Direct Action

For workers' direct control of industry

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MONTHLY PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWMA)

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WAGES: WE HAVE BEEN WARNED!

SWEDEN'S central wage negotiations have for the last couple of years or so, been quoted as a shining example of industrial know-how to the industrial workers of Britain. British trade union and political leaders have paid fraternal visits and came back full of praise for the set-up. They admit there would have to be slight amendments to suit British conditions, but the points that took their eye were centralised negotiations, more power for the TUC, and no unofficial strikes—by law. Official strikes are barely tolerated; the procedure to reach that stage is long and tortuous, which, of course, is the declared intention.

The image of industrial utopia has just escaped collapse, however, by a narrow margin when the Swedish TUC finally concluded a wage agreement with the employers.

What went wrong this time that the Swedish workers should be within a gnat's breath of striking? Negotiations started in January and for three months failed to reach agreement. On March 3, the Government-appointed arbitration committee reported that it had failed to make progress. The TUC gave a week's notice of a general overtime ban and a refusal to extend the current two-year agreement. On March 10 the Employers' Confederation held a meeting the outcome of which was the announcement of a general lockout. Panic

cont. on page 2, col. 1

MAY DAY—1966

The cost of cars

I ATTENDED a funeral of a Ford worker the last day of 1965. I drove his sister-in-law home from the funeral and she said, "Do you know why he is dead? That job at Ford killed him. For nearly a year he has been complaining that his job was murdering him. He was so tired all the time he couldn't even visit his relatives or friends. He was going to put in for early retirement next week. Several weeks ago he had a heart attack and was off from work. The company sent him to a Ford Hospital. They released him and told him to come back for a check-up before he returned to work. When he went back, the doctors told him he was in perfect condition, and the next day he was to return to work. He went home and two hours later had another attack and died an hour after they got him to the hospital.

She wept away some tears and then went on, "There is a worker living with us who works for General Motors. He has a job at the Chevy plant and his job is killing him, too. He is so tired he spends most of his time in bed. We can hardly wake him up to get ready to go to work."

She wanted to know what had happened to the union, and whether the union thought that getting workers a few pennies more at the cost of their lives meant more to a family than the life of the head of that family.

From "News and Letters", U.S.A.

set in, the Prime Minister had talks with both sides. The arbitration committee requested both sides to meet again on March 15 and in consequence the overtime ban and lockout notices were automatically withdrawn pending new talks. All very gentlemanly, both sides playing the game for the love of the sport. By March 28, a formula was still to be found. Any proposal has to be rejected or accepted by both parties, which doesn't allow much room for manoeuvre.

The transport workers intimated that they might go it alone in an endeavour to make progress. Such an action, if carried out by the transport workers, could herald the breakdown of the whole system of centralized negotiations. This the Swedish TUC had to avoid at all costs.

On April 3, the crisis was averted. In reply to the TUC demand for a general wage increase of 10% and special consideration for the lower-paid workers in terms of 20% the TUC agreed to a reduction in the working week from *45 to 42 hours to be spread over three years*, an annual wage increase of 8%, which includes "wage drift", pensions contributions and sickness benefit, and an extension of the current two-year national agreement to three years. Part of the increase will compensate for the reduction in the working week. The general level of wage drift is approximately 4%, therefore the actual increase is peanuts. The lower-paid workers who are not affected by wage drift are guaranteed a minimum increase as compensation.

The cost of living in Sweden has risen by at least 6% in the last 12 months, which if it continues will make the increase negotiated literally a dead loss.

The next three years may see the Swedish industrial utopia floundering near the rocks, which could herald the release of the Swedish workers from their industrial straight jacket.

We British workers can take a lesson from this exercise. The present Labour Government would like to force the British workers into a similar position to allow scope for their "Incomes Policy". British trade union leaders would also welcome the Swedish set-up; to have their militants disciplined by law would make their lives a lot easier. We can't say we haven't been warned.

TEST CASE

A COVENTRY car delivery concern is to claim damages from "wildcat" strikers. In less emotional language this means unofficial strikers. Writs are to be served on 50 of the 250 drivers who recently withdrew their labour. The employers stated that the writs would follow letters to the men detailing the allegations against them. They were considered ringleaders of the conspiracy.

The five-day dispute followed the dismissal of a driver. The sacking was accepted by his workmates who were in a different branch of the union, the T & GWU, but local car delivery men with other firms belonging to the union branch claimed victimisation. The employer maintains that the strike was against union advice and was not a trade dispute in the accepted sense. The Union organiser stated he gave the men advice which was not heeded; the men took the view that the action of the company is dismissing a man at short notice was unjust. Is this a precedent for the future? If so, sympathetic strikers could be in for a rough time. Obviously this employer wants to prove to the government that fining unofficial srikers can be done.

STRIKES MEAN FINE OR IMPRISONMENT

AMERICAN locomotive firemen struck on issues arising from an arbitration award and from the negotiations of apprenticeship schemes.

The firemen had been on strike for four days when the law went to work. A court decision was made to the effect that unless the firemen returned to work immediately the union would face fines of $25,000 a day and its president an additional $2,500 a day for contempt of court. Three union officials have already been sent to prison in Alabama on contempt of court charges for continuing the strike.

