

Direct Action

WORLD LABOUR NEWS

Inside: Collective bargaining
in Sweden :: Showdown
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ENGLISH PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION

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Fourpence

Out of work: 'Another little local difficulty' for Mac

THERE is certainly no "conspiracy of silence" on the part of the politicians and capitalist Press with regard to the increasing unemployment in this country. Of late the Press has been quoting all sorts of figures and analysing them, giving various reasons for and solutions to this problem. Meanwhile the politicians are spouting the usual rubbish—those in power making sympathetic and encouraging noises, while those seeking power are crowing over the embarrassed government and trying to make as much political capital as possible out of the problem.

The by now familiar figures show that the national average of 2.4 per cent is by no means evenly spread over the country. There emerges from these figures a pattern that is now popularly referred to as "the two nations". In one "nation", the South, the percentages are relatively low (London and S.E. 1.4 per cent, E. and S. 1.5 per cent, S.W. 1.9 per cent), while in the other "nation" they are much higher (N.E. 2.8 per cent, N. 4.3 per cent, Scotland 3.9 per cent, Wales 3.4 per cent, N. Ireland 6.4 per cent).

Whichever way these figures are split up, it still means that well over half a million people are workless.

Why is unemployment increasing? The tendency to rationalise production is an ever-present feature of capitalism and in modern capitalism it very often takes the form of attempting to increase output per man hour. This means the introduction of stringent

bonus schemes, decreasing the ratio of men to machines, getting rid of the least productive members of the labour force (with bureaucrats always exempted), closing unprofitable branches, etc, with the net result that men are thrown out of work.

When, in time of slump, profit margins start to fall, the need for the capitalist to rationalise becomes far more urgent. He cannot do things like labour-hoarding, buying up firms for the sake of becoming "big", or disregard the international organisation of his factories. If he is to stay in business, he must become more efficient and cut costs. This means labour costs. The increasing number of unemployed reduces the overall demand for consumer goods, forcing some firms to shut down and necessitating further rationalisation on the part of those that stay in existence—and so the ghastly spiral downwards continues.

The capitalist is assisted in his rationalisation by the "climate" that accompanies increasing unemployment. This "climate" impairs the militancy and solidarity of those still in work. They are less willing to take strike action and the individual worker knows that if he is not a "good" (i.e. docile) worker, the boss will have no difficulty in replacing him. In fact, all round the workers are more manageable. The present increase in unemployment, resulting from increasing rationalisation, would indicate an increase in the pressure of capitalists to rationalise. In other words we are at the beginning of a slump, though possibly only a small one. This slump is further complicated by the fact that, owing to previous rationalisation of the process of production, some labour has actually become superfluous to that process.

The "two nations" pattern of unemployment is also a natural outcome of the capitalist economy. Some industries are dying while others are being born, with "profitability" the sole arbiter of economic life and death. The old-established, heavy industries of the North, whose location had been decided primarily by their proximity to their raw materials and power, are either depressed or dying. On the other hand, for the new, light consumer-goods industries, proximity to markets is the most important factor in deciding their location and, in accordance with this, they have sprung up in the South.

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Spain—Syndicalists jailed

FRANCO'S military tribunals continue to sentence members of the Spanish Libertarian Movement to long terms of imprisonment for revolutionary activity.

On November 23, seven members of the CNT appeared before a tribunal in Madrid, charged with having organised local sections of the clandestine Syndicalist organisation at Vigo and Valladolid, carrying out instructions received from the CNT in Exile in France, collecting funds and making propaganda. The following sentences were imposed:

VICTOR FRANCISCO CACERES, of Vigo, 11 years' prison; **JAIME GARRIDO**, of Vigo, 9 years; **AUGUSTO DOCAMPO**, of Vigo, 5 years; **MANUEL RODRIGUEZ**, of Vigo, 4 years; **PEDRO RODRIGUEZ PEREZ**, of Valladolid, 4 years; **JOAQUIN RODRIGUEZ**, of Valladolid, 4 years; **EPIFANIO GONZALEZ**, of Valladolid, 3 years.

Six days earlier, in Madrid, three members of the Libertarian Youth were charged before another tribunal with publishing and distributing the underground paper, "Juventud Libre" ("Free Youth"). **JOSE RONCO PESINA**, 23, telephone engineer, and **ELISEO ANTONIO BAYO**, 23, student, were sentenced to 11 years jail; **RAFAEL LUIS BOREO**, 22, assistant telephone engineer to 3 years. All three comrades were from Saragossa.

