

Direct Action

For workers' direct control of industry

Inside—Trial of strength at CAV : Chaos in car industry : Sources of Syndicalism : Zengakuren

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWMA)

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SUPPORT JOINT SITES!

THE Report of the Court of Inquiry into trades disputes at the Barbican and Horseferry Road construction sites makes excellent reading. It is not, as one expects of Government reports, as dry as dust.

The factor that stands out very clearly in both disputes is that at all times CONTROL WAS, AND STILL IS, IN THE HANDS OF THE RANK AND FILE. Basically this is what the Cameron Report is all about, because it appeals to the appropriate unions to discipline their members, and it appeals to the management to manage.

The Report also paints a clear picture of building site conditions, for people outside the industry. Quite simply it's a jungle, where men are forced to tolerate conditions which, where applicable, would not be entertained for one

hour in an organised factory. The employers take advantage of a fairly frequent labour turnover, which in turn makes it difficult to organise the site.

BARBICAN SITE

Appendix 1 of the Report lists references to the Industry's Conciliation Machinery relating to Myton's Barbican Site and one can see that from March 1966 to March 1967 was 12 months of consistent struggle for the workers on the site; both National and Regional Disputes Commissions had a busy time.

Appendix 1 also illustrates the atmosphere which prevailed on the site, the employers attempting to get the job done as quickly and as cheaply as possible at the building workers' expense. As a means to this end, "labour only" contractors were engaged on the site, and the building workers were forced to take strike action on the issue of employment of non-union labour.

The Report illustrates beautifully the rank and file in action; when reading it one can sense the resentment of the Cameron Committee being forced to recognise this fact, so one can imagine what line their final recommendations will take.

As was to be expected, the Works Committee was allocated 80% of the blame, for the closure of the site. Their support for the three sacked steel fixers was taken as a challenge to the right of Mytons to hire and fire.

At this stage the District Officials of the unions concerned supported the Works Committee in their stand. Mr. Orwell, District Officer of the TGWU, is attacked for his opposition to sub-contractors being engaged to assist in the work of steel fixing. He regarded this proposed contract as "the

● contd page 2 column 1

Bolivian miners fight on

BOLIVIA'S revolutionary tin miners go on with their fight against the US-backed generals who seized power two years ago. Tin is vital to the country's place in the international market; it makes up 70% of Bolivian exports. The miners want all-out workers' control of the mines and this brings them into direct and violent conflict with the Government, who own the mines.

On June 24 this year the generals tried again to break the miners' will and strength. They sent soldiers into the mining area in ordinary railway goods wagons. When the train stopped, the doors opened and a hail of bullets cut down the miners, leaving 40 dead and over 100 wounded.

The miners replied with an 18-day strike. The troops occupy the mining area but don't go down the mines—perhaps they are afraid of the dark. Many miners took refuge in the mines, and some are reported to have left to join the guerillas in the jungles to the south. These guerillas, about whom much is heard just now, have the full support of the Bolivian working class.

A long article on the miners' struggle appeared in the *Times* (25.8.67). The generals attacked the miners over two years ago (see "Bolivian Miners Fight Back", *DIRECT ACTION*, July, 1965), subjecting them to savage wage cuts. The miners, after pitched battles with the military, have also fought back continuously with strikes and by themselves selling the tin they mine to their employer, the State mining company,

● contd page 2 column 2

From Russia with love

Curiously, the mineral presenting Rhodesia with the toughest problem is chrome. The reason is that the Russians, with true cut-throat capitalist zeal, have moved in on the Rhodesians' old markets. Russia now dominates the world market, in fact, and is supplying the US with huge quantities of this vital metal—without which the Vietnam war would grind to a halt. It is probably the last thing anyone could have thought sanctions would do.—*Observer*, 27.8.67.

JOINT SITES: cont.

thin edge of the wedge", and the Cameron Committee were forced to agree that "might well have been". Opposition to "labour only" contractors is the official policy of all building unions.

The employers believe that full-time TU officials are elected to help them (some do); when one illustrates by his actions that this is not the case the employers cry "Foul!"

The London Building Workers' Joint Sites Committee was accused of being "the power behind the throne". According to the Report, the Joint Sites Committee is a "well organised body with substantial financial resources". This is strange, the Joint Sites is normally always skint. The Court failed to understand how such an organisation could operate purely on the basis of casual contributions and casual collections. This is not surprising seeing that two members of the Court live out of this world, and the third has forgotten the problems of rank-and-file action.

But in any case, if the Joint Sites is as active and influential as the Report claims then the building workers are on their way: because here they have a rank-and-file co-ordinating organisation which could prevent workers fighting in isolation.

PEARLS OF WISDOM

The Report states that the Joint Sites Committee is unnecessary; the only people who will and can decide this are the building workers themselves. The Joint Sites will remain in operation at their whim and pleasure.