The firemen have now returned to work, and are seeking another way to strike without breaking the law.

Could this be a pattern for Britain in 1967–8? It's possible if we do not do something about it. The rank and file are the only people who can prevent it.

SOLIDARITY WITH SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

TWO HUNDRED machine-shop workers, members of the T & GWU, have been on strike for over a week (at time of writing) in expression of their opposition to racial prejudice.

The strikers allege that after a series of racial incidents involving a setter (a member of the AEU) and an Indian T & GWU man they couldn't tolerate the situation any longer and demanded the removal of the AEU member.

The 200 men have returned to work pending an independent inquiry into the whole affair, but the setter remains in the job so as not to prejudice the outcome.

Over the past months we have heard a lot about wicked workers striking for monetary gain, in this instance workers have tackled a social problem and have expressed their views in no uncertain terms *to the detriment of their own pockets.*

The powers that be are extremely anxious that industrial action should be confined to wages and conditions because in this way the system they support is secure. When industrial action is used to highlight social problems (housing, racial prejudice, old-age pensions and war) on a large scale, this for them is the beginning of the end.

BILL CHRISTOPHER

General Strike—40 years

FORTY years ago this month, the workers were in an ace of taking over Britain in spite of the union leadership.

Union leaders and Labour politicians broke their backs in their endeavours to prevent the General Strike, but the workers decided otherwise.

To quote the infamous J. R. Clynes, "With other union leaders, I sought an interview with the Prime Minister and his colleagues in a last-minute attempt to show that the compositors' strike was isolated and unofficial, without our approval, and to plead, almost on our knees, for a less cruel arbitration than he was forcing upon us—an open fight between the workers and the Cabinet. But the Cabinet had left No. 10, and the place was deserted save for a single sleepy attendant"

According to the union leadership, the workers were bigger rogues than the Government and the employers put together. After nine days in dispute the strikers received their reward, a calculated ruthless stab in the back and were forced into the position of crawling back to work.

Forty years later, have the Labour and trade union leaders changed? Not ruddy likely! Maybe they are more subtle these days, but scratch the surface and you find, acceptance of the system, compromise, "The class struggle is over brothers", master and man working together.

Have we changed? The majority of us still look to leaders, we haven't learned.

The history and analysis of the General Strike from a syndicalist viewpoint is a must if we are to learn anything at all. Tom Brown's pamphlet "The British General Strike" (price 6d. from 34, Cumberland Road, E.17) provides that "must".

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

CANADIAN CO-OPS COPY CAPITALISM

THE CO-OPERATIVE movement in Canada is, in a material sense, growing and expanding. Big new Co-op supermarkets are in operation in nearly every city, while many smaller towns have their own co-op store. These retail stores and supermarkets jointly own and finance co-operative packing plants, lumber mills, fertiliser plants and oil refineries.

Does all this mean that Canada is steadily moving towards the co-operative commonwealth envisaged by many pioneers of the co-operative movement? Unfortunately, it means no such thing. The co-operative owned packing plants, lumber mills, etc., are no different from their capitalist competitors: the workers have no say in the running of the enterprises; their wages are the same in the capitalist-run ones; profits go, not to the workers who produce them, but to the groups who own the plants, that is, the retail co-ops. In other words, it makes no difference to the worker whether he works for a co-op owned enterprise or a privately owned one—he is still a wage slave in a capitalist enterprise.

And what of retail co-ops? The idea was once to buy goods wholesale and sell to members at lower prices than prevailed in privately owned stores. This idea also seems to have been lost in the Canadian co-operative movement.

Co-ops are building flashy new supermarkets to compete with the privately owned ones. To finance these they are selling bonds and paying 6% or more annual interest on them. To try and attract customers they spend considerable sums of money on advertising and to top it all they sell goods at the same prices as do the privately owned stores.

Ah, you may say, but what about the "divi"? Members, in theory, receive a refund at the end of the year of a percentage of the amount of money they have spent during the year. This is what differentiates co-ops from the privately owned stores: all profits are returned to the members, none go into the pockets of capitalist investors. This is what happens in theory, but by the time the capitalistic holders of bonds have been paid their 6% annual interest and the advertising bills have been paid and the expenses of maintaining a large supermarket have been paid there are no profits left!

The ordinary co-op member may just as well have shopped at any of the privately owned stores. He will, in either case, have paid the same amount for his purchases and in neither case will he receive any refunds at the end of the year.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

So much, then, for the myth of the co-op being a means of buying goods at lower prices for the working class family. The only people who benefit from retail co-ops are those who have money to invest in bonds—they can sit back and collect their 6% interest. And what, I ask, is the difference between this and investors in "Safeway" and "Dominion" stores sitting back and collecting their interest?

Where, then, have the co-ops gone astray? It is, I suggest in trying to compete with capitalist enterprises, in a capitalist society, using capitalist methods. Granted, a co-op supermarket can be just as good as a capitalist one: but the cost of making it so means that its prices are the same, and if this is so why bother to run another capitalist enterprise anyway?

It seems to me that if working-class people want to buy at wholesale prices rather than retail, and this means a saving of around 30%, they should do just that and not compete with capitalists in running capitalist enterprises.

