

# Direct Action

For workers' direct control of industry

Inside—Vietnam needs social revolution : Sources of Syndicalism : How IWW broke the colour bar

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWMA)

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## AFTER ABERFAN—THE WHITEWASH

IT IS OFTEN SAID that a man is best judged by his behaviour in crisis or adversity. This might also be said of groups of men and social institutions. Judged by such a standard the ruling class, new and old, and its power cliques and institutions, in the disaster of Aberfan are not only guilty, but also petty, cowardly and lying.

The Report of the Tribunal of Inquiry, however, though deliberately restrained, unearths the ghastly truth of laziness, incompetence, callousness and lying as the attribution of the governors concerned. All political societies—slave, feudal, capitalist, Socialist, Bolshevik and Fascist—are like a huge pyramid, or a series of pyramids of varying volume, where power is concentrated at the top and is delegated downwards controlling the huge human base beneath. From the top, we are told, "Not only is this the best, it is the only possible form of society. They at the top know best, they select the best officials in descending order. The social base cannot be trusted, is ignorant and irresponsible."

In contrast to political society, Syndicalism works towards a society that, while not resembling the ever-present pyramid, is controlled from below, that responsibility and familiar control that in its most important social task, is known as *Workers' Control*.

### A new kind of pageant

LANCASHIRE'S famous cotton industry has long suffered the blows of politicians—especially the Labour sort, under both Attlee and Wilson. Even during the last 10 years, 1,003 mills have closed down.

The complaint of the mill workers is that the slump is caused by political deals, bringing into Britain heavy imports of woven cotton goods from Fascist and colonial countries where conditions are bad and wages so low that Lancashire cannot compete without going on to a coolie standard. Portugal and Hong Kong are two examples of countries supplying near-slave labour imports.

In protest, mill workers staged a pageant at King's Hall, Manchester, where, on 11 August, 3,000 mill workers from all parts of Lancashire took the day off to watch a highly successful show.

With them, by invitation, came a score of MPs, several mayors, a representative of the employers, trade union officials and, for the Government, Greenwood.

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Let us put on trial the system of the boss class. The Report proves that the disaster was foreseeable, was indeed foreseen for many years. The National Coal Board, that much boasted massive pyramid that quashed the numerous smaller pyramids of prenationalised coal, is condemned for foolishness, ignorance, bungling ineptitude and blindness in the face of warning signs writ large. The warnings were passed, say the Tribunal, "into the limbo of forgotten things. A terrifying tale."

As to knowledge of their subject and control of that which they were highly paid to control, the Report condemns Lord Robens, the Top Brass of the NCB, and the management at each descending layer of power. "They were like moles being asked about the habits of birds" (in spite of Robens's private NCB airplane). "The report which follows tells not of wickedness but of ignorance, ineptitude and a failure of communications." The exact opposite of just those things that all politicians boast of.

### HOLLOW PROPAGANDA

Even after the disaster, while public opinion was still warm, the Coal Board were still too tired to take the first obvious step. Not till the 55th day of the inquiry did they announce their intention to build a culvert to take water directly from the Mountain to the River Taff at the modest cost of £20,000.

The much-promised good relations between the boards of nationalised industries and Labour-controlled local councils is exposed as hollow propaganda, the Tribunal saying:

"We do not claim to understand even today why the (Merthyr Tydfil) Borough Council and the National Coal Board were unable to reach an amicable settlement of what appears to be a simple drainage problem and so avoid a great deal of misery in the village over many years.

"The former can no more be acquitted of lack of vigilance than the latter can be absolved from grave failure to face up to their substantial responsibility in relation to what was for decades undoubtedly a scandalous state of affairs."

Those who seek immense power, political and economic, lay claim to almost superhuman measures of character and intellect, but they do so in fine weather. Come bad weather they deny responsibility. *They demand power but they will not have responsibility.*

It seems we are not alone in this observation; the *Daily Telegraph* (4.8.67) said:

"The Tribunal was very displeased at the fact that it

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## AFTER ABERFAN (cont.)

was not till the 74th day of the inquiry that counsel for the National Coal Board admitted the Board's responsibility for the disaster. By that time, one after another of the officers of the Board had given evidence, all more or less following one pattern.

"They started by denying knowledge or responsibility but were steadily driven by relentless cross-examination into admitting some knowledge or other and agreeing that by some act of commission or omission—usually the latter—they had contributed to the state of affairs which ended in disaster.

"The Tribunal endorses the view of counsel for the Aberfan residents that much time would have been saved 'if the National Coal Board had not stubbornly resisted every attempt to lay the blame where it so clearly must rest—at their door'."

Robens himself gave the lead for this stubborn defence of the indefensible. At the time of the disaster he appeared on TV and said that the fact that the tip had been built and extended upon a stream was unknown until that day. That must stand as one of the greatest untruths of politics—an occupation not known for veracity. In his evidence to the Tribunal Robens still held, to the annoyance of all, to this obviously false statement.

