

STRIKE WAVE IN U.S.A.

Pickets Win Street Battles 30 BLACKLEGS KIDNAPPED Strikers Raid Meat Plant

By "Direct Action" Special Correspondent, St. Pauls, Minnesota.

A WAVE of strikes and threat of strikes has swept America. On a national scale have been the disputes of the railmen, miners, packing-house workers, telephone workers and the auto-union. Besides these have been, and are still brewing, innumerable local struggles of newspaper printers, taxi men, bus workers and every occupation in some city or other. Prices have risen, profits have soared since the war, but wages have risen but little. These strikes have shown a high spirit of militancy in the strikers and are always the occasion of efficient picketing. The most outstanding example of this is furnished by the meat packing workers who have been out since March 21st.

Halfway through the strike the A.F.L. Union settled for less than their demands, but the C.I.O. United Packing workers refused the meat packers' offer and continued the strike. The packing companies, especially Armour's and Swift's and Cudahy's, made big efforts to break the strike by threats and blackleg recruiting which were met by heavier picketing. The strikers then accused the companies of using "goon squads" (armed blacklegs used to break strikes by violence). Whatever the truth of this, the fact stands, that two pickets were killed in separate localities. One was crushed by a scab driving a lorry over him. The other was killed by a blackleg who reached over a packing house wall and shot him with a pistol.

Strikers Hit Back

The threat of further violent strike-breaking aroused the strikers here in the northern middle west, chief centre of the meat packing trade. At the South Saint Paul factory of Swift and Company the pickets had fought all day, the company secured a court injunction restricting the number of pickets to ten, the strikers ignored the order and turned up the next day 300 strong.

Next came the police with Sheriff Dieter and his officers. Dieter addressed the pickets from a loud-speaker wagon. The pickets closed their ranks. "I give you fifteen minutes" said the Sheriff. The police drew their guns and advanced in a tight bunch. Reaching the first line of pickets they grabbed the nearest men. Fists flew and in three minutes the Sheriff, all of his deputies and every police officer was knocked down. Several pickets also were knocked out. The law officers retreated; their uniforms dusty and torn, and many of them bleeding. The Union delegate went to the loud-speaker, "if Dieter comes back, let's really give him the works," he called.

Police Captain Farrell wiped the blood from his chin and said, "What's the use? They've got us outnumbered." The odds were certainly hopeless. To be quite fair, the police don't like this job, or the scabs, and don't see why they should be knocked about for Swift's and Armour's increased profits, and many of them say so.

The Pickets' Blitzkrieg

The Newport, Minnesota, plant of the Cudahy Company was raided by pickets the following day. Sixty blacklegs were sleeping on the premises when 200 strikers broke in by several entrances at 11.15 p.m. The main switch was pulled, plunging the plant in darkness. The blacklegs were beaten up and their coats smashed. Windows were broken. The boilers, so essential to a packing house, were drawn and the bosses' car overturned and smashed.

Telephones were torn out and office records shuffled, then the stockpiles were opened and 110 hogs freed. Having made sure that no work could be done for at least several days, the raiders took 30 of the blacklegs as prisoners, marched them to waiting cars and drove away into the open country. The Sheriff and his officers spent most of the following day seeking the prisoners, but by nightfall all the prisoners had found their way back to Newport, Mass picketing continued.

Troops Called Out

Governor Youngdahl called on the National Guard (Territorial Army) to guard the packing houses. Military aircraft flew over and infantry, ordnance and mechanised troops advanced on the meat plants.

At Evansville, Indiana, an attempt was to be made to get 150 blacklegs into Swift and Co.'s plant there, but after a report

by Captain William Thompson of Indiana State Police, who warned of possible bloodshed, the attempt was dropped.

Latest report on the situation from Moultrie, Georgia, is that 11 strikers of the Swift plant have been jailed for picketing. The sentences, are said to be from 10 to 20 days.

At the Rath Packing Company's plant at Waterloo, Iowa, pickets turned back a blackleg's car pushing it back to the road. The blackleg, Fred E. Lee, drew a pistol and shot William Farrell, a picket, killing him and wounding a woman striker. Lee was arrested and charged with murder.

The C.I.O. strikers have to work at most of the struck plants for an advance of 9 cents an hour instead of the 29 cents demanded.

The strike was broken because at the packing houses where the workers were "organised" in the A.F. of L. unions work continued. The packing companies simply increased production at their A.F. of L. houses and used one trade union to blackleg upon the other.

Napoleons of Notting Hill

FASCISTS MAKE LITTLE HEADWAY

On Saturday afternoon, in the area of Notting Hill Gate, the would-be Kommandatura of the New Fascist Order for Britain have been attempting, from their Union Jack draped platform, to put over their doctrine of racial hatred.

On one or two occasions recently, the seller of Mosley's paper has been shouting: "Read 'Union'—the anti-anarchist paper." For we have been holding some meetings of our own down this way; we felt it about time that Victor Burgess and his bunch of fascist forget-me-nots were challenged.

It is good to see that the fascists are making little headway, in spite of their attempts to exploit current ideas and topical situations. Not only have they been mouthing (unsuccessfully) the ideas of syndicalism, but they are now bleating about a "United Ireland" in order to capture the sympathy of Irishmen in this country. In this connection Mosley's condemnation of the "Police State of Ulster" has an Alice in Wonderland quality.

