

IRELAND

# THE BIG TREK

THE DEPOPULATION of the Republic of Ireland continues rapidly, some Irish seeking work in Northern Ireland (British) and Scotland, but most in England. Many Irish villages are becoming ghost towns with few other than old people left, while in the main streets of London's Kilburn or Camden Town almost the whole population of a village may meet on Saturday afternoons. This has been going on since five or six years after "independence" came in 1922, but the post-war immigration is the greatest since that of the 19th century.

While the sturdy labourers from the Emerald Isle may be solving the labour problem of British oil, building and civil engineering, each happy exile aggravates the troubles of the land he loves in song on Saturday night, for it is youth and middle-aged who leave, crowds of 18- and even 16-year-olds packing the boats, the very young and very old remaining. During the "Great Trouble" of the second decade of this century, Sinn Fein forbade emigration, painting a dark picture of what would happen to any innocent emigrant among the vindictive Anglo-Saxons. Sinn Fein and the I.R.A. met with some success in this propaganda until the thirties, but since the war the steady immigration of those years has become a rush.

Perhaps this tendency is the cause of the false image of "little Ireland and big England". In area, Ireland is about 65 per cent the size of England, 32,408 square miles against 50,337 square miles, but in population whereas England and Wales now have a total of 43,500,000 against the 4,270,000 of geographical Ireland and, in 1956, the 2,898,000 of the Republic, Ireland once had a larger population than England. Ireland's population, like that of most countries, once remained stable, births about equalling deaths, around the figure of 8,000,000.

In 1670 the estimated population of England was 5,773,000 and in 1750, 6,517,000. By 1811 the people of England and Wales numbered 10,164,000 and in 1831, 13,896,000. In that year the population of Ireland remained steady at 7,767,000 and in 1841, 8,175,000.

The potato famine of the 1840s is still blamed for the depopulation of Ireland, and Mr. W. A. Honohan, of the Department of Social Welfare, Dublin, repeated this statement as recently as November. But the potato famine happened nearly 120 years ago and the Republic is still losing its people, although across the border Northern Ireland shows small gains in population.

Why does labour flow out of Ireland in this steady stream, despite the warnings of its nationalists that you cannot have a nation without a people? To seek work, certainly, but the candid Irishman will often admit that he has left a job in Ireland to escape the rule of

the Catholic priesthood. Ireland is one of the few—and perhaps the most—theocratic countries left in the 20th century. This sacerdotal overlordship is felt not only in the irritating moral and ecclesiastical supervision of the daily round of village life, but even in the seat of government. Since the Irish Free State was formed in 1922, there has not been an Irish government which dared to pit its will against the bishops.

Ten years ago the Irish Government decided to submit to the Dail (Parliament) a number of Bills meant to give the country a health service and health laws similar to those of other West European countries and appointed Dr. John Brown to study and frame Bills to that end.

Dr. Brown framed a mild National Health Bill, which was bitterly attacked by the Church, followed by a Clean Food Bill, against which a bishop led the attack. The Irish Government bowed and Dr. Brown went.

Little is being done to develop industry and the education and other social institutions which a modern society needs. The Catholic Church is determined to keep its grip on education, even more than on the hospitals.

While industry languishes and the people drift to other shores, one might be surprised to find a land problem in the Emerald Isle, yet such is the case. Something like a land war has been going on for more than 30 years. Ireland has a Land Commission, but the small farmers and landless labourers say it cares little for their needs. When a big estate—and there are many in Ireland—is for sale, the land-hungry workers ask the Commission to buy the land, divide it into small farms and sell it to working farmers. It often happens that the Commission does not do this and the big estate goes to an "outsider", someone from another part of the country.

Then the row starts, the new farmer and his family are boycotted (the term "boycott" originated here in a historic land war) and even suffer violence. His cattle are driven off, his fences torn down, his ricks fired and he is prevented from getting his produce to market. Bombs have been used to damage machinery and farmhouses destroyed. Even rifle fire is used. The Press reports one case near Banagher, where local farmers, running cattle off a farm, were attacked by police. A battle followed and five men were arrested. They were rescued by 40 of their fellows. There seems little prospect of an end to this land war.

Ireland's class war, however, is not limited to farming. Ulster has long been a stronghold of trade unionism, with a tradition of militant strike action, especially in the shipyards, and even the Republic has its industrial struggles.

But politics and religion divide the workers of Ireland. The North are afraid of coming under the rule of the Roman Catholic Republic, suffering religious and political persecution and losing their higher standard of living. The people of the Republic dream of gaining the "Six Counties" and often attribute all their troubles and problems to the loss of this region. So are the workers of Ireland divided. For them the economic and social problem should come first. To unite in one struggle of wages and hours and other economic questions, as do the workers of England, Wales and Scotland, will bring not only immediate material benefits, but aid the solution of many other problems.

**GREECE**—On Jan. 22 a security committee in Athens rejected the appeal of George Stergiou against the Government's decision to deport him to the island of Ayios Evstratios because of his alleged contacts with the outlawed Communist Party. Greek and foreign trade unions and the Greek Liberal Party, as well as the fellow-travelling opposition party E.D.A., of which he is an executive member, have protested against the exiling of this 55-year-old veteran trade unionist, who is suffering from tuberculosis.

**JAPAN**—There were 38 deaths during 1959 in the hospital for victims of the 1945 Hiroshima atomic bomb attack, eight more than in 1958. Twelve were due to leukaemia, 11 to liver complaints, 11 to anaemia and four to lung cancer.

**INDONESIA**—On Jan. 12 President Sukarno assumed full dictatorial powers over his "guided democracy". Any party which advocates changing the aims and principles of the National Front led by himself may be dissolved by decree. He has already declared his intention of abolishing "insignificant" political parties. Members of the People's Congress, which is to consist partly of nominated representatives of "functional groups", may be dismissed for the same reasons. Elected members may be replaced with his own nominees if he is dissatisfied with them. There were two further suspensions of newspapers on Jan. 30, and on Feb. 1 a news agency was closed by the Jakarta military command. On Feb. 18 it was announced that newsprint would not be supplied to newspapers which did not support President Sukarno's political manifesto.

**SINGAPORE**—Announcing that the civil defence organisation was to be disbanded on Mar. 1, the Ministry of Home Affairs said that the administration staff would be used to organise a "workers' brigade" of 5,000 unemployed on quasi-military lines.

# WORLD LABOUR NEWS

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## Industrial action can make it a real boycott

**"You must not think we are arming against an external enemy. We are not. We are arming in order to shoot down the black masses."**

F. C. ERASMUS, now Minister of Justice in South Africa, on leaving the Ministry of Defence, at a meeting of Army officers in Cape Town, December 1959.

THE movement launched by the South African National Congress and the Liberal Party of South Africa last summer for the world-wide boycott of South African goods as a protest against apartheid is intended to be fully effective in Britain for the month of March, though it is hoped people will continue to observe it afterwards.

Its opponents include Sir Oswald Mosley, who has threatened to mobilise his Fascist brigades if shops offering South African goods for sale are picketed; the Right Hon. Harold Macmillan, who, speaking to the South African Parliament, implied that the boycott campaign amounted to an attempt "to impose a stifling uniformity" (unlike apartheid, of course); Sir de Villiers Graaf, leader of the opposition United Party of South Africa, which preaches segregation but not apartheid, and includes the majority of the country's business men, who commented with typical sickening cant: "South Africans will consider this action incompatible with a proper regard for individual rights"; and British chambers of commerce, notably Liverpool, whose Labour-controlled council started a rumpus by instructing all committees and corporation departments not to buy South African goods until further notice. Leeds and Newcastle are among those to follow the lead of Liverpool. There are Liberals and a few Tories among the supporters of the boycott, as well as Labour Party members.

