

Direct Action

For workers' direct control of industry

Inside—Another outing for the SLL : 50 years of permanent betrayal
The Weaver's trade

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWMA)

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Sixpence

PREPARE TO FIGHT!

THE overtime dispute continues between the printing unions and the Newspaper Society; as yet the general print has not been hit by the overtime ban.

The employers are offering 16s a week with strings; the major string being the termination of the sliding scale cost of living agreement. Print unions will agree to termination of cost-of-living (COL) agreement on the basis of £1 10s extra per week and 9s COL bonus consolidated in the basic wage. There should be no argument about the 9s, because that is the minimum amount that the cost of living has risen. Originally the employers wanted strings attached to that, before they would pay.

The only way printworkers could consider the dropping of COL and £1 10s increase would be on the basis of a six-month package deal.

The slogan of ALL printworkers must be defence of the COL bonus *AT ALL COSTS*. Any proposal submitted to ballot by the unions which doesn't contain provision for sliding scale cost-of-living bonus should be rejected utterly and completely by ALL printworkers. Any suggestions about clinching a wage agreement first, then discussing COL for the sake of progress should be rejected utterly and completely by ALL printworkers.

Rationalisation of the labour force is proceeding at a rapid pace throughout Fleet Street. Rationalisation means a 100% saving for the employers—let's make no mistake about that.

Housing disaster

ALL over Britain today, thousands of people are homeless.

The national director of "Shelter" has predicted that over 1,000 families will become homeless and be split up in the London area this winter. He also asked that London and Birmingham be declared national disaster areas.

Frankly, as far as housing is concerned, the whole country ought to be declared a disaster area. Wilson's housing policy is simple . . . he doesn't have one. Already local authorities have been ordered to cut down on their mortgage schemes by £24 million a year. This, by the way, is almost the same sum spent on Civil Defence. It gives a good idea of the government's priorities, doesn't it?

Before the great election circus in 1964, George Brown, the chief performing seal, opened his mouth and let his

The same production with a decreased labour force must mean 100% saving doesn't matter which way you look at it. But the employers want more; they know they have the support of the TUC, Prices and Incomes Board, and the Government plus "public opinion", which has been brainwashed by three years of propaganda dished out by the Royal Commission and the EIU Report.

The skirmishing has started with the overtime ban, but the local rags are still coming out; admittedly these have a reduced number of pages, but it is the news pages that will take the major reductions not the advertisements which is the lucrative income of local rags. *The question is posed, is it hurting the employers very much?*

Printworkers must accept the fact that a showdown has got to come. The kissing has got to stop, which means a struggle.

The issues are plain and simple: working for peanuts or a reasonable wage. £30-per-week printers are in the extreme minority, £14 per week is the majority. If the order is to be reversed, then it means sacrifice and struggle even if the car has to go back to the dealers.

BILL CHRISTOPHER

Sympathy strike at school

IN JULY this year, the head of Usworth Colliery School, Durham, an ex-President of the National Union of Teachers, had three young girls kneel before him to see if their skirts were too mini. He also threatened one of them with a bad reference if she didn't comply with his ruling on the correct length. The same week, Durham University gave him an honorary degree in education.

Against this background, it was good to see the story in the *Daily Telegraph* (18.10.67) about the twins at a Scunthorpe School who were sent home for having their hair too long. Fourteen boys walked out in sympathy and were then caned—one had his hand so bruised he had to go to hospital. Thirty parents have been keeping their boys away although the head has threatened them with a conspiracy prosecution and six months inside.

There is a real case for control of the hire and fire of heads by pupils, parents and teachers and a bit of solidarity action by teachers would not be out of place. Militancy over pay isn't everything.

TEACHER

Repeat performance on the railways

THE rail guards' pay and productivity dispute drags on, despite the fact that Gunter has promised to chair a meeting of both sides in the hope of restarting talks. What in hell's name can come out of such talks? The seven executive members who were opposed to calling off the ban make the valid point that having twice called off the ban before with no results, what is the difference now? There are still no assurances given; in fact, the stand of the Railways Board must be stiffened by the Robertson Report.

By calling off the ban it seems that the efforts of the guards in the past has been wasted. Surely the leaders of the NUR realised that Government intervention with troops has always been more than a strong possibility.

RATIONALISATION RUN RIOT

Negotiations or talks have been going on referring to this subject since September, 1965. It was in September, arising from the Jack Scamp inquiry, that the fact was clearly established that "the transfer of second-man duties to the back of the train must carry with it the full co-operation of the man at the rear of the train who, in his acceptance of those extra duties, provided the key to greater single manning." So far, so good; then all that has to be estab-

lished is, how much are the extra duties worth and what exactly do they entail?