Consider the average Canadian family with two or three children. This family will spend over $100 per month on food. If this food was bought wholesale instead of retail it would cost around $70 per month. This saving is something worthwhile. Suppose a hundred families joined together to form a "Mutual Aid Store" and paid a monthly membership fee of $6. This would provide $600 per month, which would pay the wage of a store manager. If food was sold at wholesale prices plus 5%, this would mean a further $350 per month ($70 worth of food per family per month = $7,000; 5% of this = $350) which would be used to rent a store, pay for heat and light, etc., and leave something over for emergencies. I am not thinking of a big flashy store, but of a room big enough to store the food in and to serve as office for the store manager.

This would be a different kind of co-op store, no interest paid to capitalistic investors, no expenses of running a big flashy store, no advertising expenses, *but* a 20% or more saving on food costs to members.

BILL GREENWOOD

Workers act on housing

SCOTLAND'S new towns have been making news recently. First was the strike of bus workers at East Kilbride (in solidarity with a sacked comrade, a Welshman). Then, again at East Kilbride, there was trouble at the Sunbeam factory, sparked off by the high-handed attitude of the American management. Now from Cumbernauld comes news of a rent strike by tenants, who are refusing to pay increased rents.

The general manager of Cumbernauld New Town Development Corporation, Mr. G. R. B. McGill, explained, "The Corporation is appointed by Parliament and is duty bound to get a reasonable return on its properties. If we did not do this, we would be in trouble." The Corporation sent missives to tenants notifying increases of up to 6s. 11d. and warned that those who did not return the missives would be evicted. The tenants gave their answer at a meeting held in Cumbernauld High School, when over 800 men and women handed missives to a Rents Action Committee.

Bob Winter, chairman of the Action Committee, told the meeting. "Since 1963 our rents have gone up 120%—much more than wages. Before the present increase we tied with East Kilbride for having the highest rents in Scotland—we don't want the record."

Mr. Winter went on to explain that annual increases had caused a feeling of great insecurity. The Corporation refuse to give any assurance for the future. Most of Cumbernauld's inhabitants come from Glasgow to seek a new and better life, but they are learning the hard way that new towns have old problems, the problems of a class society, which can only be removed, in the last analysis, with the removal of the exploiting class.

The tenants of Cumbernauld should beware the tactic of "Divide and Rule." This is a favourite weapon of bureaucracy. During the great Clydebank Rent Strike evictions were impossible in daytime, so they were carried out at night. Still men and women would rise from bed to defend their neighbours' homes. The bureaucrats would deliberately choose as their victims those who were comparatively better off. Furniture would be auctioned in the street to pay outstanding rent. Yet the bidding, often for good pieces of furniture, rarely went above a penny. And when the officials retreated in despair, the bidders would help the evicted tenant carry his tables and chairs back in. This is the kind of solidarity which can defeat rent increases. This is the kind of solidarity which can point the way forward to a better society.

DAVE COULL

Direct Action

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION, BRITISH SECTION OF INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION

Easter in London . . .

THE CND hierarchy, headed by Mesdames Peggy Duff and Olive Gibbs, had planned for this year's Easter March from High Wycombe to end in Trafalgar Square with the usual innocuous and platitudinous speeches. Had they not made the mistake of selecting as one of the speakers Labour MP Stan Orme, from the brigade whose "leftism" does not extend to voting against Wilson's foreign and military policy, they might have got away with it.

But, coupled with the refusal to allow a libertarian speaker, this enraged the large contingent—about 1,000 strong—behind the black-and-red banners on the road from High Wycombe. And when the Trafalgar Square meeting began, the platform was confronted with massed red-and-black banners in the forefront of the crowd. Orme's speech was rendered inaudible by concerted chanting of "hypocrite", "Go home, you bum" and similar epithets. Two Ilford libertarians, Del Foley and Ron Bailey, who had earlier attempted to seize the microphone, were carted off by police. And skirmishing developed between the police and the front ranks of the crowd during which coppers' helmets flew high and several banners—including those of the SWF and Wandsworth Libertarians—were seized by the "law". The *Daily Worker*, not yet rechristened *Morning Star*, predictably eulogised Orme and referred to "a small but vociferous bunch of anarchists."

During the March, the Communist contingents had carried paper Vietcong flags—thoughtfully provided for them by the Trotskyist "Week" group. Comrades, comrades!

DIRECT ACTION REPORTER

. . . and Scotland

ON EASTER Saturday, 95 young people marched from Pitrearie to Rosyth Naval Yard, cradle of Britain's Polaris submarines. Four comrades had been carrying on a combined fast and leafletting campaign there. The reception had been not too bad. There was a similar campaign against Polaris two years ago, but no concrete results have emerged.

The greatest obstacle is the lack of alternative local employment. It is due to the closing of the West Fife pits that many of the men started work in the yard anyway. The dockyard leaflet might have pointed out that Tyne and Wearside civil shipyards are screaming for craftsmen and offering high wages.

After, led by four comrades carrying a coffin inscribed "Vietnam", we trudged on to the Scottish bureau-rats' deep shelter at Corstorphine. A leaflet dealt with the emergency regulations, e.g., death without trial for disobeying the orders of the gauleiters of Gotterdammerung. So much for the abolition of the death penalty (which operates also against setting fire to Royal Dockyards—like Rosyth).