### ROBENS RESIGN?

"Nor did we accept it for one moment," says the Report. So bad was Robens's evidence that the counsel for the NCB was forced to repudiate the whole of his long evidence and asked the Tribunal to say that the position was as if Robens had not given any evidence at all.

As to the technical knowledge he claimed and disclaimed from having, and knowledge of the general problem, the Report says: "But as Lord Robens himself knew nothing beyond what he was told by others in the calamitous circumstances then prevailing, it was unwise of him to imply at Aberfan that he had knowledge, and it is understandable that his statement was bitterly resented by the residents who possessed the intimate local knowledge which he lacked."

Of course every worker knows that every day in industry and commerce, ignorance, bluff and picking others' brains by top management are the warp and weave of the game.

Everyone expected that after this self-exposure and the rest of the Report Robens would resign. Indeed the Press had already published, some in giant type, the coming resignation. Then the political machine got to work. They learned from Nasser who after his terrific defeat and exposure of bluff staged a well-advertised "resignation", then allowed his stage managers to work up demonstrations and phoney appeals: "Nasser please stay"—and "in response to enormous public request" he stayed on. The Labour Party knows that Aberfan has exposed the rottenness of the whole political set-up in general and the false promises of nationalisation in particular.

Easy, then, to get here a union committee, there a union boss or there a capitalist Labour MP, as Woodrow Wyatt,

to say, "We the miners of Britain implore you Lord Robens to stay and carry on with the good work you are doing."

What good work? Robens, then a union-sponsored Labour MP from a mining constituency, was appointed by a Tory government and is now supported by a Labour one, to slash the coal industry as Beeching slashed the railways. But we are told that Robens has eased the rundown of the industry. Where is the evidence of the Board's clemency to pitmen communities? That evidence is as thin as the evidence given by its chairman at Aberfan.

### LABOUR PARTY AND COAL

Wilson, too, a few weeks ago at the Durham Miners' Gala, said that the Labour Government was helping the coal industry to beat oil with coal; at the same time his outfit had just ordered a nuclear power station for Durham.

The truth is that the coal industry was mortally wounded when its fight with oil began and that, early in 1946, by the Labour Government in which Wilson was a junior minister. Then the Government created a big department which sent hordes of men about every kind of industry to persuade those enterprises to switch from coal, which we had, to oil, which was in other hands. A leading member of the Labour Government was Hartley Shawcross, QC, whose interest in oil swiftly led him to be legal adviser to BP Shell and afterwards one of its directors. What sympathy could they have with the pitmen?

To the Aberfan Tribunal, S. O. Davies, Labour MP for Merthyr Tydfil, said that he had been prevented from taking action on the tip's stability because the miners feared the closure of the pit and unemployment. Here is a long-established Labour MP who got into Parliament by telling the miners that Labour would bring full employment and nationalisation and would give them security, safety from danger, and a full life!

### START AT THE ROOTS

Why, even the officials of the National Mineworkers' Union were charmed by their party's oil propaganda and in their new London head offices, built just after the war, they said, "No coal or coke here. We'll have oil for central heating," and they went ahead until public shame caused them to switch back.

The so-called big men at the top of the pyramid are intellectual dwarfs and moral midgets. They have not the gifts they pretend to. We can better manage our own affairs. Pull down the Pharaohs and their monuments of slavery. Start at the roots to grow and build again.

**TOM BROWN**

## PAGEANT (cont.)

The march banners read, "Start the day by sacking Jay", "Fair competition is our ambition", "Give Lancs the kiss of life—not death."

When one speaker said that in three years Wilson had refused to meet a deputation or address a meeting, loud boos rent the air. When Greenwood, who looked angry and worried, spoke, he was greeted with boos, shouting and slow handclaps.

But the best of the show were four pieces of music and acting by amateur operatic societies from mill towns. The favourite act was "The Coronation of George Brown." The actor playing George wore a red robe marked "Made in Fascist Portugal," while he sat on a throne draped with a Union Jack marked "Made in Hong Kong", and was crowned with a crown made of cotton waste. Solemn version was provided by a satirical version of the "Red Flag."

It seemed that all agreed that the show was well organised and skilfully carried out. Even Greenwood said he enjoyed it, though his looks belied his words.

**NORTHERNER**

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Manchester, Sunday, September 24, 1967.

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# VIETNAM NEEDS A SOCIAL REVOLUTION

● Continued from last month.

THE AMERICANS and their allies are making war with their firing power. The air arm is of prime importance to them, but their losses in both North and South are heavy. In three months, 25 of the force's 138 Skyraiders were lost. Pilots estimate the number of anti-aircraft batteries in the North at about 13,000—and they don't laugh about them. The U.S. releases only very dubious figures for its losses, but both the fleet air arm and air force are suffering from a serious shortage of pilots.

