

# Direct Action

For workers' direct control of industry

Inside—Print blackmail : TU bureaucrats since 1945  
The Wobblies : Seamen mark time for a year

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWMA)

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## BEHIND PRODUCTIVITY DEALS

To trade union officials and employers alike, the term Productivity Agreement has replaced the more traditional and less efficient means of destroying rank and file activity at job level.

There was a time, despite the ever-present TU-employers National Agreements, when the rank and file could negotiate at their place of work through their elected stewards and site

### Stockport fight goes on

ONCE again it has been announced that the Stockport firm of Roberts Arundel is to close. As this is the second time an announcement of this kind has been made, many workers involved in this struggle are sceptical. The picket is still taking place outside the factory and will continue until the last scab leaves.

This dispute has been going on for over a year now and has been the scene of street battles between angry workers and the police who have taken their usual role of protecting the property of the boss-class. They have beaten up pickets. Many workers who have had the misfortune to be arrested have complained about Police Brutality.

The CP has been up to its usual tactics, acting as a brake on direct action against the factory.

On the last large march, the workers were ready to invade the factory and wreck the place. But the CP had other ideas. They led the men past the gates to another part of the town where they organised a meeting.

A few weeks earlier, Pomeranz, the American boss of the company, had offered to take the men back at the rate of a few each week for a period of a couple of months. This half-hearted offer was refused by the AEU.

John Boyd, the right wing AEU official, was supposed to persuade Pomeranz to attempt a settlement. Both Boyd and Pomeranz have the same interests at heart.

They are supporters of MRA, and both would like to see the workers' job organisation smashed (Pomeranz is not so much against TUs as against the stewards). Despite these manoeuvres the strike carried on. It is now a matter of time before we find out whether this is just another tactic on the part of the management. It's to be hoped that it's curtains for Pomeranz but I think that all employers in the North West will have learnt a salutary lesson from this long drawn out strike. Let's make sure it does not happen again.

RON MARSDEN

committees to improve earnings and conditions. By maintaining a degree of control at the point of production, they could increase their standard of living by their own efforts and struggles.

Old-style National Agreements left plenty of loopholes for incentive bonus schemes and other payments to be negotiated at local level. Of course this was before Harold Wilson and his band of State planners, along with their masters, the boss class, saw a rising need to stamp out the last bastion of working class defence against the employing class, this being the shop steward organisation. This need has arisen because of the new capitalist desire to plan and regulate the national economy. The most crucial part of this planning being the effective control of wages. Without this control they the capitalist class would face the prospect that foreign investors would no longer be prepared to invest money in British industry.

### INSTRUMENT OF FOREIGN INVESTORS

The British motor industry, for instance, is already nearly completely owned by foreign investors and over 80% of total production is owned by American companies. There are plenty of similar examples in other industries.

Because of this massive ownership of British industry by foreign capitalists it can be stated with every justification that

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### More out of work in Yorkshire

WHEN a Labour Minister says he can accept without concern an unemployment figure of 3% or more, he is like the person who watched a man drowning in the river and assured him, "All is well. The average depth of water in this river is only six inches."

Most of the Labour increase in unemployment is being borne by districts, such as Wales, the NE and Scotland, where the total out of work was already high. But now some previously good areas are rapidly becoming black areas. Yorkshire and Humberside is such an area. Once good, by December 1966 it had reached 1.8%, November 1967 2.3%, December 2.4%.

No wonder Yorkshire folk are worried, fearing they will go the way of the North-East corner where out of work figures rose 2,127 over last month, 11,229 over last year to 4.4% against the national figure of 2.5. (In pre-war years 5% was called Slump.)

## PRODUCTIVITY (cont.)

any government the people elect can only become an instrument of foreign investors, to carry out their orders. The current order being to guarantee future profit levels in advance. This is the motive behind all government economic planning and restriction which has manifested itself in the form of the Prices and Incomes Board, wage freezes and productivity deals.

Obviously, no government could bring about this extensive control on wages and labour without the full support of the TU hierarchy. Over a period of many years the official TU movement has been transformed into an arm of the State machine by capitalist society, no longer representing the people who pay union dues.

The capitalist press has already admitted this fact; three years ago the *Daily Telegraph* (22.1.65), stated that the TU machines are fundamentally part of the capitalist system, and that they are subjected to an increasing measure of direct influence by society as a whole. They are deeply penetrated at different levels by ideology of the system in which they exist. This ideology is that of "leaders and led", of "the good of the country", of "law and order in industry". The tendency is more and more for unions to be run as efficient businesses, computerised and costed. Thus the AEU has had an ICI efficiency expert seconded to it on full pay. Commenting on this Jim Conway, General Secretary of the AEU, said, "We want to become as efficient as ICI or Marks and Spencers."

### HOW OFFICIALS BENEFIT

It can be seen from the attitude of the TU hierarchy that the idea of controlling and disciplining its rank and file members through the means of long term package deal agreements is in their interests as well as the capitalists.

