

# Direct Action

For workers' direct control of industry

Inside—Paper workers break into print : 100 years of the TUC : Labour Government racialists

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWMA)

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**After the triple tragedy . . .**

## TRAWLERMEN MUST ACT

**I**N LESS THAN A FORTNIGHT 58 Hull fishermen lost their lives, when three trawlers went down, one in the North Sea and two off the North Coast of Iceland. This terrible tragedy has brought the fishing industry and the working conditions of the trawlermen to the public notice.

Fishing is, without a doubt, the most dangerous job there is. The mortality rate is more than twice as high as in coal-mining. Since 1951, 152 trawlermen have lost their lives at sea. Apart from major tragedies, such as the three trawlers recently lost, and the *St. Finbarr* last year, individual fishermen are often washed overboard.

So what makes a man go fishing? One answer is there's

very little else to do. Hull's unemployment figures are always well above the national average and, partly due to this, the majority of Hull's workers are poorly paid. Another reason is the big money. But the money's not so good when you look closer.

A fisherman, if he's lucky, can make £90 in a three-week trip. But for this he will work a minimum of 270 hours in his three weeks at sea. And he's not forced to be lucky. All he's guaranteed is his basic rate of £13 10s a week. The rest of his earnings is "poundage" money, a percentage of the price the catch sells for.

But this fabulous sum of £30 for 90 hours' work is not all beer money. Out of his own pocket he has to provide himself with mattress, bedding, protective clothing, knife, gutting gloves, etc., which, on average, cost him £50 a year. So when you examine the facts closely the fishermen aren't exactly overpaid, are they? A builder's labourer on flat rate would make more than £40 for that many hours.

### Help this militant!

**O**N FEBRUARY 8, the Anarchist militant Octavio Alberola was arrested in Brussels and imprisoned in the Forêt Prison.

Octavio Alberola has taken part in all the campaigns for political prisoners which have been undertaken by the Libertarian Youth Federation (FIJL), an organisation demanding liberty for all Spanish political prisoners.

In particular, he organised a press conference in New York, after the arrest of five anarchist militants in Madrid, to call attention to the gravity of the present repressive situation in Spain.

The present negotiations being carried on by the Franco Government in order to obtain its acceptance into the Common Market, and the collaboration of the Spanish police with the rest of Europe, makes it necessary for all anti-Franco militants to show their solidarity, material as well as moral, for those who like Octavio Alberola, are struggling against the present regime in Spain.

p.p. ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS,  
STUART CHRISTIE

(c/o Libra House, 256 Pentonville Road, London, N.1  
Tel: 01-837 0088).

**N.B. Letters and telegrams of protest should be sent to the Minister of the Interior, rue de la loi, 6, Brussels, Belgium, and to the Belgian Ambassador, 36 Belgrave Square, S.W.1.**

### WHEN THE FISH ARE SCARCE

The skipper is also paid according to the price the catch brings, but he gets a bigger percentage. A top skipper can make £15,000 a year (or so the papers tell us). A skipper who doesn't bring the fish home won't last long; there's plenty of blokes with skipper's tickets waiting to jump in his job.

The price a catch fetches is higher when the weather is bad, because that's when the fish are scarce. So the skipper is tempted to fish in bad weather.

Although the men have less to gain than the skipper by taking risks, they must shoot the trawl when he orders them. Refusal is mutiny, and that means jail or a fine when they get back home. Such cases are often reported in the local press. Recently, nine men were fined £25 each for refusing to work in below-zero temperatures.

### WHY THE WOMEN ACTED FIRST

After the loss of the second trawler, the *Kingston Peridot*, fishermen's wives held a meeting to decide what action they could take to prevent more lives being lost.

The reason the action started with the wives is that, whereas the majority of the men are away at sea at any given time,

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## TRAWLERMEN (cont.)

the women live in a closely knit community, the Hessle Road area. In Hull, Hessle Road means the fishermen and their families.

At a meeting the wives decided to picket the fish dock and urge the men not to sail without radio operators.

The following day, 500 women marched to St. Andrew's dock, but they were prevented from boarding the trawlers by British Transport Police, who were out in force. However, their militancy had begun to spread to the men. The crew of the *Kingston Zircon* refused to take her out as there

## Pawns in their game

HARDLY ANYONE can fail to see that the Labour Government has knuckled under to the racialist hysteria of Sunken Glands and Eunoch Foul.

But really, it's the members of the present Government who've been the biggest racialists all along. It was two-and-a-half years ago that they brought out their White(s-Only) Paper on Immigration, a complete about-face by the Labour Party after its position of principled opposition to the Tory Act of 1962.

In 1965, Labour threw out principle to boost its tiny Commons majority. It yielded to reaction and so strengthened reaction. Having abandoned all principle then it is now forced to yield further. Today, it's only a few Tory right-wingers who've got the bit between their teeth—who will it be tomorrow? After Auschwitz and Sharpeville we don't need to be told where racialism can lead.

The National Council for Civil Liberties and other organisations did well in calling a demonstration at such short notice, a demonstration the NCCL rightly called "most encouraging". But as we go to press, the new Act is as good as on the statute books. What is the alternative?