Part 8 of the Report contains the recommendations and proposals, the pearls of wisdom so to speak. Broadly speaking the recommendations mean that the control from the top must be regained. That the District union officials must regain the initiative in the negotiations, and if they fail, the services of National officials must be sought. The National Federation of Building Trades Operators (NFBTO) and the National Federation of Building Trade Employers (NFBTE) should include in the Working Rule Agreement (WRA) better defined means of election of Works Committees and of Federation stewards. More precise *delimitations of powers and functions* in relation to their duties on the site. Election of stewards under union supervision. In other words a firmer control over Works Committees and stewards.

The proposals for the reopening of the Barbican Site put the workers back to square one, the six named persons shall not be re-engaged and if picketing is used in an attempt to prevent a resumption of work, then this should be a matter for the law. The Report also makes the point that the building workers from Turriff and Laing sites on the Barbican should be warned off any picket line. The unions to take the necessary disciplinary action for failure to comply.

NEEDED NOW

Meetings have been held at Mytons Barbican, Sunleys Horseferry Road, Turriff and Laings, all reaffirming support for the strikers. If work is restarted at Mytons Barbican Site without the six men, then all the struggle has been in vain. Whilst it is true that building workers will be fighting their own unions as well as the employer, it is not their fault that the former have capitulated under pressure.

If ever the Joint Sites Committee was needed, it is now, to rally support throughout the building trade for both the Barbican and the Sunley disputes.

BILL CHRISTOPHER

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

Our Aims and Principles

THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION seeks to establish a free society which will render impossible the growth of a privileged class and the exploitation of man by man. The SWF therefore advocates common ownership and workers' control of the land, industry and all means of production and distribution on the basis of voluntary co-operation. In such a society, the wage system, finance and money shall be abolished and goods produced and distributed not for profit, but according to human needs.

THE STATE: The State in all its forms, embodying authority and privilege, is the enemy of the workers and cannot exist in a free, classless society. The SWF does not therefore hope to use the State to achieve a free society; it does not seek to obtain seats in the Cabinet or in Parliament. It aims at the abolition of the State. It actively opposes all war and militarism.

CLASS STRUGGLE: The interests of the working class and those of the ruling class are directly opposed. The SWF is based on the inevitable day-to-day struggle of the workers against those who own and control the means of production and distribution, and will continue that struggle until common ownership and workers' control are achieved.

DIRECT ACTION: Victory in the fight against class domination can be achieved only by the direct action and solidarity of the workers themselves. The SWF rejects all Parliamentary and similar activity as deflecting the workers from the class struggle into paths of class collaboration.

ORGANISATION: To achieve a free, classless society the workers must organise. They must replace the hundreds of craft and general trade unions by syndicalist industrial unions. As an immediate step to that end, the SWF aids the formation of workers' committees in all factories, mines, offices, shipyards, mills and other places of work and their development into syndicates, federated nationally. Such syndicates will be under direct rank-and-file control, with all delegates subject to immediate recall.

INTERNATIONALISM: The SWF, as a section of the International Working Men's Association, stands firm for international working class solidarity.

* * *

BOLIVIAN MINERS (cont.)

Comibol. The management has cracked down on this now, hence the recent clashes leading to the June 24 massacre.

The *Times* correspondent describes the life of the miners as "harsh", and "nasty, brutish and often short", lived under "brutalising conditions". The miners are fighting for the end of these conditions. Their immediate demands include not only the lifting of the wage cuts, with backpay, but also the abolition of housing that the *Times* calls "disgusting", and better schools—a demand the newspaper finds "only commendable".

SYNDICALISTS in the RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

by G.P. MAXIMOFF

Direct Action Pamphlet—6d.

(9d. postpaid; bulk orders 6s. a dozen)

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

TRIAL OF STRENGTH AT CAV

LATE FLASH—CAV workers on strike against big wage cut. Full support to their Shop Stewards' Committee.

IN ACTON (West London) are the C.A.V. factories. These are:

- (1) the rotary or machine factory—for starters and dynamos;
- (2) the diesel factory—fuel pumps, elements and nozzles;
- (3) the switchgear factory—switches, panel boxes and fighting vehicle equipment, mostly for the Centurion and Chieftain tanks;
- (4) the World Service H.Q.—spares and servicing plant.

This firm is part of the giant Lucas Combine that has a virtual monopoly of electrical equipment in the British motor industry. Except for speedometers and clocks (which are being taken care of by Messrs Smiths of Cricklewood), practically all the electrics in cars from the Rolls Royce to humblest of pick-up vans are by courtesy of Joe Lucas.

Also, the group enjoys an unchallenged position in the diesel world—its hands reach out to France where Roto-Diesel produce equipment under licence. Their opposition Bryce Berger was bought out years ago and is now part of the group.

Considering that one firm (Perkins) produces some 80,000 diesel engines per annum each one requiring a starter and fuel pump, one can see there's a market for these products—which no other firm in Britain can supply in sufficient numbers.

In other directions, the combine encompasses Rotax (Willesden), Hemel Hempstead (electrical equipment for the aircraft industry), and Girling (the chassis engineering and brake specialists). In Madras, India, Lucas also have factories, mainly assembly plants using parts from Acton and Birmingham.