To clarify the Government's position, George Brown made clear, in his Statement of Intent, that over the last years over 50% of all earnings were negotiated at the point of production by stewards, and this led to the "wage drift". What is needed now is that the TU officials should face up to their responsibilities and ensure that in future all wages should be related to production in the interest of the national economy, said Brown. Despite the fact that most union rank and file conferences have voted against the government's Prices and Incomes Policy, the union bureaucrats have steadily introduced productivity agreements which have reduced bonus earnings and the right to bargain at job level.

Union officials derive a great deal of benefit from productivity deals. In one agreement signed recently with the Ilford film company, Essex, the union concerned were able to guarantee 100% payment of union dues by a clause in the agreement which enabled the company to extract union dues out of the workers' wage packets, making it impossible for the rank and file members to withhold their contributions from a union which was misrepresenting their interests (very efficient: AEU please note).

### SOME ARGUMENT

Least of all the benefits the union leaders derive is a quiet life, free from any obligation to support rank and file pressure at job level in support of a claim. In fact they can now do the opposite by informing their members that the agreement signed between union and employer (without the members' consultation or consent) must be accepted to the letter; failure to do so will bring about disciplinary action by the union in the form of fines and expulsion.

In a dispute that followed the signing of a consolidated rate agreement between the CEU and Woodall Duckam Ltd., the veiled threat of expulsion was used by national officials of that union on members of the Woodall Duckams strike committee at a summoned meeting.

The argument union officials use to justify their actions in signing away hard-won rights and conditions is a very poor one; they argue that to get the higher rate strings have to be attached or the employer will not sign, but, they add, the increased rate outweighs any conditions lost. Some argument! Consider a steel erector, doing a dangerous job out in all weathers under bad conditions; he is presented with a rate of 10/6 an hour providing he doesn't have a teabreak in the afternoon, doesn't ask for condition money or bonus and must be prepared to accept the principle that the firm decides how much iron he should fix—all for the princely sum of 10/6. The non-acceptance of this principle is the sack. The idea of replacing additional payments as the incentive to work harder by the fear of the sack can be very effective, as many older worker will recall from the hungry thirties. This policy is put into operation by increasing the supervision on the job.

It is no coincidence that union bureaucrats also gain from the policy of making rank and file members submit to employers' dictates. If they submit to the employer they will also submit to official union policy, the bureaucrats will then have a guaranteed source of income of union dues for many years to come, without the trouble they used to get from unofficial industrial action by their members, leaving them more time to devote their efforts to creating efficient business enterprises like Marks & Spencers.

In a society where workers had control of industry some of the ideas embodied in productivity deals would be in the workers' interests. Flexibility of labour, reduction of overtime, reducing restrictive labour practices, all these measures would bring about more efficient industries, with all the benefits going to the people who own them, the workers. But the workers do not own industry; the capitalists do. The interests of capital and labour are directly opposed. For T.U. leaders and so-called socialist statesmen to infer that the two forces can work in harmony for their mutual interest is a tissue of lies. Employers see the productivity deal as a means of reducing costs with the labour they employ for the one and only motive of increased profit; for the worker this means wage cuts (in the Woodall Duckam agreement referred to above construction workers took an £8-10 cut in wages on the introduction of their agreement), for many it also means unemployment and the dole queue.

### WE CAN WIN

We, the rank and file, can only combat this combined attack by TU leaders and employers against our job organisations and practices by industrial action at job level. Not in piecemeal fashion, separated and split up by petty differences between one trade and another, but by building strong rank and file organisations capable of fighting this combined attack on us. The creation of liaison groups between one job and another, between one industry and another. The fact that construction workers and car workers and printing workers work in their different industries should not stop them supporting one another when they are both fighting for the same reasons.

It would be a cardinal mistake to look towards the TU leaders for support. They no longer represent us. A TU's primary commitment is not to a firm, to an industry or indeed to the nation but to the welfare of its members. The union collects our contributions and claims our loyalty specifically for the purpose of protecting our interests as we ourselves see them, not our alleged true or best interests as defined by others. When a union fails to support its members in defending practices which we regard as essential to our welfare it deserves to be called irresponsible, for it is failing to discharge the responsibility it has assumed.

With the solidarity of the workers we can win this struggle.

**DANNY REARDON**

# AN END TO BLACKMAIL

OVER the past twelve to eighteen months the plight of the newspaper industry has been exposed for all to see. Basically what it all amounts to is, struggle for circulation and advertising. This struggle is a vicious circle; if the circulation of a paper is not big enough then advertisers will not use it; and on the other hand, if a paper does not receive sufficient revenue from advertising the size of the paper in terms of paging is kept low, which in the public eye is less value for money: hence low circulation.

Again over the past years, the so-called doyens of business efficiency have advocated policies for the newspaper industry. Gleaning through the massive amount of verbiage produced, emphasis has been on "over-manning" at machine room level. It is true that managements have been criticised for inefficiency, but even then primarily for being too soft with the printing unions.