In 1958, latest year for which full figures are available, South Africa imported £186 million worth of British goods, while her exports to the United Kingdom earned her £91 million. Of this figure, it is estimated that about £6 million worth of goods would be affected by a one-month boycott, if 100 per cent effective.

The biggest item of consumer goods imported by Britain from South Africa in 1958 was fruit and vegetables: £32,578,728. This figure represented 70 per cent of South Africa's total export of these commodities.

Unfortunately, there is little chance of the boycott being 100 per cent effective. When the I.C.F.T.U. called on its affiliated unions, with 50 million members, to support a world-wide boycott, they recommended industrial action by dockers and transport workers to prevent unloading and delivery of South African goods. This embarrassing suggestion for really effective action was hastily buried by the British T.U.C. The National Council of Labour, on which the T.U.C., Labour Party and Co-operative Union are represented, called on the people of Britain "to abstain as individuals from the purchase of South African goods during the month of March".

The leaders of the Co-operative Union were so half-hearted that they successfully opposed any mention of picketing in the resolution, then recommended their 1,000 affiliated societies with 12 million members "not to respond to approaches for excluding South African goods from stock and to prevent Co-operative shops from becoming points of controversy in the boycott". They even used the hypocritical argument of the opponents of the boycott that "it would injure the native peoples".

Their real motives are revealed by a circular declaring: "Societies should not put themselves in the invidious position of responding to boycott pressure in circumstances where the bulk of the membership would be so indifferent as to purchase their requirements from other traders."

The same point is made by G. F. Dutch, J.P., C.C., President of the London Co-operative Society, which has 1,288,000 members: "It would be not only morally wrong but from a trading standpoint most ill-advised to deliberately outrage the feelings of any considerable minority section."

In short, for all the socialist principles for which they supposedly

stand, "business is business"—a tragic monument to all who believe capitalism can be operated in a socialist way.

Fortunately, not all Co-operative societies feel that way. Manchester and Salford Society, with 130,000 members, decided to withdraw all South African goods from their shops from January 11, and some other societies have followed their lead, including the South Suburban Society, the world's fourth largest. The Royal Arsenal Co-op is among those which have decided not to take part. Leeds Industrial Co-operative Society, Tory-controlled, is actually boosting sales of South African goods as a matter of policy and

Here is a list of some of the commodities exported in large quantities by South Africa:

**TINNED GOODS:** Koo, Domingo, Ashton's, Kloof, LKB, Hugo's, Golden Glory, Surf Maid, Red Robin, Magnet, Paarl Choice, Gold Reef, Zyp Products, Benedict, Wolfely Pride, Summit, Helen MacGregor, Beulah's, Juno, RFF, Hamlet, Silver Leaf, IXL, "G", Rare Dew, Golden Cuckoo, LE, Sir Montagu, Southern Pride, Western Pride, Ceramin, Divec, Tuna Corporation of Africa Products.

**GROCERIES:** B-aganza tea, Senator coffee, Barry dried fruit.

**FRESH FRUIT:** "Outspan" oranges; "Cape" apples, grapes, pineapples, Avocado pears and onions.

**WINES AND SPIRITS:** Rembrandt Brandy, Richelieu Brandy, J.V.R. Brandy, Oudemeester Brandy, Alto Rouge Red Wine, Thenniskraal Dry White Wine, La Residence Sparkling Wine, Grumberger Stein.

**CIGARETTES:** Lexington, Consulate.

one wonders how many Co-ops are among shops deliberately misleading customers by marking goods "Commonwealth" or "Empire", instead of "South African".

The boycott is receiving spirited support from students at Oxford, Cambridge, London and other universities. Representatives of 48,000 Notts miners have promised to do whatever they can to ensure its success.

Even limited to a consumer boycott, it has value as a symbol of solidarity with the oppressed races of South Africa, but it would be foolish to overestimate the effect of propaganda (and as a consumer boycott it may be little more) on the arid minds of people who think of themselves as a master race. A full-scale industrial boycott is necessary to show them racial discrimination literally does not pay. Perhaps British dockers, with their splendid record of international solidarity, will help their African brothers by direct action, despite the lukewarm attitude of the union bosses. As Gertrude Stein might have said, "A boycott is a boycott is a boycott."

### BRITAIN

## Clerks win sit-down

IT IS GOOD to hear of office workers taking direct action. Too often we find factory clerks receiving a much smaller wage than the manual workers and being put off by the title of "staff" and "salaried workers", an extra week's wages at Christmas and a special canteen, uncontaminated by the *hoi-polloi*, who may well be eating bigger dinners. But recent years have seen the increasing tendency of office workers to use the well-tried methods of their fellows of the hammer.

At the Rootes car factories in Coventry, 500 clerks staged a prolonged stay-in strike and, in January, won wage increases—as much as £1 13s. 6d. for men and £1 2s. 6d. for women. The stay-in tactic, an old Syndicalist method, is very important to an office strike, ensuring that no scabbing takes place on a job that does not have a long tradition of solidarity.

## Literature

"Direct Action" pamphlets:—

<b>WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE UNIONS?</b>	by Tom Brown	5d.
<b>THE HUNGARIAN WORKERS' REVOLUTION</b>		6d.
<b>NATIONALISATION AND THE NEW BOSS CLASS</b>	by Tom Brown	6d.
<b>WORKERS' CONTROL</b>		6d.
<b>HOW LABOUR GOVERNED, 1945-1951</b>		8d.
<b>THE BRITISH GENERAL STRIKE</b> (now reprinting)	by Tom Brown	5d.
<b>ETHICS AND AMERICAN UNIONISM</b>	by Sam Weiner	8d.
<b>THE SOCIAL GENERAL STRIKE</b>	by Tom Brown	4d.
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<b>MICHAEL BAKUNIN AND KARL MARX</b>	by K. J. Kenafick	4s. 6d.
<b>THE LONDON YEARS</b> (autobiography)	by Rudolf Rocker	25s. 0d.
<b>INDUSTRIAL WORKER</b>	(fortnightly organ of the IWW)	4d.
<b>SOLIDARIDAD OBRERA and CNT</b>	(weekly organs of the Spanish CNT)	6d.
<b>VIEWS AND COMMENTS</b>	(organ of the Libertarian League, U.S.)	8d.

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## SPAIN

## Syndicalist guerillas shot

FIVE SYNDICALIST militants of the underground anti-Franco resistance movement were killed in clashes with Civil Guards in Catalonia during the first week of January. Among them was Francisco Sabater, popularly known as El Quico, one of the best known and best loved of all Spain's heroic guerrilla fighters.

The others were Antonio Miracle, formerly a member of the group who published the clandestine CNT paper, *Solidaridad Obrera*, in Barcelona, and three young comrades—Ruiz, Madrigal and Conesa—who had been living at Lyons, in France. Miracle had been at Clermont-Ferrand for two years, since escaping from Spain on release from jail.