The navy has made known that it needs some 1,000 pilots and 3,000 supplementary pilot cadets. The air force has recalled to active service a number of pilots who were on ground duties.

The Vietcong being ever-present after two years' serious war, a face-saver had to be found: the Vietcong were only a handful of bandits, but the war went on because of a North Vietnamese invasion. On this reasoning, there was no need for the U.S. to fight in the Delta, because there were no North Vietnamese forces there. But during the past year, throughout South Vietnamese territory, the U.S. has taken prisoner 8,700 Vietcong and only 400 North Vietnamese. And the war is as fierce as ever in the Delta. Without giving up their phoney argument, the U.S. are beginning to flounder in the Delta mud.

Although they are now sending land forces into areas previously controlled by the Vietcong, the majority of Vietcong killed are wiped out by aerial or artillery bombardment. If the U.S. lacked the curtain of fire which protects them in all their operations, they would face a new Dunkirk.

## THE WAR IN DETAIL

According to U.S. figures published on February 6, 1967, in 18 operations undertaken, some lasting several months, their ground troops were supported by 10,072 sorties by fighter-bombers. The total enemy killed was 5,228—hence about two aerial sorties needed to kill one Vietcong. And this does not take into account the artillery fire of the Seventh Fleet, the B52 raids, tanks and ground troops.

Only one of these operations had no air support: that of Maeng Ho 8 in the province of Phu Yen, carried out by South Koreans (apropos these fighters of the free world, I saw a Korean at a press conference who, in a hand-to-hand engagement near Qui Nhon, had gouged out a Vietcong's eyes with his thumbs).

In the Gadsen operation, 230 aerial sorties for 44 enemy killed. In the Big Spring operation, 112 aerial sorties for 22 enemy killed. In the Prairie operation, south of the demilitarised zone, 5,183 sorties for 1,397 enemy killed. The efficiency record stretches back to the Sam Houston operation, which needed 597 aerial missions to kill five Vietcong. Finally, for the Lola operation, 117 aerial sorties. Enemy killed: nil. Arms seized: nil. Allied losses: light.

The communiqué did not reveal whether civilian victims were included in the enemy killed, or whether one should double the figures to get an idea of the total victims.

The U.S. have revealed that the munitions they used in Vietnam during a nine-month period were equal to the total expended in the Korean war.

On January 8, 1967, the U.S. decided to wipe out an important Vietcong landmark 40 km north of Saigon, in the forest area called the "Iron Triangle". After a heavy series of B52 raids, 60 armed helicopters launched a surprise attack on the village of Ben Suc, controlled by the Vietcong. It was the start of the Cedar Fall operation, which was to engage 30,000 U.S. troops, aviation, artillery, tanks, engineers,

special forces to blow up the network of tunnels. In brief, the U.S. blasted, burned, razed, mined and levelled the Iron Triangle zone from January 8–26. The B52s had previously pockmarked the area with 25-yard diameter craters from their 1,000lb. bombs. A minor road of red earth borders one side of the triangle; along it, villages, a rubber factory and mainly forest on both sides. The U.S. pushed back the forest 110 yards on both sides with hundreds of bulldozers, protected by armoured cars. The uprooted, piled-up trees were burned, the villages and rubber factory set on fire, then levelled and wiped off the map. The civil population—more than 6,000 women, children and old men—were concentrated in one of the camps they dare to call "villages for refugees from communism." During the first ten days, artillery fired more than 85,000 shells into the Iron Triangle. Air raids went on continuously: 1,238 missions in this triangle of 10 square kilometres. Then the troops went in, to discover an incredible complex of tunnels. But the special forces went only a dozen yards inside these tunnels to place their boxes of TNT.

This destroyed only 10% of the tunnels. On January 28 the operation ended. Much rice (more than 3,000 tons) and some arms had been discovered. The 6,000 civilians who were feeding the Vietcong had been uprooted. But the expected resistance had not been forthcoming. The U.S. announced a little more than 700 killed but these figures seem exaggerated. It was evident that most of the Vietcong had slipped through the net. Before withdrawing, the U.S. made a heavy bombardment with incendiaries, trying to burn down what remained of the forest. Some days after the departure of the armada, a small U.S. unit left behind suffered heavy losses. But the communiqué gives no more details. It is probable that the subterranean complex was far bigger than imagined and on several levels (in the region of Thuy Hoa, on the coast, the U.S. discovered two huge halls cut out by the Vietcong, capable of sheltering 4,000 men!). Under each straw covering that they upturn is the entrance to a tunnel, but the Americans have given up exploring places where it needs men to face men.

## THE VIETCONG

I shall not undertake a politico-military analysis of the Vietcong. The works of Burchett and the Publications of Hanoi give sufficient detail, amid their flood of patriotic and State propaganda. The Vietcong are certainly succeeding in partially holding in check the No. 1 world power. But at what cost? Firstly, that of all the civilians killed. Then, that of the heavy losses in their own ranks, which result more from the concentration of fire against them than from real battles.