## MOMENT OF TRUTH

The printing unions by their actions have to a large extent accepted these arguments. *Reynold's News* slashed its staffing but merely prolonged its death sentence. The *Sun* underwent large economies, and is now used as a blackmailing weapon against the printing unions by Cecil King. The *Guardian* experienced a spring clean to the tune of over £300,000 in reduction of costs. The rest of Fleet Street is rationalising its labour force as hard as it can go, but obviously not hard enough for the Prices and Incomes Board (PIB) who, when the International Publishing Corporation (IPC) applied to raise the price of the *Daily Mirror* by a penny, were told to cut their manning costs by 25-30%. The IPC has already affected a 30% reduction in its production departments.

We now arrive at a situation of the "Moment of Truth". New agreements between the Newspaper Proprietors Association (NPA) and the printing unions are under discussion, with the NPA demanding further economies—from print workers.

The printing unions' proposals are moderate in the light of future possible cuts in the standard of living threatened by the Government. They are:

Consolidation of the current cost-of-living bonus shortly to be increased to 32s.

Continuation of the present cost-of-living bonus.

Stabilisation for a period of not more than three and not less than two years.

Increase in basic rates of 5% on the signing of the agreement and a further 5% at the beginning of each year of stabilisation.

## ACCEPTANCE TO DATE

Consolidation of the current cost-of-living bonus must be automatic because this is the least amount it costs to live.

Stabilisation is a concession by the unions because it is a gamble on the future economic policy of the government.

Increase in the basic rate of 5% is an attempt to keep in step with the low norm proposed by the TUC.

While the NPA will attempt to cut these three proposals to ribbons, the proposal they will attempt to dig in on will be the second, continuation of the present cost-of-living bonus. Both the Government, the PIB and the employers want this deleted from any future agreements.

To date the printing unions have accepted this, in the Scottish agreement and in the agreement with the commercial printers and local newspapers.

It can be argued, and unhappily so, that through a ballot the union membership acquiesced, but it was on the recommendation of the Executive Councils of the printing unions. They stated in the accompanying circular to the ballot paper that they were unable to secure the continuation of the present cost-of-living bonus agreement.

No doubt through the medium of *discussion* they were unable to secure the continuation, but since when has discussion been the end of the line as far as securing just demands are concerned?

The continuation of the cost-of-living bonus is more important now than it has ever been; on Wilson's own admission, the cost of living is expected to rise at least 3% due to devaluation, which will negate most wage increases.

On October 25 last, the TUC General Council rejected the Government's policy on pay rises linked to increases in the cost-of-living by sliding scale arrangements. It published the results of its own enquiry based on the replies from 78 unions as a result of a questionnaire sent to all affiliated unions in May last year.

The survey revealed no evidence that in industries where cost-of-living sliding scales apply they operate in such a way as to push up wages more than in other industries.

Indeed, insofar as the knowledge that the scales have afforded some degree of protection to real earnings has made unions more disposed to enter long-term agreements, their effect may well have been in some instances to damp down wage increases.

## DON'T BE FOOLED!

Neither was there any evidence that the knowledge that some people got automatic cost-of-living increases led others to put in wage claims.

The TUC also stated that the sliding scales *rarely if ever* compensated fully for the rises in the index of retail prices.

**This must mean therefore that any proposal by the NPA which does not include the continuation of the cost-of-living sliding scale must be rejected out of hand by print workers in Fleet Street.**

And if, as is very possible, the EC's of the printing unions recommend an acceptance of an agreement which does **not** contain the sliding scale arrangement, **then the rank and file should mark "NO" or "Against" on the ballot form.**

Printworkers should not be fooled by the amount of backdated pay they are likely to receive. It is *nothing extra*, only what is due to them because the old agreement finished on September 30, 1967.

If the leadership of the printing unions should read this article one can imagine them asking, "If the ballot rejects an agreement where do we go from here?"

**The answer is firm and simple, the NPA must be taken on; there is no alternative.**

No doubt we will hear the cry that some newspaper will fold up as a result of any industrial action. The question is, how long should this form of blackmail by the NPA be allowed to continue? Printworkers have been threatened by the supposed precarious state of the *Sketch*, the *Sun*, the *Guardian*: you name them, they have been mentioned. The time has come to call a halt.

**"Inclusion in any agreement of the cost-of-living sliding scale arrangement, or trouble with a capital T for the NPA."**

**BILL CHRISTOPHER**

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# Direct Action

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## Arms and Apartheid

ONLY very rarely does the policy of South African apartheid attract the attention of the main British political parties. It is tragic that one such occasion should be as a result of a power struggle in the British Labour Party.

British Governments have never really been opposed to the apartheid policy of South Africa; they have paid lip service to opposition of a kind, but fundamentally the amount of British capital invested in South Africa (over £1,000 million) demands very little opposition to apartheid.