These "trials" followed three earlier ones, reported in our last issue. Altogether, 18 members of the Libertarian Youth have received jail terms totalling 270 years. Among them is **FRANCISCA ROMAN AGUILERA**, a 23-year-old secretary, who received 12 years and a day (the additional day means no remission will be granted)—a savage sentence for taking propaganda material to Spain from France. We had the great pleasure of meeting her in London some months ago. Our thoughts are with her and all militants, whom Franco's courts have given these long jail terms

SWF PAPERS MERGE

WITH THIS ISSUE we are combining the SWF's two papers, **WORLD LABOUR NEWS** and **DIRECT ACTION** under the title of the latter, which we feel to be the more expressive of our policy—though the character of **WLN** will be incorporated in its contents and the paper will continue to be the English-language organ of the International Working Men's Association.

We had hoped, with the start of our fourth publication year, to announce a monthly printed paper. This we have had to postpone, owing to the imminent need for us to find new premises for our printing press—news of a suitable workroom in London would be gratefully received—but it remains a project for the, we hope, near future.

Meanwhile, on the first of each alternate month, starting with February, we shall publish an enlarged, quarto-size duplicated supplement to **DIRECT ACTION**.

Subscribers to **WLN** and **DA** will have their outstanding credits transferred to the new joint paper, the yearly sub rate for which will now be 6s. (US and Canada 90 cents, though dollar bills are always welcome!).

In these areas they have created a demand for more labour, which has been met by migration from the depressed areas, which in turn has increased the demand for consumer goods in the South. Again it is a process that increases in momentum.

What can be done about the increasing unemployment? Despite the politicians' utterances and books by eminent economists, the Government cannot eliminate the boom-slump cycle without replacing the capitalist system itself.

During the inter-war slump, politicians showed their complete inability to cope with unemployment while remaining within the structure of a capitalist economy. Governments were elected on their promises "to do something about it", but on coming to power were found to be helpless. On March 10, 1924, Tom Shaw, the Minister of Labour, in reply to repeated demands to produce the schemes to lessen unemployment promised by the Labour Government, said in desperation: "Does anybody think that we can produce schemes like rabbits out of our hat?" (Hansard, 170 SS 2003).

The similarity between government and a music-hall act was heightened when, in 1930, J. H. Thomas, the Minister appointed to deal with unemployment, said in the House: "I have something up my sleeve". All he had up his sleeve was his elbow.

Since World War II the governments of this country have been attempting to stave off slump by trying to juggle with unemployment on the one hand and inflation and the balance of payments on the other. All the time they have found that, when they attempt to gain or preserve a favourable balance of payments by means of deflationary fiscal measures, they have increased unemployment. Recently, in an attempt to reduce unemployment, they have been releasing the safeguards that they had previously taken to curb inflation. They now find themselves in a position with virtually all the stops out and unemployment still increasing. Also it is difficult to see what they can do about the "two nations" problem, considering the centralist tendencies inherent in both State and private capitalism.

The only alternative a government can provide to the unemployment that is caused by a boom-slump cycle is an equally authoritarian one—as, for example, in Nazi Germany, where the Keynesian theories were adapted by Dr. Schacht. Even now "Tribune" is talking in terms of direction of labour (and telling us that we must not squeal about it).

Unemployment is a human problem that cannot be solved, in human terms, by any authoritarian system. The only choices that authoritarians can offer are merely the substitution of one evil for another and in no way can they be called "solutions".

The workers are fighting the spreading unemployment where they are able and strong enough, refusing to accept sackings and backing up their refusal with strike action. In other places they are trying to introduce work sharing schemes (i.e. all work a shorter week to make the sackings of workmates unnecessary). These schemes are generally resisted by managements and in some places men have struck in support of work sharing. As one might expect, the unions can be found alongside managements, aiding the rationalisation of production.

The workers' resistance to rising unemployment is conventional and I doubt whether they can, in the long run win. Certainly no lasting victory can be won by the workers unless they realise their strength and hurl this rotten system—a system that can actually call a human being "redundant"—out of the window.

BRIAN HART.

Italian Anarchists freed

THE TRIAL of the seven young Anarchists from Milan, charged with kidnapping Franco's vice-consul in that city while our Spanish comrade, Jorge Conill Valls, was under sentence of death in Barcelona, ended—after a great anti-fascist demonstration in the courtroom—with all being given "symbolic" suspended sentences and released immediately.

Six of the Libertarian Youth members—Luigi Gerli (21), Gianfranco Pedron (21), Vittorio de Tassis (22), Alberto Toniolo, Giorgio Bertani and Giombattista Novello Paglianti—were already in custody when the trial began. The seventh, Amadeo Bertolo, gave himself up in the courtroom of the Palace of Justice at Varese, saying that he wished to share with his comrades responsibility for their action.