DALSTON AGAIN

The only section of the community which openly supplies Mosley and his lieutenants with the respect, obedience, and flattery that fascists ache for, appears to be the Police Force. The fascist police union at Dalston on May Day provided an example, and proved that like attracts like. Mosley had 834 police protecting him, including cavalry, as well as dozens of plain clothes men and M.L.S. Police charged the understandably hostile crowd, and fascism received a victory in default, by the arrests of large numbers of anti-fascists.

A ban on political processions had been announced two days before. Of course, an exception had to be made in the case of the fascists. Police protection was afforded Mosley's thugs in a march which wound up near Camden Town. Further fighting broke out, and again only anti-fascists were arrested. But, says Chuter Ede, the police do not show favour to fascism, otherwise they would be prosecuted! What hypocrisy! Magistrates are known to work on the assumption that innocent persons are not brought before them.

What happened at Dalston takes place on a smaller scale at all fascist meetings. The Police show their very obvious bias, they act as strong-arm stewards, and follow the speakers' instructions. It's very different at anarchist meetings. We do not welcome the police, and they usually clear off. Fascists have attempted little heckling to date. They are probably awaiting instructions from headquarters. Their task is made difficult by a shortage of convenient slogans. The present selection, "Asiatic Aliens" and "Bolsheviks" must appear slightly off-centre. But the slogans are presumably being manufactured and we shall soon get our nick-name. That won't hurt us. What will be the most dangerous thing about us as far as the fascists and other social misfits are concerned will be that we shall go on using and defending our liberties, as the most certain way of retaining and enlarging them.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

All communications to the National Committee of the Anarchist Federation should be addressed to:

National Committee, A.F.B.,
15, Parliament Hill,
London, N.W.3.

Those desiring further information regarding the Federation, or interested in becoming members, should write to the above address.

PALESTINE

Arab League Acts for Bevin

THE story of the Jewish people is one of ghettos and pogroms, of massacres and torture, a history of a people hounded and persecuted by a world that presumed to call itself "civilised". A world that could produce the "civilisation" and "culture" that reached its apex in the extermination camps of Nazi Germany.

The Jews of Palestine are engaged in a bloody struggle against the armies of the Arab League who, thanks to Britain's Imperial policy and Bevin's anti-semitism, are receiving their war material from Britain.

The Palestine problem is not one that carries any easy solution. The complex of motives and interests involved, and above all the machinations of the rival imperialisms, have created a situation in which both Jews and Arabs have been used as pawns in the struggle of the big powers.

Britain's interest in supporting the Arab League is that of maintaining, under the cloak of "withdrawal", her hold over the strategic military bases and oil wells of Palestine. We have stressed many times in "Direct Action" that these bases were fundamental to Britain's control of her Eastern possessions. The Arab States are Britain's tools for this purpose.

It is difficult to deal with the question of the Jewish position in Palestine, without taking into consideration the subjective factors involved, and above all the fact that the "democratic" states have barred their doors to the Jewish survivors of Belsen and the other Nazi camps, the great majority of whom, after three years of "peace", are still homeless and "displaced".

No Brief for Zionism

We hold no brief for Zionism or for the Jewish State. We see no solution to the problem of the Jewish people in the creation of a new and virulent nationalism; we are just as much opposed to a Jewish politician as we are to any other politician.

But we recognise the right of the Jewish people to live in peace. We have nothing but admiration for the achievements of the collectivist pioneers in Palestine. Those of us who have had the chance of seeing the collective settlements at first hand know that we have seen social living of an advanced kind. For the Jewish people,

long dispersed throughout the world, have absorbed its various cultures, and the result has been one that no social thinker can afford to neglect.

Politicians Oppose Settlers

Among the settlers there have been many who have worked unceasingly for understanding between the Jewish and Arab workers and peasants. These attempts have met with some success—the many cases where the settlers have aided the backward Arab peasants, joint Arab Jewish strikes in industry, Jewish medical aid to the Arab villages. But these attempts have been opposed both by Right-wing Jewish politicians, and by the Arab chieftains—who have feared the impact of Western ideas and methods on the impoverished and mainly illiterate Arab masses and the consequent danger to their feudal rule and privilege.

In this situation we should be hypocrites if, as Anarchists, we did not affirm our sympathy with the workers on the Jewish collective settlements, refugees from pogrom and massacre, who are now involved in a war that was not of their seeking.

We must force the Government of Britain to really withdraw from Palestine, and to cease immediately from supplying warplanes and arms to the Arab League.

Scottish Strikers Sacked by N.C.B.

Nearly 600 miners of Auchincruive Collieries, Ayrshire, are to be sued for damages by the N.C.B., and 56 other men, described as 'habitually striking' have been sacked from the Priory Pit, Blantyre.

These moves are officially stated to be part of a plan to clean up Scottish pits with bad records.

Daily Mail, 26.5.48.

The Scottish miners are the latest victims of the N.C.B.'s brand of industrial fascism. Priory Pit has long had a reputation for militancy among the men in defence of their conditions: it is always the front-rank fighters who get hit first.