British governments have always hidden behind the beautiful escape clause, "non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries". When the call was made for a boycott of South African goods (particularly Outspan and Cape fruit, Carreras, Rothman and Stuyvesant cigarettes), the official Labour Party ignored it and the Co-operative movement claimed they could not afford it. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the leaders of the Labour Party

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are in fact prepared to recontinue the sale of arms to South Africa.

This year Britain has sold South Africa £217 million-worth of goods and imported £186 million from her. When South Africa was expelled from the Commonwealth it was purely a token gesture to India and Africa, neither Britain nor South Africa has suffered as a consequence.

### PLAYING POLITICS

When Wilson refused the South African arms order he was playing politics—which, one must admit, he is very good at. If he had agreed to the South African order the left wing of the Parliamentary Labour Party would have had his guts for garters. Such left wing MPs usually represent left wing constituency parties who are strongly influenced by the Movement for Colonial Freedom (MCF). Wilson at this stage of his career cannot afford to upset the very people who grafted to put a Labour Government in office. But more important still Wilson will need the support of the Parliamentary Labour Party in pushing through some very unpalatable economic measures. His argument can now be that he sacrificed a very lucrative arms deal on principle so therefore the lost cash must be obtained elsewhere primarily out of the workers' pockets and cuts in the social services.

The majority of the supporters of the arms deal make no pretence; to them it is an export order which means cash, to get Our Beloved Country out of the red, the former being the most important. The minority of the arms deal supporters attempt to justify their position by claiming that such arms included in the order could not be used internally, or, "If we do not supply them the French and Germans will." Both forms of justification are equally pitiful, they expose the Labour Party for what it is: an abject apology for the capitalist system.

Unfortunately except for a few isolated incidents international working class solidarity is a myth (the capitalist class are pleased to say) but until such solidarity is built situations like apartheid and Spanish and Portuguese repression will remain, and arms deals will still remain a question of political expediency.

## Tanzania bans strikes by law

THE Tanzanian Government is planning legislation to ban strikes and go-slows. The proposed legislation carries penalties of six months imprisonment plus a fifty pound fine, and foresees the setting up of a tribunal to which all claims will have to be referred. It follows a recent wage policy which limits wage increases to a maximum of 5% per year. There are no independent trade unions in the country since the Tanganyika Federation of Labour was banned by the Government in 1964, when hundreds of trade union leaders were arrested and detained without trial. The Tanganyika Federation of Labour was replaced by the Government-controlled National Union of Tanganyika Workers, whose General Secretary is appointed by the President.—*ITF Newsletter.*

## SYNDICALISTS in the RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

by G. P. MAXIMOFF

Direct Action Pamphlet—6d.

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# TU BUREAUCRATS SINCE 1945

THE Labour Government elected in 1945 began its nationalisation programme and with it came further collaboration from the TUC. National Joint Negotiating Agreements were set up with a structure almost the same as that recommended by Whitley and later by Mond (see *DIRECT ACTION* last month). It was in fact joint management. Many union officials resigned their offices to take up appointments on the Boards of the nationalised industries.

In 1948, the TUC accepted a recommendation from the Government, a "Statement on Personal Incomes, Costs and Prices". Although some strong criticisms came from the more left wing unions it was later fully endorsed by a Conference of Trade Union Executives.

From the very start there was a distinct air of humbug about the majority support for the Wage Freeze, in the sense that the majority support came from many unions who weren't even affected by it, such as the miners' and railwaymen's unions. There was a series of escape clauses, allowing for wage increases where output increased, or where wages were below a reasonable standard of subsistence, or where it was necessary to attract labour to undermanned essential industries, or where in the interests of productivity it was essential to maintain craft differentials.

## INDUSTRIAL TRIBUNALS

In 1949, the Order 1305 Conspiracy to Tort Act was amended and only applied to what were described as essential supply industries such as power, mines, and docks. The Order was replaced either by a system of mutual recognition of the rights of both sides of industry (union and management)—this was where there was an established union—or by the Fair Wages Act. This Act applied to industries where unions were only partly organised. The Ministry of Labour would set up Industrial Tribunals for any unsolved issues which might arise, rather than allow a strike to take place which could damage the national economy.

In many of the big exporting sectors of industry, such as Fords, BMC, Standards and BOAC, battles had raged for twenty-odd years between the rank and file and the employers over attempts to establish the unions. In these battles, the rank and file always associated hundred-per-cent TU membership with job control. The managements continued to resist but were prepared to make certain concessions such as bonus and incentive payments in line with Government policy. This in turn created more problems for the employers because in times of boom it gave the rank and file much more control over production, and recruitment to the unions was once more expanded.