Can an organisation which claims to be revolutionary continue to let its partisans be massacred in the forests, where they face only slaves—volunteers who have failed their examinations, unemployed Negroes and the host of well-conditioned conscripts—while the swine (Vietnamese bourgeoisie, high-up American officers, colonists, pimps and international politicians) strut around Saigon?

That is the *crime* of the communist organisation, which has once more betrayed the workers and peasants: in Saigon those responsible for the war are able to walk about in peace. Every day you can see high-up officers of the U.S. Navy, in white walking-out uniform, strolling around the centre of Saigon without arms or escort. Now the U.S. are even bringing their wives—to taste the peace of the tropics and the family. And when the Vietcong fire their mortars in Saigon, they talk about terrorism. What folly! It is simply

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# Direct Action

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## Syndicalists in the Russian Revolution

THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION has published extracts from *The Guillotine at Work*, by G. P. Maximoff in a pamphlet entitled SYNDICALISTS IN THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the event. Maximoff was an Anarcho-Syndicalist who participated in the Revolution as editor of the Petrograd (now Leningrad) Anarcho-Syndicalist paper *Golos Trouda* (Voice of Labour).

Maximoff recalls that the Revolution in March (February) 1917 took merely three days in which to smash the tyrannical Tzarist regime. He recalls that this was, in retrospect, relatively easy compared with the struggles of the subsequent months. All factions and classes were united in their objective of destroying the Tzarist regime. He notes however that this shortlived unity was followed by eight months of revolutionary struggle culminating in the temporary destruction of the State. Temporary—because in November (October) the Bolshevik reaction settled into the saddle of power.

It then became a question only of how long the Bolshevik Party could take to consolidate their power before the revolution was strangled. "To arrive at centralism *via* federalism", he quotes one of Stalin's slogans and here indeed is summed up the two-headed attitude of the Bolshevik leadership. Maximoff recalls in detail the manner in which the Bolshevik Party used Anarcho-Syndicalist slogans such as "Workers' Control", "Arming of the Workers", etc., in order to pander to the popular masses who would then place confidence in their hands. Then, as Stalin said "through federalism to centralism".

Maximoff writes of the differences between Anarcho-Syndicalists on the role of the Factory Committees. Maximoff

himself was one of the faction which supported the Factory Committees against the trade unions. He blames this difference as bearing much responsibility for the success of the trade union bureaucracy against the Factory Committees, and it greatly helped the Bolshevik Party to exploit the differences amongst the rank and file. The trade unions which were controlled in the early stages by the Social Democrats were ultimately taken over by the Bolsheviks who used the Factory Committees to undermine the Social Democratic bureaucracy. He notes that while the Bolshevik Party at no stage gave open support to the Factory Committees many of the Bolshevik rank and file supported the Anarcho-Syndicalist view. He quotes the Bolshevik theoretician A. Lozovsky (S. K. Dridzo) writing on the subject of Workers' Control: "Workers' Control was the fighting slogan of the Bolsheviks before the October days . . . but despite the fact that Workers' Control figured in all resolutions, and was displayed on all banners, it had an aura of mystery about it. The Party press wrote very little about this slogan, still less did it try to implement it in a concrete way." And this indeed sums up the attitude of the Bolsheviks. Nonetheless, Maximoff takes the Anarcho-Syndicalists to task for their lack of clarity on the role of Factory committees and says that many of the comrades were deluded by the Bolsheviks during this Revolutionary period.

Maximoff quotes the strength of the Anarchist and Anarcho-Syndicalist movement throughout Russia during these months of fifty years ago. He recalls that two dailies were published in Petrograd and one in Moscow, each with a circulation of 25,000. He notes that many provincial towns in Russia also had a live Anarchist press. He mentions the more extensive oral propaganda carried out in the army, the factories, and villages. This propaganda contributed greatly to the growth of Soviets, Factory Committees, and house committees, etc.

Finally comes the reaction, and here he details how the Bolsheviks once in power, set about to bring the Labour Movement to heel and we see the beginning of what later became the Stalinist terror. He recalls the attempt of the Anarcho-Syndicalists to build a revolutionary trade union movement only to be thwarted by Bolshevik manoeuvres, intrigue, and then jails. He quotes the strength of the Anarcho-Syndicalists at the First All-Russian Trade Union Convention, in January 1918, as 88,000.

This is a timely pamphlet stating the facts of the events in Russia of fifty years ago. In November, we shall see the Communist Party in common with the C.P.S.U. celebrating the counter-Revolution in the name of Revolution. This pamphlet will whet your appetite.