The court's public seats were crowded and the trial was punctuated by shouts of "Down with Franco", "Long live Liberty". At one stage the carabinieri escorted one interrupter from the room, while he yelled "Down with Franco . . . Aid for Spain".

The defence of our comrades was that their action was fully justified as a means of protest against the vicious sentence on Jorge Conill. Witnesses testified to the appalling conditions in Franco Spain, to the ill-treatment of political prisoners there and to the underground struggle against the fascist regime, which culminated in the mass strikes of May last year.

The Palace of Justice was turned into a political forum, with Franco—not the seven young Anarchists—in the dock. A Spanish fascist journalist, Julio Morenes, reported bitterly in "La Vanguardia" (November 17) that: "Not satisfied with demanding a free

pardon for the prisoners, the defence is now suggesting that they deserve a decoration".

Summing up, the prosecutor bowed before the anti-fascist storm that the case had aroused and asked only that suspended sentences of from two to seven months should be imposed: "They should be returned as quickly as possible to their families and their studies, so that the sentence of this court can be seen as an example of justice under free conditions".

Unilateral or not?

IN the September-October, 1962 issue of World Labour News, I discussed the CND Executive's attempts to water down unilateralist policy far enough for them to strike a convenient compromise with the Labour Party leadership, which bargain would be the road for both to power.

Since then the situation has crystallised, so that the position is more dangerous. Soon after the above-mentioned WLN article, "Solidarity" published a well-thought-out analysis, relating the increasing tendency to compromise on the part of the CND leadership to the general tendency to bureaucratic degeneration evident in all "Left" movements within capitalism.

This analysis perhaps ignored the fact that, by their own report, several of the CND Executive members had, from the beginning, only wanted a better bargaining position within the Labour Party—a position they now hold—and so overpraised the early CND, thus over-stressing the present degeneration.

Shortly after this the Executive published the new policy statement, "Steps for Peace", which went much further than had Conference done in repudiating the demand that Russia and America disarm, without waiting for each other, it interpreted CND policy as merely a glorified version of the Gaitskell-Rapacki plan, under which the Bomb is to be limited to the two prime powers and, by a series of partial disengagements, a neutral zone is to be established, then enlarged.

This policy, instead of meeting with the barrage of protest it deserved, has for the most part been praised with faint damns. Such protest as there has been started with a letter from Witney CND, stressing that whatever the national position, Witney CND will continue to advocate Unilateralism by every country, a copy of this letter being published by "Peace News".

"Solidarity" followed up with another useful editorial and the "Socialist Leader" has made good the previous neglect of the ILP, by dismissing this new sell-out in the terms it deserves. There has not, however, been the barrage of letters one might have expected from other CND groups.

CND has arranged an International Conference in Oxford early in January, but if "Steps to Peace" is to be the basis, it will effectively bury Unilateralism. Witney CND intend to distribute a leaflet, in the form of an open letter, outside the Conference. The text had not, when we went to Press, been finally decided, but the following was agreed as a basic draft by the last meeting of the group:

"Five years ago radicalism in Britain was in total disarray after the defeats at the Brighton Labour Party Conference. Since then there has been a remarkable revival. Why? In this time the active wing of radicalism has been able to build CND into a formidable political movement, a movement of the grass roots and of the streets. Why? Purely and simply because it had a clear policy, stemming from a simple and straightforward ethical statement: 'Whatever others may do or threaten to do to us, we will not sanction the evils of the Bomb being used in our name on others.'

"Unilateralism, therefore, is the cornerstone of CND and it has an appeal because it is a principle, not merely a tactic, but a principle has universal application; and to limit advocacy of unilateral disarmament by saying it is only applicable in one country is to undermine the very foundations of CND. The old International Socialist Movement had the slogan, 'the enemy is in your own country' to typify the need for the peoples of each nation to oppose the evils for which their own rulers were responsible and Unilateralism may be said to be today's expression of this. Therefore it would contradict the whole basis of the movement if CND should support an international grouping on any other basis than unilateralism in each and every country.

"CND Executive has recently published a statement which differs in no vital respect from policies advocated by members of the Pentagon or Kremlin. Namely, that American and Russian Bombs should for the time being remain unchallenged, but that all other countries should disarm and be neutralised; and that then Russia and America would be more likely to disarm multilaterally (a large presumption). Against this action by the Executive without Conference mandate, we—the Witney Nuclear Disarmament Group—maintain the basis of the Campaign, stating that Unilateralism is a principle that cannot be limited to one country; pointing out that Conference called for links at all levels with Unilateralist movements in other countries."