Many see racialism as the evil it is because it offends their sense of decency and fair play, and they remember Auschwitz and Sharpeville. But racialism isn't something on its own. It is a rotten product of the rotten social system we live under—capitalism.

### THE COMMON ENEMY

It must be admitted that race hatred has got more than a toe-hold in the minds of many workers. Conditioned from childhood to ignore their own exploitation by the employer as the cause of their insecurity, workers can fall easy prey to those who tell them that what little they have is threatened by those who've even less.

But it is the boss, black or white, who is the common enemy of working people, black or white. Daily, workers in every country are robbed of the better part of what they produce, while employers and State (which is only a central committee for the employers) take the rest. A part of this is squandered, another part used for the further exploitation of the workers ("investment"), another part to provide a police force to protect privilege and an army to fight brutal wars against rival bosses. What progress man makes is despite, not because, of, class rule.

All workers, everywhere, regardless of colour (or creed), have a real interest in getting rid of this system and making a classless, free society, based on common ownership and workers' control. But if we allow ourselves to be divided by the lies of a few political tricksters we can never win that world, only lay ourselves open to more attacks by the boss class and their State.

MARK HENDY

were only 16 outdated lifebelts between 20 men. The next day the *St. Andronicus* was delayed over lifebelts. The General Manager of Thomas Hamling & Co., the owners, refused to show the Board of Trade certificate for the lifebelts to the crew, but said he was prepared to show it to "responsible" people such as trade union officials. The *Andronicus* missed the tide and didn't sail for two days. Other trawlers were delayed by the wives or the crews for safety reasons.

After making a good start the wives got side-tracked by the TGWU (the fisherman's union). So the fight was taken off the fishdock, where it was hitting the gaffers in the pocket, and down to London.

A delegation went down to see Mr. Mallalieu, Minister for Shipping at the Board of Trade, and Mr. Peart, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

The ministers promised to instruct the trawler owners to implement a three-point "safety code":

1. No fishing off North Iceland in bad weather.
2. All trawlers to carry a qualified radio operator.
3. All trawlers to report back by radio every 12 hours.

Unfortunately, there is nothing to stop the owners ignoring the instruction. It's not legally binding, and they don't take much notice of other safety regulations.

### REAL FIGHT TO COME

Having passed the safety code on to the trawler owners, and promised an independent inquiry, the government had done its bit. Public interest is dying down, and the fishermen's wives have plenty to do besides picket trawlers.

The real fight is yet to come, and when it does it'll be the trawlermen *versus* the gaffers. A few years ago, union membership among trawlermen was negligible, but 80% of the men are in the union now. Two years ago, nearly 1,000 trawlermen came out on strike for 100% unionism, their first strike in twenty years.

These are signs that the men have realised this is the 20th century, even if the employers haven't. But organisation on the job is another matter. At sea the lads are up against the iron rule of the skipper, backed by the law; and ashore the gaffers are past masters at victimisation. Then there's not much time to talk about changing the system when you're working 18 hours a day.

### A LONG WAIT

Even so, certain demands must be made, to prevent more lives being lost, and to improve working conditions at sea.

They are:

1. Shop stewards on board ship. The crew must have a say in safety measures, and on whether to fish or not in bad weather.
2. Twelve hours on and 12 hours off. Britain is the only fishing nation in Europe not to enforce this.
3. A decent basic wage (and I don't mean £15); fishermen are workers—not gamblers.
4. Repeal of the Merchant Shipping Act. Seamen and fishermen want the same rights as other workers.

If the trawlermen wait for the government or the owners to improve things, they'll have a long wait. If they want the job made safer they'll have to show they mean it. One thing is certain; if they do decide to strike their women will back them up.

Hull

JIM YOUNG

## UNHOLY ALLIANCE

The 1966 Seamen's Strike: an Analysis  
by GEORGE FOULSER  
(9d. postpaid; bulk orders 6s. a dozen)

# PAPER WORKERS BREAK INTO PRINT

*The Aberdeen Paper Worker* (6d). Published by Aberdeen Libertarian Socialists, c/o M. Dey, 142 Walker Road, Aberdeen.

THIS is a much-needed statement of the situation in the paper industry. As the introduction states, "The paper industry is an important and strategic one for modern capitalism, which needs vast quantities of writing-paper and newsprint for the administration of society and industry, for education and for the press; as well as increasing amounts of high-quality papers for industrial purposes, e.g. fibre-glass paper for the electrical industry and base papers for the photographic industry. The industry is one of the few old-established ones (such as textiles, mining and shipbuilding) which are not declining; and is practically the only old industry which is keeping abreast of the new, expanding ones (such as cars, electrical engineering, etc.)"

"Due to the increased demand for paper since the war, the number of people employed in the industry in non-communist Europe has risen to almost  $\frac{1}{2}$  million mill-hands and office workers, and still more are employed in the timber and road-haulage sectors. The industry is also one of the greatest in Europe in value; in 1958 the total value of its output was £1,500,000,000. Britain is the most important single country with 21% of European production and over 100,000 paperworkers."

