

Direct Action

For workers' direct control of industry

Inside—Lessons of BEA and Courtauld strikes
Background to Vietnam
Report from Canada

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWMA)

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BOLIVIAN MINERS HIT BACK

ON November 14, 1964, the mob was in La Paz, capital of Bolivia, very carefully prepared to hang president Paz Estenssoro. On that same night, General Ovando very carefully lined the road to the airport with soldiers, had the airport itself surrounded. He led the president, whom he and General Barrientos were ousting, to the aeroplane that would take him to exile. Juan Lechín, former miners' leader, who had been hiding in the mines, and is now the avowed enemy of Paz Estenssoro, came out to join forces with the military junta.

General Barrientos was declared president with General Ovando, but anger over Paz Estenssoro's cheating the hangman's noose caused trouble and Ovando had to step down. Some said Ovando had helped Estenssoro get away because he had answered "Yes" to a million-dollar question, namely "A million if you let me go". Others said it was only loyalty which had made Ovando aid Paz. In the end, the Army,

destroyed by the people in the revolution of 1952, had been created all over again by Paz Estenssoro, and the generals Ovando and Barrientos were his creations. Gratitude knows no bounds.

Lechín became a figurehead for the miners. Conditions worsened as the months went by, while the government, through the press, was busy saying how much had been stolen by all the socialist politicians under Paz Estenssoro. But that theme would wear out soon and, besides, the Americans were putting on pressure.

The Americans said the miners in Bolivia could offer only a syndicalist dictatorship. They also said the Army could only offer a military dictatorship. They chose the Army as their pals and told them to annihilate the miners. Preparations for the massacre had been going on for years. The Americans had supplied tanks and aeroplanes, now was the time to use them. The Army hesitated. For them, being Bolivians, knowing that the wealth of the country were the tin miners, that the miners had a right to their claims, the question was not a dictatorship of syndicalists, but syndicalists played on by politicians.

The Generals even declared that they approved of syndicalism, but only genuine syndicalism, not under the direction of politicians as it had been until Paz Estenssoro left. In short, they declared, to the Yankees' horror, that they

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Milk depot men fight bosses' private army

PRIVATE SECURITY ARMIES, uniformed as far as possible to simulate real policemen, are growing. Night guards, factory police and, lately, armoured cars to run between factory and bank. Attacks on clerks carrying money to make up wages have given impetus to the armoured car side of the business.

It is, unfortunately, generally overlooked that some of these guards carry firearms. A couple of years ago a man, true probably a bandit, was shot in a City of London street by a "security man".

Some workers are aware of this growing danger. In a North London milk bottling centre during the past few months a running contest has been carried on between the shop stewards and the panzer-corps of Securicor Ltd. Several times the car drivers have been turned away empty, after failing to produce a trade union card.

It is, by any standard, unfair that one body of men should carry this dispute. Surely it is the task of the whole labour movement.

S.G.

Aussie dockers out again

SOME 22,000 Australian dockers struck for 24 hours on two counts. The sending of Australian troops to Vietnam and the breakdown of talks over a pension scheme.

All major ports were idle except one. The Association of Employers and Waterside Labour said it would prosecute the Waterside Workers Federation. The union's general secretary said all members of the federation who took part in the stoppage had been fined, in terms of withholding attendance money.

This is not the first time Australian dockers have taken Direct Action! They struck in support of the South African boycott and against aid for Dutch imperialism in Indonesia. People who have to fight wars are the people who can stop them.

BOLIVIA, cont.

approved of workers' control as long as no parasites interfered. They still declare it and the Americans are no longer horrified, as the military junta is obeying their orders. What do words matter if one can act in another way?

As conditions got worse, Lechín was forced to speak up for the miners. He was exiled to Paraguay, welcomed by the dictator Stroessner. Nothing is known about his conversations with Stroessner, but it is known he is having a good time with the Paraguayan belles. The miners decided to come out on a general strike, Lechín the pretext, until their other grievances covered up Lechín as an excuse. No money, no machinery to work the mines, corruption and a definitive decision to hand over nothing to the Army. The Railway union and the Textile workers came out in support of the strike. It was then when the grateful people of Bolivia, those who have the money, decided that General Ovando was a good sort and asked that he be co-president with Barrientos. Two heads are better than one.

Ovando immediately began to make laws. All the miners were criminals, and out of 25,000 in the Catavi region, 15,000 were criminally lazy. The 15,000 had to be sacked. With the curfew, he said, all males from 18 to 50 should be ready to enlist at any moment and place themselves under military orders. The same males should also be available to do any kind of work the Army asked them. Those who refused would get to know the concentration camps Paz Estenssoro had built. The miners got tired and decided for direct action.