British Railways submitted a 13-point programme which they wanted accepted to cover the claim. The NUR were able to accept seven points. It is interesting to note that some of the extra duties BR wanted to allocate to the guards displaced other sections of labour, i.e. reversing tail lamps, and preparing brake vans. Railwaymen rightly rejected these proposals; acceptance of such would allow rationalisation to run riot. We all know for a fact that it is the ambition of British Railways to get rid of the guards' job completely, and we also know, and so does the British Railways Board, that the railwaymen will not stand for this; therefore the Board is attempting to tackle it from a different angle. At the cost of a few extra bob a week get the guards to do six men's jobs, with the possibility of saving more money than if they got rid of the job of guard all together.

Obviously, the NUR have agreed to a programme of rationalisation of labour some of which has already been carried out on various sections of British Railways. What has to be established quite clearly is that: (1) The sky is not the limit. (2) Railwaymen want a share of the saving; 80% is the minimum they could accept. (3) If BR pursue this programme on the basis of British Railways eventually running at a profit, then the railwaymen have to veto the whole exercise, because even for BR to "break even" the pay and conditions of railwaymen would be cut to ribbons and the service to passengers would not bear thinking about.

To be perfectly blunt, rank-and-file railwaymen must have more than their fair share of patience both with their union officials and the Railways Board. They have stood for a Court of Inquiry on the guards issue; they must have known it would not go in their favour. The Court went through the motions but the Government was in the background holding the pistol to their heads. It looks democratic and all that bull, but its sole purpose was to buy time and cadge public sympathy away from the railwaymen.

PLAIN COMMON SENSE

The Robertson Report was rejected by the NUR executive, 14 votes to 10, which shows how far the executive was prepared to go in terms of *action*. While the Robertson report did not have any cartoons, it had its merry quips and japes, such as the reference to the "tax payer sharing the savings from productivity agreements." The report also had a scapegoat for not agreeing with the NUR's proposals; the implication was that ASLEF would make a pay claim on behalf of their 'second men' if the NUR guards were successful. ASLEF should be four-square with the NUR on this issue—not hovering about like a shitehawk waiting to pounce on the pieces.

It is not necessary for the railwaymen to be on the defensive; other transport workers are considering action to support their claims, joint consultation and action at rank-and-file level would not only make history but would be plain bloody common sense. Railwaymen will have to make a stand some time, some place, soon.

B.C.

HOUSING DISASTER (cont.)

belly rumble, "We will introduce mortgages at 2½% interest".

Instead we get the "Option Mortgage Scheme". This will mean that people earning as little as £16 per week will be able to get mortgages. Although the government doesn't say from where. The snag to this little plan is that, at present, demand exceeds supply in the housing market. Imagine the escalation of house prices when thousands of new bidders start looking for homes. In other words, the Option Mortgage Scheme is worse than useless. It may make more money available, but what's the use of that when there are no houses to buy?

A LOVELY THOUGHT

On the council housing front the government's record is equally dismal. We are actually building fewer council houses now than we did under the Tories. Vast areas of our major cities can only be described as derelict, or to use the official jargon, twilight areas. Nowadays it's not polite to call bloody slums, bloody slums.

Don't look for any improvement from any of the other political parties. Even Moscow has got slums. There can only be one solution to the housing problem. The taking of power by the working class and the control of production. Then we can get building workers off the office block sites and onto building homes.

One last thought. Look at the property pages of the *Sunday Times* and the *Observer*: literally hundreds of houses for sale, every week. And scarcely one under £5,000. We could almost obliterate the housing problem in one day by taking over that lot. Why not occupy some of these mansions? There's a lovely thought for revolutionaries to put into the heads of the homeless!

PETER THE PAINTER

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

LONDON SWF SOCIAL

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ANOTHER OUTING FOR THE SLL

LUTON has recently been the scene of workers struggling for the first time ever with their employers and the trade union bureaucrats. The workers' demands have been simple; all they want is a wage comparable with that of the rest of the Motor Industry and without strings.

After months of negotiations during which time the management has reduced earnings by cutting shift allowances, overtime, and condition payments, the Vauxhall Chairman David Hegland is now trying to stampede the workers into accepting a "Two Year Package Deal." This deal offers increases of up to 30s. over a two-year period, in exchange for an extension of the Measured Day Work system already in operation at Vauxhall for a number of years. It has other familiar features, such as increased productivity and efficiency, and some entirely new threats to the motor industry like compulsory overtime and the use of female labour over a wider range of occupations—at widely reduced rates, of course.

The workers reacted with mass walk-outs and later by working to rule and there can be little doubt that this is what has prevented the trade union bureaucrats from signing the deal on behalf of the management.

THE INFIL-TRAITORS

Wherever large groups of workers take up the cudgels and begin to fight they are always liable to meet some funny little men selling or giving away a comic called the *Newsletter*. Although these never seem to work themselves they would have you believe that they know more about your job than you know yourself; the fact that you may have been working at it all your life won't embarrass them at all. If your Shop Steward refuses to prostrate himself before their leader they will call him a "Stalinist", or some other dirty name. The fact that he may have no other affiliations except those of his trade union will not produce an explanation from them. They will impress upon you that the only way a worker can successfully fight his employer is by becoming Politically Conscious. All this entails is to hand one's self over body and soul to the Socialist Labour League, the answer to every workers' prayer. (You are guaranteed a long time on your knees!)