## ONE STEWARD FOR 1,500

Despite the importance of the paper industry the union organisation leaves much to be desired. A SOGAT member working at Stoneywood paper mill, Aberdeen, says, "The workers in the mill are very poorly organised; afraid to take action in defence of their interests in case they lose their jobs and pensions, and with a low degree of solidarity between different shifts and groups of workers. Most people in the mill have never been through a strike, the last one, apart from short walk-outs by the women, was in the 1926 General Strike when the Mill was closed for one day and most of the workers were clamouring to go back at the end of it! Then

## Aberdeen SWF and the Election

The Aberdeen SWF Group will be standing a candidate against the local election in May. Aberdeen is, at present, ruled by the Labour Party, who specialise in selling civic land to private building speculators and giving Labour Lord Provosts fancy limousines. A law unto themselves, they have their own PRIVATE car park, which can't even be used by the public when there are no cars in it! They happily spend the ratepayers' money on slap-up dinners for the US Navy, and pass resolutions against the War in Vietnam in their spare time.

Our policy is simple. Aberdeen has been ruled too long by the Broad Street boys (is it just chance that our right wing local press lies next door to the Town House?) The SWF will not ask for votes. Our election leaflet will not mention voting for us. We are standing only to announce Syndicalism to the people. We are standing to sound the knell of doom for Aberdeen's Labour fascists.

Our candidate is Ronnie Slater, a young labourer, and a recent supporter of the SWF. We ask all groups to support us, by suggestions, ideas, and preferably, hard cash. All donations to, Aberdeen SWF Anti-Election Fund, c/o Iain MacDonald, 15 Cotton Street, Aberdeen.

**ABERDEEN WORKER**

there was still a bit of skill involved in paper making and craftsmen paper-workers were highly paid, but with automation the only craftsmen left in the mill are the engineers. *There is only one shop steward for 1,500 workers*, a situation which workers in other industries may find hard to credit; the management will allow no more and neither the unions nor the men seem to be prepared to put up a fight on this important issue at the moment. Recently there was more discontent than for years over a bonus dispute; a pay rise was granted after long negotiations; but the management began cutting the workers' bonuses until they were about 15s. lower than they had been, which cancelled out the wage rise. If a shop-stewards committee had been in existence then, with the custom of regular meetings, elections and reports back to the men, it could have served as the focus of a struggle on this issue, which instead was gradually let slide and forgotten, leaving the bosses £1,200 a week richer."

## SOLIDARITY LOST

Another point well covered in the pamphlet is the appalling working conditions in most of the Mills. Some sections have to work in very damp conditions whilst others suffer extreme heat and can only wear the minimum of clothing. Fires are quite common. "These are to some extent unavoidable," says "SOGAT member" (Culter Branch), "But the least you would think the management would do would be to have adequate fire-fighting equipment. The Culter management thinks differently. The hand fire-engine in the Mill is in a terrible state of rust and decay, and all the fireman can do when a fire breaks out is to run and phone the fire brigade! The only repairs the fire engine gets is a polish once every three years when the factory inspector comes for his cuppa tea. Only in January a worker was burned to death in the Mill when trapped by a fire."

The situation is summed up by Mac (an SWF member): "The workers in the Moss have long lost their enthusiasm for the Trades Unions in the Mill, both the AEU and SOGAT, and the solidarity which got them through the 1936 strike (described in the pamphlet). If a situation similar to that ever develops again in Mugiemoos, they may well find that they will have to deal with it in the same way as before; but I think that if intense management-workers strife comes to the Mill again the workers' fight will be much harder, and they stand a good chance of being defeated.

"The bosses of Mugiemoos have seen the strength of the workers when they are organised, and make a stand; and they are sure to do all they can to prevent the workers from organising to the same extent ever again.

## UNLESS THEY TAKE ACTION

"If the workers had the same interest in their own welfare and conditions at work as the management have in theirs, they would be 100% in the Union (instead of, I estimate, about 50% union membership) and would be DEMANDING immediate action on such issues as safety conditions and a decent basic wage.

"Unless the workers in Mugiemoos Mill take action of the kind outlined above, all I can see for them in the time ahead is that things will plod on in the same old way, accidents will occur, and a basic living wage be as far away as ever."

J.C.

**ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS SOCIAL.** Saturday, March 16, 8.00 p.m., at "The Roebuck", Tottenham Court Road (tube: Warren Street). Admission 4s 6d at door. Folksong. Proceeds to aid of libertarian prisoners.

# Direct Action

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

## Death and destruction

NO ONE should need be told that America's actions in Vietnam are barbarous, and that it is contemptible that any allegedly civilised race should use Napalm, Lazy Dog, Phosphorous Bombs, Defoliants and so forth to terrorise a weak nation. Genocide takes place today on a level comparable to Auschwitz, which makes it all the more nauseous that among those who whitewash America is to be found that former Pacifist and Libertarian Bernard Levin.