EDITORIAL

JUSTICE and the LAW

In the course of their war against the State, the anarchists have, all too often found themselves face to face with the law. Anarchists have come to realise that in their struggle they find themselves opposed, not by "justice" but by the "force of the law." For there is a whole world of difference between law and justice.

To us this difference is only too apparent; but oddly enough we find that many people still stoutly defend British Justice, even labelling it "the best in the world."

These people, whose contact with the law is usually restricted to obeying its ever increasing edicts, believe that the female statue, holding scales above the Old Bailey is duplicated in her balancing of justice and mercy by the judge sitting in the court below.

Such naive victims of the power of suggestion will often readily admit that lawyers are rogues, and that it is unreasonable to expect anything but rogues of them. From Shakespeare's plays to the latest Hollywood release, lawyers have been depicted as glib-tongued scoundrels, exhibitionists, and vocal persuasive clowns. This is not unnatural, for lawyers are hired to prosecute or defend, questions of guilt or innocence are not allowed to shape their arguments.

Thus the importance of any case, for the advocate, is whether he will "win" or "lose" it. The more cases he wins by eloquent persuasion, the more successful he becomes and the bigger his fees.

Then in time the really successful lawyer, or to be more precise, the really plausible one, is promoted, he is made a K.C. or a magistrate. Backed by the State, he becomes the administrator, the dispenser of "Justice". Behind this sanctified figure lie the tragic furies of trials and courts, the harsh sentences, the whole illogical and inhuman system of trial and punishment.

Two recently reported court cases provide a topical illustration of our argument that "Justice" is at variance with "Law".

The first case is that of Doctors Bergmann and Fergusson. Acquitted on a charge of 'causing miscarriages' in a number of women, they were subjected to the strictures of the judge.

He stated that purely personal reasons for not having a baby, as opposed to physical ones, were of no validity and obviously should put a doctor on her guard.

"It is imperative that no doctors should yield to the temptation to help someone in ACUTE DISTRESS. THAT IS NOT THE LAW."

What is the law? To ensure that even the unwanted child shall be born? How hypocritical—for the State authority, of which this judge is the mouthpiece, sends these humans with the right to live into interminable wars.

We wonder, too, what is the difference between LEGAL acute distress and the ILLEGAL variety?

The second case concerns a young Jew, Mendlebaum. He was charged with using threatening behaviour at a Mosley meeting.

Mr. Malone, K.C., the magistrate, was told that: Mendlebaum, having been blown up twice during the war, had developed a neurosis.

Mr. Malone: "Hundreds of thousands of elderly women living in the worst parts of Bethnal Green, were blown to blazes in this war, and did not develop neurosis."

On being further told that Mendlebaum's parents were upset, Mr. Malone replied:—

"It is just this sort of brat whose parents are upset. He is much too well dressed and has as much grease on his hair as would grease the main armaments of a battleship."

We do not see why the magistrate assumes the functions of a fashion dictator.

The mixture of gross exaggeration and stupidity will be self-evident to our readers.

This phrase "much too well dressed" sounded familiar. We looked up our news clippings and found the following, dated 16.8.47:—

"TOO WELL DRESSED"

"A coloured man died in Johannesburg yesterday after alleging that he was severely beaten up by two Europeans who referred to his gloves and said he was too well dressed."

Daily Mirror.

And so we find that in the administration of the legal code, justice is silenced in favour of irrational prejudice and the interests of the State.

HITLERS' BANKERS AT

PRIESTLEY Work Again

and the Servile State

"It is the same Nightmare World"

Apparently Mr. J. B. Priestley, famous novelist, playwright and broadcaster, is becoming rather weary of the "New World" that his years of "socialistic" propagandising has helped to create.

The following quotations are taken from two articles titled "Cantankery" which have recently appeared in the "New Statesman and Nation."

Priestley, borrowing from the mythology of "Alice through the Looking-Glass", labels the men in power as "Tweedles" and discusses their behaviour.

"Remembering Dum and Dee, let us call these angry noisy characters, our men of power and their professional propagandists, the Tweedles. It does not matter much whether they are American soap manufacturers, Communist Party bosses, British trade union leaders; we can lump them together as Tweedles. And it is my contention that these people, for all their *Nohoe!* and *Contrarivise!* share a common outlook, a Tweedle view of this life. And the grim joke is that the rest of us, who pay—and how we pay—for the Tweedles, do not share this point of view . . . and this explains what secretly worries the Tweedles, namely, the lack of enthusiasm everywhere, the boredom that is creeping from Surbiton to San Francisco."

"The Tweedles are men of power. They do not shrink from but enjoy the exercise of power. And it is only in the Looking-Glass Wood that the ordinary citizen is making a choice between *Nohoe!* liberty and *Contrarivise!* slavery. In the real world he is simply being dictated to and controlled more and more by the Tweedles. The methods differ, but the broad results are the same. Elmer J. Tweedle, with his vast wealth, his newspapers and magazines, his radio programmes, neatly conditions his fellow countrymen from dawn until midnight. Comrade Tweedle issues directives, deciding everything from the size of families to the slow movements of symphonies. Even Sir Westminster Tweedle, though less blatant and impudent in his exercise of power than some of the others, is deciding every day how you and I shall live. Nor does he ask our opinion first. True, in 1950 we can vote for Lord Tweedle and banish Sir Westminster, but Lord Tweedle lives in the same world and will behave in the same fashion—or worse, like his friend Elmer J."