Elsewhere, Australia, Germany and South America, even Russia, Lucas has factories and service plants.

C.A.V. itself was originally C. A. Vandervelle, who sold out to Bosch of Germany between the wars—they sold out to Joseph Lucas before the Second World War.

Emerging from the war to a wide-open market it found ready customers for its products.

EXPANDING TO NEW TERRITORY

The firm carried on its old, pre-war production methods; it wasn't a suitable type of business for automation—too many varieties of pumps and starters, etc., catering for the individual firm's requirements. The accent was on quality and reliability, a reputation for which was backed by a skilled workforce, who often produced high-quality products despite inadequate methods. (To many setters the drawings and layouts are a joke!)

There was the minimum of contact between the two main factories, diesel and electrical. Each had their own supervision, stores, clerks, etc., and there was much duplication; it was a conglomeration rather than organised practical units.

In the fifties and early sixties C.A.V. decided to expand to new territory. Diesel work went to Sudbury (Suffolk), Rochester (Kent), and Fazakerley (Liverpool), other work went to Chatham and elsewhere. Workers whose work had been taken to these factories were in some cases asked to go to the new works. They were to form the nucleus of the new labour forces.

The unions, via the shop stewards committee, were informed by the bosses that there was absolutely no need to worry—jobs would be found for the diesel workers in the expanding switchgear business.

Indeed, leaflets enclosed in the workers' pay packets almost pleaded for them to get their friends to work at C.A.V. "to ensure that our customers' needs are satisfied". (Anyone who responded to these blandishments can hardly now be held to be a "friend".)

"BACKLOG OF ORDERS"

On top of this (as if to prove the truth of a "backlog of orders") the management asked for excessive overtime to be worked. One period lasted seven weeks with people working 1½ hours each night and all day Saturday and Sunday morning.

Many now believe they were conned by the bosses into believing the transitional period would be easy for them.

As if, again, to bear out the bosses' stories about expansion, the Napier factory (now owned by Brixton Estates) was offered as a home for the new switchgear factory. A large part of it was leased and the machines moved in.

The diesel machine shop was gradually running down and yet the bosses had put the switchgear elsewhere and at great cost. Surely other plans were envisaged for the diesel shop. So the workers reasoned that new products were coming. Those who had some misgivings now felt reassured all was well after all.

The alternator section situated in the rotary factory was shifted to the diesel machine shop. A section of it was moved to the Napier building.

Gradually the diesel work shrank and workers who'd been promised new jobs grew apprehensive and many left.

In the rotary factory the new orders failed to appear and the workers began to hear all kinds of rumours that no one, management or union stewards, bothered to deny or confirm.

SACK FOR OLDER WORKERS

In July 1966 the bosses stuck up a notice about the elderly workers. It had been the practice for many years (originating during an acute shortage of skilled workers) for workers who wanted to remain in the company's employ on reaching retirement age to do so—and the pension being what it is, many took advantage of this offer.

The notice simply said that the company had changed its policy and that in future all people reaching retirement age would have to leave—also, that workers over retirement age must go.

Of course, the company were "quite within their rights" and had no need to inform the shop stewards committee. But in the view of the fact that these "old hands" had loyally served the company for many years and had only recently worked excessive overtime it came as quite a shock. Many illusions were shattered, those who thought and said "the firm's a good 'un" were strangely quiet.

The stewards held a meeting (about 800 attended), a resolution condemning the management's methods (veiled redundancy) and the adoption of an overtime ban were the most that could be done. A strike was out of the question (too near the annual holiday).

NEGLECT BY UNIONS

Even the overtime ban didn't get overwhelming support. The labourers (always the lowest paid workers) relied on overtime in order to take home anything like a living wage (£10 after tax). Their spokesman claimed (rightly) that it was always the lowest paid that made the greatest sacrifice. Of course they lost (to men taking home twice that amount and more!).

Naturally, in a struggle where the opposition is united and strong the workers must be the same—and some. There-

Direct Action

Published monthly by the Syndicalist Workers' Federation,
British section of the International Working Men's Association

A simple question of economics

DIRECT ACTION has, since it was re-published in 1960 (then as *World Labour News*), never failed to appear on time. For the first two years the SWF brought it out every two months. Then our growing membership and increased sales made a monthly issue possible. And month in, month out, DA has exposed the political tricksters, publicised the struggles of workers in dispute with their bosses, supported militant anti-militarism.

This work of editing, composing, printing, folding and despatching a genuine workers' paper has been carried on throughout nearly eight years by voluntary unpaid labour. A labour of love? Sometimes, standing behind an old platen printing press, after a hard day working for one's boss, it seems hardly that. There are, after all, easier and pleasanter ways of spending one's leisure hours.