Sabater, 45, was born in Barcelona and joined the CNT when he was 16. During the Civil War he and his two brothers commanded a section of the Syndicalist militias. For him the anti-Franco struggle did not end with military defeat in 1939 and, from exile in France, where he rejoined the CNT, he and others continued the struggle by armed raids on the Fascists from across the Pyrenean frontier, some of which carried them deep into Spanish territory, where they were sure of support from the workers and peasants. One of his brothers was shot dead by the Barcelona police in 1950 and the other executed, as a member of the Catalan maquis, in the same year.

According to Press reports, Sabater and his four companions crossed the frontier on the last of their raids on December 24 last and on January 4 were besieged in a farmhouse at Bañolas by Civil Guards. In the ensuing battle, the police chief was killed and one of the guards wounded, but Miracle, Ruiz, Madrigal and Conesa were all shot dead. Sabater, wounded, escaped to Fornells, commandeered a train and ordered the driver to take it to Barcelona. At San Celoni he left the train, was trapped by Civil Guards and killed.

*Solidaridad Obrera*, of Paris, commented: "We cannot hide our emotion at the death of this selfless man. Despite the hatred, rancour and resentment felt towards him by the authorities, the police and the Civil Guard, they had to recognise that this guerillero always attacked them face to face, not for any personal profit, not out of any desire for adventure, but simply for an ideal, because for him the cease-fire of April 1, 1939, did not end the struggle against Fascism."

A relief fund for the families of the five Syndicalists has been launched by the CNT's North Regional Committee, 24 rue St. Marthe, Paris X.

## PORTUGAL

## The silent dictatorship

LISBON—The PIDE (Gestapo) is the power that controls "justice" in Portugal. We believe that this body (which is a dictatorship within the dictatorship) would imprison Salazar himself if he relaxed his totalitarian form of government.

The director of the PIDE, Capt. Neves Graça, has organised specialist courses in the Technical School of International Police here. The school admits men and vomits forth monsters.

The authorities have confiscated "Cadernos do Meio Dia" of Faro, "Coordenada" and "Convívio", both of Oporto, and two books of poems by Egito Gonçalves, *O Vagabundo Deceitado* and *Viagem com o teu rosto*. Confiscations of mail have reached fantastic proportions. Since General Delgado sought refuge in Brazil, correspondence with abroad is continually intercepted.

The police within the post office do not always operate in the same way. In some cases they have arrested or threatened addressees of mail containing unfavourable allusions to the dictatorship; in others the mail is returned without the addressee's knowledge. Such was the case with several registered packets coming from Brazil: No. 13,348, for containing *O Malhete*, a Masonic paper; No. 1,079, for containing Anarchist papers, among them *La Protesta*, *Acção Direta*, *Tierra y Libertad* and *CNT* (these were returned with the stamped inscription: "Circulation forbidden"); No. 9,807, for containing the bourgeois paper, *Diário de Notícias*, of Rio de Janeiro.

From a study of wages by Dr. Maria Manuela Silva, it emerges that a fifth of the industrial working class in Portugal, 177,028 persons, are below the subsistence level.

## CNT.

A Lisbon court has sentenced 13 persons accused of forming part of a secret and illegal society between 1956 and 1957. The sentences ranged from 18 months to two years and eight months. *The Times*, 23.12.59.

Ten Communists, including the Portuguese party secretary, Alvaro

Cunhal, are reported to have escaped from the prison of Peniche. . . . Cunhal was arrested in 1949 and at his trial the following year was sentenced to four and a half years' imprisonment . . . under the terms of his sentence he was to be handed over to the security authorities at the end of his sentence. *The Times*, 5.1.60.

A Lisbon court has sentenced five persons accused of forming part of an illegal secret society, whose aims, it was alleged, were to destroy or alter the present Constitution. *The Times*, 11.1.60.

An Oporto tribunal has sentenced Dr. Pedro Diaz, Jnr., a 44-year-old teacher accused of conspiracy against the security of the State, to two years' imprisonment and suspension of political rights for 15 years. *The Times*, 14.1.60.

Seven persons accused of subversive propaganda have been sentenced here to terms of imprisonment ranging from eight months to two years, with loss of political rights. *The Times*, 23.1.60.

A Lisbon court has sentenced two persons accused of subversive propaganda to two years' and 22 months' imprisonment respectively and loss of political rights for 15 and five years respectively. *The Times*, 1.2.60.

A Lisbon plenary criminal court has sentenced seven Portuguese employees of the British-owned Lisbon Tramways Company. They were accused of being members of a secret and illegal organisation and of subversive propaganda, distribution of leaflets and canvassing of funds with intent to alter the Constitution and form of government. They were sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from two years and three months to 15 months, and suspension of political rights for 15 to four years. *The Times*, 9.2.60.

The Oporto court has sentenced a man to 18 months' imprisonment and suspension of political rights for five years for fomenting a strike. *The Times*, 11.2.60.

ALGERIA—The report of the International Red Cross team on conditions in camps, prisons and transit centres where Algerian rebels and suspects are held, extracts from which were published unofficially on Jan. 4 by French newspapers, confirmed that torture is still used in Algeria. Conditions in a third of the 82 camps and other places visited were described as bad. The report said that in some camps prisoners had been chained up at night. Cases of prisoners under interrogation having been subjected to the water and electricity treatment were mentioned, and a doctor who examined some who said they had been tortured found the allegations to be "unfortunately conclusive".

The existence of an army school teaching "clean" and "humane" methods of torture was alleged in the Roman Catholic newspaper *Temoignage Chrétien* in December. M. Guillaumat, Minister for the Army, denied the charges, but the school concerned was closed without any reasons being given.

The horrifying conditions in many of the 1,500 "regroupment camps" run by the French army for Muslim refugees from combat zones also received publicity in December through the Christmas SOS appeal from three French relief organisations. Some 1,500,000 Algerians, 60 per cent of them children, live in these camps. Children dying of hunger and others with malaria, shivering with fever on the ground, without blankets or quinine, were seen by Pastor Beaumont, director of the Protestant evacuee committee, and according to Mgr. Rodhaim, secretary general of Secours Catholique, some children were kept alive only by lumps of sugar left over after coffee had been served in army messes.

## IWMA world call

THE TENTH CONGRESS of the International Working Men's Association (Toulouse, September, 1958) agreed to support the formation of "Groups of Friends of the IWMA" in all countries where sections have not yet been set up, with the aim of gaining sympathy for our International and of spreading its principles and propaganda as widely as possible.

We hope that you will interest yourselves, in each country where there is still no section of the IWMA, in forming one or several groupings of "Friends of the IWMA" and of seeking to win over, if only through moral support, sympathisers in each locality.

A group can be formed by five, ten or more members. It will give you the chance to maintain regular contact with the IWMA and of being in touch with the affairs of the international movement.

We address ourselves especially to comrades and sympathisers in Africa, Asia, Australia and the Americas, Uruguay and Argentina excepted.

It is desirable that "Groups of Friends of the IWMA" should keep close contact between themselves in each country and they will receive our Press, propaganda and news of other countries through the international secretariat.

All interested in this proposal should write to the IWMA Secretariat (AIT-CNT), 4 rue Belfort, Toulouse (H.G.), France.

## BRITISH RAILWAYS—THE FIGHT GOES ON

RAILWAYS are an absolute necessity to modern society, despite the growth of road transport, as even a one-day strike shows, and public transport moves most of the country's goods and passengers. But social transport, like most of life's prime necessities, is forced into much less than second place to the flashy commodities deemed the only things worth consideration in our acquisitive society.