"They all see us slogging away in enormous factories, our heads wagging to *Music While You Work*, eating a flavourless hash and pep talks in the canteen; eager for a message from Elmer J. Tweedle or Comrade Tweedle or Sir Westminster Tweedle, congratulating us upon producing more rubbishy goods than ever. There is a tremendous quarrel among Tweedles to decide where the profits shall go and who shall have the large car and the best private office, but it is the same nightmare world whether it is called American free enterprise or the dictatorship of the proletariat, democratic socialism or a return to sound Tory common sense. . . . No wonder there are glum looks and sabotage in Moscow, nervous breakdowns in Detroit, and a demand for double whiskeys at any price in Manchester."

"All the fuss is really about mere colouring and labels, but the hideous style of life is always the same. The enormous factory, the canteen, the radio, the propaganda, the rubbishy goods, the boredom and stoniness, they will always be there. That is what is in store for us, no matter what flag has been hoisted."

"We do not know how much longer the 'New Statesman and Nation' will continue to publish Mr. Priestley's subversive opinions. If he continues in this strain we imagine that the presses of Fleet Street will seize up upon him. When this happens, the pages of 'Direct Action' will be open to Mr. Priestley for a further instalment of his 'Cantankery'."

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May Day Rally

400 people were present at an indoor May Day Rally, organised by the London Groups, A.F.B., and held on Sunday, May 2nd.

Delegate speaker from the Spanish Libertarian Movement and former Editor of the Madrid daily paper "C.N.T.", J. Garcia Pradas, spoke strongly on the subject of working class responsibility. To a sympathetic audience, he stressed the need for building fighting organisations capable of combatting the demagogues who are leading the peoples towards world conflict.

Prada brought out the menace to the working class inherent in totalitarian parties—whether of the Right or Left. Only by social and cultural self-development could the people finally rid themselves of power hungry leaders.

Ken Hawkes, for the A.F.B., drew a lesson from the declining recognition of May Day by the workers. This, he said, was an example of how Parliamentary activity, in the name of the class war, had betrayed that struggle. The ensuing apathy was allowing attacks upon workers' organisations all over the world to go unchallenged.

Following the speakers, and appropriate to the spirit of May Day, the International film "KAMFRADRSCHAFT" was shown. This well-known film, with dialogue in two languages, directed by G. W. Pabst, symbolises the identity of interests between the workers of all lands. Based on an actual occurrence, a mining disaster on the Franco-German border, it has long been acknowledged for its realism, technique and artistry, as a masterpiece of cinema.

The response of the large audience, both to the speakers and the film, was very heartening. May Day '48, provides us with a stimulus for future activities.

The German people certainly lost the war, though we cannot be so certain who won it. Whoever the winner the German cartel monopolists are entitled to be placed. After the German defeat of 1918 the cartelists came out on top under the Social Democrats and other democratic governments; under Hitler they reaped the harvest of re-armament, now under allied occupation they are coming out on top again.

In the American zone of Germany, General Lucien Clay, the U.S. administrator, recently issued an order that practically re-establishes the cartels and puts into positions of great power the leading German industrialists and monopolists, the men who financed Hitler in his climb to power.

The very men and organisations condemned by the Kilgore Senate Committee are busy again under U.S. protection given, not only in Germany but also in Washington. The special Senate committee presided over by Senator Kilgore had conducted an exhaustive enquiry into the German cartels. It showed how they had helped to bring about the second world war, their diabolic part in that war and their international connections with big business in America, France and Britain.

This re-establishment is very pleasing to American big business interests which will profit by the resumption of relations with their old business partners, but the lesser capitalists, who might have profited by the establishment of "free trade" in and to Germany are disturbed by the promise of international monopolies. Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney (Democratic Party) says:—

"Our programme in Germany has got to be an American enterprise based on our fundamental principles of free enterprise, and not a cartel and monopoly enterprise. Any attempt to compromise with the cartel system will be a denial of everything for which we fought and a repudiation of American policy."

What the Senator means by "American enterprise" and "free enterprise" is, of course, a free-for-all scramble with no holds barred and no interference by the referee. He evidently thinks that it was to protect the "free enterprise" that the war was fought and who would be bold enough to contradict a Senator?

Enter the Nazi Bankers

Under General Clay's sponsorship two notorious Nazis have just been given top jobs in Western Germany. The Western Allies have set up trizonal bank of the German states occupied by Britain, France and the U.S.A. President of the new bank is Herman Abs, the chairman is August Schniwind. Abs was a director of the Deutsche Bank, Schniwind a director of the Reichbank, both important links in the cartelist, Nazi chain.

It is less than a year ago that General Clay reported on the investigation into the cartels made by his commission. In that report Clay identified Herman Abs as the leader of the Deutsche Bank when it operated as "an economic arm of the Wehrmacht in exploiting the resources of occupied Europe."

The report went on to tell how Abs was responsible for the seizure of French and Belgian properties in Luxembourg, Czechoslovakia, Yugo-Slavia and Roumania on behalf of the Nazi leaders. His experience as a banker was invaluable to the Hitler gang in these plunder raids.