After months of camping on the Vauxhall workers' doorsteps, the SLL has been unable to penetrate the Shop Stewards Committees despite the fact that Leon Trotsky's reincarnation, comrade Gerry Healy himself, has made them the subject of his personal attention.

Out of sheer desperation at the Vauxhall workers' reluctance to hand over their dispute to the SLL, it was decided to impress them by calling a "Conference of the Motor Industry", so, using the front name "The Oxford Liaison Committee For The Defence of Trade Unions," the Conference was called.

THE S.L.L. FREAK-OUT.

THE VAUXHALL DELEGATES WALK OUT

On September 2, if you had been present at the Oxford Conference hall you could not fail to have been impressed by the attendance. On a closer inspection, however, it could be seen that the age group of the average attendee was far below that normally employed in the motor industry. A closer look at some of the older attenders and one could easily recognise well-known Trots of one shade or the other.

What was going on? Had all the Trots decided to go to work at last? If so, was it a coincidence they had all chosen the motor industry for this revolutionary step?

At the very back of the hall, and just off the assembly line at Clapham High Street, sat the Producer, Gerry Healy, looking as inscrutable as ever. If you didn't believe the

evidence of your own eyes all you had to do was to sit back and listen; they had already organised who could attend, now they organised the agenda and the resolutions to be passed, any of which could have been seen in the comic *Newsletter* over the past year.

One resolution demanded that the Left MPs put down a motion in the Parliamentary Labour Party for the resignation of Harold Wilson and his Cabinet. (They have as much chance of getting Wilson to resign as the rank and file of the SLL would of getting their own Permanent National Secretary Gerry Healy to resign, in any circumstances). Other resolutions included a call to Nationalise The Motor Industry, and another old favourite, "Make The Left Wing MPs Fight."

The only practical motion all day came from Luton No. 5 Branch of the NUVB and called for the setting up of a National Shop Stewards Committee for the motor industry, with delegates who would be subject to recall at all times.

In the afternoon session, the Trots continued the charade, helped by a couple of CP members. The main bone of contention seemed to be just how much the Left MPs could reasonably be asked to do, and the Vauxhall delegates, sick of listening to pointless arguments totally unrelated to the problems of the motor industry, got up and left the hall in a body, and the meeting in uproar.

This mock conference of the motor industry was a clumsy attempt to con the Vauxhall workers into believing that it was a representative body. There were about 40 delegates from Vauxhalls, very few from Oxford BMCs, and a couple of CP members, but for the other 400 it was clearly a Trotskyist Freak-Out which resulted in another Vauxhall workers' Walk-Out.*

THE RED HAMS

Since the SLL's stage production of a "Motor Workers' Conference", they have devoted the comic *Newsletter* entirely to raising the political consciousness of the Vauxhall workers by criticising the Shop Stewards for the failure of the Oxford Fiasco. The *Newsletter* (23.9.67) complains that the *main danger* at Luton is from the non-political, strictly Syndicalist attitude of the Shop Stewards and leading militants. (Funny, we thought the Vauxhall workers were fighting the management!).

It must be really frustrating for the SLL to find that in the last analysis the workers rely on their own logic rather than the political poison peddled by the Red Hams of Clapham Road. Apart from the very bad acting at the Conference, it's about time the SLL got down to changing the script writers; at least they then may be able to provide entertainment value, if nothing else.

THE VAUXHALL WORKERS

The Vauxhall workers have always been what they themselves describe as the cabbage patch of the motor industry, content to accept the wages and conditions won by other areas of the industry about six months later. During the past year, the management has shown that this is not on in the future. Unless the workers themselves are prepared to organise to protect and progress their own wages and conditions, the management will push them further back than they are now.

Vauxhall workers are in the process of rebuilding their shop floor organisation, and already they have shown that they do have some understanding of the structural difficulties experienced by other rank-and-file organisations, but they

*For other reviews of this conference read *Solidarity*, Vauxhall Special.

Direct Action

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SWF's 9th Conference

THE 9th National Conference of the SWF, held at the AEU Offices, Manchester, on Sunday, September 24 was attended by comrades from Glasgow, Hull, Liverpool, London and Manchester. L. Torbison, as a delegate of the SAC, brought greetings from our Swedish fellow-workers.

Messages of solidarity were received from the Spanish CNT in exile, The Norwegian Syndicalist Federation (NSF), the Bulgarian CNT in exile, and the FIJL.

National Treasurer, M. Hendy, reported that if more money is not forthcoming, we will not stay solvent long, and a discussion followed on various ways of raising more cash for the Press Fund.

Under Press and Propaganda, a long discussion went on about the possibility of bringing DIRECT ACTION out on a fortnightly basis and also the possibilities of duplicating alternate issues outside London.

The National Committee elected was: J. Christopher (Secretary), M. Hendy (Treasurer), B. Christopher, K. Hawkes, L. Otter, D. Reardon, E. Stanton, with R. Lynn (Glasgow) and R. Marsden (Manchester) as provincial members to attend when possible.