However, just as Churchill's Britain did not suddenly become socialist purely because it resisted Hitler, so one cannot assume that the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese regime are socialist because they resist America. North Vietnam is a rigidly hierarchical society, and the Vietnam Communist Party has for over thirty years attempted systematically to liquidate all independent leftists. Many were betrayed to the French Occupation forces, many were assassinated, many were "judicially" murdered when Ho Chi Minh ruled all Vietnam in 1946, many former refugees from the French were liquidated where they thought they had found sanctuary.

It seems to be a fact that still, even after the present Vietcong assaults on the towns, which Le Duan had intended should release spontaneous urban insurrections, there is still in Saigon and other major South Vietnam towns very little active support for the Communists—however much the people may hate the Thieu puppet regime. This is evidence that the Vietnamese working class has been permanently alienated by Ho's Stalinist manoeuvres.

This is the reason why Harlow Anarchists and others are launching a campaign on the slogan "Neither Washington nor Hanoi" next month, and why some other comrades published a small pamphlet under that title last year.

Moreover, it is worth pointing out that even to those who do not believe that the only worthwhile revolution is a social revolution—and do not judge movements as to whether they are socialist and Libertarian—it must be pointed out to them that the Vietcong cannot win—even in purely militarist terms. It is not within the bounds of reason to suppose that one of the two most powerful nations in the world can be defeated

## 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:

Mar. 13—Discussion for new pamphlet

27—To be arranged

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

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

permanently militarily by a small nation; even if it may well be that it can be forced to choose between deadlock and nuclear war.

It no doubt fits the Stalinist-Communist book that the war shall continue and the barbarism of the US Government be more and more exposed. But for those who want to win self-determination for the Vietnamese, and peace in that country, the main struggle is not in Vietnam but in the USA itself.

The American peace movement is potentially more revolutionary than the Vietcong. It has gone beyond talking about negotiations, it has gone beyond the Communists in so doing; it has seen the necessity to work with the movement against colour prejudice and has gone beyond on the one hand the belief that all the Negro needs is to be integrated into an otherwise unchanged society as also beyond Black Nationalism; and in so doing it bids fair to going beyond the Trotskyists and turning to revolutionary anarchism.

## Gastro's death camps

COMRADE Francisco Aguirre Vidaurreta, who was serving a long-term sentence in the sinister prison of La Cabana, for a "crime" against the Castro-Communist dictatorship, died recently.

In the penitentiary of the Island of Pines, our comrade Jose Aceña was also recently found dead.

Among the thousands of political prisoners, of all viewpoints, who rot in Castro's jails, we particularly recall some of our own comrades, "privileged" victims of the Cuban dictatorship.

Suria Linsuain, daughter of the Spanish militant, Domingo Germinal, already detained for several years, is seriously ill in the infirmary of the women's prison at Guanajay.

Jose Alvarez Micheltorena, Osvaldo Huertas, Isidro Moscu, Teral, Eloy Vega, Canizares, Napoleon, Luis Miguel Linsuain (Suria's brother) and Gerardo Garcia are a few of the many comrades suffering for their struggle for Freedom. *Accion Libertaria*, Buenos Aires.

## Anarchists banned in Uruguay

OUR COMRADE Pietra Ferrua, of Rio de Janeiro, writes that the local press has announced the banning, by government decree of December 1967, of the Uruguayan Anarchist movement. We have been without news from our Uruguayan comrades for several weeks and our letters bring no reply. *Monde Libertaire*.

## And the next, please

MANY THANKS to all who've responded quickly to our Fund Drive, launched last month. Their contributions are gratefully acknowledged below.

The begging bowl's still out, though. We said in our appeal that we need £200 this year to keep on bringing out this paper, and we weren't joking. Have that sum we must—or bust.

Brother or sister reader, it's your choice. An now's your opportunity. We'll never forget you.

DIRECT ACTION PRESS FUND—February 1968

Herne Bay, P. & S.R. 7s; London N.16, M.V. £2; Oxford, D.M. £1; Bristol, Anon. £1 10s; Glasgow, R.F. 10s; London N.W.2, M.B. £1 10s; London S.E.5, M.H. £3 15s; London W.9, W.C. 10s; Tadworth, N.W. 4s; Wimborne, D.M. 13s; New Malden, G.B. 3s 6d; Exeter, R.H. 3s 6d; Hayes, J.P. 3s 6d; Woodford Green, J.P. £1; Manchester 14, R. & J.M. £1 10s; Newcastle-u-Lyme, B.B. £1; Falmouth, R.W. £1; Manchester 14, R.B. £1; Hartlepool, B.C. 2s 6d; Toronto, P.P. £2; G.F. (Seaman's Voice) 18s; Greenock, A.L. 9s; Pré St Gervais, E.E. 13s 6d; J.T. Sogat, 10s; SWF London Group £6 9s.

# A VERY FISHY BUSINESS

THE TRAGIC loss of the three Hull trawlers may have one good effect. It might just open people's eyes to what goes on in Britain's fish industry. The fish "barons" are among the most rapacious capitalists in the country.