No one denies that Herman Abs during the war acted directly under and for the German Wehrmacht by seizing raw materials and machines, factories and labour and putting them to the task of making aircraft, tanks, guns and explosives for the Nazi war machine. It is this man, with his colleague Schniwind, who is selected for high office by the trizonal state bank under the wings of General Clay and Tripartite Allied Banking Commission. The mistake Goering made was in being a General instead of a banker—you can't hang a banker!

DIRECT ACTION

Monthly Organ of the Anarchist Federation of Britain.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES :
United Kingdom - 12 issues 3/-
U.S.A. - 12 issues 60 cents.

From :
Administration "Direct Action",
15, Parliament Hill, London, N.W.3.

Red and Black Notebook

ON DIRECT ACTION

A FEW readers ask us what we mean by Direct Action; to most the term is obvious. Let us begin by explaining the apostrophe—indirect action. Some action of capitalist society presses particularly hard upon the workers, and they wish to do something about it. The political parties, Labour, Communist, I.L.P. and others advise indirect action, asking someone else to do something about it, such as writing to "your M.P.", or "signing the petition", or waiting until the next general election and voting their set of politicians into jobs.

The Anarchist Federation, however, urges Direct Action, doing something yourself, directly and at once. Direct Action has usually come to mean strike action, not only the conventional strike method, but also the many novel and effective strike methods used by Syndicalists. But there are other methods of Direct Action, devised by the workers, each adapted to the situation of the day. I shall quote three of these which I have been witness. Of course, the Anarchist Federation did not invent the Direct Action method, that has grown out of the workers' struggle, while the A.F.B. expresses the general philosophy of Direct Action.

Safety First

Western Avenue, an arterial road running into West London, ending at Shepherds Bush, was in 1936 a death trap for children. Many drivers, particularly private motorists, claim that the possession of a motor car is sufficient right to knock down and maim or kill any pedestrian, man or child, who happens to be in the way. This is largely upheld by the law, administered by the car owning class, who usually name a small fine or caution for what would in other cases mean a long term in gaol or a short one on the gallows.

Children were the chief victims of speed or pleasure on Western Avenue, many had to cross

the road to get to school. There were "Belisha" crossings, but, sure of the sympathy of motoring magistrates, the road hogs tore over them at top speed when the children were attempting to cross. Petitions and deputations were tried without avail. Authority seemed little interested in the massacre of the innocents.

Local parents organised. They gathered children and neighbours and marched in solid column over the crossings, round and back again for hours each day. This was, for a little while, effective. Then road hogs began to charge the processions of parents and children on the "Safety Zone." Then some local young men replied. They laid on each side of the crossing well selected pieces of jagged scrap iron. The cars had to slow down to pick their way.

Some members of the residents' committee protested that the young men's action was illegal. It was, but from then onwards Western Avenue was safer and many young lives were saved.

A Dockers' Example

Dockers of New York remember how in 1941 patriotic capitalists were selling scrap iron and other means of war to Japan even within a few days of "Pearl Harbour." They remember, too, how these merchants called upon American workers to "fight the Japs."

Now the same game is being played with Russia. Munitions of war are being supplied to Stalin's war machine by American capital. But the merchants of death met a check in New York harbour recently. Dockers refused to load the Soviet ship "Russia" with war material. Although their action meant a heavy loss in wages to them they remembered the arming of other totalitarian powers by international capital.

Farewell to the Foreman

In a certain factory where the workers were on piece-work the foreman would sit for many days in his office "reorganising the shop"—on paper. Reams of paper were covered with squares and noughts and crosses. The shop steward once said to him: "It's rather like a game of chess, Mac." "Yes," replied the gaffer, "it is." "But you play chess with wooden men," replied the steward.

The result of the periodic reorganisations of the bone-head foreman was a heavy wage reduction

for the workers, who depended on the amount of work done for their wages, and irritation and discomfort in their work.

The orthodox way would have been to report the matter to the district office of the Union which might have set going the "machinery of negotiation" which usually takes six months, at least, to get to the source.

Instead of this, the workers met, elected their own "foreman", gave him full backing and went on with their work in their own way. Each gang worked its own way, individual workers fitted themselves in, and when co-ordination was needed between groups, the men's delegate was called in. In case of dispute he was the arbitrator. He was a middle-aged man, of good skill and experience, and held the respect of all. The foreman shouted and ordered and planned and threatened, but no one paid the slightest attention to him. For two years he remained a tragical-looking spectator.

I'm looking for Work

About 1925 the Tory Government spent much time thinking up schemes to annoy, pester and cut off from benefit the out-of-work. Their handiest weapon was the "Not Genuinely Seeking Work" Clause—N.G.S.W. Even in districts where every factory and every mine was closed, the unemployed had to prove they were looking for work or lose benefit. Then the Tories had another bright idea. The unemployed man could be called to a committee at any time and be called upon to furnish notes signed by factory foremen and managers witnessing that he had been asking for work every day for the previous two weeks. Most firms refused to give these notes, but the Labour Exchange Committees went on demanding them.

The Unemployed Organisation, of Gateshead, Co. Durham, found the answer. They marched a hundred or so, a banner and a drum and pipe band to a factory at 7.30 one morning. Packing banner, drums and pipes and all. "No work?—then give us notes certifying that." "One note?" "No, one each."