Apart from DA, we have brought out a series of pamphlets defining Syndicalist policy, the latest in the series—50 years after the event—being *Syndicalists in the Russian Revolution*, by our late comrade, G. P. Maximoff. Pamphlets, too, need a great deal of solid, hard graft to produce. Even in these days of automation, it is not a question of pressing a button and letting the machine do the rest. They have to be written, edited, taken to the typesetters, composed, printed, folded, collated, stitched, trimmed and despatched.

Then there are propaganda leaflets, of which the SWF has produced, if not a steady stream, at least a respectable number. More hard labour for the faithful few.

What, may you ask, is this leading up to? Well, we don't expect medals—and we certainly shan't get them. Nor do we want financial reward—for ourselves. But there is the rub. We do need money—a great deal more money than we are getting at the moment—if this work of revolutionary propaganda is to continue without interruption.

The situation is simple. Even allowing for the fact that the donkey work is done for free, our publications cost money. Cash to pay the typesetters, to buy newsprint and ink, to pay rent and power charges, to put stamps on the papers and pamphlets we send out. And far more of it than we are getting at the moment.

GROUP NOTICES

ABERDEEN: Contact Russell Knight, 42 Mathews Road, Aberdeen.

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

BRISTOL: Contact Adam Nicholson, 10 Bellevue, Bristol 8.

GLASGOW: Contact R. Lynn, 2B Saracen Head Lane, Glasgow, C.1.

HULL: Contact Jim & Shelagh Young, 3 Fredericks Crescent, Hawthorn Avenue, Hessle Road, Hull, Yorks.

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

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

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

For each of the past two months, our balance of expenditure over income has run at £25. And this cumulative drain is now within a couple of weeks of completing exhausting our resources. The situation is as serious as that.

It is two years since we last made an appeal for money. At that time we hoped to buy a new printing press, that would have enabled us to publish a bigger and better DIRECT ACTION. The response to that appeal brought in only half the amount we needed to go ahead with our plans, which were further hindered by failure to find suitable premises to house the new press.

Now even DIRECT ACTION in its present modest form is threatened with bankruptcy. From the fact that you are reading the present article—if you have got this far—we assume that the continued appearance of DA must concern you. It certainly worries us.

We need contributions to the Press Fund *immediately* from all our comrades and friends. Not next month! Not next week! But now! Our only revenue is from sales and contributions. Each copy of DA is produced at a loss—and needs to be subsidised. That is why we are virtually skint. More sales would help, because the costs per copy diminish as circulation increases, due to the fact that typesetting and rent costs are constant, however many copies we produce.

YOU can help by taking extra copies (and of course paying for them) to distribute to your workmates. You can help by taking out a subscription for anyone you know would be interested in our viewpoint. But, above all, you can help by getting a donation into the next post to our Press Fund. If you want to be reading DA next month—and next year—it's up to you. Cheques and PO's payable to Syndicalist Workers' Federation, please, and sent to SWF, 34 Cumberland Road, London, E.17.

Welcome home, Stuart

AFTER more than three years as prisoner of Spanish fascist dictator Franco, our comrade Stuart Christie has been freed. He was jailed in August, 1964 on charges of helping the anti-fascist underground movement in Spain, by allegedly carrying explosives. We welcome him home—and, at the same time, remember all those who, like Stuart, have been imprisoned by fascist Franco. Many still languish in Spanish jails, their "crime" that of fighting for freedom. Their fight is ours.

SEAMAN'S VOICE

THERE are still some copies available of *Seaman's Voice*, by George Foulser (published by MacGibbon & Kee, 18s). This describes his life as a seafarer in quite a few ships and ports, particularly British, American and Australian. It concludes with an account of the successful seamen's strike of 1960.

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

DIRECT ACTION PRESS FUND—September 1967

Southall, K.B. 3s 6d; Cleveland, Ohio, T.H. 2s; Greenford, J.O. 7s; London S.E.5, M.H. 14s 8d; Falmouth, R.W. 2s 6d; CNT, "Spain Today" Cards 6s; Tadworth, N.W. 2s; Red Deer, Alberta, B.G. 10s 6d; G.F., Gift of Books, 18s 6d; Conference collection £9 5s 1d; Manchester SWF Group, Proceeds of Social, £8 3s; London SWF Group £3. Total £23 14s 9d.

PROPOSED GROUP: Syndicalists, Anarchists, Libertarians and Pacifist Socialists wanted to form S.W. London Libertarians. Contact Martin Page, 10 Thornton Avenue, S.W.2.

CHAOS IN THE CAR INDUSTRY

Labour Relations in the Motor Industry by H. A. Turner, Garfield Clack and Geoffrey Roberts. George Allen & Unwin Ltd. Price 55s.

THE motor car is the universal yardstick by which we assess the progress of modern society. Our affluence is reflected in the number of cars on the roads; only when we can pour millions into the construction of motorways can we have a surplus for schools and hospitals; the balance of payments and the sanctity of sterling depend on the export of cars; the prosperity of finance companies and ultimately the bank rate are joined to the restrictions on the hire purchase of cars; it is the level of employment in the motor industry which mainly determines the monthly unemployment figures; cheap residual oil for industrial boilers depends upon the amount of high-grade fuel used in motor cars; the prosperity of the steel industry is determined by the tonnage of steel sheets rolled out for the production of cars.