On May 24 the miners of Milluni, a small mine near La Paz of some 800 miners, decided to march on the capital after blowing up the dam that supplied water and electricity to the city. They were grassed on and the Army attacked with aeroplanes, paratroops and infantry. The bombing of the mine stopped when the miners made some soldiers prisoners and placed them in the open, where the planes were delivering their bombs. The miners' radios called all miners to a general insurrection. The generals stood firm. They refused to concede a 48-hour truce, they said they did not care a damn about the 70 soldiers held as hostages by the miners. They would march valiantly on. A few days later, they began to march on Catavi, a concentration of big mines, with 25,000 miners.

In Catavi, the miners decided for passive resistance. They hid their weapons and asked their delegates to do the same with their bodies. When the Army marched in, they found everybody sitting down. Talks were begun. The miners agreed they would work, but only at "desgano", which means with the slow movements of zombies. They refused to have anything to do with the tin once it was out of the mine, so that it piled up outside, making exports impossible. By then the generals, still firm in their ideals, still talking about true syndicalism, had lowered the figure of those they wanted sacked from 15,000 to 8,000. They had also forgotten their pledge to employ in the mines only men who had never been in a strike, or any other sort of direct action—perhaps because they found out that, apart from the miners themselves are hunting for ex-president Siles Suazo, whom they denounce nobody in Bolivia wants to be a miner. Meanwhile, they as the organizer of the general strike, thus attempting to prove that the miners are only children misled by corrupt politicians.

The "desgano" strike still goes on, the tin lies unmoved, the Army will not budge from its totalitarian position, and the Americans are getting fed up, insisting they will not tolerate a syndicalist dictatorship. Echoes of Vietnam. The

Dominican Republic is too recent an event for sending marines to Bolivia, but perhaps in a few months' time President Johnson will pluck up the courage to do so.

At least, the miners have the courage to stand firm, as they have nothing to lose but their lives and much to gain if they win. They have the solidarity of all other workers, except the peasants, who are now being pampered by the Government, desperately conducting a smear campaign against the miners among them. But even the peasants cannot be trusted. In the end, they are as much Aymara Indians as the miners.

JUAN NOVEDADES

- We appeal to British miners' lodges to pass resolutions of solidarity with their Bolivian brothers—and make them known to the Press. This may seem only token support, but its effect on morale among the miners of Bolivia would be enormous.

CND LEARNS NOTHING

THE Whitsun Conference of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament showed that the bulk of the Campaign has learnt nothing from eight months of Wilson but is still marching steadily up the parliamentary blind alley. The projects planned for the year reveal total bankruptcy. Another lobby of Parliament, another petition for Wilson's wastepaper bin, a campaign in support of the United Nations (during which all CND supporters will be asked to contribute 2s. 6d. each—so that the UN will not lack the necessary funds the next time it wants to rain napalm on Korean peasants or help murder a Congolese prime minister).

The few radical resolutions that found their way onto the agenda were all defeated. Bristol University moved that CND supporters spoil their ballot papers at the next election. The Bristol delegate said this resolution had first been put up by a member who had campaigned for Wilson in October. Another delegate exposed the futility of the Labour Left by pointing out that the bankers, Wyatt and Donnelly, the US and the Tories had all won concessions by threatening Wilson. Similarly, the only left wing that would win concessions would be one prepared to threaten him. However, the clichés about MPs who "put our case in Parliament" (but never vote for it) won the day and the resolution was overwhelmingly defeated.

The debate on CND and the unions was equally disappointing. A motion reminding CND of the importance of industrial action against the bomb brought a hysterical contribution from Walter Leach of the Executive which, with its call to Conference not to "blackmail a democratic government", could have come straight from the *Daily Telegraph*. Leach did not tell us when our democratic government asked us if we wanted the germ warfare centre at Porton, but the motion fell by the fairly narrow majority of 41-32.

Taking this into account, it is not surprising that a resolution calling for marshals not to co-operate in the harassing of marchers by police fell after the executive had allowed only a short debate. Cecil Ballantine, 1965 Easter Chief Marshal, described this year's march without once mentioning, let alone condemning, the unprovoked attack on the libertarian contingent by the police on Easter Monday.

However all is not hopeless. At last year's Youth CND Conference many present were prepared to tell the apologists for Labour and the Communists where to stick their "critical support" for Wilson and "Soviet Peace Plans".

ROGER SANDELL

VIETNAM: WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

[The following article is reprinted from the French monthly journal Informations Correspondance Ouvrières (c/o P. Blachier, 13bis Rue Labois-Rouillon, Paris 19).]

THE old French colony of Indo-China is not one unit. On one side, Cambodia and Laos are of Indian civilisation, on the other Vietnam (Tonkin, Annam, Cochinchina) are of Chinese civilisation. The following reflections concern above all Cochinchina. They are the result of my personal experiences up to 1948 and of diverse information gathered since.

To understand fully what is going on one has to realise that Indo-China's population is 98% peasant; a peasant war has been taking place, throughout successive occupations, either passively or, more rarely, in open forms.

In fact, peasant resistance has always existed, because the peasants were always oppressed, but they have no clear vision and are ready to support whatever political tendency appears to correspond to their own, to free themselves from the yoke of landowners and imperialists.