Finally, we marched to the War Memorial at the Mound, Edinburgh, where despite police obstruction the coffin was set down and a vigil held.

The Scottish YCL was away in London on orders.

SASSENACH

Watch Wilson on Vietnam

ENOCH POWELL, that stalwart representative of unrepentant 19th Century Toryism, threw one of the few stones into the stagnant water of a General Election campaign which more than justified our view that Tory and Labour today are as alike as Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

Powell's allegation was that the Wilson Government had been preparing the despatch of troops to aid the US war against Vietnam. The embarrassment of Labour spokesmen was unmistakeable. We think they did protest too much. Repeatedly L. B. ("Jughead") Johnson has made it clear that he expects more backing in troops from his "allies" (so far the only support he has received of this kind has come from South Korea, Formosa, Australia, New Zealand and Fiji). But he who pays the piper ultimately calls the tune. And Britain's financial dependence on US capitalism gives Johnson the opportunity to tighten the screws on Wilson, whenever he wishes.

The morass of South Vietnam, whose puppet military government of Marshal Ky survived only by using American-supplied bayonets and tear gas against universal opposition, is one for which Johnson and the Pentagon's only answer is, "Pour in more troops." Sooner or later in this situation, the demand will be made for British troops. And Wilson will send them, unless he is made to realise that the people of this country have no interest in—and will not tolerate—a war to consolidate yet another American military base in Asia.

The mass demonstrations in South Vietnam make it clear that the people of this war-torn country, where the rat population swarms and bubonic plague is spreading, want, above all, to be left in peace. Even the army is split against the military government. From Da Nang, Hue and Saigon have come daily reports of demonstrations and unrest and the Ky dictatorship, which already controlled less than one-third of the country, was exposed in all its unpopularity.

A wise man of the Orient, Lao-Tse, once wrote that, "Where armies have been there follow lean years." Vietnam, ravaged by war, pestilence and hunger, is a tragic and timely reminder of his words.

We want no part of this war. The price of freedom from involvement in it is eternal vigilance against intervention by the Labour Government with British troops.

GROUP NOTICES

LONDON: Weekly meetings at Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Road, WC1 (5 min. Kings Cross Station). Wednesdays at 8.0 p.m. (Note: change of day and time).

LONDON : SWF Industrial Action Sub-Committee (London). Readers wishing to help in the work of this committee are asked to contact the Secretary, c/o 34 Cumberland Rd., London E.17.

Open-air-meetings every Sunday, Hyde Park, 3 p.m.

ABERDEEN: Contact R. Comrie, 288 Hardgate, Aberdeen. Regular meetings.

BIRMINGHAM AND W. MIDLANDS. Contact Peter Neville, 12 South Grove, Erdington, Birmingham 23.

BRISTOL: Contact Mike Davis, 130 Chesterfield Road, Bristol 6.

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

HULL & E. YORKS: Contact Jim Young, 67 Sandringham Street, Hull.

LIVERPOOL: Contact Vincent Johnson, 43 Millbank, Liverpool 13.

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

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

SOUTHALL: Enquiries to Roger Sandell, 58 Burns Ave., Southall, Mddx.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS: Contact J. D. Gilbert Rolfe, 4 Mount Sion, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

WITNEY: Contact Laurens Otter, 5 New Yatt Road, North Leigh, nr. Witney, Oxon.

TROTSKYISTS AND THE GENERAL STRIKE

HAVING BEEN INVOLVED in the General Strike (the 40th anniversary of which falls this month) from the first to last hour, I read with decreasing hope of information an article on the subject in the Trotskyist *Newsletter*. Sadly I realised that in May, 1926 the writer must have been exiled in a remote part of Mongolia and had not yet caught up with the news. A great part of Robert Black's essay, "Trade Unions and Politics" is a lying, dirt-slinging attack on Syndicalism, a further big chunk an attack on the official Communist Party, a eulogy of Trotsky and Lenin and a few references to Tories and Labour leaders, all built about the theme of the General Strike, in an attempt to justify parliamentary, as opposed to industrial action.

The Trotskyist in his argument in favour of parliamentary action quotes, strangely, the experience of the Socialist Party of France: "This process of corruption reached a very advanced stage in France when Millerand accepted a post in a capitalist Cabinet as far back as 1899. Eleven years later Briand, another Socialist, broke a national railway strike [the railways were nationalised. T.B.] by conscripting all railwaymen into the army and placing them under military discipline". What a strange example to be quoted by a party that urged nationalisation of railways in Britain!

Black cites Sorel and Hervé as the leading theoreticians of Syndicalism. Sorel was not a Syndicalist; he was an intellectual who, in common with his fellows, looked for ideas and material to the workers' movement and tried to build a mystique upon it. Hervé was a Socialist and a politician.

LYING STATEMENTS

Black goes on to accuse the Syndicalist movement of deliberately helping the victory of Fascism in Italy: "Because the Syndicalist movement based itself on capture of power by the trade unions it became an easy prey for the Fascist demagogy of 'National' syndicalism and the corporate state." This and many other lying statements about Syndicalism are made by the *Newsletter*, including this gem: Many of the Syndicalist theorists found their cult of violence best exemplified in the mass slaughter of the First World War and after that war the same Syndicalists ended up in the various Fascist groupings that mushroomed up."