Whether we like it or not, the motor car is the magical device which makes our society tick. So one would expect that those who take the top decisions for regulating our lives would give priority to seeing that the car industry operates with the maximum efficiency and the benefit for all concerned, whether in production, distribution or consumption.

RIOT OF INSANITY

Do they hell! Nothing could be more unplanned and anarchic than the motor car industry. Among the five or six large manufacturers there are widely different rates for the same job, and the highly paid skills in one concern may fetch lowly semi-skilled rates next door; bonus schemes and incentives vary not only from factory to factory, but even from shop to shop in the same firm. Men's wages topple without notice from £40-50 one week to £15 or less the next; overtime is normally a condition of employment, yet short-time and lay-off can descend on workers within an hour. "Efficiency" in production means planning to such a tight schedule that a minor hold-up can set up a chain reaction affecting the pay packets of a whole factory, and 20 men downing tools may put as many thousands out of work, without unemployment pay.

It is all a riot of insanity which would make a combination of the Crazy Gang, the Marx Brothers, King George III and Joanna Southcott seem a rational and sober substitute.

Readers searching for what makes up the car industry will find this book valuable but perhaps not indispensable. Facts are essential, and probably no other work has assembled so many in one fairly short volume; not all the facts, but enough to make this a worthwhile book to borrow. It is all set down lucidly, in rather dull simple prose, quite without humour, and sometimes a bit portentous and turgid. It is written in the objective, detached, colourless, neutered and non-committal style of the magazine *New Society*. It is all material, nothing seems to come to life.

OFFICIAL SECRETS?

One author, Dr Clack, spent two years in a car factory "researching" in the modern manner. He was on the shop floor for a year, but does not tell us whether he earned any bonus; he attended shop stewards' meetings, but as he was also in direct communication with the personnel manager, it seems questionable whether the stewards were quite as open in his presence as when he wasn't there. No doubt he did his very objective best, and no doubt the stewards did theirs too.

There is no question that the co-authors have striven their hardest to elicit the facts, yet in the preface there is an unconscious confession of their inadequacy. "Some disputes

are the subject of detailed reports by the Ministry of Labour's conciliation officers, but these files sometimes contain confidential observations, and it was felt inadvisable to consult them". Why not? Official Secrets and Crown Privilege?

Naturally, a great deal of attention is given to shop stewards. It becomes very plain that most stewards—perhaps all—become hopelessly enmeshed in the mystique of "procedure". As workers are never mentioned except as objects, it is never questioned whether procedure is really necessary. The authors quite rightly emphasise how procedure becomes a mere stalling device, used indiscriminately by both sides, much of it merely frustrating the real aspirations and grievances of the workers.

It is pointed out more than once that this "procedure" is still based upon the 1922 Agreement between the AEU and the Engineering Employers Federation, signed under duress after a disastrous lockout—and the AEU bureaucracy has never made any attempt to modify it. It is shown, too, that shop stewards, once they become minor centres of power, behave like any other power group and set up their own bureaucracy, alienating themselves from those they represent.

It is all written in a very flat and detached way. The great Ford dispute of 1962-3 together with the Jack Report on it covers little more than one page; it ends without comment: "Two years later there were reports that more than half those designated as troublemakers were still unemployed." I need not comment either.

NEW FORM OF UNION

Syndicalists will not be surprised when the authors conclude that the overriding requisite for better labour relations would be industrial unionism. Far too much of the avoidable friction in the industry is the result of inter-union bickering and jealousy. Most syndicalists will agree with the authors that industrial unionism seems unlikely, perhaps impossible so long as the aim of the employers, the trade union bureaucracy AND the shop stewards is to keep the industry jogging along much as it is.

If the only solution to the troubles in the industry is industrial unionism, it may not be outrageous to question critically the present set-up, and regard the workers as a subjective force capable of producing a new form of trade union. At least this suggestion is not a counsel of despair.

Besides the facts, the book is valuable because it also stimulates a challenge to the complacency of the authors. In considering the many theories and analyses of the so-called "strike proneness" of the industry, the authors find all except one wanting. They suggest that the fluctuations and insecurity in employment are a major factor of dissidence. We can agree at least with this, even if workers are themselves partly to blame for their gullibility in expecting the occasional high wage packet to be a permanent weekly event. We can also agree with the authors that some strikes are deliberately provoked by the employers; the mechanics of the production line are so delicate, that an insignificant diversion can put a whole factory out of gear. When this is foreseen, it may pay a management to foment a strike rather than proclaim a lay-off—but, of course, the worker gets the blame. I cannot do better than end with the last sentence of the book: "Fundamentally, we conclude, the recent strike proneness of the British car industry (and we see no reason to think that this conclusion is not more generally valid) reflects a failure of institution."

Well, why not change the institutions?