Even the Press and radio have been unable to deny the justice of the British railmen's claims. Indeed, B.B.C. Television, in "Panorama" a few weeks ago, gave a skilful and fair round-up on the subject of the railmen's complaints. Interviewing of rail workers, drivers, clerks and platelayers was well done, despite a few inane questions such as: "How long have you worked on the railways?" "Forty-four years." "Have you ever thought of leaving the railways?" The interrogation did, however, show that thousands of railmen were working for less than £8 a week and thousands of others, with very responsible jobs, had £9 or less.

"Panorama" also interviewed men who had left the railways to work on road transport, in the Post Office and in factories, all for higher wages, without any greater skill or responsibility—the unanswerable argument of the permanent strike!

One elderly engine-driver, when asked his opinion on the cause of the railways' troubles, went right to the heart of the matter. The railways, while being a social service and a social need, are yet subjected to unfair competition from road transport, a competition subsidised by tax- and ratepayers.

It is true, of course, that road-users pay taxes, but so does everyone—smokers, drinkers, buyers of household goods and music-lovers. These, however, do not expect the money to be spent directly on the satisfaction of their particular appetites; they know it goes for warships, schools, hospitals, public relief, police and a thousand other things.

The lying propaganda of wealthy motoring organisations attempts to create the idea that all roads, and a lot more besides, are paid for by motorists. Their alleged statistics are completely false. More than 90 per cent of roads and streets are built on land forcibly donated by house and building owners, who also paid for the making of the road. Ratepayers pay for the maintenance of roads, too. Ligning, drainage and cleansing are paid for by ratepayers. Sign-posting, traffic lights and other street furniture needed by road transport are charged to the ratepayer and, of course, the man with a rent-book.

The police—and at least half of police costs are devoted to road traffic and parking—are paid about 50-50 by taxpayer and ratepayer. Above all, the enormous cost of the thousands of killed and wounded in our streets falls in heavy part on public funds.

All these things on the railways have to be met by the railways themselves, in competition with road transport.

Transport, of goods and passengers, in modern society cries out for socialisation. In a complex and delicate social and economic relationship, transport—society's veins and arteries—should be integrated and the functions of its separate parts defined. At present the ruling class, biased by their own selfishness, encourage the individual to act, in this highly complex society, as though he were Robinson Crusoe alone on his own little island. Today "No man is an island"—not even a traffic island.

Lack of capital also hampers the proper development of railways, for capital is now attracted not just to where it will earn a reasonable return, but to where it will give a vast profit. Most of the enterprises which return these enormous profits are, considered as social and use values, of very small worth and often even harmful—but they pay the highest dividends and, as they do not operate in a vacuum, services providing the necessities of personal and social life suffer.

Because of this—one sickness of an acquisitive society—the railmen have been told to be patient, to forget their families and think of the passengers, to put up with low wages, to watch others growing rich and learn from their sweet contentment. The railway problem is a social problem, not exclusive to the railmen or the Transport Executive.

It can be solved only socially and it is grossly unfair for anyone, by word, deed or inertia, to seek to thrust the whole burden on the railmen.

In the meantime, while the social grass may be growing, the horse is starving. It is for us, now, to support the railmen in their just struggle, which will break out again and again until a social solution is found. Patience they have shown, but arbitration has been prolonged and delayed beyond human endurance. It is good that the rank-and-file London busmen have been eager to show their solidarity by banning overtime and even by taking strike action. London lightermen, too, declared their support by refusing to run the proposed water-buses.

It is bad, however, that the same eager solidarity has not been

shown among the railway unions. The Transport Salaried Staffs Association and the Amalgamated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen are at constant loggerheads with the bigger National Union of Railwaymen. Even on "Panorama" the heads of the three unions openly quarrelled. And on B.B.C. Television again the following evening the dispute was renewed. A striking case for one union for all railwaymen!

The N.U.R. has among its members most of the lowest-paid railmen, so impatience may seem more natural in them than among the members of A.S.L.E.F. and the T.S.S.A., but there are obvious signs that disgust is common among all railmen—disgust that leaps the boundaries of sectional unionism. Let us, too, remember that defeat for the railwaymen is defeat for all of us.

## Postbag

In 1894 I was apprenticed in a 100 per cent T.U. shop and in 66 years have seen Labour betrayed by its leaders—from J. Burns, D. Bell and F. Hodge to 1947, when the so-called Labour leaders conscripted the poor and gave £4,500 million to the rich. . . . For the past 10 years I have amused myself with science. Professors are the rottenest charlatans of the lot . . . i.e. professors teach all the other rogues.

"79 and worn out"

London, N.W.1.

I am enclosing a copy of *News and Letters* . . . you will notice it is different from most other so-called workers' papers in so much as it is written almost throughout by workers themselves . . . this is not another group to fight all other groups, neither do we lay down any party line . . . basically we are anti-party and take our stand on workers' councils (as in Hungary), which we feel is sufficiently close to your own position to put us on the same side of the tracks. . . . I wish you every success in your own new venture.

B. B.

London, E.5.

WORLD LABOUR NEWS is an excellent paper and obviously long needed to give us a report on the struggle elsewhere . . . please send me four extra copies. . . . The proposal of "Groups of Friends of the IWMA" is very good.

D. P.

Dublin.

Thank you for the copy of WORLD LABOUR NEWS. It is indeed a sparkling and novel news-sheet.

J. McI.

Glasgow.

The paper should serve very usefully that growing element who today are heartily sick and tired of party politics and who are anxious to get on with the real struggle in industry.

I. P. H.

Liverpool.

Your paper was the first contact I had had with Syndicalist ideas, though I am well acquainted with British working-class history. I have studied at some length all shades of left-wing opinion and by the time I received your literature was partly convinced the working class could only fight its own battle with natural weapons and that parliamentary action the world over always weakened the left. I should like to know more of Syndicalism.

D. J. B.

Southsea, Hants.

The paper is very good and we are very pleased with it. Let us hope that it will succeed, both in Britain and other English-speaking countries.

G. G.

Paris.

In Southport the position for working people is medieval slavery and mass unemployment continues unabated and there is very little organisation. Where I work there is no overtime pay and we work seven days, including Sunday, on shift duties before we get one day off. There is no overtime, even for Bank Holidays, and we work 50-odd hours per week for an atrocious wage. There are no prospects, pump attendants are treated like dirt and are savagely regimented. Only one has stayed there any length of time.

It amazes me that working people here are so docile, while the bosses are uncommonly savage and sit on them. Why will they not organise and fight back? I am confident that, if they did, there would be improvements. The Press, members of the town council, politicians, employers and their representatives make all sorts of false statements, but who bothers to correct them? In my view, very few—and it is a great pity. Solidarity is vital, but individuals should be prepared to fight alone if necessary and do their utmost to check the enemy and rally others to the cause.

V. T.

Southport, Lancs.

## DAY-TO-DAY STRUGGLE IN BRITAIN CAR STRIKE RECORD

BRITAIN'S motor industry had a record number of strikes in 1959. Figures for the first 11 months list 126 disputes in vehicle building, with 443,000 days' work lost. The first two months of 1960 suggest the figure may be exceeded this year.

It started with a two-hour stoppage in the body shop at Vauxhalls, Luton, on New Year's Day, because the temperature was too high to work in comfort—an unusual mid-winter complaint.

But the strike with widest repercussions was that of 55 electricians in the British Motor Corporation's tractor and transmissions branch at Birmingham, who came out on January 25, demanding that a bonus offer made on November 13 should be extended to cover unskilled workers. B.M.C. had laid off more than 31,000 workers and seen production cut to only one make of car before they came to terms, with an offer of a 17s. weekly bonus for mates, to bring a return to work on February 8.