At the beginning of this century the French occupation overthrew the traditional structure (dispossessing the royalty and literati, imposing Catholicism) but basing its supremacy on the landowners. From 1868 to 1900 the secret societies (royalists seeking the restoration of the old régime) exploited the peasants' hostility towards colonialism and the big landlords. The frequent peasant risings were drowned in blood, the leaders executed.

In 1916 a secret society called "Heaven and Earth" succeeded in bringing off a peasant rising, the French forces having been withdrawn to fight in Europe. The peasants attacked Saigon jail (with cold steel and charms to make them invulnerable to bullets . . .). This resulted in execution, or penal servitude (this period is described in the book *Secret Societies in Annam*, by G. Coulit, 1926).

The condition of the peasant is unimaginable slavery. The basic cell of imperialist domination remains the traditional commune (which has nothing to do with the European village, but links scattered hamlets, where the peasants live in straw huts). The gentry—landowners—were appointed by the French to Councils to administer the commune, that is to levy taxes (on pain of imprisonment). The rich peasants are freeholders and themselves exploit, through employing agricultural workers. They are a minority, and have an easy life. The middle peasants live a life of drudgery as tenant farmers. The vast majority are poor peasants on the verge of destitution with a minute plot of land, who are obliged to work for the landowners as well. The wage-workers of the ricefields are exploited by the rich peasants and the landowners; they work the land, serve as domestics, herdsmen, etc. This entire world of peasants is exploited by imperialism, whose economic giants and rural administrators are the landowners. The bourgeoisie of the towns forms a section of the landowners.

The real peasant risings began towards 1930. Since then there has been an agreement between nationalists and Communists to win over the peasants; there was a succession of strikes, demonstrations and open peasant insurrections.

1926: strike in the arsenal; 1930: mutiny at Yen-Bay (Tonkin) started by republican nationalists, some officers shot (night of February 9/10); 1935: peasant demonstrations against taxes and villein labour; 1936, 1937: widespread strikes and peasant demonstrations, led by the Communists (Stalinists and Trotskyists: time of the Popular Front in

France). September 29, 1939: on the declaration of war, the French rounded up all militants, nationalists, religious groups, Communists and sent them to Poule-Condor (penal servitude), put them in camps in the forests, or annihilated them. 1940: peasant rising organised by the Communist Party.

The peasants know only the immediate reality: poverty through lack of land—their means of labour—the landlords who suppress them and support and profit by the French occupation (or whatever has followed it), the extortions of the colonial administration (through taxes, etc.) and the plunder and killing of the occupying troops (whoever they are). They know nothing of events elsewhere; they have no concept of socialism; they revolt, they kill the gentry, and their obsession is to have land to live on and to suppress the occupying forces.

This is what the Communist Party (founded towards 1929, the old "Nationalist Youth" transformed) proposes to the peasant: division of land and the abolition of the private landowner. It advocates "a democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants". The Trotskyist groups propose the same but advocate a "dictatorship of the proletariat". Communists and Trotskyists talk equally of national independence and peasant liberation through agrarian reform (one recognises the schemes of the *Permanent Revolution*). In Indo-China, there are only some 100,000 town workers. The Trotskyists have some working-class cells for their dictatorship of the proletariat (which is non-existent); the Communists operate in the countryside.

The Japanese occupation verged increasingly on economic plunder with the complicity of the French; poverty was indescribable. (In the Plain of Rushes at certain places the peasants had only a single sackcloth garment for each couple, the wife staying at home naked while her husband went to work.) The magico-religious sects evolved into armed bands.

On May 9, 1945, Japan threw aside the whole French administration and, until the surrender, tried to organise the country to support its troops. Young peasants were enrolled in paramilitary organisations called "Vanguard Youth". In August 1945, with the surrender, came a "political vacuum". The "organised" forces were these paramilitary organisations and the sect-bands, in which one can analyse the passage from the principle of the sect (supernatural forces, flag, symbols) to the principle of the party (impersonal, omnipresent leadership, flag, symbols).

Indo-China was partitioned at Potsdam by the famous 17th Parallel, with Chinese influence (the China of Chiang Kai-Chek from whom Mao-Tse-Tung took over the next imperialist shift) in the North, British influence in the South. The Japanese gave arms to the nationalists to create difficulties for the occupiers; the British rearmed the French freed from the camps; the CP came out on the side of the allies (Russians, Americans, British). The French relied on the sects (the leaders became generals). The peasant youth (Japanese paramilitary organisation) became the organised force of the Stalinist CP. The Trotskyists organised a

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Direct Action

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The lessons of London Airport

THE BEA stoppage by porters and other unskilled or semi-skilled workers showed up important facts of the current condition of the working class. A dispute involving a tiny fraction of the working population of this country became caught in a glare of publicity that threw into high relief the differences of interest not only between worker and boss, but within the so-called Labour Movement.