JIM PETTER

Trial of strength at CAV: cont.

fore one can't condone any breakaways or dissenters however sympathetic one is to their particular case. Nevertheless, I've mentioned this incident to illustrate that often what appears to be reactionary action is the result of neglect by unions of certain groups of forgotten workers.

Perhaps the stark facts of life came home to the labourers when possibly for the first time they saw in their wage packets the miserable sum that both management and unions consider to be a fit remuneration for 40 hours.

The overtime ban was lifted and soon the holidays came and the workers forgot their problems for a while. On the resumption of work in August many old faces reached retiring age (65 for men, 60 for women). Individual departments held collections and pathetic little presentations were made, often with the foreman of the section being photographed handing over something to the retiring workers (as if the firm had given something!). Some handshakes, a brushed away tear, and then the parting.

MORE WORK—SAME MONEY

People who don't work in a factory but who may have visited one probably couldn't understand any sane person being upset at leaving. Workers do get attached to their workmates and even, surprisingly, to "their" machines. Particularly when they've been in the same department for many years.

The policy of not replacing people who leave has probably saved many jobs (and, of course, saved doling out redundancy money), but this has led to "doubling up", i.e. workers doing extra duties—utilisation of labour!—with of course no increase of wages.

Many workers whose jobs have folded up have been offered jobs at lower rates—some have left, disgusted. In a pamphlet distributed in 1965 the figure of employees was 5,000—over a thousand have left since December 1966. From time to time the management will approach a section and ask for volunteers for redundancy—but it is noticeable that they are selective in whom they accept. Key workers are turned down flat!

As a final stab in the back, the "bread and butter" job in the rotary factory is now threatened. This is the co-axial CA45 starter. The danger doesn't come from any competitors, it comes from the parent company, Joe Lucas. Unless costs are drastically reduced (we all know what that means!) the production line must be shifted to Birmingham.

Some parent! Recently another five men on this line were asked to leave.

The diesel factory, now a ghost of its former self, has become a dump for machines. More and more work has left Acton. No new products are forthcoming, as far as the workers know.

Now even the loyal supervisors are worried men. . . .

The amalgamation of various departments due to the reduction of the labour force has created various problems.

Men with a lifetime of experience supervising men or a certain section now have extra departments to cope with (and this at an age when one likes an easy time!). Again, of course, their money remains the same.

TRIAL OF STRENGTH

After a struggle for recognition, ASSET has been established and many chargehands—the foremen's whipping boys—formerly (through ignorance) opposed to unions, have joined and talk as though they'd been militants for years!

The other week in the rotary factory the bosses decided

to have a trial of strength—or so it seemed. They put a woman on a job traditionally done by men.

Of course, they weren't going to pay her a man's wage. The machine shop stopped work. Stewards in other departments told their members the facts and asked for support. Unlike other strikes where people go home, the workers were asked just to stay in the factory and do nothing. For C.A.V. this was indeed revolutionary—and it was successful.

Behind this affair was no doubt the fact that in Sudbury and elsewhere the company make great use of the cheaper female labour—it must irk the bosses to think of the lolly they could save by having women operators at Acton.

This isn't the time to go into the subject, but I've always felt that the demand of equal pay for equal work should have been pushed by the unions years ago—it is due to their negligence that this kind of incident is possible.

The management refused to negotiate until there was a return to work. Equally determined, the convenors said, "We won't talk until the woman is taken off the job." The management threw in the towel and the following morning work resumed. Many however didn't turn up at all as they didn't know whether the strike was still on.

FURTHER DISGUST

Two unusual things occurred. One, the foremen (briefed by the production manager) instructed their whipping boys to make a statement on the stoppage—this while the convenors were talking to the bosses! Two, the woman who was the centre of the dispute was again put on the job.

The statement the chargehands made (without notes) to their sections indicated that the union case was incorrect and that an agreement dated 1958 allowed such labour to be used. Obviously a strikebreaking tactic. No such agreement exists—in fact, owing to one or two leftovers of War-time agreements, the practice of using female labour on the larger Ward capstans was *dispensed with* in 1958—the reverse of the management's statement.

Many workers were further disgusted by the management's action the following day. Foremen armed with a *typed* statement denied the implications of their previous mouthing. There'd never been any mention of an agreement, or the year 1958, according to them.

The chargehands were taken for a bum's rush—perhaps they even felt that as they were ASSET members they shouldn't have made the statement at all. Next time (if there is one) they'll do better if they tell the foremen to do their own dirty work.

BOSSSES PREPARED TO STRIKE

Many changes are planned and many workers will be shifted around. It is up to them to constantly keep the shop stewards informed of any unusual occurrences. Although the boss was unable on this occasion to force the stewards to accept cheap labour, it must not be looked on as any sort of victory.

The management, fortified by growing unemployment figures, are prepared to strike at the conditions of the workers.

The C.A.V. workers know what has happened to other factories in the district (B.L.S.P. and Napiers). They know of the struggles at E.N.V., Willesden. Only by resisting these attacks by strong shop committees and by backing militant stewards can the management be taught that they will have a fight on their hands each and every time they attempt to lower conditions and reduce wages.