Now, I don't know too much about the seaboard side of fishing life, but I can give some of the lowdown about what it's like to work in the fish-processing industry. In Aberdeen, "the fesh" provides a major source of employment. Conditions in the industry are really 19th century. For a start, about two-thirds of the industry is concentrated on small units, employing anything from 5 to 50 workers, mostly female. The worst places are "underneath the arches", along the railway at Aberdeen. These ill-lit, unsanitary, hell holes are the daily lot of hundreds of totally unorganised workers. The toilet facilities in these dens are indescribable, safety precautions nil, hours long, heating an unheard of luxury.

Knives slip from frozen fingers and if you do happen to fall ill . . . then your job won't be open for very long. In one firm I worked for, a bloke who had been there for 25 years (during which time he had three increases) fell ill and was sacked, by post, after three weeks absence. The health hazards are appalling. The out-patients department of the local hospital has a daily stream of cuts, etc. One of the greatest hazards is slipping on the rarely cleaned-up floors. If you do slip and hurt yourself badly, the foreman

will make damn sure that everybody else says it was your fault. This game is a jungle and that law applies. Solidarity is nil.

Talking of foremen. Gaffers in the fish are chosen for their brawn not their brain. Get stroppy with one of these lads and you could wind up in hospital. Once I came near getting the beating of my life for preaching to the workers. The union isn't a joke, it's a tragedy. In one of the bigger factories, the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society's plant, the union has nearly 100% membership and the management pays the union rate. Thus this place is the *lowest* paid in the industry! A mate and I once went along to join the TGWU and to get a supply of membership forms to pass round. God knows how many times we went to the office and were turned away by a clerkess who wouldn't even give us forms until we had been interviewed by the local secretary. He was never in.

Finally we went ahead ourselves, and after a nauseating week in which temperatures in the place we worked had fallen below zero and elderly women were passing out, we called a very amateurish strike. My mate phoned the TGWU and asked for someone to come down and address the striking workers. For half-an-hour we stood there in the open, with the gaffer prowling about making threats, but no union man. Finally he staggered towards us, grunted something about "getting back to work" and "I'll see the management" and disappeared, leaving a trail of whisky fumes behind him. We were shattered! This wasn't what was supposed to happen in the books.

The strike collapsed and I got my cards. In our youthful naivety, we decided to appeal to the local Trades Council. After all, wasn't it controlled by the Communists—the party of the workers? (We were both ardent YCLers at the time.) Surely they would bring every harbour trade out and fight the fish barons to a standstill. Big laugh! The local TC secretary, a CPer, told us to take the matter to the union, the TGWU!! And one mannie muttered about how he was victimised the same way in 1920. And that was it.

What can be done? The answer is, sadly, probably nothing. For a start, the vast majority of the workers themselves are opposed to unions of any kind. Religion, though not as strong as it is further north, still plagues the fish trade. The local branch of the TGWU is rotten with members of MRA, with their "love thy boss" crap. The local fish porters committee, once one of the most militant groups in the trade, is totally under the control of MRA. Attempts to get action in the various fish houses is often met with arguments about God, "the great fisherman" who will see us through. Once when I tried to get some action on a lavatory, I was told by the women that "Christ didna hae a toilet". Exactly what answer militants give to this I'm sure I don't know. The position on board trawlers is even worse. The only hope is that the odd fishworker will tumble to it that the boss he prays with is bleeding him white. All I can say is that I'm glad to be out of it.

IAN S. SUTHERLAND

## Friends and neighbours

S.W. LONDON LIBERTARIANS meet every Thursday, 7.30 p.m., at 14 Clapham Court, Kings Avenue (Acre Lane end), S.W.4.

KILBURN ANARCHIST GROUP—Contact Andrew Dewar, 16 Kilburn House, Malvern Place, London N.W.6. Meetings every Tuesday, 8 p.m.

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

B.B.

## Roberts-Arundel: business as usual

AT time of writing, the 14-month-old Stockport strike at American-owned Roberts-Arundel is still going strong. What began as a small strike led to a lunatic lockout, and has now finished up with this crazy company trying to pull our leg that it has closed down.

Only last Friday, the pickets were complaining that the firm is now smuggling machinery out at weekends, when there are no pickets about. Having pretended to close on January 12, the management now say they've still to meet some orders for spinning frames, which want finishing off. So far as we can see it's been "business as usual" at Arundels all along.

Locally known as a "little Hitler", the boss, Pomeranz, has refused to sell out to a more responsible company willing to respect union rights, until the unions call the strike off. He won't quit, but he says the unions are uncompromising brutes.

### "GIANT TOKEN STRIKE"

In the *US Textile Reporter*, he has just claimed the dispute is costing Britain £2 million a year in lost exports. Pomeranz has been more of a hindrance than a help to British exports!

Now the Stockport Trades Council is to push for a "giant token strike" in the North West, as a way to combat the Pomeranz company. It's about time, too!

Meanwhile, police accused of beating up pickets have been let off by the local Public Prosecutor. The union will now help the lads who were injured by the police to take civil actions against the police for assault.

Over 50 have been arrested so far in this dispute. On February 27, a local anarcho-syndicalist will be tried for obstruction at Stockport. Hardly any fail to get a fine, and some get framed fairly successfully.