Shrieks and threats from Grunter, past President of the railway clerks' union and Wilson's Minister of Labour. A year ago the Grunter, still in opposition, warned the unions to toe the line or expect state intervention. Within 36 hours of his ministerial appointment he was condemning striking dockers. At the strike-bound airport he declared the unofficial action was "... a disgrace ... sheer viciousness". He added, "These men have the power to disrupt the lives of good people. These good people may, ere long, say they have had enough and are not going to be pushed around any longer and they will have my support." It is difficult to imagine even a Tory Minister of Labour using such threats today.

BEA is a nationalised concern. It is for more of such concerns that the left-wing opposition within the Labour Party and the unions bays daily. Yet the porters took action in defiance of "their" union officials because the officials wanted them to accept a wages deal that raised their pay a pound a week (from £11 5s.) but took away overtime rates for Sundays worked to rota. No wonder workers in nationalised industries refer to other industries as "outside".

Management met the 48-hour strike with a lockout. This word is not used by management, press, or union officials. The sack would be withdrawn on an undertaking not to engage in further unofficial action. There was no question of the lockout being official or unofficial—management was united. This brought matters to a head. Milward, BEA chairman, while calling the strike "selfish", showed that he had little regard for the much-championed grounded passengers: "I have decided that even if thousands of holidaymakers have to be let down, it is in their interests in the long run. This is a national issue."

BEA management had previously yielded to wage demands by higher paid-workers, and it chose to loose its vindictiveness on lower-paid ones. Milward boasted how easily he would replace the porters who refused to sign the pledge. This emphasised their weaker position in the labour market. But

higher-paid staff, instead of using their stronger position to back the porters, as the latter had previously backed them, scabbed unashamedly, continuing to operate the airlines, while some, with office workers, even volunteered for portering.

Throughout, TGWU bosses took a consistent line: "Back to work." Before the lockout this meant "Accept our wage deal." After the lockout it meant "Wage deal and pledge." The TU bosses took the line that the pledge was meaningless, revealingly since every wage bargainer relies on the threat of unofficial action when confronting management, even when he has signed away the official strike. The scab herders called union officials constantly find themselves in the contradictory situation of having their position undermined by unofficial action, then using the threat of it to maintain this position.

Last but not least, when strikers finally accepted the orders of the officials, came the remark of John Cousins, TGWU official, that he would have given his right arm for five years' more experience. Experience is usually the last thing lacking in union officials, who come up through a tough school; one might ask what exactly were the qualifications that got John Cousins his £24 a week post.

A Labour Minister more reactionary than the Tories, poor pay and ruthless management techniques in a nationalised industry, scabbing and lack of solidarity, all aided and abetted by union officials, a whiff of nepotism—the BEA strike had the lot. But the scabbing and lack of solidarity were the worst—and the first that must be tackled. Until workers can come together on the job they will bear the cross of the Grunters and traders who live off their divisions. When they are united they will be able to start thinking about running an airline for the community instead of for the profit of government bondholders.

GROUP NOTICES

LONDON SWF: open meetings every Friday, at the Lucas Arms, 245 Gray's Inn Road, WC1 (5 min. Kings Cross Station) 8.30 p.m.

July 2 Discussion: "Direct Action" (criticisms, etc.).

9 Subject to be announced.

16 Discussion: Problems of delegation.

23 Subject to be announced.

30 Social evening.

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

Open air meetings at East St. Market, Walworth, S.E.1, Sundays, 10.30 a.m. Help needed with lit. selling.

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.

BEDFORD: Contact Doug Holton, 47 Dunville Road, Queens Park, Bedford. Weekly meetings.

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

BRISTOL: Contact S. Gannon, 22 Hampton Road, Cotham, Bristol 6.

DUNDEE: Meetings every Saturday, 2.30 p.m. at Mike and Alison Malet's, 20 South George Street, Dundee.

GLASGOW: Contact Ron Alexander, c/o Kennedy, 112 Glenkirk Drive, Glasgow W.5.

Meetings at Horseshoe Bar, Drury Street, Tuesdays, 8.00 p.m.

HULL & E. YORKS: Contact Rod Baker, 6 The Oval, Chestnut Avenue, Willerby, E. Yorks.

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

MANCHESTER AND 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, Middx.

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.

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French Canadian workers on the move

WILF is a French-Canadian and a skilled technician in the pipe trades. His native tongue is French, but he is completely bilingual. His home is in western Canada where he was born and raised and, except for one occasion he has never set foot in Quebec.

His visit to Quebec arose in this manner: the company he worked for in western Canada bid on, and won, a contract for a big job in Quebec. Looking for a suitable superintendent to send to this job the company chose Wilf who, as well as being technically qualified, spoke both French and English. His arrival on the job caused a sensation. The company had unwittingly broken an unwritten law that in Quebec French-Canadians are not made foremen or supervisors. The system was to always appoint English-speaking, non-French-Canadian, foremen who were often unable to speak French.