Commenting on an unofficial stoppage by 132 fork-lift drivers and material handlers at British Light Steel Pressings, Acton, company chairman Lord Rootes stormed: "The union have instructed the men to return to work repeatedly. The men flout the advice of their elected leaders." This stoppage, in support of a pay claim, lasted from January 11 to February 2 and caused the lay-off of 7,000 at Rootes factories in Coventry and Cowley.

Workers in the car industry have learned the hard way that the bosses are most reluctant to give them an increased share in their present prosperity—unless forced to by direct action.

From car building to car driving. . . . Instructors at London branches of the British School of Motoring threatened to stop work on February 8, unless suspended instructor W. V. Houghton was reinstated. He was—and B.S.M. blandly announced the fact he was a Transport Union organiser had not influenced their original decision to dismiss him!

Merseyside portworkers, too, showed a fine sense of solidarity with a two-day stoppage on February 8-9. Sixteen portworkers had been suspended for these two days by the Dock Labour Board, because they had taken part in a successful December strike to obtain higher rates for handling a cargo of wet nitrate. The militant portworkers' effective reply to the Board bureaucrats was: "Sixteen out—all out."

The effectiveness of direct action in settling claims was demonstrated by Thames tugboat and lightermen. A dispute with the Association of Master Lightermen and Barge Owners had been dragging on since April 1959 over shortage of deckhands, whom the employers said were unavailable. On January 6, the rivermen finally lost their patience, 500 stopping work and tying up Thames shipping. Complaining bitterly at the men's "precipitate action", the employers quickly discovered some extra deckboys—and the dispute was settled in three days.

Forty-five members of the Electrical Trades Union in the research laboratories of the English Electric Company at Stafford earned our support with one demand of their New Year's Day strike: "To make it a pleasure to go to work." The company, it was reported, were not prepared to make any comment on that one.

## All foremen are—

NEWSPAPER reports of wildcat strikes rarely give a true picture of the cause of a dispute. This is not necessarily done from malice. It is difficult to show that, very often, the strike is the bursting forth of a long-buried resentment, caused by chronic irritations and wrongs. Such was the case of the January strike of workers at Hardy Spicers, Birmingham, makers of most of Britain's motor-car propeller shafts. Demanding the dismissal of a foreman who used bad language against a man he believed had come late to work, 1,800 workers struck.

Of course the firm tried to shrug this off with the remark: "Everyone uses filthy language." But in all such cases when a worker uses bad language to a foreman or manager—that's different and usually he is sacked at once. Over and over it has been our experience that the louder the curse and the fouler the vocabulary, the smaller the courage. How often have we seen a foul-mouthed ape who, when sworn at in return, ran to the manager, or, when asked to repeat the remarks outside, has threatened a call a cop.

This was, indeed, admitted by Hardy Spicer Ltd., on whose behalf T. G. P. Rogers, personnel director, stated: "This is a case of swearing in the presence of someone, rather than at them, and using a word which is used many times in a day in any factory. That is very different from being personally abusive and insubordinate to a foreman" (*News Chronicle*).

The men returned to work after the firm transferred the foreman.

# WORLD LABOUR NEWS

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## The shadow of Nazism

DESPITE the crocodile tears of Chancellor Adenauer, the rash of anti-Semitic incidents sparked by the desecration of Cologne synagogue on Christmas Eve has brought to light some enlightening facts about life in his Fourth Reich.

"The Chancellor," comments *New Statesman* (9.1.60), "now condemns the recent outrages, but last year, in a telegram of good wishes on Friedrich Flick's 75th birthday, he referred to the 'great and amazing life of achievement, in long and self-sacrificing toil' of the man whose factories armed Hitler's armies through the sweat—and often the blood—of slave labour."

In Adenauer's Cabinet are notorious officials of the old Nazi Party, such as Prof. Oberländer, Federal Minister for Refugees, who is alleged to have taken part in the massacre of Jews and Poles at Lvov, during the war; Dr. Seeböhm; and Secretary of State Dr. Hans Globke, joint compiler of the racist Reich Citizens Law of September 15, 1935.

This unholy trinity are presumably excluded from Adenauer's call on January 16 for active Nazi hooligans to be beaten up.

So, obviously, are the undercover Nazis who apparently dominate the police, judiciary and education in the Federal Republic. Teachers are largely responsible for the resurgence of Fascism among German youth.

In the State of Hesse, a Ministry of Education investigation recently revealed that half the schools were not teaching the history of the Nazi period; the other half were stressing such aspects of it as the building of arterial roads and the ending of unemployment.

In North-Rhine Westphalia, history lessons came to a full stop with the outbreak of the first world war in 1914.

A widely-used school textbook, *Lebende Vergangenheit* ("Living Past"), has been revised. In the 1949 edition, 41, 8, 5 and 3 pages were devoted respectively to the history of the Hitler period, the anti-Fascist resistance movement, concentration camps and persecution of the Jews. In the 1958 edition, these subjects get 13 pages, 0, 0 and 14 lines respectively.

The Rabbi of Cologne states that Jewish children have been told by their schoolmates that it was a pity Hitler did not also gas them and their parents (*The Times*, 13.1.60).

Schoolteachers often form the backbone of the ultra-nationalist neo-Nazi organisations, which still dominate German provincial life. And the influential Bund Nationaler Studenten (National Students' League) numbers among its speakers Hitler's deputy Press chief, Sündermann.

Blame for this rebirth of Nazi activity and ideology can be laid at the doors of the Atlantic Alliance, for their consistent support of reactionary forces, who have been ready allies in the policy of remilitarisation that NATO forced on Germany and is now to continue by supplying nuclear weapons to Adenauer. This, if we remember rightly, is where we came in during the 1930s.

U.S.A.—A federal grand jury of 23 Mississippians (22 white men and one Negro) reported at Biloxi, Mississippi, on Jan. 14 that it could not return any indictments against the men who lynched the Negro, Mack Charles Parker, in May 1959 while he was in jail awaiting trial on rape charges. Thus, despite a 378-page F.B.I. report in which men believed to have been in the lynching gang were named and fingerprint evidence was given, these atrocious racial butchers, said to include a town official and a white clergyman, are not even to be brought to trial. At Austin, Texas, the Court of Criminal Appeals quashed the sentence of 99 years' imprisonment passed on Isiah Storz, a Negro found guilty of raping a white woman. Pointing out that no Negro had been summoned to sit on a grand jury for at least 20 years, although half the people of that county are Negroes, the Appeal Court held that there had been racial discrimination in the selection of the jury that had convicted him.

## S. AFRICA—THE ECONOMICS OF APARTHEID

SOUTH AFRICA has a population of 9,500,000 Africans, 360,000 Asians, 1,100,000 Coloureds (mixed blood) and 2,600,000 Whites. One might expect, then, that the main social conflict in this turbulent country would be the traditional one of privileged Whites against the unprivileged rest, but instead it was, in the main, a conflict of two White groups until quite recently, when it became a triangular contest.

Founded, from 300 to 250 years ago, as a Negro slave society by the Dutch, the colony was ceded to Britain in 1820. From that has come the present White population of an English-speaking minority and an Afrikaans-speaking majority of Dutch descent. After the Anglo-Boer war, an Afrikaan minority, led by such generals as Smuts and Botha, joined the British Whites to form one White society. The majority of the Boers, however, remained antagonistic and their bitterness was increased by the poor economic conditions of most of them. The industry and mines of the country were mostly in British hands and the commerce under British and Asiatic control.