## "WE SHALL CONTINUE . . ."

After the victory of the Conservatives in the 1951 General Election, the General Council of the TUC at once made it clear that it was not going to abandon its close association with the process of government and administration just because the Labour Party was now in opposition. A statement was issued which declared:

Since the Conservative administration of pre-war days the range of consultation between ministries and both sides of industry has enormously improved. We expect of this government that they will maintain to the full this practice of consultation. On our part we shall continue to examine every question solely in the light of its industrial and economic implications.

By the early 1950s many employers began to see the advantages of the National Joint Negotiating Committees, and as the rank and file became more and more organised the employer simply sent for the TUC and had its own NJNC set up. These had the immediate effect of taking away all

the power from the point of production and from the very people who had built the unions. In BOAC, for instance, under the terms of the NJNC agreement, recognition of the existing Shop Stewards Committee was signed away by both right and left wing unions. There was also a no-strike clause (no strike under any circumstances) written into the agreement. Instead, all unsolved issues would be dealt with by an Industrial Court set up by the Minister of Labour. Unions such as the ETU, whose policy was to declare all strikes official, signed this NJNC agreement—and as a result many shop stewards were sacked or victimised. Some, like Jim Peters and Sid Maitland, went through the Industrial Courts. At Fords and BMC and other places, similar situations occurred.

## SIXTY YEARS OF BETRAYAL

The NJNC agreements of the 1950s were deliberately planned by the TU bureaucrats to divert the direct struggle between organised labour and employers to a struggle within the unions for changes in the rule books so that members would be able to protect and progress their standards of living at the point of production. But we now know that changing the rules is totally inadequate when the TU bureaucrats are left to interpret them.

The illusion that changing the leadership of the unions solves any problems has also been dispelled. The left wingers elected into office today inevitably become the right wingers in practice tomorrow. Those of them who do take up office with good intentions—and I believe that many of them do—soon find they have inherited sixty years of betrayal, and they soon become depersonalised by the terms of reference of their office.

Altogether, the trade unions have become linked up with the State and employers, both nationally and regionally, by means of a total of 300 employers' and Government committees, while the TUC is represented on about 75 Government committees. Their authority has been limited in many respects because the trade unions only represent about a third of the total working population, but that the trade unions have influenced and do influence wages and conditions of the whole working population cannot be overstated.

## CONTROL AT NATIONAL LEVEL

When the Labour Government was elected in 1964, George Brown accused the TU leadership of a negation of responsibility to the national economy. He stated that the union leaders were responsible for negotiating only 50% of their members' total earnings, the other 50% being directly negotiated at the point of production by shop stewards and comprising bonus, incentive and overtime payments. This, according to George Brown, led to the Wage Drift.

The intention of the Prices and Incomes Board is quite clearly to ensure that all earnings are controlled at national level, which will centralise the power of the State through the TU leadership even more. The "Productivity Agreements" now being signed throughout the engineering industry are a typical example of the Government's policy of relating productivity to earnings by taking away all power from the shop floor.

The answer to the question, "What's wrong with our unions?" is therefore that they do not represent the conscious or instinctive aspirations of their members; they have been

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

# The Wobblies

*THE WOBBLIES* by Patrick Renshaw (*Eyre and Spottiswoode, 45s.*)

*THE ORIGINS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IN SPAIN* by M. Dashar (*Coptic Press, 2s 6d.*)

\* \* \*

ONE of the great difficulties facing Syndicalist propagandists in Britain is the melancholy fact that, since the pre-1914 days of the South Wales miners, this country has had no industrially-based movement representing the aims they put forward. It is always far easier to build from a position of strength, where one's ideas hold widespread acceptance, than to plough lonely furrows in virgin or worked-out soil.

Having mixed industrial metaphors, let me offer a heartfelt vote of thanks for the publication of the above two works, which deal objectively with Syndicalism's practical expression in two other countries—the IWW of the USA and the CNT in Spain respectively.

*The Wobblies*, sub-titled "The Story of Syndicalism in the United States", is written by a professional journalist, a man of honesty and care for his craft. His acknowledgements of collaborators and sources, plus a useful bibliography, show that his approach is very different from the sensation-mongers who all too often produce lurid stories about the IWW—and reveal their ignorance by referring to them as "International Workers of the World."

## THE OLD CONFLICT

This not to say that the book lacks errors, both of fact and interpretation. The most serious fault in the latter category is Renshaw's repeated assertion that the struggle between the revolutionaries and politicians within the IWW, between the federalists and the centralists, was one between anarchists and syndicalists.

In fact, this conflict—first between Daniel de Leon's Socialist Labour Party, which soon broke away to form an independent IWW, and the anti-political majority; and later between the Bolsheviks and the Wobblies—was the century-old split within the labour movement between the concept of political leadership from an élite and mass organisation by the rank and file.

Renshaw's story of the 1905 birth of the IWW makes fascinating reading. The founding convention provided a good cross-section of American rebels. Miners like Bill Haywood, Vincent St. John and Charles Moyer, brewery workers like William Trautmann; the maverick Roman Catholic priest, Fr. Thomas J. Hagerty, black-bearded and Colt-toting; "Mother" Jones, the fabulous figure from the Illinois coalfields.