The rights and conditions (such as they are) which workers have now must be defended and improvements to those already existing must be included in every demand. Isolation, lack of liaison, has been in the past one of the weaknesses of militant trade unionists.

INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

SOURCES OF SYNDICALISM--2

THE HOPES of social revolution, which had inspired militant workers throughout the world, appeared to be near realisation in February, 1917, when, wearied by the privations of war and the oppression of Czarism, the Russian people rose in revolt. During the months that followed, seizures of factories and estates by the workers and peasants, coupled with the original Soviet (council) organisation, suggested that the ideas of Syndicalism were finding a ready response among the Russian toilers (see Direct Action pamphlets, *Lenin and Workers' Control* and *Syndicalists in the Russian Revolution*).

Indeed, the events of the Russian Revolution, together with the similar events in Germany and Hungary in the years that followed, fully confirmed that the ideas embodied in Syndicalist theory come naturally to workers in a period of revolutionary upsurge. Faced with the imminent possibility of radical change, workers naturally create the embryo organs of social ownership and workers' control. In such a situation they have no apparent need of political parties, nor self-appointed leaders.

And yet, in Russia, the dream of workers' control turned into the nightmare of political dictatorship and State oppression.

Something clearly went wrong. Instead of capitalism being supplanted by a free social system, it developed even worse forms. Under the slogans of working-class emancipation, the Bolsheviks carried into effect their clear-cut designs of State capitalism and one-party political control.

NOTHING HAD CHANGED

First, the Communists attempted to swallow up all other revolutionary working-class organisations. In 1920 they called a conference in Moscow, attended by many Syndicalist bodies, to set up the Red Trade Union International. Already the Russian Anarcho-Syndicalists had been suppressed, their papers banned, their militants imprisoned. Some Syndicalists, like Tom Mann in Britain, did an abrupt about-face. Abandoning their advocacy of industrial organisation, direct action and workers' control, they embraced the new tyranny. Anarchists, too, like Guy Aldred in Glasgow, fell for the myth of Bolshevism and denounced those of their former comrades who were clear-sighted enough to realise that nothing had changed . . . that the Bolsheviks were in direct line of descent from Marx's followers, who sabotaged the First International half-a-century earlier.

In December, 1922 the International Working Men's Association was re-formed, at a congress in Berlin attended by delegates of revolutionary labour organisations from many different countries.

The strongest section of the IWMA was the CNT of Spain, but there were many other member organisations, during the 1920's and 1930's which could count on tens of thousands of members—among them the USI (Italy), FAUD (Germany), FORA (Argentina), SAC (Sweden), CGT (Mexico), CGT (Portugal) and NSV (Holland).

Only in one country, Spain, however, did Syndicalism succeed even partially in putting its principles into practice. This was during the early period of the 1936-39 Civil War, when the patient propaganda, organisation and direct action of Spanish Anarcho-Syndicalism resulted in the widespread collectivisation of industry and agriculture under direct

workers' control. The Spanish workers finally went down to defeat, crushed by the overwhelming military force of international fascism, the indifference and collusion of the so-called democracies, and the kiss of death from international communism.

Elsewhere, too, as in Portugal, Italy and Germany, Syndicalism succumbed to the onslaught of fascism. Today, the only Syndicalist organisation in Europe which maintains an effective, organised life as an open, industrial union body, is the SAC of Sweden. And the SAC, since the last war, has abandoned its former aim of overthrowing capitalism by revolutionary means and now seeks a gradual transition towards industrial democracy and workers' control.

During the same period, Bolshevism has extended its control over a great part of the world and, despite the disillusion among its supporters which followed the ruthless crushing of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, can still count on widespread support in many other countries.

A realistic assessment of the relative strength of the authoritarian and libertarian currents in the international labour movement today leads inevitably to the sad conclusion that the former has crushing numerical superiority and that the latter has been virtually eclipsed.

DOUBLE-THINK

And yet, the basic social problems remain unchanged for the world's workers. Now, more than ever, there is a need for libertarian alternatives to Social Democracy, which stands exposed as aiming only to supplant old-style capitalism with a more highly-organised, centralised version of the same system of exploitation. The Communists—whether of the Moscow, Peking or countless Trotskyist varieties—have only State exploitation to offer, once their policies are closely examined.

The fact that Syndicalist policies are not something from the outmoded past, as our Marxist critics are all too quick to suggest, is proved by the way in which, unable themselves to offer any constructive alternative to the present social morass of reaction and apathy, they latch on to such slogans as workers' control and industrial democracy. They *know* the working class have an instinctive tendency towards these solutions—as Russia, Spain and Hungary showed in 1917, 1936 and 1956. But, as with the lying lawyer, Lenin, they utilise such slogans to mean something completely different. It is a policy of double-think, where white means black, freedom something completely different.