As most of the workers were French-Canadian and many of them could speak no English, it was impossible for the foremen to communicate with the workers. He got round this little difficulty by finding a bilingual French-Canadian who became the *de-facto* foreman. The official foreman gave his instructions to his unofficial French-Canadian deputy, then sat back while he saw to the work being done. The workers could not believe that Wilf was both supervisor and a French-Canadian, so rigidly was this unofficial law enforced.

This event occurred a few years ago and I recount it to illustrate the discrimination practised by the English-speaking minority against the French-Canadian majority in their home province of Quebec.

The existence of such discrimination makes it easier to understand the rapid growth, during the last few years, of the Confederation of National Trades Unions (CNTU) a predominantly French-Canadian labour organization. Based primarily on Quebec, the CNTU is in bitter conflict with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), which would like to control all organised labour in Canada.

The CNTU grew out of a Roman Catholic church-sponsored organization, the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour, formed in 1921 to "protect the French-Canadian worker from the menace of communism". This church-dominated body was more interested in opposing socialism than in fighting the bosses and its membership was never very large until a new type of worker began to join after the war.

These were French-Canadians who were tired of being discriminated against in their own country, tired of being exploited by English-speaking capitalists and their French-speaking hangers-on, and distrustful of the English- and American-dominated unions of the CLC.

This influx of new members led to an increase in militancy and a decrease in church influence, so that by 1960 the organisation had broken all ties with the church and was recruiting members with any, or no, religion. The organisation formally changed its name to the Confederation of National Trades Unions at this time.

The CNTU is attracting members from CLC locals in Quebec and this, together with organisational activity among the non-unionised section of the Quebec labour force, has led

to an increase in membership from 90,000 in 1959 to 150,000 in 1965. The CLC has about 235,000 members in Quebec, but is losing members to the CNTU. One reason is the greater militancy shown by the CNTU, but another is the lack of consideration shown by the CLC for its French-speaking members. For example, 560 members of the Glass Bottle Blowers Association (GLC) recently switched to the CNTU. These unionists, mainly French-speaking, had not seen an international union representative for over two years, their union charter was written in English, and to cap it all suggested that before each meeting they salute the *Stars and Stripes*!

The CNTU is unusual in that its militancy is backed by its officials as well as its members. The president, Mr. Marchand, had some interesting things to say in a recent TV interview. In reply to the charge by the CLC that he was "a fanatic whose tactics are hurting both labour and national unity", he said:

"We aren't candy salesmen dividing up the market, we are men trying to transform society . . .

It isn't in labour structures that unity is important. It is when the real interests of the workers are at stake and we are in agreement on objectives that central bodies should put aside their petty differences and fight together for the worker . . .

We aren't at war with the CLC, but we want to be free to organise workers when they want to change. Even if we were affiliated (to the CLC) we wouldn't agree to its no-raiding policy . . .

We know some workers are dissatisfied with local CNTU leadership. If we lose them, we deserve to."

Unlike the CLC, which supports the New Democratic Party, the CNTU is forbidden by its constitution from supporting political parties.

It would appear that the growth of the CNTU, both in numbers and militancy, can do nothing but good for the workers of Quebec. Those in the CNTU will reap material gains from their militancy, while those in CLC locals will also benefit, as the CLC will be forced to take more militant action to try and forestall further losses to the CNTU. Both union centres will be forced to pay heed to the wishes of their members, or run the risk of losing them.

The increase in working class militancy in Quebec today appears to be part of the general social ferment in that Province. Young people are rejecting the dictatorship of the Catholic Church and the corrupt political bosses who together ruled the province for so long. Even the Québec Liberal Party, presently forming the provincial government, reflects this ferment: it is more left-wing than the allegedly socialist New Democratic Party.

Conditions appear favourable for the development of a libertarian movement in Quebec. There are anarchist groups in Montreal and news from them would be welcome.

BILL GREENWOOD

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VIETNAM, cont.

"workers' platoon"—embryo of a military organisation (Saigon tramways). Everyone was worn out.

It was in these conditions that the rebellion broke out. The CP methodically developed its plan for taking power. In Saigon for the first time there was an amazing demonstration 300,000 strong. Most were peasant youth under Stalinist control, but there were also tattooed brigands, naked from the waist up and Buddhist sects . . . armed. The CP manoeuvred to form a provisional government. It promised the peasants land and the suppression of taxes. The following day the government of Ho Chi-Minh was proclaimed in the South. The rearméd French attempted to occupy Saigon. On September 29, 1949, street fighting broke out. The situation was confused; the peasants withdrew. The CP organised the underground (assassinating all its opponents: Trotskyists, nationalists, magico-religious)—in effect, a true state, a state in embryo, was at war with France and now with the U.S.A.

The war has continued up to the present in this form. The peasant always dreams of what he has been promised; he in no way sees the global aspect of things. At the level of his commune there is always an American occupying force, squires who sponge off him; he undergoes war, pillage and the rest. If he revolts he has no resources other than to take to the underground, which is controlled by the Communist

SOLIDARITY WITH BARRY EASTER

SEVERAL SWF members were among the London marchers who on Saturday, May 29 joined in protecting Barry Easter of the REME, stationed at Bordon, Hants, as he took part in a protest against the war in Vietnam.