World War I premier Lloyd George, afterwards the Communists' pet, thought differently. He denounced Syndicalism as the chief enemy of the war effort; industrial action he feared, political opposition he laughed at.

As to Fascism, we Syndicalists will place the record of our movement against that of parliamentarians, Socialists and Communists—all brands. Fascism triumphed in Italy, despite speeches in parliament by Socialist politicians who had paved the way for it by sabotaging the Syndicalist-inspired occupation of the factories two years earlier. In Austria and in Germany, where a big, wealthy and well-organised Socialist Party and a huge Communist Party existed, with military units, Reichsbanner and Red Front fighters, Nazism triumphed with hardy a whimper of protest. In both countries, these parties and their splinter groups carried Marx's portrait as a banner.

Fascism found easy victories until it met in Spain, 1936, a Syndicalist movement which fought it at the barricades (despite Engels' dictum that the days of the barricades were over and that voting would bring the Revolution) and stopped the runaway politicians at the frontier.

And the parliamentarians? The big governments of Europe, united in the so-called Non-Intervention Committee, guaranteed arms to Franco, but denied them to the Republic. The British Labour Party, which the Trotskyists call on the workers to vote for, supported the Tory Government in this "non-intervention", an undisguised support of Fascism. Italy and other Fascist governments, of course, joyfully gave their support. But what of the Soviet Union, ruled by "the Party of Marx and Lenin?" It too, put its name to the "Non-Intervention Pact", its very name a satanical lie. The triumph of Fascism, despite the heroism of the Spanish workers, which should have inspired a Europe-wide uprising against the Fascists, was possible because of the treachery of the Labour Party; the Russian Government, the Socialist parliamentarians, as well as the Tories, Nazis and other brands of politicians.

I recall that, at the time, a leading Trotskyist, Jock Haston, urged me to go with him and join the Labour Party, of which he was later to become a prominent figure!

Black, going on to speak of the second Labour Government, 1929-31, and the betrayal which ended that government in suicide, speaks of MacDonald, who switched, within an hour, from being Labour premier to being premier of a Tory-dominated cabinet. Hardly a good advertisement for parliamentarism. As Trotskyists talk of "right wing" and "left wing" MPs, it is well to remember that MacDonald was elected leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party as a *left winger*, pushed by the votes of the Clydeside "red men" against the *right winger*, J. R. Clynes. Wilson, too, made his name as a left during the Korean War and the resignation of Bevan.

CLASS CONFLICT HIDDEN

Black, like most Trotskyists, uses the term Tory, not so much to identify a political sect, as to identify it with the employing class, thus hiding the class conflict behind a political screen. But the Liberals were then just as bad as the Tories, perhaps worse. It was a Liberal government which sent armed police and soldiers to fire on strikers and jailed Syndicalists who called on the soldiers not to kill their fellow workers and which, put in office by Labour votes, executed Irish prisoners, including the wounded James Connolly, in the 1916 Easter Rising. During the General Strike, all Liberal MPs, right and left, supported the Government wholeheartedly.

But the Trotskyist centrepiece, around which their argument is built, is the doctrine of Lenin: "In *Left Wing Communism*, Lenin warned the British Communists of the necessity to work inside the reformist trade unions, the Labour Party and also Parliament . . . Lenin insisted that the British Communists fight to return a Labour Government . . . After the election of a minority Labour Government at the end of 1923, Lenin's struggle and the intervention of the Comintern began to bear fruit."

What fruit, lawyer Lenin? Betrayal of the General Strike, a government, 1929-31, which did *nothing* but carry on capitalism and ended in the great 1931 betrayal, support of yet another world war, the rule of 1945-51, with attacks on shop stewards and strikers, with wage freeze and anti-TU laws and courts, the Korean War, the Colonial wars and friendship with Franco. A Labour Party pledged to capitalist measures against wage workers, too strong for Tories to implement. A party "of Labour", which, as to MPs is almost completely barred to wage workers. What rotten fruit!

Lenin persuaded William Gallagher to drop his anti-parliamentary stand, Black says. To what end? Gallagher never had to join a dole queue or work in a factory again. At the end of his parliamentary career he was praised by Tory MPs, "the House had mellowed him", and he praised the Pope. Oh, Briand! Oh, MacDonald!

TOM BROWN

An open letter to the Labour Leader

DEAR HAROLD,

Well, what a walkover! What a triumph! I feel, though, that this is just the time when you may need my advice and suggestions more than ever, though perhaps you wouldn't think so.

You see Harold, you're such a supremo now that you may feel there's nothing more to struggle for except this High Noon thing you're playing at with Ian Smith. But just look at the opportunities as I see them.

First, no more elections! Why should you, in your greatness, bother with the annoyance of having even to pretend to kow-tow to the workers that we both so rightly despise. Just tell them straight, Harold—they love being kicked in the teeth, as we've just seen—that from now on the ballot's obsolete. Anyway, the Tories know you're a Tory P.M. so they'll soon pack it in and fall in line behind you. Then you'll have what you really want—a one-party State.