# I've got the foreman's job at last!

(To be sung to the tune of the Red Flag)

"YOU, the foremen and technicians in British industry, have every reason to be proud of your contribution to the technical progress made in the 23 years since 1945. Like the non-commissioned officers who were said to be the backbone of the British Army, you carry a great deal of the daily responsibility in any modern enterprise, and it is sufficient to wonder for a moment just what could have been achieved if your knowledge and experience had not been available. Nobody will deny that it was hard work, and maybe some hard study in spare time, that have helped you to rise to the position you now hold, to acquire a house, to run a car, and to take your family away for a holiday each year."

THIS song of praise to the Foremen of England is not published by the Employers' Federation, or the Economic League. It is the leading paragraph of a new pamphlet, *What Socialism Offers Key People*, published by the British Communist Party. Although it adds "technicians", this is only an attempt to socially upgrade the foremen to whom it is addressed—so, too, the references to "salaries" instead of wages.

To appeal to the foremen is part of the new CP line of appearing respectable and middle class. The theme of the pamphlet is, "Foremen are the backbone of industry, and it's time the backbone came to the front." A long way from the thirties, when petty middle class members of the CP donned khaki shirts and cloth caps and went looking for "the proletariat" at weekends!

## THE STRAWBOSES' CHARTER

In all the experience of wage labour, now, in history, in every land, the foreman is recognised as the lowest element of capitalism. He is "the bosses' runner", his informer, his "watchdog". It is his livelihood to drive, bully and cheat the worker as far as he can, and to work himself when the workers are on strike. He is everywhere recognised as the employer's "policeman on the job". The ranks of the Communist Party are just the place where he should feel at home.

Many workers are on strike now against employers who are sacking workers and speeding up the work process to make up the labour of the sacked. More will be out tomorrow. Who stains his hands and soul with the dirty work of driving men? Not the capitalist, who may be in the USA! That is the job of his lowest hireling—the foreman.

Capitalism hasn't changed, the foreman hasn't changed, he just has to be a little more careful nowadays. But not to worry, the CP has something for him; they have pointed his place in history and prepared a path and a programme for him.

## THE FOREMAN'S PARTY

In its outline of the social problem, the pamphlet continues the present Communist fashionable attack on the Labour Government (there is certainly no medal to be won by defending it), but is silent on the fact that at the last election the Communist Party in 600 constituencies called on the workers to "Vote Labour", and give Wilson a "thumping majority", even though his policy was then known.

During the vastly greater part of its existence since being formed in 1920 it has called upon the workers to vote for the Labour Party and pay its political levy. Yet, whenever the workers are inevitably disillusioned with a Labour Gov-

ernment, the CP swings about and denounces the monster it helped to bring into being.

"The direction of Ramsey MacDonald, Arthur Henderson and Herbert Morrison, and later of Attlee, Gaitskell and Harold Wilson, has been a steady betrayal of the interests of the working people," the pamphlet goes on. It should have added, "The Communist Party has aided and abetted that betrayal."

When, in 1920, several Socialist groups formed the Communist Party, most were anti-Labour Party, and many, including Willie Gallacher, were anti-parliament. But Lenin with his money bags intervened. "We must study the question raised by the British delegation (of the CP) in a special commission and after that say: the correct tactics are affiliation to the Labour Party. If the majority are opposed to that, then we should organise the minority separately."—July 23, 1920 (*Lenin on Britain*).

The money bags won and the CP tried, year after year, to join the Labour Party. For the first two of those years, Henderson was leader of the Labour Party, including the General Election year, 1922. At that election, three CP members stood as official Labour Candidates, W. Windsor (Bethnal Green NE), S. Saklatvala (Battersea N—he won this seat), and J. Vaughan (Bethnal Green SW).

At the next election, 1923, seven CP leaders were official Labour candidates, now under MacDonald's leadership. These were: Vaughan and Saklatvala again, with Philipps Price (Gloucester), Ellen Wilkinson (Ashton), W. Paul (Rusholme), A. Geddes (Greenock), and A. Ferguson (Kelvingrove).

In the 1924 Election, Labour had four CPers among its candidates. Saklatvala regained Battersea North for Labour, after having lost it in 1923. Vaughan was Labour candidate for Bethnal Green again, A. M. Wall wore Labour's colours at Streatham and W. Paul at Rusholme. After that, the Labour Party threw out the lot, but the CP went on pleading for entry and calling "Vote Labour" under other leaders than MacDonald, Attlee, Gaitskell and Wilson.

## WRITTEN BY HENRY FORD?

If, which is not at all certain, the foreman gets more wages than the others, he must not allow that to keep him out of the CP. Under Socialism, all will be well. "Status and reward is important in the development of a socialist community, and has been the subject of distortion and misrepresentation. People there (in socialist countries) do not receive the same pay irrespective of the quality and quantity of work they do; 'equality' in this sense does not obtain. A wage and salary system according to performance continues, therefore, to be a feature of socialism. For the supervisor and technician, as for managers, technologists, and persons of professional qualification, the salary differential is theirs of right, and, indeed, as a matter of principle, is essential to the growth of the national product and the well-being of socialist society." (*What Socialism Offers Key People*, page 8.)