DAVE PICKETT

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# IWW STRIKERS BROKE COLOUR BAR

EMPLOYERS boasted to one another how the race hatred they stirred up between Black and White workers was helping to prevent the workers forming a union. One journalist wrote: "The Lumber Trust carefully studies methods for intensifying race antagonism and then sits back to watch it work. Black or white men, a few lives more or less, are of no consequence to the masters of the swamp lands if their snuffing out turns a profit to the companies."

The time was the years 1907 to 1910, the place the timber forests of the Deep South of the United States, particularly Western Louisiana and Eastern Texas. A quarter-million and more workers were employed in these forests, over half of them Negroes. The Negroes were mainly unskilled workers in the lowest-paid jobs, doing most of the heavy manual work in the sawmills, on railways, in the turpentine camps, at skidways, and in the swamps.

Yet in the following years thousands of workers of both colours united successfully to fight the near-serfdom the lumber kings imposed. "I owe my soul to the company store" most could have said. The bosses owned the towns and took much of their labour force from the jails which they kept well stocked for the purpose.

## MODERATE AT FIRST

In 1907 the first attempt to organise a strike collapsed. Then they began to form the Brotherhood of Timber Workers. The main militants were Arthur L. Emerson and Jay Smith. They and several dozen others went from camp to camp disguised. One of the disguises was to pose as evangelists, another to pretend to be card sharpers—quite the opposite of other people who are card-sharpers disguised as union organisers.

Emerson had been to the Pacific Northwest timber forests, and many of the militants he recruited first were Wobblies, members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), an organisation well known in the latter region to say the least. At first, though, the Brotherhood tried to appear moderate. It even had segregated locals. It foreswore violence and talked of the "rights" of the employers.

But the bosses weren't fooled. They branded the Brotherhood an IWW offshoot and John H. Kirby, the largest lumber operator in Texas, went straight off to Samuel Gompers, reactionary boss of the craft-union American Federation of Labour (AF of L), for help. Gompers advised him to recognise the AF of L alone and to lock out all the mill workers. These would have to return on the employers' terms and the Brotherhood would be smashed. Naturally, the AF of L was interested only in getting dues from the craftsmen, who were White, and the workers would be doubly split once it got its foot in the door.

## "CALL IN THE NEGROES"

The lockout lasted for half a year, but failed to smash the Brotherhood. White and Black stood shoulder to shoulder. Kirby offered the Negro members of the Brotherhood a return to work at higher wages, quite unsuccessfully. A plan to bring in Black scabs also failed when the Brotherhood circulated an appeal to Negroes throughout Texas and Louisiana. When the mills reopened it was not with scab labour. The Brotherhood had won its battle against extermination.

After this the Brotherhood joined the IWW and all segregation within was ended, though it was against the law in Louisiana for Whites and Negroes to meet together. Said Bill Haywood of the IWW: "You work in the same mills together. Sometimes a black man and a white man chop down the same tree together. You are meeting in convention

now to discuss the conditions under which you labour. This can't be done intelligently by passing resolutions here and then sending them out to another room for the black man to act upon. Why not be sensible about this and call the Negroes into this convention. If it is against the law, this is one time when the law should be broken."

Philip S. Foner tells the story of the IWW's Southern lumber Drive in his *History of the Labour Movement in the United States: Volume IV: The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-17* (International Publishers, New York, 1965). One incident further is worth noting here. It would be worth noting for the fact alone that when on November 11, 1912, 1,300 union men struck work at the American Lumber Co., Merrivale, it was the biggest strike in the Brotherhood's history. The strikers were not only Negro and White but Indian too.

The strike was against the sacking of 15 men who'd been witnesses at the Grabow Trial. (This trial had cleared Emerson and eight other defendants, as well as 49 others awaiting trial on the same charge, of the murder of one of the employers' gunmen who'd provoked an exchange of fire at a union meeting, killing four workers and wounding 40-odd more.

With its funds already exhausted by supporting the families of those in jail, the Brotherhood sought to avoid a strike and appealed to the State Governor. The witnesses had, after all, been sacked for obeying a court summons. The appeal met with no response, however, and the walkout followed, "thus making an injury to one an injury to all."

## "A GLORIOUS SIGHT TO SEE"

The American Lumber Co. bosses tried to bring in scabs from other areas. It fenced off the mills and workers' shacks to stop the pickets talking to them. But the railway track was lined with pickets four miles each side of the town who threw leaflets through the windows as the trains slowed down to enter Merrivale. Many Negro, Mexican and foreign-born workers brought in as scabs refused to enter the mill. As a Brotherhood statement put it:

"It is a glorious sight to see, the miracle that has happened here in Dixie. This coming true of the 'impossible'—this union of workers regardless of colour, creed or nationality. To hear the Americans saying 'You can starve us but you cannot whip us'; the Negroes crying, 'You can fence us in but you cannot make us scab'; the Italians singing the *Marseillaise* and the Mexicans shouting vivas for the Brotherhood. . . ."