The Boers were farmers (the name means that). But many had small or poor farms, some lived by share-cropping, others were the least happy of men, farmers without farms. The latter found it difficult to get jobs in competition against the African farm labourer, many of the former found it difficult to live well in a farming society often short of water and always retarded by the inertia of a semi-slave economy.

The majority of Afrikaans lived in dire poverty for generations, but this did not prevent them from hanging on to their "Master Race" theory, which largely prevented them gaining the profits of capitalist development.

The World War of 1914-18 modified this situation, but still there remained a Poor White problem, meaning a Poor Afrikaaner problem. In 1929 it was estimated that of an Afrikaaner population of 1,000,000, about 300,000 lived on a pauper level and about the same number were only just above it (*Poor White Problem in South Africa*, Carnegie Commission, Stellenbosch University).

The Report of the Social and Economic Planning Council (U.G. No. 10, 1945) gives figures of the cash incomes of White farming families in 1941, when, due to war demands, conditions were better. Forty-five per cent of farming families, mostly Afrikaans, earned less than £100 a year in cash, about half of these less than £50. And between 1929 and the Second World War came the depression of the early thirties, when thousands of Boers were driven by poverty to seek sustenance in the towns.

But, as most were unskilled, they found the skilled jobs held by the English-speaking, while most unskilled work was done by Africans. The Coloured people and Asians performed much semi-skilled and skilled work, when given the chance. In the mines, for example, almost 90 per cent of the jobs were held by non-Europeans, as the recent mine disaster illustrates (only six of the 435 fatalities were White). All this and the fact that most industry was believed to be owned by British capital, and much business by Asians, fanned the Nationalist desire to fight a war on four or more fronts.

The Second World War, by creating a demand for South African materials and goods, and because the Afrikaans were able to nip into jobs while the pro-war party were in the armed forces, altered this position greatly. But, while Afrikaan poverty does not now exist, at least in the old sense, bitterness remains. Boers, like elephants, never forget and a sense of insecurity, as well as a desire for revenge, moves them.

The insecurity is not only memory, but also fear of the future. South Africa is not a rich country, *per capita*. It is rich in minerals, but its farming is weak and constantly threatened by drought, locusts and soil erosion. Industry has developed swiftly, but is not up to European standards of efficiency. The annual income *per capita* is: European £125, Coloured £25, Bantu £10. While many Whites are very well off, a redistribution of wealth, even slightly towards equality, would cause their income to slump.

To ensure a "White standard of living for their people", the Nationalists must either join in the modernisation of the country's industry, transport and farming—a process which breaks down colour distinctions—or, continuing the present "Master Race" society, use political means to gain economic ends.

Choosing the latter, the Nationalists have favoured the development of South African industry, such as the Government-sponsored Iron and Steel Corporation (Isacor), with many jobs at European pay scales for unskilled Europeans; the political backing of grossly unequal wages, unrelated to skill; the exclusion of Africans from certain economic areas; and the formation of Afrikaaner trade leagues to wrest trade from Asian and British traders.

But *apartheid* does not mean, as one might expect, the resettlement

of the Africans in tribal areas exclusive to themselves. The lands allotted to them are but a fraction of South Africa's area and mostly very poor. They could not support the people. In any case, much wealth would have to be spent on them for fertiliser, irrigation and to rebuild the soil after erosion. And the Coloured people—they have no tribe and are entirely European in outlook.

Further, and most important to the ruling class, South African industry, mining and farming is founded and continues on a ready supply of extremely low-paid African labour, a semi-slave society.

*Apartheid* would put back into the reservations those Africans not immediately required for the labour market, to be drawn on when needed. The others would be moved out of the towns to make way for White urban expansion, but would still be near enough to labour in the White man's employ. In their case, *apartheid* means only a longer bus ride to work, a longer queue at the day's end, or even a tramp of 10 or 15 miles a day to earn their daily bread.

Such a policy is arousing world public opinion, but the Nationalists would have us believe they even like that. They are against the British, the Coloured, the Asians, the Bantu, the United Nations, the Jews, the Liberals and a host of other named enemies. In their hideous racial "Master Race" theory they are backed by the leaders of their own Dutch Reformed Church, which, with an emphasis on the Old Testament, is untiring in finding torn-out texts to support their cruelty.

Perhaps the reverend gentlemen have pondered too much on Genesis xvi:12: ". . . his name Ishmael. . . . And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him."

## Army of ghosts

A REPORT in *Reynolds News* (17.1.60) draws attention to the hoary legend that there is no unemployment behind the Iron Curtain. The official Polish economic journal, *Zycie Gospodarcze*, has been publishing quarterly unemployment figures since the end of 1956 and admits that these figures must be multiplied by five, because most of the unemployed do not bother to register. Why not? Because since there is no unemployment, how can there be unemployment benefits? This army of ghosts was 300,000-weak in March 1958, and by the middle of last year two-thirds of them had been fortunate enough to persuade a kind wizard to give them back their human forms.

The other workers' paradises have their ghosts, too. The Hungarian trade union paper, *Nepszava*, reports tens of thousands of women, many with families to support, unable to find work. The *Csongrad Megyei Hirlap* says that 6,000 of Csongrad's 21,000 inhabitants are unemployed. Allowing for children and old-age pensioners, that must be getting on for half the town's working population!

From Czechoslovakia the Prague daily, *Lidova Demokracie*, says that in the first nine months of 1959 there were 2,500 unemployed women in the capital. And in Russia the Communist Party paper, *Radianska Ukraina*, has been criticising Ukrainian trade unions for not giving sufficient attention to the problem of findings jobs for young people.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC—Following an alleged discovery of a plot to assassinate dictator General Trujillo, a *Times* correspondent reports (4.2.60) that "on apparently good authority, it is said that virtually every family in the country has been affected by what has been called 'wholesale arrests'." From Venezuelan sources comes the report that 1,200 people are detained in a concentration camp outside Dominica's capital, Ciudad Trujillo. Even the Roman Catholic Church has been driven to protest at the latest crimes of the "Benefactor", as Trujillo calls himself. Six R.C. bishops have demanded the restoration of full civil rights in a pastoral letter read in churches throughout Dominica, in which they declare that "the rights of all men to freedom of conscience, of the Press, and of assembly, are superior to any government". On Feb. 9 the Organisation of American States, rejecting the Dominican Government's contention that the arrests were a purely domestic matter, on the ground that concern for human rights and liberties was fundamental to the American system, decided by 20 votes to none (Dominica abstaining) to open an immediate inquiry into what the Venezuelan representative described as a "situation of anguish".

TIBET—Between March last year and Jan. 17 some 15,000 Tibetan refugees entered India, according to figures given by Nehru to the House of the People.

## EAST AFRICA

## Workers on the march

ANOTHER REMINDER that the struggles of colonial workers, like those of workers everywhere, are basically economic rather than political comes from Tanganyika, where members of the African Postal Union came out on strike on December 23. It was reported in the *Tanganyika Standard* (30.1.60) that Mr. O. R. Lewis, Regional Director of the East African Post Office Administration, had said that Tapu had dissociated itself from the unions representing postal workers in Kenya and Uganda, with whom joint talks were about to begin in Nairobi.