As the section of the procession in which Comrade Easter, in uniform and carrying a placard, entered Trafalgar Square for the final rally, a gang of military police tried to grab him. Marchers round him closed up and linked arms. One Redcap, the largest, was dragged backwards from the crowd by the scruff of the neck and had his uniform ripped in two.

The marchers, moving slowly forward all the time, would certainly have reached the steps for which they were heading had not the civilian police joined in, apparently without any direction since they were pitching out marchers from the crowd and then hurling them back into it. Eventually Barry Easter was arrested, and after being taken back to camp was apparently given a comparatively minor punishment, though details of his treatment on the way are as yet the subject only of speculation.

Five other comrades were arrested by the police, quite arbitrarily, and charged with "using threatening behaviour". The incident, though featured in several Sunday papers, was not mentioned in the report of the otherwise unremarkable demonstration in the Monday *Daily Worker*.

We express our support for all workers in uniform who wish, like us, neither to kill nor to be killed for the sake of capitalism, and for their attempts to show this.

"EVERYONE who voted last October for a new Britain now has to stand up and fight." George Brown at Leigh, Lancs., 12.6.65.

And serve them right, too!

Party and the North. As in the past, he identifies his struggle with that of the party which wishes to gain power. Instead of freeing himself, he supports another class: the bureaucracy.

In the face of such a war between states there is nothing to be done. The only problem of the "backward" countries is that of the land, but it cannot be resolved on a national basis. The poor peasants must take part in global liberation including the advanced countries as well as the others, in socialism expressing international solidarity. Otherwise, the "revolution" leads to the enrolment of the peasants in a state, in a war between national states and, openly or behind the scenes, between imperialisms.

These events allow criticisms to be made of all theories of national independence, Trotskyist or otherwise. Everywhere similar régimes can be seen installing themselves under the cover of national independence, whether or not they call themselves a "dictatorship of the proletariat".

WHAT IS TO BE DONE IN SUCH A SITUATION?

In Indo-China, choosing sides immediately means being under the totalitarian ascendancy of one or other camp, or even being eliminated by one or/and the other. Since the beginning of the war in 1945, all revolutionary opposition has been eliminated (assassinations, "accidents", etc.) by the CP. On a world scale, everything takes on its true dimension. What is to be done? If one is on the spot, one can hide, run, or try to escape the totalitarian ascendancy of one camp or the other; but in time of war between states it is difficult and dangerous to evade entanglement. If one is here, one has no right to lie and hoodwink oneself into the belief that a choice between one camp and another is a genuine issue.

We have no space to go into what is called "agrarian reform" and the division of the land between peasants. We think that under a capitalist state—directed by capitalists, bureaucrats or "workers' state"—the true liberation of the exploited and oppressed peasant is impossible, whatever the régime imposed or agreed on in line with the general aspiration of the poor peasants: "division of land" or state collectivisation is trickery for the profit of the state and is a mere alteration of the form of exploitation of peasant labour.

Ideas like workers' control have a socialist meaning only with the end of the capitalist state and only if the workers no longer exist as a working class; the end of the slavery of the peasant can take place only simultaneously with that of the worker.

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS

WANTED: People as extras for film about Spanish Civil War. I am making a film based on events in Barcelona between May 3-7, 1937. Filming sessions take place exclusively over weekends (weather permitting) and invariably in London area. For more details, please contact me at 47, Burntwood Lane, London, S.W.17 (WIM 7491). If I'm not in, please leave contact address or phone number—Pat Kearney.

INDUSTRIAL YOUTH—voice of militant apprentices and young workers. 2d. monthly from 25a Duffield Road, Salford 6, Lancs.

RESISTANCE—for Peace and Freedom. Bulletin of the Committee of 100, 6d. per copy, 10s. a year post free, cut rate on bulk orders. 13 Goodwin Street, London, N.4.

NEW FOREST ANARCHIST GROUP: Contact Ken Parkin, Old Tea House, Brockenhurst, Hants.

OXFORD ANARCHIST GROUP: Contact H. G. Mellor, Merton College, Oxford.

SURREY ANARCHISTS are invited to meetings on 1st Thursday of every month at Chris Torrance's, 63 North Street, Carshalton, Surrey (ring 3 times) and on 3rd Thursday of every month at M. Dyke's, 8 Court Drive, Sutton, Surrey. Both meetings 7.30 p.m.

S. WALES ANARCHIST GROUP: Correspondence to M. Crowley, 36 Whitaker Rd., Tremorfa, Cardiff. Lit. selling outside Home Stores, Queen St., Cardiff, Saturdays, 2-5 p.m.