Then you could really start moving. First, I think it's time to change the name England—you've made it stink nearly everywhere, so change it. What to? Wilsonia, of course—the only possible name.

Next, the BBC. I'm glad to see you've begun to take that over. How about HW1 and HW2? And get rid of that treasonable John Bird, Harold—I warned you last time. I think it's the Tower for him.

Then there's the Queen. I think it's time to do something about her, now. You see, she still takes the limelight. She's only got to put on a tiara and turn up somewhere and no one looks at you. That's got to change, Harold—you can do these things, now that you've got the power.

And Philip, too—he's almost as bad. He makes you look a common little spiv any time he appears and all that sharp witty talk of his shows up all the corny, hackneyed stuff you put over so well when there's no competition. That's what you've got to stamp out now, Harold—any sort of competition. Fortunately, you've nothing to fear from your own crowd for, if anything, they look an even worse set of crooks and snides than you do.

This will leave you free to deal with Smith, and you're going to need all the time you can get. For one thing, to keep those Africans happy you'll have to go on these gun parties yourself soon—otherwise you'll have to let them send troops in on Smith, Verwoerd and Salazar and goodness knows how many you'll get involved with before old Bottomley stops horsing about.

But what splendid headlines you'll get, Harold—pictures of you like Churchill in naval rig embarking and disembarking on this frigate and that cruiser! Don't let the Navy Brass get in on the act Harold. You're really going to be a world figure on this one. Leave the Gannex coat behind. You're into the big-time glamour stuff and who's going to bother about housing shortages and pensions and 3½% norms when they can sit and watch Wilson ruling the waves. And if you finally set Africa aflame the opportunities will be even greater.

Just before I close, Harold—what did you do to George Brown? Bro. Grundyman was asking at our last meeting—he says that even George doesn't seem to know whether he's been promoted or demoted and neither does anyone else. Anyway, be sure that whatever shady tricks you get up to on behalf of the great British Nation, you can always rely on my regular letter to keep you posted as to what goes on at Ward level in the stalwart ranks of our great middle-class movement.

Yours fraternally,

JIMMY WIGGINS

AT THE HUSTINGS

OUR EDITORIAL article for March was reprinted as a leaflet for distribution during the General Election. Our old, slow-running press ran overtime and thousands of copies were distributed throughout the country. Here are comrades' reports of two reactions:

* * *

MOLLOY, the Labour MP for the marginal seat of Ealing North (he has a majority of 27) has recognised our existence! He was given your leaflet ("Pink or Blue, It's just the same") not long ago and at his meeting yesterday, just as we were leaving, he said: "I would just like to add this. Some people will say that there is no difference between Labour and Tory Party" cheers of "Hear! Hear" from back), then he went on to say a load of claptrap about the Tories being bred from the upper class, whilst the Labour Party members had worked their way up and all that baloney.

Northolt Park, Middx. **JEAN McLEAN**

* * *

THE SCENE: waste ground by Woolworths, North Shields on a Saturday morning. The sound: "Prices and Incomes, God Save the Pound, East of Suez, Productivity, Prices and . . . " The Labour candidate, Dr. Gordon Adams of the Coal Board, is addresing himself to the bored and bewildered population . . . "And now, are there any questions?"

A young man who has been quietly leafletting the crowd steps forward. He is refused the microphone.

"Would you agree that the way you sold the Incomes Policy at the last election, as a means of enabling lower-paid workers to close the gap with the higher-paid, has worked as a fraud on such people who voted Labour, since the policy has amounted to an attempt at a general wage freeze?"

Not a very good question. It gives the candidate too much elbow room " . . . teeth. Wait till we've got it going." What is more, before letting him answer, the agent, who has now read one of the leaflets, gives the questioner a few unasked-for words of abusive introduction to the crowd . . . "Syndicalism went out of date eighty years ago . . . has no place under a socialist government . . . " The young man shouts back, "Do I look as if I went out of date 80 years ago?" And the crowd start reading the leaflets.

Try again. "Why can no Labour Government let people get greater job control?" Bullseye! The candidate has obviously never heard of job control. There are a few fumbling moments of consultation. The agent steps forward.

"And now our next question is from a Youth Leader, who wants details of our Programme for Youth." He reads the question from a typed list—and the candidate rolls out a few more unctuous platitudes. The original question remains unanswered. The point is not missed by the crowd.

The questioner distributes the last of his leaflets and a general discussion breaks out between him and bystanders. People turn their backs on the intruding amplifier. The meeting comes to an end without further questions. People disperse, reading their leaflets and arguing.

Leaflets were also distributed house to house in North Shields and also throughout a monstrous grey-brick council barracks. Syndicalism is kicking hard for an octogenarian ghost.

Newcastle-on-Tyne. **P.R.**

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HOMELESS UNDER FIRE IN KENT

MANY people will have read, in the papers, of the renewed attacks launched by the Kent County Council against the homeless people living at King Hill Hostel, West Malling.

This is the place where husbands are prevented from staying with their wives and children (despite the fact that the Hostel is nowhere near full and despite the fact that the nature of the accommodation provided—separate family units—would make it quite possible for husbands to be admitted).