After a lengthy discussion on Syndicalists and Syndicalism in industry, the following resolution was passed "That particular attention should be paid and contributions be invited, in the next internal bulletin, for discussion of ways and means of formulating syndicalist organisations in industry."

It was agreed that if he was available at the time, R. Etherington would attend the IWMA Congress as an SWF delegate and the following proposal was carried "That the IWMA reform itself to make itself more representative of revolutionary Syndicalism throughout the world".

The 10th National Conference, it was agreed, would be held in London on the last Sunday in September.

Money raised by a collection at Conference and the Manchester Group social held the evening before totalled over £15.

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, 16 Ross Street, C.1.

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

LONDON: Open meetings every other Wednesday at 8.30 p.m. at Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Road, WC1 (5 min Kings Cross). Correspondence to 34 Cumberland Road, E.17.

Next meetings:

Nov. 15 Communes in Spanish prisons—Stuart Christie

29 The Barbican Dispute—Dave Coull

Dec. 13 How Labour Governs—Ken Hawkes

Nov 18 (Saturday) Social at 8.0 p.m. at Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Road, WC1 (5 min Kings Cross). All Welcome. Bar, music.

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

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

VICIOUS SENTENCES AT GREEK EMBASSY TRIAL

THIRTY-NINE of the 41 demonstrators arrested for occupying the Greek Embassy on April 28 this year (see DIRECT ACTION June, July) were sentenced at the Old Bailey on October 3 and 4.

The majority got conditional discharges for two years—almost identical sentences to those on the organisers of the Weymouth Street Squatters in 1946 (see DIRECT ACTION, July 1967), and 11 were fined between £20 and £100.

Vicious prison sentences were reserved for those men against whom, judge and prosecution admitted, the evidence was no different from that against the rest. They just had "worse" records of convictions for political offences.

The judge told Terry Chandler (who got 15 months) that in view of his eloquence on a previous occasion (an appeal against a prison sentence) and his record he was clearly a "leader."

Mike Randle, who courageously justified the occupation of the Embassy, was similarly judged and sent down for 12 months.

Del Foley, "a man with no respect for the law", got 6 months.

THE PROSECUTION MAKES A DEAL

It is useful to trace the sequence of events that led to the trial. Originally, the defendants were charged with "affray" and a Public Order offence. Before the committal proceedings these were dropped and the more serious "riotous assembly" and "forcible entry" substituted. After the magistrate rejected the latter, the prosecution produced "conspiracy to trespass."

The prosecution then said they'd drop the charge of "riot" if the defendants pleaded guilty to the "conspiracy" charge. This deal was refused. A few days before the trial they said a plea of guilty to "unlawful assembly" (a sub-section of riot against which, all were agreed, there was no legal defence) would result in the dropping of both riot and conspiracy charges.

The last and most unusual offer was made the day before the trial; namely, that if everyone accepted one of the above deals the additional charge against Terry Chandler, assaulting a policeman, would be dropped.

The defendants accepted this deal, thinking it might reduce Chandler's sentence. It is impossible to know if it had this effect.

All in all, a judicial procedure rather different from that "justice" the general public, who at most have minor brushes with the law, are led to believe exists.

There is an urgent need for hard cash now and in the coming months for these men and their dependants. If you support their action against Greek dictatorship, here is an opportunity to show some solidarity. Send protests to MPs and the Home Secretary. Get your union branch to do the same.

Donations to "Save Greece Now Fund" a/c, c/o Brett Carthy, 8 Vincent Square Mansions, Walcott Street, London, S.W.1—or direct to that account at Midland Bank Ltd., 138 Tottenham Court Road, London, W.1.

● Pirate Press is still going, despite savage sentence on Terry Chandler, under management of Mike Seaman and Neill Collins, 116 Whitfield Street, W.1. 01-387 8864.

PRESS FUND: a full list of donations will be published next month. Meanwhile—WE'RE STILL SKINT.

GLASGOW SWF ask that in future the various libertarian groups in Glasgow should refrain from linking them with any activity for which approval of the SWF Group has not been obtained. This is a point of principle, not a criticism of any recent activity.

FIFTY YEARS OF PERMANENT BETRAYAL

"*Lenin insisted that the main force in the revolution would be the working class. He argued that the capitalist class was too weak and too frightened of the working class to gain even basic political rights such as free elections, a democratic parliament and press. Martov and his co-thinkers, however, tended to see the working class in a subordinated role—only pushing the capitalists along—putting pressure on them in their fight against the autocratic powers of the Tsar.*"

P. Jeffries, "The Russian Revolution", *Keep Left*, Sept. 1967

READERS who compare the above quote from an allegedly Trotskyist paper's history of the Russian Revolution with the views of Trotsky and Luxembourg may wonder if P. Jeffries knows that they sided with the Mensheviks against Lenin. It would hardly matter, were it not for the fact that it adds grist to the Stalinist mill. Had the split really been on the lines suggested, Trotsky would indeed have been the wishy-washy capitulator described in the official Soviet histories.