"Whenever trouble broke out against the miners," wrote Haywood, "Mother Jones went there. When a bridge was patrolled by soldiers she waded the river in winter. When trains were being watched the train crew smuggled her through." She organised "women's armies" during mining disputes to chase strike breakers with mops, brooms and dishpans. "God! It's the old mother with her wild women," the coal owners would groan when confronted with this formidable array. (p.65).

Soon direct action, under the IWW banner, began to sweep the States. Among the gold miners (Goldfield, Nevada, 1906-7), engineering workers (McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, 1907), lumberjacks, sheet and tin plate workers, farm labourers, the IWW grew swiftly. And although the IWW all too often found it impossible to consolidate its newly-gained membership, once a battle had been won, its radius of influence was soon enormous. To the ideas of direct action on the job were added those of the free-speech

fight, for the employing class was quick to use every weapon in its well-stocked armoury to prevent the Wobblies' message getting a hearing.

Frame-ups of organisers, on charges of murder and violence, were frequent

One interesting sidelight is Renshaw's statement (p.182): "During its active life, from 1905 to about 1924, the IWW issued about a million membership cards, of which about 100,000 were to Negroes." It would be of value to know more of IWW work with integrated locals—a facet of the Wobbly story that, to my knowledge, has still to be told.

The "rule of ruin" activities of the Bolsheviks within the IWW during the 1920's is well documented by Renshaw and, in an invaluable postscript, he details attempts to set up IWW administrations in other countries.

This book is essential to any understanding of the rise and fall of the IWW. To explain why he wrote it Patrick Renshaw significantly says: "Recently as the traditional left seems to be emerging from the long sleep which followed the McCarthy era, Americans have become uncomfortably aware that, in the midst of affluence, the problem of the submerged fifth is still with them. For this reason, perhaps, and also because the submerged nations of the world are today in revolt, a study of the IWW may be of more than academic interest." (p.26).

And so, for different reasons—the social ferment which is spreading within fascist Spain, threatening an end to the long night of Franco dictatorship—is the pamphlet on the origins of the revolutionary movement in Spain.

This was first published in 1934 and a postscript by the present editor takes it up to the outbreak of the Civil War and Revolution in July, 1936. Little is known in this country about the activities of the Spanish libertarian movement during the earlier years of the present century and this pamphlet helps fill the gap. It is available from the SWF, 2s 9d postpaid.

## JOHN ANDERSON

JOHN ANDERSON, General Secretary of the International Working Men's Association from 1938 to 1953, died in Sweden on December 9 at the age of 81, after a painful illness. His wife and lifelong companion, Laura, died a few months earlier. With Anderson, the IWMA loses a comrade who, perhaps, worked harder for our international organisation than any other.

He was a founder member of the SAC, for many years its General Secretary and an outspoken Anarchist. When the danger of the Second World War became imminent, the SAC took responsibility for the IWMA Secretariat.

For 15 years, throughout the war and up to the Eighth IWMA Congress in 1953, John Anderson ensured contact with the international movement, issued from Stockholm a regular Press Service packed with topical information about activities and, with treasurer Ragnar Johansson (who died several years ago), maintained the IWMA efficiently and well.

It was due, at least in part, to comrade Anderson's work that the SWF was formed in 1950. From the end of the war he had urged the British Anarcho-Syndicalists to form an IWMA section and it was a matter of great satisfaction to him when this was done. Several of us met him at the IWMA Congress in Toulouse during 1951 and found ourselves in repeated agreement with him on matters of principle and tactics during that often stormy gathering, which lasted almost two weeks.

We mourn the loss of a good friend and comrade, to whom international working-class solidarity was not merely a slogan but an integral part of his life and activity.

K.H.

## NORTH-EAST NOTES

# THE MINER'S DREAM OF HOME

AT CRAGHEAD (Co. Durham), on December 19, five unemployed miners were given notice to quit their National Coal Board houses. (For 100 years the majority of miners have lived in "colliery houses" belonging to the coal owners.) The five families must be out by January 2.

Fred Stoker of Greglingstadt Terrace said, "If we do not get a house by January 2, we will be on the street. What can we do? We cannot expect anyone to take in all nine of us. We can't get a council house, though if we could the rent would be £4 5s. a week."

Ron Scott said, "They are putting the clock back 40 years when coal owners put you on the street when you lost your job—this time it's our own people doing it."

A member of the joint workers and management committee said lightheartedly, "It's only a few isolated cases." But at Craghead and South Moor, where thousands await the sack, there is fear and uncertainty. Every miner and every miner's wife is thinking and many are saying, "Will our family be the next when the crunch comes?"