The Kent County Council has been granted injunctions forbidding husbands from even visiting their wives, except at weekends. These families are being broken up in their hour of greatest need.

The Kent Council Council is also seeking to limit visits to the Hostel by those actively engaged in campaigning on behalf of these families.

The Kent County Council is finally seeking to limit the stay of families in this "welfare" accommodation to an arbitrary period of three months. The families are then threatened with eviction and with the children being "taken into care". A court case on this issue is pending.

An old Poor Law mentality dominates all the thinking of the KCC. They think that by making accommodation at King Hill intolerable families will be induced to do anything rather than stay there.

In acting in this manner the KCC are openly flouting several written recommendations made to them by Mr. Kenneth Robinson, Minister of Health, who is ultimately responsible for Part III Accommodation under the National Assistance Act, 1948. The legality of the KCC's "rules" is highly doubtful and will be challenged in the courts at a later date. In the meantime these inhuman and bureaucratic practices are being directly challenged by other methods.

The campaign launched by the Friends of King Hill to draw widespread attention to this intolerable state of affairs must continue and develop. We need every possible help (financial, moral and material) to continue our activities. Please be generous. Collect among your friends and workmates and send every penny you can spare to our Treasurer, Dr. Don Bannister, 27 Meadow Walk, Wilmington, near Dartford, Kent. All monies sent will be acknowledged.

On behalf of the Friends of King Hill,
Jim Radford, Chairman,
5 Clockhouse Road, Beckenham, Kent.
Andy Anderson, Secretary, 40 Tudor Close, Dartford, Kent.

The full story

The rebellion of the Kent homeless has won the admiration of people throughout the country. A small group of working class families, in desperate circumstances, have pitted themselves against a powerful and reactionary local authority that treats them as second class citizens. They have refused to remain passive while their families are systematically destroyed for the sake of administrative convenience. Their tenacious struggle has focused public attention on the incredible workhouse mentality that still persists, not only in the Kent County Council, but in County Halls throughout Britain.

A large booklet, profusely illustrated and entitled

"K.C.C. VERSUS THE HOMELESS"

tells the full story to date. Price 2s. post paid (six copies 10s., 12 for £1, bulk discount rates on orders of 24 copies or more), it is available from Heather Russell, 53A Westmoreland Road, Bromley, Kent. Cheques and p.o.s should be made out to Heather Russell.

Letter

DEAR COMRADE,

I was more than surprised to read the distorted account in DIRECT ACTION (March) of what I said at a recent meeting in Glasgow. The report was by R. Lynn. I did not use the word "shame" when I spoke on the Fairfield affair. I criticised the leaders for what I regarded as a sell-out. R. Lynn's report is based on what he was told by "an S.W.F. member". My attitude is well known and I do not propose to labour it.

R. Lynn shows a desire to connect the Fairfield thing with the fact that I was once a member of the Communist Party. No one has been more critical of the Communist Party during the last 13 years than I have been, but I was once a member and I must not be forgiven for that. I joined the Communist Party when, despite its many weaknesses, it advocated proletarian revolution. I gave service to it because I believed in its aims. Should I apologise for that? I remained in it far too long, but I don't feel inclined to confess my sins to Father Lynn and ask for absolution.

Now that I am writing to you, I would like—with your permission—to refer to the letter from Allen Elliott. Marx did not write *Capital* just because he was interested in political economy. He made it quite clear that he turned to that subject to find confirmation for philosophic convictions. Marx, from 1844 onwards, was concerned about freedom. That is what *Capital* is about. As for his politics, the fundamental principles laid down in the *Communist Manifesto* are still sound.

To return to R. Lynn, I would like to hear of the time when I opposed workers' control.

Yours fraternally,

Glasgow, S.W.1. HARRY McSHANE

ABARCA FREED

FRANCISCO ABARCA, the Spanish Libertarian Youth militant, whose arrest and imprisonment by the French authorities, under threat of deportation to Swizerland we reported last month, is free. When he appeared in Court, a decision on his case was deferred and Abarca released. Wisely taking no chances, he returned to Belgium, a country which has assured him political asylum.

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS

WHAT'S UP WITH THE APPRENTICESHIP?—Industrial Youth pamphlet, 5d postpaid from UIY, 20 Nora St., Salford 7, Lancs.

BARROW ANARCHIST YOUTH—Contact Bill Corr, 72, Powerful St., Barrow-in-Furness, Lancs.

WORKERS' CONTROL IN OUR SCHOOLS!—Readers interested in the formation of a Libertarian Teachers' Association for the promotion of freedom in education please contact A. W. Taylor, Basement Flat 1a, 10 St. Georges Terr., London, N.1., or P. A. Ford, 102, Stotfield Road, Arlesey, Beds.

RESISTANCE—Committee of 100 Bulletin, 6d. From 32a Fellows Road, London N.W.3.

OXAN—Quarterly bulletin of Oxford Anarchists. Specimen copy 1s. from L. Otter, 5 New Yatt Rd., North Leigh, Witney, Oxon.

WANDSWORTH LIBERTARIAN YOUTH — Contact Adrian Morris, 26 Openview, Earlsfield, S.W.18.