"REACTIONARY"

In fact, as the writer earlier admits, the debate at issue was the nature of the social-democrat party and both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks were agreed on aims; there had earlier been a split on the lines suggested (between Plekhanov and Peter Struve), but this was on whether the party should be (a) limited to activists, and (b) subjected to rigid discipline (in what Lenin admitted was a way of which Marx would have disapproved, but which fitted the particular conditions of Russia). On ideological grounds, it was in no sense a left-right split; the facts that Plekhanov was then a Bolshevik, and Alexinski on the Bolshevik Left, and that both Luxembourg and Trotsky were anti-Bolshevik are no accident.

Lenin himself deplored the necessity to institute a party organisation which limited the free flowering of inner-group democracy and warned that if socialism were not democratic it would be an absurd form of tyranny. "Anyone who attempts to achieve socialism by any other path than that of political democracy, will inevitably arrive at the most absurd and reactionary conclusions, both economic and political."—Lenin, 1904, in reply to Trotsky and Parvus' concept of Permanent Revolution.

It was justified only on the grounds of expediency and was held to be an efficient organisational form. But what are the facts? When Trotsky returned to Russia in 1917, Lenin's disciplined party was collaborating with Miliukov's provisional Government (before Kerensky created a nominally socialist provisional government). The Anarchists and the Mehzhraihontii (the loose grouping of dissident Marxists, both Bolshevik and Menshevik, who collaborated with Trotsky), were the only people calling for fundamental social change, and advocating all power to the Soviets, though they were soon after joined in this by a faction of the Agrarian Social Revolutionary Party and by the Centrists round Gorki.

Precisely because the Bolsheviks opposed all activity not sanctioned by the central committee they were less prone even

than the Mensheviks to work in the Soviets.

When later Lenin returned to Russia, he turned his back on the central committee of the Bolshevik Party which had come to meet him, and spoke to the crowd. When he issued his July Theses he was indeed expelled from the party by the central committee, though popular vote of the party's rank and file did reinstate him. When the Petersburg Soviet finally made the revolution the role the Bolshevik Party played was subordinate; the party elected a sub-committee to co-ordinate its actions with the Petersburg Soviet, but the convenor of this was Stalin and on the eve of the Revolution, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Molotov and Stalin denounced the revolutionary plans in the public press. Had the Provisional Government not been both impotent and stupid, it would have heeded this warning, emanating as it did from those who for years had dominated the Bolshevik central committee.

The revolution was made by the masses, who had come to see that the slogans that the anarchists had advanced from the beginning were right. The fact that the Bolsheviks played any part whatsoever in this was *despite* Lenin's organisational forms, not because of them. Not only Trotsky, traditionally of the Left, but also Gorki of the Centre had turned to Soviet Power before Lenin's return. "... the organisational principle of revolutionary social democracy strives to go from the top downwards, and defends the enlargement of the rights and plenary powers of the central body against the parts."—Lenin, *One Step Forwards, Two Steps Backwards*.

CUL-DE-SAC

When tried in action, Lenin's concept of the party was seen to lack even the excuse of efficiency—though it was never intended for use within a bourgeois democratic state, but only as a way of achieving bourgeois democracy. Lenin always insisted that the post-1917 Soviet State was not socialist, but "workers' capitalist" (adding, in his later days, "with bureaucratic deformations"). And, though Trotsky rightly denounced the dangers inherent in the organisation—dangers which have since been shown to be all too real, we have been told ever since by numbers of socialists in the West—none more so than those who rallied to Trotsky in exile and who still call themselves Trotskyists—that the Bolshevik form of organisation is the only effective vehicle for the attainment of socialism.

This is nonsense—and pernicious nonsense. By forbidding all independent rank and file initiatives it leads socialists into the same cul-de-sac of inaction as the first Bolsheviks. Not only in Russia, but in every "Communist" country, the achievement of power has not followed the Bolshevik pattern. More-over, where Communists have (despite their party's organisational theories) achieved power, they have invariably duplicated the Stalinist tyranny.

For Trotsky and his epigones to advocate the organisational forms he had so rightly earlier denounced, the falsity of which had been demonstrated by history and his own actions, is only one example of how Trotsky, like Stalin, betrayed the ideals for which he stood. "The organization of the Party takes the place of the Party itself; the Central Committee takes the place of the organization and finally the dictator takes the place of the Central Committee."—Trotsky, *Iskra* 1903.

Not only the crimes generally denounced in Libertarian papers, the destruction of the Vyborg Quarter of Petersburg (the working class district where the anarchists were strong and where the slogan All Power to the Soviets was first raised), the treacherous attack on Makhno and the butchery of Kronstadt (the cradle of the Revolution); but also the liquidation of the first left oppositional group within the

● contd page 7 column 2

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

Treachery is the Weaver's trade

MR HARRY WEAVER, General Secretary of the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives, was shouted down by the men on the Barbican site of Turriffs Ltd. when he spoke to them in the works canteen. When he and other union officials left the meeting, they were greeted with mud pies from the men. One of the officials was knocked sprawling in the mud and all of them had to sponge their suits down in the management's offices before leaving the site.