There was solidarity not only between Black and White but also between wage worker and farmer. Covington Hall, a Wobbly, relates the following incident: One worker told a meeting that even though he had nine children he was willing to strike "if the Union can guarantee food for my children." Whereupon the one Negro present said, "We farmers and workers will have to stick together in the Union and win this fight, or all of us, white and coloured, are going back to slavery. I have so many pigs in my pen, so many head of cattle in the woods, so many chickens in the yard, and so many bushels of corn and sweet potatoes, and so many gallons of syrup in my barn, and I pledge myself so long as I have a pound of meat or a peck of corn no man, white or coloured, who goes out in this strike will starve nor will his children; and I believe all the white farmers here are ready to pledge the same."

And every farmer in the audience rose and confirmed the pledge.

MARK HENDY



# Zengakuren fights to stop US war escalation

THE FIRST HALF of 1967 was devoted by Zengakuren to the fight against the planned expansion of the US air base at Sunagawa in the vicinity of Tokyo. This attempt is closely connected with the escalation of the war in Vietnam.

On February 26, May 28, and July 9—together with peasants and the Anti-War Youth Committee—they succeeded in holding three mass protest rallies in front of the runway of the base.

Sunagawa was the former air base of the Japanese forces and after the Second World War came under the control of the US Occupation forces. It was used, by the Americans, as a base for jet fighters and bombers during the Korean war and is now indispensable to the US in its fight in Vietnam. 8,000 men of the US Air Transport Troop are stationed there and the base employs 10,000 Japanese workers. The soldiers are actively engaged in sending men, material, medicine and food into the front line in Vietnam. Many of the bodies of US soldiers are brought back to this base to be destroyed. The base is also used as a refuelling point for CIA personnel who travel back and forth to all parts of Asia.

The plan is to extend the runway so that the transport planes leaving for Vietnam can be filled to top capacity—at present, they are forced to leave the base carrying only

## VIETNAM (cont.)

a small military operation, which kills civilians and Vietnamese parachutists 100 yards from the American objective. Can a revolutionary organisation allow itself to use mortar fire in a town dominated by the population that it wants to win over? Why not the atomic bomb?

All that is clear. The communist organisation has long since betrayed the Vietcong peasants. It prefers to ensure its absolute control of the partisans and carry out the classical warfare of military against military, rather than risk losing control, by giving the individual responsibility and using revolutionary terrorism, which could make the position of the U.S. and their lackeys impossible in the big towns.

True, terrorism has been discredited and even in revolutionary circles many people are disillusioned by the setbacks it has undergone. Perhaps because it has never really been tried? Clearly the blind terrorism practised by the Vietcong does not help them. Their bombs, mines and grenades kill more civilians than enemy. But if 50 revolvers were discharged every day against the military and political bosses in Saigon, it is likely that "the enthusiasm to save the freedom of the Vietnamese people" would soon evaporate.

But we are not at that point. Far from it. Every day the B52s unload their cargoes of bombs on the jungle and often bodies are found near the bombing targets without even a wound: Vietcong killed by shock, several dozen yards from the craters of the huge bombs.

And the communist hierarchy, which refuses to clean out the Saigon sewers, keeps its men in the jungle.

In Europe, those who attend communist meetings risk being misled. Here, the sacrificed peasant of Vietnam bends his back under the fire of those who claim to win him over. Like all peoples of the world, those of Vietnam need a social revolution.

VO CHIN PHU

60-70% of their full load. A previous attempt, in 1956-1957, was made to enlarge the runway but now, due to the escalation of the Vietnam war, the need for a larger base in this area is even greater and the Americans have offered the peasants large sums of money to vacate their land surrounding the base.

The backbone of the opposition has, in fact, come from the peasants in the area and they have formed the Peasants of Sunagawa Base Opposition League.

As we do not have the space to give full details of Zengakuren's activities during 1967, here is a brief list of activity:

*January 20:* In protest against the raising of fees, 15,000 striking students of Meiji University surrounded the University Administration block.

*January 24:* Okinawa workers and students joined together to protest against the Education Control Bills—this was followed by a further demonstration on January 28.

*February 11:* Protest rallies all over Japan against the revival of the National Holiday "Memorial Day of The Foundation of Japan."

*February 23:* Protest rally of workers and students against the port-call, at Yokahama, of a US nuclear submarine.

*February 24:* 20,000 Okinawa workers and students surrounded the Parliament Hall and stopped the Education Control Bill being passed.

*February 26:* First rally at the Sunagawa Base.

*March 14:* Students of Takasaki College of Technology struck against the expulsion of 20 students who fought the city's intervention on the campus.

*May 26:* Students demonstrate against police intervention in the campus festival.

*May 28:* In the second rally at the base 12,000 workers, peasants and students demonstrated at the base's runway and were attacked by riot police as they marched towards the gates.

*June 9:* Several student protests against increase of university fees.

*June 19:* Protest action against Chinese Nuclear Tests.