## THEY CALL IT PROGRESS

THE new extension to the national union headquarters of the boilermakers and shipwrights was opened with ceremony at Newcastle on December 14. 170 persons,

## BUREAUCRATS (cont.)

completely integrated and institutionalised. Their function is the same as that of the police—to protect the capitalist system. Whenever the system is in danger the union leaders are called on to co-operate in demanding the loyalty of the rank and file to make sacrifices on behalf of the system. This takes the form of giving back some of the hard-won wages and conditions.

Mark Twain once said, "My kind of loyalty was the loyalty to one's country, not to its office holders. The country is the real thing, the eternal thing; it is the thing to watch over and care for and be loyal to; institutions are extraneous, they are its mere clothing and clothing can wear out, become ragged, cease to become comfortable, cease to protect the body from winter, disease and death, to be loyal to rags, to shout for rags, to worship rags, to die for rags—that is the loyalty of unreason, it is pure animal. It was invented by Monarchy; let Monarchy keep it."

Many left wing organisations have failed to recognise that the trade unions have become institutionalised and therefore ragged and worn out, they have never been revolutionary and cannot be used as platforms for revolution; members who call themselves revolutionaries and at the same time participate in the day to day running of the unions cannot fail to become socialised by the bureaucracy; therefore they participate at their own peril.

The trade union movement has developed along two clearly distinct lines. On the one hand there is the tendency towards complete integration with the State, on the other the Syndicalist influence on the rank and file has caused a conscious or an instinctive expression of a desire to maintain a certain amount of control at the point of production. This has proved completely incompatible within the present structure of the trade union movement, so that in the very near future the rank and file will be drawn more and more into open conflict with the union leadership and with the State.

E. STANTON

including the Lord Mayor, MPs, local politicians and even a few ex-boilermakers, were addressed by guest comedian George (eyebrows) Woodcock before the nosh party. You may have guessed that this select party was told that this "shows the great progress made by the shipbuilding unions". Grandad boilermaker may not have thought so, but he wasn't invited.

When Newcastle was chosen as the national home of the Boilermakers Society in 1880, following the example of the Shipwrights Union, they shrewdly bought a piece of land large enough to hold any future extension of their new building which was completed in September 1890. The local paper reported the opening ceremony.

At least 7,000 members of the union turned up, supported by tens of thousands of other unionists. "From Grainger Street to the Cattle Market and along Westmorland and Scotswood Roads there was a vast sea of moving people." Then a procession was formed and marched off with many elaborate banners, twelve brass bands and workers carrying large models of ships, bridges, engines, boilers and tools of their trades. More than 200,000 persons lined the streets.

In 1890 the hall was dedicated by a vast throng of workers, proud of their craft, proud in their militancy. In 1967 its extension was monopolised by a select party, entertained by political speeches. And the workers never even noticed them. Well, that *must* be progress!

## BUSMEN'S SYNDICALIST ACTION WINS

SOUTH SHIELDS (Co. Durham), municipal busmen, for six weeks in November and December, ran a guerilla Syndicalist strike in support of their wage demands. Then they decided on snapshot 24 hour strikes to further the effect of "no standing", no overtime, no working rest days.

One hour later the Corporation gave in. The busmen won £1 a week on the basic wage. Time-and-a-half on Saturday afternoons, time-and-a-half to be extended to the first two hours of overtime. These conditions are what the busmen nationally are demanding.

At the same time Gunter had appealed to busmen to discuss a compromise with their employers with Gunter himself in the chair. Shields got the lot by ignoring Gunter and helping themselves.

## MINERS BOYCOTT ROBENS

WHEN ROBENS visited the Dawden Colliery, Co. Durham, on December 13, officers of the union lodge refused to meet him. Miners had demanded that they should so act because of the intensive "bull" that preceded his well-planned visit. The local men took no part in the occasion. Many men had been put to work painting, cleaning roads, putting up coat hangers and everything short of polishing the pit.

\* \* \*

NEWCASTLE: At the City Hall someone was told to write an official notice on an office door for "The Newcastle Joint Finance and Working Civic Services Working Group as to the Public Abattoir". The notice was written, "Abattoir—joint meeting".

TOM BROWN

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

# SEAMEN MAKE LITTLE PROGRESS

THIS YEAR was a Rules Revision Year in the National Union of Seamen. These recur at five-yearly intervals. They give the membership a chance to alter the NUS Rules via resolutions to the AGM, which are voted on by the AGM delegates. In the past, rank and file delegates to the AGM have always been well outvoted by the Hierarchy's stooges from smaller, poorly organised ports, and ports such as Holyhead which are not allowed delegates unless they are British Rail Ferries Company men. In addition to this, the AGM Rules Revision Committee vetted all resolutions so that any resolution on a rule-change for democratising the NUS was behind the eight-ball even before the voting began.

A lot of the rank and file seamen worked hard to see that this Rules Revision Year AGM would be different. They actually achieved a rank and file majority on the Rules Revision Committee, a few months prior to this year's AGM, and were certain that the 1967 AGM of the NUS would see the rules changed so that all NUS officials would be elected by rank and file vote instead of appointed as they always have been.