Mr Weaver's comment on this was: "In all my 30 years experience as a trade union officer, I have never experienced anything quite like it." It is little wonder that he was treated like this. He had come to sell the Cameron Report, on the Myton and Sunley disputes, to men who have given every possible assistance to their brothers on the neighbouring site.

THE EX-MILITANT

To any trade unionist in the building industry who is willing to have a go at the employers, the name of Harry Weaver stinks. When you talk to some of the old boys, they nearly explode with anger and indignation at what he has done over the years. They remember how this man has climbed on to their backs and has reached his present exalted position at their expense. For Weaver was himself a militant. The old boys remember how, when they re-entered the industry after the war, the employers gave in to the demand of the unions for an increase of 4d per hour. This was the highest ever demanded at that time.

At this period, it looked as though the Government was going to nationalise the industry. Opposition to this came from none other than Aneurin Bevan, who at that time was the Minister of Health and Housing and wanted to fulfil the Labour Party's promise on housing. To further this end, Bevan sided with the employers who favoured incentive schemes. The unions put in a claim for 6d an hour, which was turned down by the employers who countered with the statement that they were going to introduce unilateral incentive bonus working and give an increase of 3d per hour. The offer was put to the vote and carried and so the long stand of building workers against incentive bonus schemes came to an end.

It was during this period that Harry Weaver was very much involved in unofficial activities and helped to organise marches and demonstrations in support of the 6d per hour demand. He has come a long way since then and it is no wonder that some of the old ones, who knew him then, are bitter now.

The disputes at Mytons and Sunleys are now, at time of writing, a year old. They and the Cameron Report have illustrated the wide gulfs which separate national trade union

SLL'S OUTING (cont.)

would be the first to admit that they have a long way to go yet. Syndicalists wish them every success in the future. The motion they put to the Oxford Conference was a challenge to all motor workers who are genuinely seeking to do something about the problems of the Motor Industry.

The Vauxhall Delegation called for the setting up of a National Shop Stewards Committee with delegates who would be subject to recall at all times. This means another Outing for the SLL.

E. STANTON

leaders and the rank and file. They have also shown the marvellous solidarity that exists between workers. Let us make no mistake about it, for if this support and solidarity from sites up and down the country, as well as in London, had not been forthcoming, these disputes would have been over long ago. However, the battle isn't over yet for if the unions are allowed to carry out the recommendations of the Report, then rank-and-file activities will be put into a straitjacket. (See last month's D.A.)

The London Join Sites Committee was made out to be a sinister body of people who deliberately fomented trouble wherever they went, but it only does the job that trade unions, ideally should be doing. It assists building workers in struggle, so that they are not isolated. It has opposed the Government's wage freeze and its anti-trade union legislation. In doing so, it has linked up with rank-and-file organisations in other industries.

The executives of the building unions know that their authority has been undermined by these two disputes. In an endeavour to keep control, my own union, the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, has sacked our District Secretary, suspended members of our lay London Management Committee and expelled members.

POLICE BRUTALITY

The struggle is not only concerned with getting the stewards back onto these two sites, but also with getting rid of the union executives. As Anarchists and Syndicalists, we have been saying for years that it is no good replacing them, unless the rank and file have control of the members they elect. It is also necessary to build up and create other joint sites committees. The struggle which started out against the employers has evolved into one against not only the union executive, but the State as well.

The failure to get the Myton pickets to accept the Cameron Report meant the site had to be opened with police assistance. This led to a brutal attack on a mass picket that had assembled to prevent maintenance men from entering the site. The action of the police was a deliberate attempt to smash, by force, the resolution of the building workers to carry out this struggle.

Twenty-four pickets were arrested, many being carried away by four or five coppers. Truncheons were drawn for the first time in London since the St Pancras rent strike in 1960. Union leaders described the scabs as "loyal trade unionists", while the Myton management called the pickets the "scabs".

The next day, at a mass meeting, it was agreed to accept steward proposals that an aid fund be set up to pay any fines incurred by these twenty-four men when they appear at the Guildhall Magistrates Court on November 2, and that on that day the biggest demonstration possible be organised to which the labour movement of this country should give their support.

Obviously not only Mytons and the Government, but also the leadership of the unions are determined to smash the organised attempt to prevent the site opening with scab labour. Harry Weaver is disbanding any Works Committees on sites that give support to the Myton picket. Both Turriff and Wimpey's Brunel University jobs have been threatened in this way.

The union leadership is out to smash any militancy and especially that centred around the Joint Sites Committee.

Our unions are fast becoming, if not already, company unions, where our national officials make agreements without any reference to the membership. They do not represent us and yet their actions are jeopardising not only our standard of living and conditions on sites, but even the possibility of ever being able to get a job in the industry.