*June 23:* Protest rally against the suppression of education to Koreans in Japan.

*June 24:* Students protest against being forced to participate in civil defence activities.

*June 30:* Demonstrations by students against Prime Minister Sato's visit to South Korea.

*July 9:* Third rally at the Sunagawa Base. 50,000 participated in the rally, 12,000 sat down at the gate and because of the large numbers of demonstrators, the police remained orderly.

The information for this article was taken from "Zengakuren: Struggle of Japanese Students—Summer 1967". It's full of facts and contains 30-odd photographs which include some smashing scenes at the US Air base.

MARYLYN HUTT

## THE HUNGARIAN WORKERS' REVOLUTION

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# SOURCES OF SYNDICALISM

FOR MORE than a century there have been two distinct currents in the working-class movement which, though claiming to have the same eventual aim, have always been utterly opposed to each other.

The first, propounded by Marx, Engels and the vast majority of their followers, while paying lip service to the goal of a free society at some unspecified date in the distant future, saw the State as the centre of social life. Its principles were centralism, élitism, the control over society by a political and bureaucratic minority.

The second, originally propounded by Bakunin, Kropotkin, William Morris and other libertarians, recognised that the State, an organisation of repressive power over and above society, could never be used to free the working class from the chains of wage slavery. It held that the struggle against capitalism and for a free society, based on social responsibility, must at the same time aim at the destruction of State power and the management of society by a system of voluntary associations. Its principles are federalism, rank and file control, the elimination of political power and bureaucracy.

Although these two currents have at times worked together for limited objectives, they are totally opposed, one to the other. The great tragedy of present-day society is that the former has gained almost complete control of the international labour movement. Let us look at them in greater detail.

## ONE-PARTY DICTATORSHIP

Broadly speaking, the first tendency can be divided in two: Bolshevism and Social Democracy.

Bolshevism is a product of the Russian revolutionary movement. Its leading apostle was Lenin, a man to whom the conquest of political and economic power by his own faction was the driving force, to which all else was secondary. All means—lies, subterfuge, character assassination, trickery, murder—were good in this single-minded endeavour. Bolshevism aimed at a one-party dictatorship, in which all other working-class movements, all freedom of association, would be ruthlessly destroyed and economic life organised on the basis of total nationalisation of industry and enforced State collectivisation of agriculture.

Power would be concentrated at the centre, in a tight party caucus, and passed down through political commissars and industrial managers to shop floor level. The same held for distribution of goods. The state and its officials were to be all-powerful.

This tendency triumphed in Russia and today also rules China, the East European countries, North Korea, North Vietnam and Cuba. Class relations are unchanged from those of private capitalism, except that State officials and bureaucrats are substituted for shareholders. The objective condition of the worker is basically the same, enslaved by a wage system in which the differentials are often greater than those of Western-style capitalism. It is, therefore, correct

to class this system of one of State capitalism.

Social democracy has taken various forms, some more Marxist than others in theory—German social democracy more, British social democracy less—but its end result is approximately the same. Let us take the British Labour Party, which we know best, as an example. Formed as a political extension of the trade unions, to safeguard their interests, it started with virtually no theoretical basis, apart from seeking such reforms as sickness benefit, safety regulations in industry, amelioration of harsh working conditions and so on. It never had, except in the vaguest terms, any vision of a classless socialist society, but simply aimed to modify the power structure. Like Bolshevism, its basic principle was: "Father knows best." Such theory as was imposed on this political vacuum came from the middle-class Fabians (Shaw, the Webbs, etc.), a grouping completely divorced from the realities of working-class life and industrial struggle, who worshipped power, tidiness and efficiency and to whom nationalisation was a keystone.

## FILLED WITH RUBBISH

Social vacuums, like vacuum cleaners, tend to get filled up—usually with rubbish—and so it proved with the Labour Party. Those with clarity of ideas, who know where they are going (though the direction may be entirely wrong), usually prevail over those with no sense of direction. This is a lesson unfortunately still to be learned by much of the libertarian movement, which persists in believing that airy abstractions and well-worn slogans are a substitute for constructive thought, action and organisation.

Libertarian trends within the labour movement have always existed, but they began to find widespread and effective application in the first International Working Men's Association, founded in 1864. The IWMA's statutes proclaimed that the economic liberation of the working class was its primary aim, to which all political movements must be subordinate. The IWMA, despite a strong marxist leavening, was federalist in character and its activity did much to foster international solidarity at a time when foreign strike-breakers were being imported by many countries, notably Britain, to combat growing industrial unrest.

In 1868 the IWMA declared for collectivising the land and other means of production and the following year it moved close to Syndicalism, as we know it today, when it opted for industrial, as opposed to trade federations of the workers and resolved that:

"The councils of the trade and industrial organisations will take the place of the present government and this representation of labour will do away, once and forever, with the governments of the past."