WEST HAM ANARCHISTS—Contact Karl Taylor, 98 Clova Road, E.17 (MAR 0316).

CIRCUS GOES ON, IN DUBLIN

ACCORDING to the ILO the Irish Republic had the highest strike-rate in the world last year. This year appears to be developing a similar record. During March there were strikes and threats of strikes in CIE (the national transport), Aer Lingus, the Electricity Supply Board, the breweries, docks and paper mills, as well as many minor industries. The immediate cause for many of these disputes was the break-down in talks for a national wage agreement, similar to that of January, 1964. Others were a result of claims for five-day week, reduced hours and service pay.

This year celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Rising in 1916, the objectives of which some people will claim have not been realised in the present Irish Republic. This is obviously true, inasmuch as the Rising, engineered by elements of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, aimed at a 32-County Republic. The loss of six counties has been the source of much trouble between 32-County Republicans, the British authorities in Westminster and Stormont and the authorities of Dail Eireann.

If the present regime in the Republic can justify any claim of relationship with the Rising, then clearly the Rising was a futile effort by some working-class forces, who participated in the Irish Citizen Army.

Ireland is in for some excitement this year and I don't mean the circus fanfare and bull associated with the Easter celebrations, or whatever pranks may be staged by people acting in the name of the Republic, but really in the interests of those wanting continuation of the present geographical and social set-up. Actions such as blowing up Nelson Pillar do not advance the interests of the Irish working class one jot, but the defeat of Dr. Noel Browne in the election of April, 1965, did great damage to their interests.

Space does not permit me to comment on both 1916 and 1966 but it is necessary to comment on the past in order to prove a point about the present. Obviously if the working class had taken the right decision in 1918, we would not have a society where there is a mushroom crop of strikes which duplicate the pattern of the US in having no objective other than attempting to deal with the effect of being a neo-colonialist poor relation of Imperialism, instead of dealing with its root cause. Any attempt to tackle the root cause is thwarted by the intellectually bottling effect of a medieval-ist Church that dictates what you will do from the moment you wake up to when you go to bed—and does not even stop there, because contraceptives are not available in the "free, liberated" zone of Ireland. What a farce! How much longer are we to listen to the pontificating bull of priests, bishops, politicians and clerical-educated Trade Union leaders, whose sole claim to education comes from being brainwashed in the Church's sausage machine—the Catholic Workers' College? All this is covered by that holy term on every clerical tongue —spiritual guidance.

Let's be frank and say that until the grip of the hierarchy is removed, the Irish working class will continue to be led up the creek, by the leaders and their strikes be less effective. More next month.

PAT KELLY

Kick one—ten limp in NE

"KICK ONE AND TEN LIMP" is the Consett, Durham version of the IWW slogan "An injury to one is an injury to all." As far as Brian Shave, steward of No. 74 shop at Vickers' Elswick works is concerned, it was a case of "Kick Brian and Four Hundred Limp."

The trouble started on March 18, when he disagreed with the foreman about how a job should be shared out—a disagreement over management. He was reported to the manager, Lt.-Comm. Lakin, who told him, "For gross insubordination to the foreman, as from this moment you are fired." Brian was not allowed to state his case or call witnesses. There was not even a noose—just OUT!

So Brian's mates, in three different unions, got out, too, as it was a clear case of victimisation. Brian (in our view unwisely) prevailed on his mates to return to work after the weekend, so that official talks could take place. Afterwards they decided that, if he were not reinstated by April 14, they would come out again. As the area secretary of Brian's union, NUGMW, put it, "I doubt whether we can hold the men back."

In the meantime, Brian remains on the engineering employers' blacklist of militants. Readers will remember it was the NUGMW who made such a pathetic showing over the victimisation of Mrs. Doreen McNally at the Blaydon Wire Works last month; she is still sacked.

There is trouble of a different kind in No.34B shop at Elswick, where two men exceeded by 20% the three-month £35 a week ceiling on piecework earnings, set at a shop-floor meeting. After several hearings, which both men agreed were very fair, they were each fined and paid £15. At a later meeting it was decided that they should show their pay slips to the works convenor. It is now possible that the men will lose their union cards.

The whole affair has got as much publicity in the North East as the "noose" trial had nationally. The two men's complaint seems to be that they are being stopped from providing for their families and that they are shocked by this restriction on the Government's call for greater productivity.

What seems to have been missed in the welter of opinion and comment, except by one ILP member who got a letter published in the local paper, was that in the first place the two men were in simple breach of shop floor democracy. And secondly their arguments about not being able to support their families—on £35 a week—without working harder, would, if universally followed, lead rapidly to a capitalist law of the jungle on the shop floor, with rates reduced, norms raised and weaker, older and less skilled men thrown out of work. Collective solidarity would be replaced by a mercenary individualism. We hope the two men concerned keep their union cards by learning this basic lesson.

DIRECT ACTION REPORTER

LITERATURE

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE UNIONS ?	by Tom Brown	**4d**
WORKERS' CONTROL	**SWF Pamphlet (2nd printing)**	**6d**
HOW LABOUR GOVERNED, 1945-1951		**6d**
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THE BOMB, DIRECT ACTION AND THE STATE		**6d**
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