Every effort should be made to defeat this

BUILDING WORKER

DIRECT ACTION WINNING AT STOCKPORT

IT DOES appear that despite the intervention of the "One Above", Moral Rearmament, the Salvation Army and John Boyd (AEU), the Roberts-Arundel dispute is far from settled.

On September 15, the trumpets sounded; the walls of Roberts-Arundel were supposed to crumble. Mr Pomeranz, Chairman of the Roberts Company, had been advised to approach J. Boyd (AEU) as he did not fall into the category of "Communist agitator" to discuss a peace formula. An

abortion was worked out, the only snag being it did not satisfy the people concerned, the workers who had been struggling for 10 months.

The phased return to work as proposed by Pomeranz would have meant seven months before some of the men would be able to return to work. Plus the fact that the strikers on returning to work would be expected to work alongside the rodents who had scabbed on them.

The top brass have intervened but nothing has been achieved, both Grunter and Feather (Ass. Gen. Sec., TUC) have put their oar in.

The Roberts-Arundel Action Committee have, at time of writing, planned a second Roberts-Arundel Week commencing October 23, ending in a half-day stoppage of Stockport industry. The police have asked Stockport Council to invoke Section 3 (2) of the Public Order Act, 1936 from October 26 to January 3, 1968. If the Stockport Council implement the Act it would mean all public processions connected with the dispute would be banned.

It is gratifying to see the police on the side of the law, but as we all know this has nothing to do with justice. Our police are wonderful until the crunch comes.

The tragedy is, Roberts-Arundel is still ticking over, which means raw materials must be still getting in. When asked how much the dispute had cost to date Pomeranz replied that they had lost less during the past 10 months than they had lost during the previous 15 months of operations. Scabs are noted for doing three men's work, which amounts to unsolicited rationalisation of labour.

The lads are winning the Arundel dispute, but need just that little more assistance to deliver the knock-out blow.

B.C.

Battle of the Barbican

THIS was the title given by the capitalist press to the events of October 16. I was present at this "battle".

The picket line was quiet enough in the morning. There was no sign of any attempt to break it. As time wore on, men began to drift away, including me. I returned at 12.30 for the mass meeting to learn that some scabs had got into the site and four workers had been arrested.

Lou Lewis asked from the platform that the police remove two particularly vicious cops, whose numbers he gave, as their presence was provocative. They refused. He spoke about statements alleged by the press to have been made by anonymous Barbican workers. One rag, the *Daily Sketch*, had gone further and said that he personally had threatened the families of strike-breakers. This was a lie. "I'll kick any scab round this town, but if the *Sketch* doesn't withdraw this accusation they've got a libel action on their hands."

After the meeting (in a car park) the police formed a cordon to prevent workers getting onto the public highway round the Myton site, but a good shove and we were through. Men marched down the road shouting angry slogans.

The real trouble came when cars with more scabs made a dash for the site. Workers who tried to block the way were set upon by uniformed thugs and hustled into waiting paddy waggons. This was when the violence occurred.

One bloke had his arm broken—not on the picket line but in a police van. There were 24 arrests. The victims of police violence appear at the Guildhall on November 2—so all out in a demonstration of solidarity with our fellow workers.

BRICKIE

PERMANENT BETRAYAL (cont.)

Bolshevik Party after the Revolution. Anyone reading Trotsky's archives should study his relations with the Democratic Centralists, to see that Trotsky's concept of the militarisation of the State and the subordination of trade unions to the "Workers' State" led him to denounce as anti-Soviet and ruthlessly exterminate men with whom he had collaborated closely in the underground, in Siberia and in exile—and on whose courage and devotion to the same cause his life must often have depended.

All the evidence of the revolution in Russia and the subsequent growth of tyranny; all the evidence of Trotsky's warnings against power, his subsequent actions when he himself had it, his fall and the Stalin era, all show that Trotsky was right and Lenin wrong. A tight, hierarchical party cannot remain democratic and cannot lead to socialism, nor is it a particularly effective weapon in the fight against despotic monarchy. It is certainly unsuitable against "liberal" capitalism.

LAURENS OTTER

Trial of strength (cont)

like most, living beyond their means, were feeling the pinch (after only three days—so much for the Affluent Society!) Obviously, a vote for carrying on the strike would have been disastrous for the Shop Stewards Committee. So a meeting was convened for Tuesday, October 3. Fighting speeches, references to the bosses' letter, etc., a vote (unanimous) for a return to work was the programme—and that's how it went.

At least the stewards had the sense to bar the officials from speaking. Everyone knew what they'd say: "You've made your point—you've hurt the bosses—you're out of procedure—go back!" (Really, they ought to sack the officials and make some tape recordings!) Also, of course, everyone went back as they'd come out, *together* in one mass, not like a defeated rabble.

Most people were optimistic when they returned to work next day, October 4. But those whose ideas aren't limited to Football and Crumpet know that this is by no means the end of the bosses' excursions into human-cost saving.

Only by shop committees backing their steward and (if he's slacking) making him do his job can these attacks by the employers be fought.