Trades Councils: Rise and decline

STRANGLED BY BUREAUCRATS

A HIGH POINT in the early Trades Councils' independent political influence was reached in 1872 and 1873, when the London Trades Council intervened to cause the withdrawal of soldiers, who had been sent to break, by scabbing, the Oxfordshire and Berkshire farm labourers' strikes. The Council succeeded and not only were the troops withdrawn, but a new regulation was made, prohibiting the lending of troops to farmers "in cases where strikes or disputes between farmers and their labourers exist." (*Queen's Regulations for the Army for 1873, Article 180*). It must be emphasised that this regulation was made because of the pressure of the LTC. unaffiliated to any political party. It could not happen under a Labour Government.

About the last of such fruits was the direction, in 1908, of the Local Government Board to borough councils, that a room in the Town Hall should be reserved to the use of the local Trades Council. This was only following what many towns, including Manchester, Nottingham, Leicester and Brighton, had already done. Such a privilege added public importance to the Trades Councils, but decline was already setting in: though the Councils increased in number, their vigour was ebbing.

They suffered because the main support, trade union branches, did not always have funds to meet their affiliation fees and branches were mostly controlled from London, not Leeds or Derby. Further, few district officials and almost no national officials of trade unions took an active part in the councils. In a movement largely controlled by a full-time bureaucracy, always holding the right to veto, this had a numbing effect.

Even in its early years the council movement was threat-

ened by rigid control from the centre. In 1895 the councils this, for the TUC owed its birth to the councils: Manchester and Salford Trades Council, acting as convenor, called the first Trades Union Congress for Whit Week, 1868, at Manchester.

Even afterwards the TUC sought to discipline the councils until, just before and following the last war, they treated them like recalcitrant Young Socialist branches. After the formation of the Communist Party, the task of the General Council of the TUC became easier. The conspiratorial antics of the CP factions, with occasional paper majorities, was like manna from heaven to the disciplinarians of the TUC. When the British CP obeyed the Moscow line and tried to form "red unions" in the late twenties and early thirties, they set up a "red" and rival London Trades Council: it died, but the TUC used the object lesson.

Most readers are probably familiar with the perpendicular organisation of Syndicalism: the factory general meeting and committee of shop stewards forming the job syndicate and sending delegates to the district council of that industry; the district in turn sending delegates to the national council of the industry and all industries being affiliated to a national council of syndicates.

It is not so generally realised that the Syndicalist method needs a horizontal link-up: the affiliation of job syndicates to a local, a city, council of labour and, where appropriate, a further affiliation of the local councils to a district council of all industries and services.

Even now, with existing factory and job committees, such organisation would prove infinitely stronger than present Trades Councils, based on affiliation of trade union branches and the discipline of a centralised trade-union and political-party bureaucracy.

Of course it may seem that we leave out a large section of the working population, but when we speak of job syndicates we speak of a form of organisation suited to almost every place of work, where a commodity is produced or a service organised—mill, pit, ship, bus depot, office, theatre, hospital, school, complete the list yourself. And yet there remain the married women who work only at home. It would clearly be wise to organise women's auxiliaries even if only for special occasions such as strikes. I have seen in districts of heavy industry the great strength that working women can bring to a wage struggle. For other occasions, such as rent strikes and evictions the local industrial council could be a tower of strength.

But the council must be based on the places of work. Other proposals for local workers' committees have foundered because the subjects of activity have most usually been anything but local. Any such committee is likely to be concerned with Vietnam, the Bomb, World Government, the Chinese Revolution, United Nations Sunday and so on—good, local issues to rally the indifferent natives, with all meetings finishing up outside the American Embassy.

The human body has organs, each of which has its special function, though all are integrated. The organs of social struggle also have their special and particular functions; this is not a strict analogy, but it's near enough. The task of a workers' local syndicate begins with the man on the next bench and the next-door neighbour. The universe comes later.

TOM BROWN

Stay out of Spain!

FOREIGN TOURISM causes immediate hardship to Spanish workers and their families. Workers outside Spain can help in the struggle against the totalitarian regime by contributing directly to aid funds.

These were two of the points made by Agustin Roa, Secretary of the Liaison Committee in Great Britain of the National Confederation of Labour (CNT) of Spain in Exile, in a talk to SWF London Group on April 30.

Comrade Roa explained that many workers go to Spain on holiday because it is cheap, but even by spending what are quite modest sums, by British standards, they raise the prices of food and other necessities beyond the reach of Spanish workers. The average wage in Spain is 70 pesetas a day, enough for three pounds of sugar.

Meanwhile, the struggle is taking a very encouraging form. The slogan of "Sindicatos libres" ("Free unions") dominates all others. The smallest contribution to funds to aid victimised militants and their families has a positive effect on morale. Making a striking comparison between conditions in Britain and in Spain, Roa pointed out that when a worker goes out to demonstrate in Britain he can tell his wife when he will be back for a meal; in Spain he does not know if he will ever be back.

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

ONE OUT, ALL OUT!

THE immigrant workers' strike at Courtauld's, Preston is over. The seven hundred coloured workers have gone back, on the understanding that all strikers will get their jobs back, have their own shop steward and will have a new time-and-motion study of the extra-work scheme.