An hour later they straggled out and went on to the next factory. Next day more unemployed joined in. In less than a week about three hundred men were parading each day. Almost demoralised, factory managements begged the Regional Office of the Ministry of Labour to call it off. It was called off in the North East under the threat of spreading the marches. The wires hummed to Whitehall; the scheme was cancelled nationally, and peace reigned.

Libertarian Film Club

Formed in London

With the aim of giving London people an opportunity to see films of outstanding sociological and artistic importance—films which, because of their content, are usually withheld from public performance, the LIBERTARIAN FILM CLUB has been formed.

The Club will inaugurate its activity on Sunday, June 13th, when "Metropolis" and "L'Idée" will be shown at Denison House. "Metropolis", a classic of the silent screen, directed by Fritz Lang, has not had a public performance in this country for many years. It portrays a society in which the industrial workers have been reduced to the status of serfs to a managerial ruling class. The eventual revolt of the workers and the assertion of their individuality provides the climax to the film. The elaborate sets and superb camera work make this one of the great landmarks in cinema history. "L'Idée" a French cartoon, is banned from public showing in Britain, due to its devastating attack upon capitalist society. It shows the revolutionary idea attacked by the forces of the Church, the Military and the capitalists. But finally it is shown triumphing in the mind of men, because the idea is truth.

Films selected for future performance include: Bert Brecht's "Drei Groschen Oper" ("The Threepenny Opera"); never previously shown in Britain and banned from public performance; "He Who Gets Slapped" with Emil Jannings; Rene Clair's "Italian Straw Hat"; D. W. Griffith's "Birth of a Nation"; Eisenstein's "Battleship Potemkin"; early Chaplin's and outstanding documentaries.

Yearly membership of the Club, which includes notification of activities and other facilities, is 3/-. Apply to the Secretary, Fred Read, 10, Linden Gardens, London, W.2.

THE CZECHOSLOVAK ELECTIONS



"He's suspected of not voting for the Communists!"

Letters to the Editors

"FREEDOM"

Dear Comrades,

Our mutual friend G.C. has just sent me a letter enclosing the cutting from "Freedom" to which he replied in May, "Direct Action".

"Freedom" is NOT the earliest Anarchist paper. In 1881 John Most was prosecuted at the Old Bailey for an article in his "Freiheit" on the execution of Alexander of Russia. A committee of which I was chairman was formed for the defence and it issued a weekly paper in defiance, "The English Freiheit" which contained in the first number, a translation of the article for which Most suffered 16 months imprisonment, and was sold outside the Old Bailey while the trial was proceeding. It ran to 7 or 8 numbers and then succumbed for want of funds.

It is generally thought that Kropotkin first came to England in 1885. But that is not so. He first came in 1882. He met a few comrades at the Patriotic Club. I had a conversation with him and induced him to give a lecture at Stratford. He came with Tchaikovsky and we had a crowded meeting.

I received "Direct Action" and was much interested in Comrade Cores' note. I should like to send copies to friends who might be interested. Will you please send me half a dozen copies for that purpose.

I beg to send a small contribution towards "Direct Action" jointly with Comrade Ella Twynnam. She is one with me in sending greetings to all comrades.

With all best wishes,

Fraternally,

AMBROSE G. BARKER.

Walthamstow, E.
10th May, 1948.

* Comrade Barker here refers to Most's article "Endlich" (At Last!) exulting over the assassination of the tyrant, Czar Alexander the Second, by a group of nihilists. The article reached Bismark, who complained to the British Government.

The Crown indictment covered twelve points among them the encouragement of persons to assassinate the Kaiser, and all Sovereigns.

Comrade Editors,

I read with interest the letter of our old and trusted comrade George Cores in the May issue of "Direct Action". I am not at all astonished, as some are, that the proprietors of the paper "Freedom" claim to be running a journal founded by Kropotkin in 1886. I know these people.

The paper, the original "Freedom" was published by the London Freedom Group, but the paper, unfortunately went out of existence finally some years before the war. In October, 1939, I with three others founded the paper "War Commentary". It was then clearly understood that the paper should be non-profit making and non-job finding. After the war ended in 1945, this six

year old paper took the title "Freedom Through Anarchism", later still "Freedom".

When the new title was being discussed one of the sponsors met the objection, "But if we call it 'Freedom' people will confuse us with the London Freedom Group, and the old paper 'Freedom', with this answer: 'Freedom' has been too long out of existence for that to happen."

Now its proprietors evidently claim to be the old original founded in 1886 and still going strong. When readers consider that this sort of skulduggery began happening every day they will understand better how I came to be disassociated with the paper.

Yours fraternally,

TOM BROWN

Greetings from Germany

Dear Comrades,

Your newspapers "Direct Action" arrived here today, I thank you very much for them in the name of my comrades, who will enjoy reading them. As I have told you already, we are tied hands and feet in this country to express our thoughts freely, they do their best to keep us down but they will fail. No, we shall go forward for Libertarian Socialism. And our movement grows, the ice is broken thanks to the help of our comrades of England and France. I hope to see the day when we can speak in another language to our masters than today.

I am glad that you will have in your May Day Rally the International film "Kameradschaft." Such a film is the thing that the workers, and for that matter, everybody, should see.