## ORGANISED EXPRESSION

But the honeymoon between marxists and libertarians was soon over. Signs of division developed at the London Congress of 1871—year of the Paris Commune—when Marx and Engels used their position on the General Council to commit separate national federations to parliamentary action. In 1872, at the Hague, the conquest of political power was urged by the marxists, provoking a split which has divided the labour movement right down to our own time, and the original IWMA faded away.

But Syndicalism, as an organised expression of revolutionary working class activity, prospered during the last years of the 19th Century and those up to the First World War. In France, the early CGT (General Confederation of Labour)—subsequently captured by the parliamentary socialists and, more recently, by the Communist Party—was revolutionary

● contd back page column 2

## SYNDICALISTS in the RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

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# SEMPER FIDEL-IS

**FIDEL CASTRO** (23.4.59): "Fascism, Peronism and Communism are different types of totalitarianism." (*Guide to Politico-Economic Thought*, Fidel Castro, 1959, p.30).

Fidel Castro (21.5.59): "Communism is a system which solves the economic problem, but which suppresses the freedoms which are so dear to man and which I know are felt by the Cuban people." (*Revolucion*, 22.5.59).

Fidel Castro (16.12.60): "We believe that to be anti-communist is to be counter-revolutionary." (Speech on Havana television).

Since then, Fidel has declared himself a marxist-leninist and converted Cuba into a totalitarian communist state, at the same time maintaining the most cordial relations of all kinds with the fascism established in Spain by "Generalissimo" Francisco Franco.

\* \* \*

**UNDER** THE pretext of "greeting" the First Conference of **OLAS** (Latin American Organisation of Solidarity), held in Havana on July 26, Castro-Communism imposed on the Cuban workers greater tasks of slavery and exploitation coupled with inhuman work norms, endless hours of labour and miserable day wages. Here are some proofs of the Castro-Communist attacks on the Cuban working class:

*Granma* (25.4.67): "Jose Lopez, aged 88, has been taken back to work in a tobacco factory." *Granma* (26.4.67): "Forty-two women at the workshops of the Matanzas Mechanical Plant did 72 consecutive hours of 'voluntary' labour." *Granma* (29.4.67): "Workers of the Central Factory of the Ministry of Armed Forces, have done 28,000 hours 'voluntary' labour, working 14-16 hours daily." *Radio Progress* (29.4.67): "In Oriente Province, 109,479 women have been mobilised, who in the space of three months carried out more than a million hours of 'voluntary' labour."

*Granma* (3.5.67): "On the presidential tribune, at the May Day march, as a bonus for their work, were the brigade of Permanent Voluntary Sugar-Cutters, "Luis Turcios Lima", whose members stayed five days working and sleeping in the canefields; also there was a woman of 53, who fulfilled 'voluntary' ordering duties and walked two kilometres daily to and from work; the worker Guillermo Planas who separated out cane by night, working with a lantern, and

cut it by day; and Graciela Cabral, who spent two years on 'voluntary' labour and confessed, 'I worked for ten days with a very high fever'."

Speaking of the hours and conditions of slavery which the regime has imposed on the workers, Miguel Martin, general secretary of the Cuban Confederation of Labour, said (29.4.67): "Workers must forget their fatigue and fulfil the tasks assigned to them."

Enrique Vinales Ruiz, 29, truck driver for the Ministry of Construction, who fled Cuba on June 16 with three companions in the twelve-foot boat, *Gloria*, said: "... now traffic offences are punished with days of 'productive labour' (read, forced agricultural labour). For crossing a red light, breaking the speed limit, etc., from 5-30 days; for any accident in which damage exceeds \$50, six months work in the fields."

It has been officially announced that from July 26, conductors would be eliminated from all buses in the island. That means a thousand Cubans will have lost their jobs and been directed to 'other production fronts.'

Radio Havana stated: "Comrades of the Santiago Region propose to carry out 250,000 hours of 'voluntary' labour and it has been 'resolved' that 150 women's brigades shall work on cleaning the city of Santiago during the holidays to commemorate July 26."

*Libertarian Information Bulletin, July, 1967.*

## Syndicalism (cont.)

syndicalist in theory and practice. In Spain and Portugal, where anarcho-syndicalists were the backbone of the early labour movement, the ideas of our movement gained majority support among the industrial workers. And in Italy, Syndicalism was the most militant expression of organised labour right up to and including the occupation of the engineering factories in the North in 1920. But not only workers of the Latin countries embraced Syndicalism; in Scandinavia, Holland, the USA, South America and Japan there were strong Syndicalist movements; in Britain, particularly among the miners of South Wales, Syndicalism enjoyed growing influence during the period 1910-1914 and, in the war years, found mass expression through the shop stewards and workers' committee movements. Revolution was regarded as an imminent possibility, with the workers themselves taking control of economic life. What went wrong? We'll discuss this next month.

**KEN HAWKES**

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