No nonsense about equality, and "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need." No "Abolition of the Wage System" on Communist Banners. The CP creed on the wages system might have been written by Henry Ford.

But I have learned something from the pamphlet, I have a further clue as to why so many Communist shop stewards become foremen. Otherwise, it is fit only to hang on the lavatory—the STAFF lavatory, of course.

**TOM BROWN**

● The SWF has reprinted its leaflet, "A Cheap Holiday", attacking tourism to Franco Spain. Copies are available at 1s. 6d. for 100; 15s. for 1,000, postpaid.

# TUC ON BOOZE WITH ROYAL PARASITE

PLANS are well under way for the celebration this June of the Centenary of the Trades Union Congress. Well, that is to say, the main event's already organised—a Bumper Booze-up at the Guildhall, London, traditional stomping ground of the City's bigwigs. There, on June 5, there is to be a banquet attended by 650 trade unionists and guests. Guest of Honour will be the Queen. Even at a conservative estimate it's difficult to see how the damage can be less than £10,000—and that's putting it at less than £20 per head.

All that glittering gluttony—as the hereditary symbol of privilege sits down with the champions of the toilers. Why, nothing like it's been seen since Cosy Jim Kosygin dined at the Palace those many moons ago.

## Anarchist arrested

A YOUNG Anarchist militant, David Urbano Bermudez, resident in Paris, was arrested in Madrid on December 24. As the Franco police were unable to accuse him of carrying propaganda, or being on a "subversive mission", he was charged with belonging—in France—to the Iberian Federation of Libertarian Youth (FIJL).

This charge was clearly "suggested" to the fascists by their French police colleagues, as David Urbano had earlier had his residence permit in France withdrawn for the same reason. And Franco still proclaims, "There are no political prisoners in Spain . . ." But . . .

Miguel Garcia, 60, has been in jail since 1949 for being active in the CNT. He is suffering from a serious heart condition and, according to the remission system of Spain, should already have been released.

And what has happened to Julian Millan Hernandez, arrested on October 17 last in Barcelona?

The truth is that Spanish prisons hold hundreds of political prisoners, some, like Juan Salcedo, condemned to 60 years behind bars.

The reality is that all anti-fascists have the duty to show their moral and material solidarity with those detained and those detained and to denounce this state of affairs.

(from a leaflet of the Committee for Revolutionary Spain).

### TWO CONGRESSES

THE 17TH CONGRESS of the Japanese Anarchist Federation was held recently. The agenda included discussion of ways to strengthen anarchist ideas and influence in the labour movement and the International Anarchist Congress, at Carrara, Italy, later this year, to which the JAF will send a delegate.

The XI Congress of the Regional Workers' Federation of Argentina, FORA, will be held in Buenos Aires from March 22-27. *Monde Libertaire*.

### CHILEAN MOVEMENT REORGANISES

THE CHILEAN libertarian movement has been reorganised in a Federation of Libertarian Groupings. The new organisation states: "The FAL is an anarchist organisation which propagates the re-organisation of society on the basis of libertarian communism. Regional councils already exist in several provinces, the base of our movement being the formation of anarchist groups in factories and the unions, as well as association by affinity. This has received a very promising and favourable reception in certain working-class centres."

*Monde Libertaire*.

The TUC first met in Manchester on June 2, 1867. Previous attempts to found a lasting national body to co-ordinate the struggles of organised workers had failed. This was in part due to weakness, but more because previous bodies had declared a war to the death on capitalism. The Grand National Consolidated Trades Union of the 1830s was hostile not only the bosses, but also to Parliament, which it rightly saw as the lawmaking body of the bosses. It proposed to take over industry and run it on a co-operative basis, replacing Parliament (and so abolishing government) with a Workers' Industrial Administration—Syndicalism. The Grand National was smashed, and the workers turned to semi-insurrectionary Chartism.

After the collapse of Chartism, workers again turned to industrial action, and now on the basis of the slogan which remains the dreary and self-defeating motto of the official movement today—"A Fair Day's Work and a Fair Day's Pay". The official slogan of today that is, except that we might add, "So long as it doesn't harm the balance of payments."

### "ONE OF THE RULING CLASS"

Just as they accepted the wage system, so the unionists of 1867 accepted its political form, parliamentary government, and in 1874 the Trades Councils and TUC had the first two Labour members elected. In doing so they defined Parliamentary Democracy in the form we know it today—the stage of capitalism which depends on the voluntary support of the working class. And made this June's junketings, if not inevitable, at least foreseeable.

George Lansbury, himself a Labour Minister, was fully aware of the situation when he wrote as follows back in 1925:

"Those of us who are invited to attend Royal garden parties and other social functions of the rich are invited because we are now supposed to have risen superior to our fellows. J. H. Thomas [*another Labour Minister, who asserted he belonged to no class*], as a worker on the railway, is of no particular importance; as the spokesman elected by his class to speak for them he is an important person, whose company is cultivated in such a manner as will make him accept the belief that, having risen from humble rank, he is of no class. Yet he is now one of the ruling class. . . .

"The British Governing class is the most plausible and clever in the world. They know, none better, from the King on the throne down to the poorest Tory or Liberal Mayor, how to stoop to conquer, and are up to every move to prevent leaders of the people remaining class-conscious."

