vietnam war and supported the call of SOHYO (General Council of Japanese Trade Unions) for strikes against the war on October 21. Coupled with the strike call was opposition to Chinese nuclear tests.

On November 5, Zengakuren organised a mass assembly in Tokyo “in memory of the revolutionary uprising of Hungarian workers”, in which some 1,000 workers and students took part.

The Japanese Anarchist Federation has also held a 10th anniversary meeting, to commemorate Sanshiro Ishikawa, one of the movement's pioneers—and a friend of the English libertarian writer, the late Edward Carpenter. JAF's National Congress was at Nagoya on November 19–20.

The BMC management, knowing it has government backing, seems all set to intensify this campaign over the next few months, ending, in all probability, with an attempt to introduce a “measured daywork” system based on the present low level of production. So the situation slowly returns to normal; the workers would then find themselves doing the increased production without any increase in their wages. Whether or not BMC succeed in this, the fact remains that the next few months are going to be very stormy.

It is almost possible to sympathise with various foremen and supervisors, already sweating cobblers at the prospect of coming redundancies among their own kind, trying to put these measures over to stewards who are not slow to tell them, “You've already made our jobs so poor we couldn't care less if we keep them or not, but if you want to keep yours, you'd better sod off and keep quiet.”

Finally, Vauxhall workers during a recent dispute were heard to call for the lynching of some of the top executives. No one at BMC thinks this would solve their problems.

But most agree it would help.

FRANK HENDERSON

## TU men refuse to evict Gipsies

**A**TTEMPTS to evict gipsy families from a temporary caravan site at St. Mary Cray, Kent, by Bromley Council during December were foiled by the direct action of the gipsies themselves, the support of the newly-formed Gipsy Council of Great Britain—and the solidarity of two good trade unionists, who refused orders to carry out the officials' dirty work.

The first assault on the site was thwarted by a sit-down, in which Grattan Puxon, formerly active on behalf of travelling folk in Ireland, took part. The second failed when Bromley council driver Aloysius O'Boyle and his mate, members of the National Union of Public Employees, refused to tow the caravans away. “I refuse to do the work of a bailiff,” said Bro. O'Boyle. And the third attack on the encampment, for which police were called in, ended in the ignominious retreat of the forces of “law and order”, after a pitched battle, in which the gipsy women played an active part.

The council then decided to call a Christmas truce, after discussions with representatives of the gipsies' organisation. But, despite promises to provide a permanent caravan site eventually, they threatened to resume their eviction efforts on December 28.

## LITERATURE

- UNHOLY ALLIANCE.** The 1966 Seamen's Strike: an Analysis by George Foulser 6d.  
**SMASH THE WAGE FREEZE** by Bill Christopher 2d  
**WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE UNIONS?** by Tom Brown 4d  
**WORKERS' CONTROL** SWF Pamphlet (2nd printing) 6d  
**HOW LABOUR GOVERNED, 1945-1951** 6d  
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