The *Sunday News* of Dar-es-Salaam (31.1.60) reports that the strikers have been offered financial help by the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International, who also asked for an emergency decision on aid for the strikers to be made by the International Solidarity Fund of the ICFTU. Meanwhile they are being given, "where necessary", 10s. a week or food, a poignant reminder of the hardships of striking in conditions of poverty, though no doubt they are somewhat mitigated by the natural solidarity of a society which is still largely tribal in character.

Like another echo of labour struggles in Britain a hundred years ago is the news that classes are being held in which those who cannot read and write are being taught by literate strikers.

The Post Office Administration has refused to negotiate until the strike is called off, but Mr. J. D. Namfua, general secretary of Tapu, said that if necessary they would stay out until Tanganyika achieved internal self-government in September, when the new Government (which will be African-led) would certainly accede to their demands.

In Kenya, on January 27, 500 members of the Chemical Workers' Union walked out of the British Standard Portland Cement's factory at Bamburi, after 80 building department labourers had been dismissed as redundant. A company spokesman declared that the strike was illegal and said that the factory was continuing to operate and could do so indefinitely—under European and Asian supervision.

The East African Railways dispute is still not settled. Towards the end of last year the African railway workers in Kenya and Uganda were out on strike in support of wage and other demands for over two weeks, though the Tanganyika African railwaymen cancelled their threatened strike.

On February 9, however, the 15,000 Tanganyika men did come out. Again services were operated by European and Asian scabs and trains were guarded by armed police after angry strikers had tried to pull the driver and fireman of a locomotive off the footplate.

The *Uganda Argus* (1.2.60) reported that the E.A.R. were offering African railway workers an increase of 2s. a month on the basic minimum wage, to take effect from February 1. This was in addition to the 4s. a month rise which came into effect on January 1 and would bring the basic minimum wage up to 80s. a month. There would also be increases for two group scales above the minimum and higher minimum wages for staff in the main towns to offset the higher cost of living. The charges against the European superintendent, which touched off the strike in Kenya, were dismissed, evidently without serious examination since no detailed refutation was published.

The three African unions had made a joint demand for a minimum daily wage of 7s. 75 cents (100 cents = 1s.). Mr. S. J. Katungutu, assistant general secretary of the Tanganyika union, said in Dar-es-Salaam: "It is inhuman to offer any man an increase of 6 cents a day. The demand for 7s. 75 cents a day is based on figures published by the East African Statistical Department, which stated that 9s. a day was a living wage. . . . The union is not prepared to consider this increase. We reject it flatly and there is no possibility of this increase affecting our decision to strike very shortly."

East Africa is on the eve of great political changes which threaten the privileged positions of White settlers. The diehard lines on which the minds of many of them continue to run make the situation explosive, in class as well as racial terms. A writer in *Kenya Weekly News* (4.12.59) who signs himself M. F. H. gleefully informs his readers that "of 3,422 graded African railwaymen—earning £118 a year or more—573, or 16 per cent, remained at work throughout the strike." The article is entitled "Lessons of the Strike", but the author is evidently too Blimp-headed to learn any lessons. The striking points about these scab figures, for example, are first that the lot of the African people is so shocking that it is possible to consider a man who earns £118 a year as belonging to a relatively privileged class, and secondly that even in such appalling social conditions the solidarity of the Africans is steadfast enough to make the percentage of scabs fairly low. For M. F. H.:

"The first lesson to be learnt from the strike is that whereas it is possible to keep the railways' services running for several weeks without Africans it would be impossible to do so, even for a few

days, without the European and Asian staff and the volunteers who came to their aid. The second lesson is the economic and social menace of an immature trade union movement wherein a few African leaders can exercise compelling power over thousands of workers, many of whom have little or no understanding of the issues at stake and many of whom are illiterate. . . .

"Moreover, there is a growing menace of unemployment in Kenya and many thousands of Kikuyu who would be very glad of the jobs of those who are led astray into wild-cat strikes."

As if to give this threat official backing, Mr. Leo Brown, E.A.R. Regional Representative in Uganda, threatened the dismissal of selected strikers under the staff regulation declaring that if a railway employee absented himself from duty without permission for more than a week his appointment would be deemed to have been forfeited.

Repressive laws and grinding poverty are the classic conditions for social revolution, but doubtless the complacent views of M. F. H. are representative of many White settlers, standing on the White Highlands with their heads in the clouds.

## U.S. steel strike ends

THE LONGEST and most costly labour dispute in America's steel industry came to an end on January 5, with the signing of a new contract with the Steelworkers' Union, providing wage increases and fringe benefits estimated to be worth about 40 cents an hour on the average wage (including overtime, incentives, etc.) of \$3.10 (just over 22s.) an hour. The union had been demanding 45 cents an hour. Direct wage increases will average 8.3 cents an hour on December 1, 1960, and the same again on October 1, 1961. The union traded the cost-of-living adjustment, under which wages had to be increased by 17 cents an hour over the three-year period of the old contract, for full payment by the steel companies of life, accident and sickness insurance, of which they had previously paid only part. Pensions have also been raised. On the companies' demand that they should have the right to change local work rules as and when they considered it necessary, the union stood firm and it was agreed that they would be changed only by mutual agreement, after an investigation by a joint committee, which is to make recommendations by November 30.

David McDougall, president of the Steelworkers' Union, said that he had promised to secure the greatest labour contract and best conditions the workers had ever enjoyed, "and that we have gotten". He believed the agreement practically ensured that there would never be another steel strike. Others have described it as a triumph for collective bargaining.

It is difficult to see it that way. True, the union won practically everything they went on strike for, but only at the cost of humiliating the steelworkers, first by submitting to Ike's injunction to return to work (after a 116-day strike, the longest in the union's history) under the Taft-Hartley provisions, imposing an 80-day "cooling-off" period; and then by negotiating under the politicians' threats to introduce even more repressive labour legislation if agreement were not reached by the time the 80 days expired. The only real victor in this battle of puppets was Vice-President Nixon, who, by coming in at the last moment, to drop hints of what unpleasant ideas were in the minds of congressmen, was able to pose as a masterly negotiator, and so improve his prospects of inheriting the White House.

## A. I. T.

READERS who understand French or Spanish are advised that the International Working Men's Association publishes a monthly paper in these languages, *A.I.T.* (Association Internationale des Travailleurs). Half is printed in French, the other half in Spanish.

The eight- or ten-page monthly issues, tabloid size, contain many articles of general interest to the international working class. From this month (March) will also appear a special, quarterly number in 16 pages, well illustrated and containing more general articles on current, historical and theoretical subjects.

Some of the headings in the last monthly number to reach us are: The Rome Appeal of 17 European Communist Parties, Eisenhower and the Taft-Hartley Law, Nicholas Stoinov—a figure of international Syndicalism, Housing Crisis in Bulgaria, Congress of the Venezuelan Syndicalists, The Spanish CNT Calls on Public Opinion (text of an article from the clandestine Spanish paper, *CNT*), Rebel Movement in Paraguay, Communist Infiltration in the British Trade Unions, World Tension and its Solutions (editorial).

The monthly issue is 9d. and the quarterly issue 1s. 6d., post free from SWF, 25a Amberley Road, London, W.9, or from J. Egleas, AIT-CNT, 4 rue Belfort, Toulouse, H.G., France.