It depends on us whether this world will be saved from destruction or not, all the others are bankrupt, therefore, let us fight with all our might, the aim is worth the fight. But we can only put up a good and winning fight when we fight on an international scale, therefore, hands across the seas and borders for a new society, peace, and the welfare of mankind.

Yours for this aim,

WILLY F.

Wuppertal, Germany, 19 April, 1948.

And from California

Fellow Workers,

Well the heat has been turned on full steam ahead. The ruling clique and Uncle Shyster are talking peace to chloroform us, the workers, but are scheming to bring about another blood bath of the workers. Radio has reported submarines seen off U.S. shores, but we know that it is a lie. The big howl now is Universal Military Training and also to revive the Draft and on top of these two measures there is talk of Industrial Mobilisation, which means the straight-jacket for labour. Bernard Baruch, the big Wall Street tycoon is out in the spotlight again. He is one of the guiding stars of American policy and diplomacy, and is behind the Industrial Mobilisation Scheme. It's his baby, Industrial Mobilisation.

The A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. fakirs are 100 per cent, behind the war conspiracy now being hatched in Washington, D.C. I see an article in March issue of "Direct Action" about Atomic Insanity. Send me a couple of the pamphlets if you have any.

Hope this finds you and all fellow-workers O.K.

California, U.S.A.

A.S.

Towards the Free Society (vi)

THE FREE COMMUNE

IN the preceding articles in this series we have touched only on the question of industrial and agricultural organisation, now we pass on to the fully social structure, the Free Commune.

Today we have Municipal Councils, and the point that these are elected, and that they regulate certain questions touching public life, the less enquiring mind can receive the impression that these are the true expression of the popular will. Also, the council seems to enjoy a certain independence in its rapports with the State—but this independence is really illusory, and fictitious.

In effect the municipality is elected by the population (and it seems hardly necessary to define that it only touches a small section of the population), it is nevertheless true that the State, by means of the authority accorded to the local government officials exercises the most absolute control over the smallest, and most sparsely occupied areas. Local independence is purely fictitious. It is against this fictitious independence that we put the real independence of the commune.

How the Commune Will Arise

Once a successful revolution has destroyed the State, and having done away with the organisms which are an expression of the State—the commune will be organised outside of all central power and control. The commune must arise as a direct act of the people themselves, it must be in conformity with the desires of the people who live in it.

Naturally, it is to be expected that the types of commune that would arise will differ immensely, a local commune in London would have an entirely different organisation to an agrarian commune; a commune in a heavily industrialised town would be considerably different to one in a seaside town with fishing as its main local production effort. For clarity of expression by the inhabitants of a large town it will be necessary to avoid having a commune too large, too densely populated. In a large town there would obviously arise many communes which, by means of their delegates, would constitute an inter-communal council which would handle questions of interest to all the communes of the agglomeration. (For example: transport, lighting, sewage, drainage, distribution, etc., etc.).

Periodically, the whole population would assemble to elect its representatives to form a communal council, which would carry out the functions for a limited period only. All, young and old, men and women, would have the right, indeed the moral duty, to participate in these elections. The inhabitants, furthermore, would be able to convene the council to discuss urgent and necessary questions, or for any necessary recalling of members of the council.

Organisation

Always following the same federal principles that govern the constitution of co-operatives and syndicate councils, the representatives of the communal councils will constitute, in the same region, the Regional Federation of Communes. This, to facilitate its rapports with production,

should be limited to the area of the Regional Federation of Production. Then, in their turn, the Regional Federations will, constitute, by means of delegates, the Inter-Regional Council of Communes, which will cover the whole territory.

This communal federalism represents an organisational, and representational, method completely outside of any State form. The public will be the absolute master of all the public services that it uses. It is, in effect, by means of the commune, users' associations and consumers' associations, that the people will be able to make their needs known, and to satisfy these needs.

For all questions within the bounds of the commune (housing, streets and high-

U.S. Labour Trends

Reports indicate a profound change in American labour-capital relations.

For many years the workers have been on the offensive, securing through their Union channels certain wage increases. These the employers have compensated themselves over by raising the prices of their goods.

But the upward trend of wages and prices which leads to the dangers of inflation has now reached its zenith. The employers are now using a new tactic. Instead of offering a wage increase, they are proposing a cut in the price of goods. This manoeuvre has put the Unions in a cleft stick, for if they strike against the idea, they will lose public support, whereas if they accept it they will lose the support of their members. And the bosses are sticking to their guns.

The new capitalist offensive was launched by America's most important industry—STEEL. The steel kings have broken off negotiations for wage increases. The example was immediately followed by the electric combines, while the Chrysler organisation has withdrawn their 6% wage increase offer.

The Taft-Hartley Labour Act, by resort to methods of injunction has also weakened the legal position of the workers' organisations.

The Union bosses can still remember the grim days of 1920-33, when many of the larger Unions—including John L. Lewis's United Mineworkers' Federation—almost disappeared.

Pamphlet Reviews

From America we have received copies of two pamphlets, both of which we can recommend to our readers. The first is for the more advanced student—"LENIN AS PHILOSOPHER" by 153 West 21st Street, New York, 11, price one dollar. This is a deep study and critique, and very well written, although I must admit that I found it somewhat heavy going in places.