As for the so-called white collar workers at CAV—look out, brothers and sisters! The administration aren't only concerned with manual workers—they're after you too!

INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

PS—CAV have a suggestion box. If the boss fails to cough up to the assembly boys, why not suggest they forget their role of being quality men (for which the management are reluctant to pay) and build the *rubbish* they're issued with—perhaps it might do the trick!

TRIAL OF STRENGTH—SECOND ROUND

THE workers in the CAV factories didn't have long to wait for the employers' next move.

Having failed with their attempt to introduce "cheap" female labour, the management looked around for different sections to attack, or so it seemed.

The CA45 assembly line (by CAV standards, a relatively high-paid section and, again by CAV standards, a militant section) was stopped by the foreman. The reason for this was bad-quality components—which, had they been assembled into starters, would have failed the test. (This in the much-publicised Quality and Reliability Year!)

Now this assembly line, like others in the Machine Factory, had a special agreement (a verbal one) as regards stoppages due to bad-quality components. It worked like this:

Some seven years ago, the Company experienced a bad patch of defective parts; to combat this without adding to their team of "non-productive" inspection staff was a problem. So some bright spark suggested the assembly lads should act as quality men as well as doing their own job. This, of course, was an extra duty and suited the bosses' ends perfectly.

It was agreed that if the line stopped due to bad quality, then no one would suffer any loss of earnings. That is, they would be paid the "shop average". The logic was simple. If the bad components continued to be built into starters and therefore failed the test, the finished starters would have to be stripped down and the faulty parts removed and the whole motor would have to be rebuilt! A costly process indeed!

AGREEMENT NOT HONOURED

All during September 1967, trouble was experienced on the CA45 line owing to sticky pinions (sounds painful!) and on Wednesday, September 20 the line was stopped as the situation got even worse. Normally, an unwritten rule exists which forbids the line to stop. (One can't say whether the fact that Vauxhall is having trouble and isn't therefore, in such a hurry for coaxial CA45 starter motors, influenced the management's decision.)

The men were unconcerned at the stoppage; they'd had a hell of a job trying to build previously and there was a special analysis number to book on (3306) which paid the shop average—so why worry?

The illusion of a "good guvnor" honouring his agreement was rudely shattered on Friday, September 22. The younger foreman told the men they would only get "bare waiting time"—a loss of £2 10s *per day*! Thinking the foreman had made a mistake (or gone mad!) the lads saw their steward and he in turn saw the senior stewards. They met the management. They hadn't gone mad—if a mistake *had* been made they certainly saw something in it for them. They insisted the stoppage was ordinary waiting time.

The management denied all knowledge of an agreement—despite the existence of the code 3306 and the fact that many assembly boys still held old wage-slips to prove their case. Again, the convenors saw the bosses and still got nowhere.

FIRST DAY OF THE STRIKE

The CA45 assembly came out on strike on the following Monday. (This was rather funny as the line was stopped anyway; they'd been doing odd jobs on sub-assembly.) They were joined by the other assembly men and women—70 in all. The union decided to call a mass meeting (unheard of at CAV) in the road at 10 a.m. next day (Tuesday, 26.9.67). Tuesday came and over 2,000 workers came to hear the Convenor put the case. They listened carefully and then, hearing all the facts, supported a resolution to strike next day if no change was got out of the management by 4.30 p.m. (finishing time) that day.

Four-thirty came and no news from the management, so the factories were on strike! The night shift of some 500 men voted (at their own meeting that Tuesday evening) to come in; they (due to an appalling lack of liaison) seemed to belong to a different world.

The following morning, the first day of the strike, we heard the bad news about the night shift's decision—but, as if to bolster our flagging spirits, we also heard that a section which has been looked upon always as a reactionary tool of the employers, the gatekeepers, were supporting the strike. We could hardly believe it.

Leaflets explaining the strikers' case were produced and distributed widely. Local factories and traders (who relied on CAV employees for their trade) weren't forgotten. CAV and Lucas convenors and stewards were seen by a delegation sent by the Strike Committee to Liverpool—Rochester and Sudbury were also visited. Support was offered and we had only to ask for help and these other parts of Joe's Empire (*i.e.* the Joseph Lucas Combine) would've joined in to show we *meant* business. (These contacts proved very valuable and must be maintained as a permanent feature.)

FEELING THE PINCH

By Friday, the few scabs that had shown their loyalty by passing their workmates in the picket lines were sent home as they were so few as to be an embarrassment to the management. The problem posed by the night shift had been solved by a strong picket and the initiative of the senior stewards who addressed them and explained the facts and dealt with their queries. Luckily, they were convinced and went home. To our relief!

Friday was a miserable day and we felt degraded as we queued in the rain for our pay. Over the weekend the management sent us all a nice letter. Full of the usual guff about the strike being unofficial, etc., it ended by saying that they (the management) were most willing to talk. The union seized on this as a formula for a resumption of work—they really had little choice.

The people, unused to strikes (16 years no trouble) and,

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