### BARBICAN PICKETS

Capital can't live without labour, so the ruling class must stoop to conquer, must offer bribes, banquets, boardroom places and baronies. Our union leaders have been taking these for so long that they obviously feel they now have sufficient of the social graces to return the compliment (though Lord Ted Hill might drink out of a finger bowl).

It's really poetic that the guzzling's to be under the very roof at the Guildhall where last November the Barbican pickets were prosecuted for upholding union principles in defiance of the united front of employers, State and union officials.

M.H

**STOP THE POLITICAL LEVY.** New leaflet asks "Would You Pay a Man to Pick Your Pocket?" Calls on trade unionists to stop financing the Labour Party—the Party of the Wage Cut. Plain words, concisely argued, backed by facts. Price 2s per hundred, £1 per thousand, from SWF.

# A BLEAK NEW WORLD

WHEN a man has been in steady, moderately well-paid employment for over five years, and out of the blue comes a redundancy notice, the world which he believed to be permanent suddenly comes to an end. If during the past four years, 16,000 other jobs in his district have also disappeared, the new world into which he is pitchforked is bleak indeed.

Of course, this isn't unemployment; officially he will be only temporarily stopped and backing Britain in the cause of redeployment. And if he should start worrying about HP payments, or how to keep up his car against the time when he may have to travel twenty miles or more to work, he will find plenty of time to contemplate his past improvidence.

## MILLIONS HE HADN'T GOT

But let us be fair to GEC-AEI. Arnold Weinstock has his own headache too. He is the whizzkid overlord who has promised that during the next three years, 47 per cent in dividends will be paid on capital investment; that is, you will receive back in three years nearly half of what you put in, which makes bingo and pools look pretty workhouse. In addition, both GEC and AEI each spent half a million or so in advertisements for and against the merger, and Weinstock bribed the AEI shareholders with several millions he hadn't got.

Let us spare a little charity for Weinstock, for he's certainly got a plateful. Of course, Weinstock isn't interested in electrical engineering; he might just as easily be managing director of a bank, an aircraft corporation, a chemical complex, the London Rubber Company, or a land development consortium. His job is to make money, the means to do so being secondary and incidental.

## LECTURING TO CONSUMER

During the past seven years, Weinstock has brought home the gravy to GEC and established a name for ruthlessness. His main weapon has been to "cut out unprofitable lines". The immediate result of this has been the sack for those producing unprofitable lines, and increased intensification of the labour of those designated in profitable production—always with the ghost of redundancy in the background.

Indirectly, the consumer has suffered, too. A host of small concerns now find their needs cannot be met because products are obsolete, and those requiring spares or services

have to purchase new equipment. It is a simple remedy which can only be applied once, but most effective while it lasts. Contrary to the free enterprisers who preach the virtues of the market automatic regulator for ensuring that the consumer can buy what he really wants, the concentration of manufacturing units makes sure that capitalists can dictate to the consumer what he will have to accept.

## MYTHICAL SCHEMES

It is now the turn of AEI to be rationalised, with the worker being the expendable agent in the scramble for greater money-making efficiency, and Weinstock employing the modern managerial skills to reach the goal which leaders of all political parties exhort us to be essential for national survival—whether the workers in Woolwich survive is neither here nor there!

If Weinstock is to redeem his promises and become a life peer representative of the new technological age, the workers of Woolwich should be proud of their contribution to these desirable ends. Whether they march through the streets of Woolwich, lobby the Prime Minister or petition Parliament, is not likely to make much difference. Grunter will announce mythical schemes for "retraining", GEC will be "generous" with redundancy payments, and aimless talking will spin out until it can all be conveniently lost behind the shock of the next wave of takeovers.

## JOIN THE TRAIN ROBBERS?

Is this really all? The marches and petitions can at least remind politicians that flesh and blood is involved, even though the computerised accountancy of Weinstock can only recognise book entries for metallic symbols. It is always worthwhile to let Authority know that the human animal still exists on this planet, and that people have a right to share in what they produce before the requirements of those who only make money. Even when nobody pays any attention, this must be repeated until the day it does sink in that welfare is not dependent upon money making.

If the capital equipment in the Woolwich factory is no longer to be used, it might be a good thing for the workers to draw the obvious conclusion, and smash it all up before they leave. This would horrify all the organs of the Establishment, particularly the bewigged spokesmen of the legal property-owning racket. The Woolwich workers would probably become as famous as train robbers, and share their company on the Isle of Wight.

## MINUTE ELITE

In spite of this affront to law and order it is almost certain that this is what will eventually happen to the machinery. GEC-AEI cannot afford to allow it to be sold at cut prices to possible competitors, and so will likely adopt the usual practice of selling to the breakers under contract that it will only go back to the blast-furnaces.

When the day comes that workers undertake the honourable task of wrecking the machinery they are no longer permitted to operate, they will be very near seeing that it is not inevitable that their welfare should be dependent upon the decisions of that minute elite, who can only use production for the irrelevant task of money making.

JIM PETER

## LITERATURE

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