The second is "JOHN L. LEWIS EXPOSED" written by Eric Hass, and obtainable for the modest sum of ten cents, from the New York Labour News Co., P.O. Box No. 1076, City Hall Station, New York City. Anarchists will certainly not agree with all that Hass says, nonetheless much useful information on American labour organisations is to be found in this work.

B.M.

WISE and OTHERWISE

Closer working arrangements among the police forces of Europe will be part of the political and economic unity envisaged by the Hague Congress, which has just concluded.

Coppers of the World Unite, you have nothing to lose but your brains!

Observed in Piccadilly—(May 8):—The local "boys" neatly sabotaged military police attempts to arrest a suspected deserter. Final word from the "boys" to the "cops"—"We'll have to DO you."

"I certainly would be glad to SEE some form of whipping."—(Lord Saltoun—Criminal Justice Bill debate, House of Lords).

Public spirited?—or just a sadist?

From Buenos Aires we learn that the boycott organised by the FORA on Spanish ships in the Argentine, is progressing in a satisfactory manner, and is spreading over the whole country.

We don't recognize national limits—but we would settle on "world boycott" as EMINENTLY satisfactory.

For many months readers of the tabloid press have been steadily dosed with pictures of royal dresses—at the same time being fed touching notes on how hard it is for the Royal Family to pull along on the same Ration Books as you and I. Yet one Sunday (10.5.48) paper remarked, en passant:—

"Princess Elizabeth has bought three new outfits for her Paris visit this week. One is an ensemble in white silk, patterned in blue and black, which she will wear when she arrives in an open carriage."

Three new looks on ONE CLOTHING BOOK?

Princess Margaret has announced her intention to joining in the battle for the coveted title of "Best Dressed Woman of the World". Others who have held the title spent approximately £15,000 to £20,000 annually on this racket. Does the Princess intend us to believe that this too is to be accomplished on ONE CLOTHING BOOK? SCORPION

Papers Received

U.S.A.: "Industrial Worker," "Resistance," "Baptist Bulletin," "Diels Trade," "Cultural Proletarian," "L'Adunata dei Retrattori," "Freie Arbeiter Stimme." AUSTRALIA: "Workers Councils," "Socialist Comment," "INDIA: "Indian Socialist." FRANCE: "Le Libertaire," "Le Combat Syndicaliste," "L'Unique," "Solidaridad Obrera," "C.N.T.," "Ruta." ITALY: "Umanita Nuova," "Il Libertario," "Era Nuova" (Turin), "Era Nuova" (Palermo). AUSTRIA: "Le Neue Generation," "Freie Welt," "GERMANY: "Der Freie Sozialist," "Die Gilde," "Jugendfederation." HOLLAND: "Socialisme en Onderop," "De Vrije Arbeider." BELGIUM: "Pensee et Action." NORWAY: "Solidaritet." SWEDEN: "Brödd," "IWMA Press Service," "Syndikalisterna," "Metall-Syndikalisterna." ARGENTINE: "Accion Libertaria," "El Obrero Calderero," "La Obra," "De Pie." MEXICO: "Solidaridad Obrera," "Tierra y Libertad," "Regeneracion." CUBA: "Solidaridad." NORTH AFRICA: "Solidaridad Obrera." PERU: "Le Proletaria." BRAZIL: "A Plebe." SWITZERLAND: "Le Reveil Anarchiste." BRITAIN: "The Word," "C.A.M. Bulletin," "FRANCE: "Universo."

LIBERTARIAN FILM CLUB
SUNDAY, 13th JUNE at 6.50 p.m.
A Classic of International Cinema
"METROPOLIS"
Directed by FRITZ LANG
AND
The Unique Cartoon
"L'IDEE"
Banned from the British Screen for its Revolutionary Implications
At DENISON HOUSE, Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W.1
(Two minutes from Victoria Station)
Admission 2/- (Includes Provisional Membership)

Rudolf Rocker
75th Birthday Meeting
Recognition was given to the activities and writings of Rudolph Rocker when London comrades met on May the 23rd, the occasion of his 75th birthday. The meeting was organised by the Freie Arbeiter Stimme group.
Passing of an Old Comrade
We regret to note the passing from our ranks of our late Comrade F. C. Davies, of Fulham, aged 73, who died on April 26, 1948.
He had been a sufferer from an internal complaint for a very long time, and spent over two and a half years in hospital previous to his death. Hence younger comrades were not personally acquainted with him. But he became converted with the movement in 1908, and ever since has been one of its most loyal members. He lies in Fulham Cemetery. G.S.

LITERATURE
We have received a limited number of copies from Modern Publishers, Indore, India, of:
"GOD AND THE STATE"
By Michael Sakunin 1/6, post 3d.
"ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM"
By Rudolf Rocker 2/6, post 4d.
By TOM BROWN
BRITISH GENERAL STRIKE 2d. (post 1d.)
SOCIAL GENERAL STRIKE 2d. (post 1d.)
By GUY A. ALDRED
AT GRIPS WITH WAR 1/6 (post 2d.)
From: "Direct Action" Administration, 15, Parliament Hill, London, N.W.3.
Published by "Direct Action" Administration, 15, Parliament Hill, London, N.W.3, and printed by C. A. Brock & Co. Ltd., (T.U.), 79, Southern Row, London, W.10.