## ARGENTINA

## SYNDICALIST PLUMBERS' 13-YEAR STRUGGLE

THE ARREST, on trumped-up charges of "terrorism", of three Argentine Syndicalists—Carlos Kristof, Raul Arias and Manuel Correa—was briefly reported in our last issue. It followed an unsuccessful lock-out of plumbing workers in the Regional Workers' Federation (FORA), a section of the IWMA. As background, we now publish a summary of activity in recent years by their syndicate, the Resistance Society of Plumbing, Sewage, Water and Allied Workers, which was founded in 1917.

THE SOCIETY, which the employers now pretend to ignore, has since 1941 had collective agreements with the Buenos Aires Centre of Sanitary Engineers. In 1947, the Society's demand for a six-hour day was rejected. Owing to the political situation, the workers decided to postpone this struggle and substitute a claim for higher wages, improved safety conditions and longer holidays. The employers again refused, saying the claim should go to Labour Ministry arbitration.

Meanwhile the bosses and Peronists set up a company union, recognised by the Ministry of Labour, signed an agreement with it for increased wages, and called for a return to work. The strike had then lasted 60 days, the Society's local had been closed and all meetings forbidden to its members. But the workers stayed out and, after 80 days, the police—thinking they were on their knees—let them call an assembly. This reaffirmed loyalty to the Society and resolved that "firms who come to terms can resume work; others cannot". Soon some such firms were back at work and after 107 days the Centre capitulated.

In 1948 the six-hour demand was renewed, but the bosses offered only small wage increases. A general strike followed, with the same proviso: "The firm that signs shall work". More than 1,000 workers were already doing a six-hour day, when the Government closed their local, arresting many members, including Kristof, who was threatened with death by Police Commissioner Goldar.

After 77 days there was a return to work, on the basis of a 15 per cent wage increase. Employers operating the six-hour day were soon forced to suspend it by police threats of prison or deportation. The Centre later offered a seven-hour convention, but this was rejected.

During the years of Peron's dictatorship the plumbing trade workers were the only ones to succeed in staying outside the State-controlled unions. The totalitarian State controlled all aspects of the country's life, but the plumbers clandestinely kept alive their organisation and in May 1950 met the rising cost of living by demanding a further wage increase. Delegates came to terms with the employers, but the Government reacted violently, because both sides were acting outside its apparatus, and, to avert reprisals at the request of the Centre, the settlement took the form of a "gentlemen's agreement", with nothing on paper.

A Peronist union was set up by an employer named Vago, who guaranteed its expenses, but this manoeuvre failed, because the workers, scorning financial advantages, stayed loyal to their old organisation.

In 1952 the Society began discussions with the Centre for new increases. The Minister of Labour immediately warned the Centre and its member firms that they must deal only with the Peronist union, finally forcing them to sign an agreement with it. During a 68-day strike virtually all the Society's militants were arrested and employers aided the police by identifying them. Foreign workers were threatened with deportation and the strike was lost.

In league with the Peronist union, the bosses next decreed that only members of this body should be allowed to work, a position maintained until the revolutionary overthrow of Peron's régime in September 1955 enabled the plumbers to reopen their local and call a general assembly. Workers turned up in force to support the persecuted Society. During the Peronist era the plumbers had also staged many protest and solidarity strikes, particularly with railwaymen, portworkers and students.

In 1956, the Society presented a new draft convention to the Centre. This was ignored, so a strike was called and after 25 days the Labour Ministry decreed the dissolution of the Peronist union as unrepresentative. The convention was finally signed, following another 77-day strike, and a general meeting of plumbing workers resolved that all belongings of the Peronist union should pass to the FORA Society.

New conventions were signed in 1957 and October 1958. In May 1959 the plumbing workers agreed to demand a 25 per cent increase on expiry of the latter agreement on August 31, but a further general meeting in August proposed prolongation of the agreement until December 31, 1951, in view of restriction of credits in the building trade and the country's general economic situation.

Two small local disputes with the Serman and Chacon firms

resulted in lock-outs. Although all plumbing workers are governed by collective agreements, local sectors of the Society are free to negotiate their own working conditions and rates for day work. In this way some 70 per cent had achieved a six-hour day.

Despite this situation, long recognised by the employers, the Centre launched a Press, radio and television campaign, accusing the Society of gangsterism and policies of national economic ruin. These attacks went on for three months, without police intervention, but on September 7 the Centre decreed a general lock-out, which failed miserably. Within a fortnight six of the Centre's member firms came to terms with the Society, paying compensation for time lost through the lock-out. The last of these, Lemme and Co., were secretaries of the Centre.

Once more a company union was set up and this phoney organisation, with no members, meetings or sign of public life, signed an agreement with the Centre, which was lodged with the Labour Ministry. The workers knew nothing of its terms.

This new trick was rejected at a general meeting on October 31, when the workers reaffirmed their membership of the FORA. They followed the police raid on the workers' local, the arrests of Kristof, Arias and Correa, and the first-named's 12-day hunger strike in prison. Kristof's attitude has further strengthened the fighting spirit of this model workers' organisation.

*La Protesta.*

## BRITAIN

## Boy jockeys strike

A LESSON in effective strike strategy and organisation has been given by 70 teenage apprentice jockeys in the racing stables at Newmarket. Their stoppage, in protest against the dismissal of their popular welfare officer, Bill Welham, and for immediate improvement in the appalling conditions under which they work, was a model of direct action.

Resentment against conditions in the Newmarket stables flared on January 14, when some 20 apprentices in trainer Fred Armstrong's stable staged a lightning stoppage. It was a curtain-raiser for the bigger struggle to come.

This broke out on February 3, after the sacking of Welham following criticism in the *Daily Mail* of conditions in the damp, rat-ridden hostel where the apprentices were lodged.

Said Welham: "There are only six baths to about 70 boys . . . in one washroom there is no hot water for the 35 boys who use it. . . . Most of the bed springs are broken. Several of them are tied up by string. Mattresses are very old and dirty. . . . The boys in the hostel are given no outdoor sports facilities. . . . The boys never get butter to eat, only margarine."

The strike decision was taken in one of the hostel dormitories. Without union organisation or tradition, the boys, aged 15-20, elected a strike committee of six, drew up a three-point charter of demands: better living conditions, better pay, reinstatement of Welham.

The hostel is owned by the autocratic Jockey Club, which leases it to the Newmarket trainers. A spokesman of the Club, with typically feudal disdain, commented: "Our role is the control of racing. Our concern is not with apprentices."

The apprentices, undismayed, set about making propaganda for their cause and collecting strike funds. Let by an accordion player, they marched through Newmarket, calling at public houses and collecting money from the sympathetic townspeople.

They had no support from the Transport and General Workers' Union, to which the stable lads and girls belong. The union district officer, Stanley Aldous, said: "There could be trouble if my members are not paid for the extra work they are having to do while the apprentices stay out." In other words, the official attitude was that there should be overtime pay for blacklegging.

The sympathy of the lads and girls, however, was with the apprentices and on February 9 they themselves decided on strike action—for higher wages and in support of the youngsters. Epsom and Lambourn joined the struggle.

On February 11 the trainers came to terms. The Newmarket hostel was closed, a living-out allowance given the apprentices and wages increased both for the apprentices and the lads and girls.

Racing—aptly dubbed "The Sport of Kings"—has plenty of cream to be skimmed off the top by rich owners, trainers, bookmakers and top-grade jockeys, but little for the workers. This strike has lifted the lid off racing and shown that the majority in it are viciously-exploited wage workers. The time when they were prepared to put up with serf-like conditions and treatment has now ended.