The crying need of the labour movement today is for a militant, revolutionary organisation, with clear-cut ideas, which can make the message known throughout the working-class that there is a positive alternative to both Labourism and Bolshevism—an alternative which lies in the workers' own hands, but which—as history all too clearly demonstrates—needs a well-organised form. Spontaneity is not enough. Time and again the events of this century have shown that, in a revolutionary situation, it is those whose policy is clear who prevail. Social revolution needs careful preparation; it needs a working-class conscious of its own strength, conscious of the fact that ALL politicians are interested primarily in power for themselves, not in control of society by the

• contd back page column 2

Only a trade-union leader!

Mr. Thomas Gilbert Edwards, of St. John's Wood, N.W., former general secretary of the National Union of Bank Employees, who died on April 30, aged 67, left £107,641 net (duty paid, £48,529). Details of the will were published yesterday.—*Times*, 16.8.67.

Subscribe to DIRECT ACTION

Yearly subscription rate 6s 6d (USA & Canada \$1—dollar bills preferred to cheques owing to loss in negotiating latter) from 34 Cumberland Road, London E.17. Cheques and p.o.'s payable to Syndicalist Workers' Federation.

ZENGAKUREN'S EPIC STRUGGLE

Zengakuren: 20 Years' Struggle. Pamphlet published by the All Japan Federation of Student Autonomous Associations, (c/o NC-JRCL, Zenshinsha, 2-62-9 Higashi Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku, Tokyo.)

* * *

FOUNDED in September 1948, Zengakuren brought together 300,000 students from 114 different universities all over Japan. The Japanese students have consistently maintained a militant record and here are just a few examples of their activities over the years.

By a full-scale general strike in 1949, they succeeded in preventing the government bringing in the University Control Bill, aimed at stopping the students' political activities. Whilst this struggle was in full swing, the government, together with the United States Occupation Army, retaliated with an attempt to purge the universities of so-called reds, but so violent was the student reaction that they were forced to give up. However, they did manage to get 20,000 workers sacked in these purges.

In 1956 Zengakuren organised a demonstration and joined with workers and peasants in protest against the proposed extension of the US Military Base at Sunagawa. The result was that the government gave up the attempt.

In 1958, again together with railwaymen and miners, Zengakuren staged protest strikes against the proposed amendment of the Police Duty Law which would in effect strengthen the power of the police and curtail civil liberties. The government was forced to withdraw the amendment as a result.

At this time, the Japanese Communist Party attempted to take over the leadership of Zengakuren. Unable to achieve this they tried to direct the student struggle through the parliamentary channels. Again they failed. Finally, they tried to smash the organisation but, eventually gave up and pulled their members out of Zengakuren and made a feeble attempt to set up a rival organisation.

In 1960 Japan signed a Mutual Security Treaty with the United States. The proposal to do so brought immediate condemnation from all sections of the Japanese working class. Students and workers once again joined together in demonstrations, and on June 4, the General Council of Japanese Trade Unions called on its members to strike. On June 15,

10,000 demonstrators marched to the Diet (parliament) and were viciously attacked by the police; scores of demonstrators were wounded and one girl—Michiko Kamba—was murdered by the police. Protests and strikes against the treaty went on throughout 1959 and 1960 and demonstrators always met with violent and vicious attacks from the riot police.

Since its foundation Zengakuren has protested against nuclear tests and is particularly anti-militarist. To begin with, it condoned the Russian Bomb as a counterbalance to American power, but has long since condemned all atomic weapons.

Yet again in 1962 the government attempted to re-introduce the University Control Bill—which if passed would have effectively crushed the political activities of all Japanese students. The students launched a massive attack against the Bill and came out on strike six times in three months—eventually the government was again forced to drop the issue.

Since the outbreak of the Vietnam war, Zengakuren has been even more active and has increased considerably in numbers.

The thing that makes Zengakuren unique amongst student organisations is its strong links with the workers—it has actively supported many strikes and in turn has gathered strong support from the working class in Japan.

This pamphlet is well worth reading—it's full of fantastic photographs showing the massive demonstrations that have been held in Japan and you've never seen police like these—they wear steel helmets with visors attached. At the moment, we only have a couple of copies of this pamphlet, but we have been promised more.

MARYLYN HUTT

Syndicalism (cont.)

workers as a class. Syndicalism offers an organisational form through which industrial democracy can supplant political society—but it is futile and against all historical experience to think that such a social framework will be created AFTER the overthrow of private or State capitalism, *unless* the necessary spadework has been done previously.

That is why a handful of militants created the Syndicalist Workers' Federation some 17 years ago. The SWF, to be effective, needs to be extended into a fighting federation of all who reject party politics, believe in workers' control and accept direct action as the means to achieve it. We challenge all libertarians who, for one reason or another, have not yet joined the SWF, to offer any constructive alternative to its policies as the road to free socialism. We are convinced that no such alternative exists. If you agree that we are right, why hold back? Because the SWF is still small? That is because you and thousands like you are still on the outside, looking in.

KEN HAWKES

HELP SPANISH TOURIST BOYCOTT

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

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