The dispute started three weeks earlier over a new working agreement, which involved one man looking after 1½ machines instead of one, and being paid 3d. an hour extra for this doubtful privilege. This was after a year of consultation. The coloured workers operated a 'sit-in', and were sacked by Courtaulds, after the T & GWU appealed to them to go back. The personnel officer of Courtaulds stated that the department could continue to operate indefinitely with the European and British workers employed there, AND IT DID JUST THAT.

An officer of the T & GWU (Courtaulds branch) stated bluntly that the union had in no way sanctioned the strike and that the new working agreement was entirely satisfactory. After which he polished his industrial medal and said "What a good trade unionist I am". When the coloured workers struck they made a very "strange" statement—they thought that unionism meant "one out all out". The shop stewards spoke of unconstitutional action and failing to help implement productivity. One can imagine how the coloured workers felt: "What's all this jazz about solidarity?"

One of the main grievances of the strikers was that they had not been fully consulted by the union before the agreement was signed. In fact they were ignored. Sorry brothers, but this type of arrangement is not peculiar to the T & GWU.

There were many disturbing aspects about the dispute. Firstly, only the coloured workers struck, yet conditions in the tyre spinning dept. are chronic, the air foul with chemicals and the noise unbearable. Two-thirds of the workers in the spinning dept. are coloured, so it can be assumed it is not a very popular job. Secondly, it still isn't clear if and when any "agreement" was ever signed, although two T & GWU officials claim there was an agreement made. The third disturbing aspect was the talk of a coloured union. How widespread the feeling is for such a venture can only be speculation. If such an idea is attempted, it would be tantamount to criminal folly. Any division between white and coloured workers would be widened to an irreparable degree. Apart from the fact that one union could be used to scab on the other.

Finally, the outside influence of a Mr. Malik Abdul Khaliq, an economist from Bradford who was accepted by the strikers

as their leader. Mr. Khaliq probably played an admirable role, but the very fact of having an outside influence could be fraught with danger.

All in all the whole strike situation was a tragedy. One can only hope repercussions are not widespread. Solidarity at rank-and-file level is a must; if that breaks down, particularly on racial divisions, then the struggle is not only over; it is lost.

SCOTLAND'S T & GWU THE BRAVE

THE following letter was received by one of our Scottish comrades.

Mr. J. McSherry,
Pay No. 8536.

DEAR SIR,

The Branch Committee is perturbed at the action taken by yourself on 26th February 1965. The facts placed before the Committee are as follows:

You asked or called out the whole of Shieldhall to support a stoppage, which was unofficial and used the Delegate's authority to apply and help you in getting the Dock to cease work. The Delegate with the Branch Committee in the area reported the facts to the Branch.

Members of the Branch Committee decided that if there is any recurrence of the methods used by you to bring the men out on unofficial stoppage, they will take action. Yours faithfully,

J. CAMPBELL,
Docks Branch Secretary,
ST & GWU

I always thought the Scottish Transport & General Workers' Union was a militant organisation . . . well, it always passes bloodcurdling resolutions. Is there something about "empty vessels"? I do like the Pay No., Dear Sir, and Yours faithfully—sounds like a real working-class organisation.

The contents of the letter are really militant, against its own member. It's the old story! Direct Action is not only frowned on by the trade union hierarchy, but is actually feared. Once the rank and file take control, soft numbers go out the window and the game of charades with employers is over.

IN CONFIDENCE TO THE WORLD

ON June 1, members of the National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants (Natsopa) received a private and confidential circular, referring to the recent pay award which was to be submitted to George Brown's Wage Freeze Board. On the morning of June 2, the radio blasted part of the contents to the whole wide world, followed on June 3, by the national press. Private and Confidential?

George Brown wanted the printers' wage negotiations deadlocked. It is reported that he tapped his old employer, Cecil King, Chairman of the International Publishing Corporation, to intervene with the British Federation of Master Printers, the idea being to persuade them not to agree to a negotiated settlement. George Brown on £9,750 a year, thinks that more than 2½% for printers is too much, as they are overpaid already.

George Brown had better keep his sticky fingers out of wage negotiations, unfortunately printers or any other workers cannot give themselves a pay rise—they are not as fortunate as MPs.

BILL CHRISTOPHER

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Libertarian Youth Summer Camp

THIS YEAR'S Young Libertarian International Camp will be held throughout August at Aiguilles-en-Queyras (Hautes Alpes) in the French Alps, north of Nice near the French-Italian border. It is located 17 miles along N202 and N547 north-east of Guillestre, midway between Aiguilles and Abriès. There are opportunities for bathing, climbing, fishing, etc. and a shop for food and drink. The second week will be particularly devoted to discussion. Campers are asked to bring their own tents, etc., though there has previously been an emergency tent provided, also cooking facilities. French, Spanish, German, Italian, Bulgarian and British (30 last year) comrades attend the camp. There is a nominal charge for site and cooking. Further information from: International Camp, c/o 34 Cumberland Road, London E.17.