The boys' hard work went for nothing. Their jubilation was shortlived, for all Hogarth had to do was to get a stooge branch of the union, Dover, to call for all Rules Revision Committee decisions to be subject to the EC's approval, and the hard-won Committee of genuine seamen's representatives was rendered impotent.

## MERSEYSIDE ALONE

Hogarth left nothing to chance. He made sure there was no possibility of rank and file AGM delegates outvoting his stooges by some mischance. This was achieved by sending packed busloads of "white mice" from the three Channel-ferry ports of Dover, Newhaven and Harwich to the three NUS Branches in London when the branches elected their AGM delegates. The London seamen were swamped by a crowd of men who ordinarily never sail from London (and who, owing to being in cross-Channel passenger jobs where the biggest crawler gets the most tips, have always been the reverse of militant), and London's seamen found that they were represented at the AGM by phoneyes, owing to the rigged vote. Legally, too! For NUS purposes Dover, Newhaven and Harwich are part of the Thames district.

The only port area which managed to ensure that the NUS clique was unable to supplant the genuine seamen delegates was Merseyside, which sent a contingent of 100% militants to the AGM in May this year.

This year's AGM was held at Liberty Hall, Dublin, and if things had gone OK, the Merseyside boys would have taken six hundred copies of "Seamen's Voice" AGM Specials across with them. However the "Voices" never got there, someone had lost the address of the recipient, and by the time we heard of it, it was too late. A bad slip-up. The AGM "Voice" included some suggestions for rules of a rank and file seamen's union; all AGM delegates would have received a copy of that issue—and even the men who allow themselves to be used by the NUS machine on occasion should like to have a genuine say in running their own affairs as seamen. Still, there it is. The 1967 AGM proved as barren of hope for us as all its predecessors. Paddy Neary and the Mersey-

side seamen, plus a few from Tyneside, saw the AGM resolutions rubberstamped to Hogarth and Co.'s satisfaction by the "white mice". True that it was the first time that the clique had found it necessary to bring in outside stooges to NUS branches (in case of emergency at the AGM more or less) at AGM delegate elections. This year's AGM showed that no matter how hard rank and file seamen may try to ensure a really representative AGM in a decisive year, the racketeers have them beaten before they start.

I was in Liverpool just after the AGM. Whilst most seamen were raving at Hogarth's cynical manipulation of the AGM to keep the mob in control, and were hoping if not expecting some sort of protest-action from the Merseyside Rank and File Committee, the Committee took no action of a positive sort re the AGM.

## LARGEST AND STRONGEST

Now the Merseyside Committee is the largest and strongest rank and file seamen's committee in Britain. It is strong enough to compel the Pool officials, for instance, to publish a daily list of jobs available. This is a big point insofar as it does away with the job-buying by a few when ships are scarce. The Scouse seamen have always been the spearhead of UK seamen's militancy, and their present Committee are good boys worthy of the men who elected them.

Why did Merseyside which could have given a lead to us all do nothing regarding the AGM fiasco in which once again UK seamen were swindled out of their right to elect their union officials? It seemed to me that most of the Committee were as eager as the rest to "have a go" but followed the line of the lads like Paddy Neary and Roger Woods. The opinions of both men go a long way with the Scouses and rightly so, they are genuine seamen with a fine record of militancy. Neary is an RC, and Woods is a CP member of long standing; both are on the level as far as I am concerned, and in fact the feeling is mutual. I think that the Liverpool boys should have taken action after the AGM in some way or other in order to see how the lads responded; they would have got enough backing on an all-UK basis, in my opinion, to enable them to call for a real "go", not only for a democratic union but for the other aims of the rank and file, such as a Union hiring hall, a decent pension scheme and so on.

Well, it's six months since the AGM now. Personally, I have had a very rough year regarding work. I've had about a month at sea this year, the worst yet. One thing which cheered me up a hell of a lot while in Liverpool was that the Liverpool NUS members at a very crowded branch meeting voted overwhelmingly for the EC to press for my reinstatement with the Pool for seagoing employment. The only dissident to the motion was Stanistreet, the District Secretary. Remarks about me made by Stanistreet earned him the contempt of the men so much that he nearly got a chair wrapped around his neck.

I was arrested on August 21 in Swansea and later copped three months porridge. I was turned loose on November 10. I was pinched over trouble with the NAB; it was for a reason connected with all seamen on the bosses' blackment. I have had trouble with the NAB for the same reason on several previous occasions. This particular incident in Swansea has succeeded in providing an opening for taking the case of the men on the shipowners' blacklist to a place where we may get justice at present denied us. If the editors of DIRECT ACTION are agreeable I can give a resumé of "The Case of the Blacklisted Seamen" in this paper in the near future.

**GEORGE FOULSER, AB**

*The sooner the better George.* (Eds.)

## UNHOLY ALLIANCE

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