LAURENS OTTER

Collective bargaining—the Swedish set-up

THERE has been talk recently, by George Woodcock and the TUC top brass, of need for "new thinking" on employer-worker relationships and TU structure by British trades unionism. Several times the example of Sweden has been cited as a model for our own future—and a visit to that country (expenses paid, of course) is planned by a select group of TU leaders, to study the comforting pattern of class collaboration there.

They could save themselves the trip by reading **Collective Bargaining in Sweden** (by T. L. Johnston, George Allen and Unwin, 40s), which gives a masterly survey of industrial policy in that country, where the slogan is "avoid trouble at all costs", productivity is the god and workers and employers are constantly urged to work together, so that the bosses can wax richer and the workers obtain a few "currants".

One aspect this book does not, regrettably, deal with is the existence in Sweden of a Syndicalist organisation, the Central-Organisation (SAC), which has some 20,000 members organised, mainly in the lumbering industry and among the metal-ore miners. This organisation, based on industrial federations and libertarian in structure, has survived constant attempts by the employers' body (SAF) and the reformist trade unions, Landsorganisation (LO), to exclude it from representing the workers. Johnston does cite one reference work on Syndicalism (Svensk Syndicalism by Valter Aman, LO Stockholm, 1938), but this is probably written from a social democratic standpoint.

Johnston's own book deals mainly with LO, closely linked to the Social Democratic Party, which has held power in Sweden for many years. LO unions provide financial support for the party in a set-up similar to that of the British TUC and Labour Party.

LO is tripartite in structure—congress, representative assembly and secretariat (EC). Congress consists of 300 delegates appointed by the various unions (using their own methods) and is the supreme decision-making body, meeting every five years. The representative assembly, consisting of the secretariat and representatives of affiliated unions, meets twice a year and is supreme between congresses. The Secretariat, of 13 members from affiliated unions, includes three full-time paid officials, elected by congress and holding office until further notice. The other ten are part-time, elected by each congress. The secretariat, meeting weekly, is the real power in the union. It is all-powerful on:

- (a) internal disputes;
- (b) plan of organisation;
- (c) wages policy and negotiations;
- (d) procedures in disputes and grounds for giving financial support.

In disputes between unions, on demarcation, etc, the Secretariat acts as a board of arbitration, **with no appeal**. In wage negotiations it can present proposals and, if these are rejected by the union concerned, withdraw financial assistance to it. There is right of appeal against such withdrawal to the representative assembly and congress. This threat of withdrawing finance is tied up with "the interest of society" and "inconvenience to other unions". I had to read that bit twice, to make sure I had it right. What a stinker!

Up to 1928, the local organisations (trades councils), political in emphasis, were thorns in LO's side. Then model rules were drawn up by the representative assembly, giving the Secretariat supervisory powers. Syndicalist influence, in the form of blockades and boycotts, was being felt at the time. In 1931, LO Congress empowered the Secretariat to dissolve local bodies refusing to obey its instructions (shades of London Trades Council, 1952).

The white-collar workers are covered by three organisations, the Central Organisation of Salaried Employees (TCO), Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (SACO) and National Federation of Civil Servants (SR). Total membership of about 407,000 is increasing. Relations between TCO and LO is fair, but those between TCO, SACO and SR are strained, skills and academic degrees being the dividing factors.

Swedish labour legislation, in terms of collective bargaining, divides disputes into two categories, "non-justiciable" and "justiciable". The former involve problems not regulated by contract or statute, the latter problems interpreting a contract or provisions of a statute.

To deal with "non-justiciable" disputes, the Mediation Act of 1920 divided the country into eight districts, each with a government-appointed mediator, who can ask parties to refrain from direct action during negotiations. The Warning Act requires seven days' notice of a stoppage, strike or lock-out (not blockade or boycott). Failure to do so can bring fines in the public courts.

Collective Contracts provide obligations for organisations and members. A union branch or individual bound by such a contract must not engage in illegal direct action, even when not a direct party to the contract. Industrial peace is enforced by provision for damages, assessed by the Labour Court.

This Court was set up at the same time as the Collective Contract Act, to administer it and interpret the provisions of contracts. 88 per cent of cases before the Labour Court are brought by workers. The whole set-up is designed to prevent rank and file action and in this it has been generally effective.

Despite propaganda to the contrary, job security is just as precarious under social democratic capitalism as in Britain or America. Employers have the right of fire and hire and will not let labour "apply" be channelled through the unions. The employers' position has been strengthened through judgments of the Labour Court. LO claims that short-time working hides unemployment and its policy is mobility through dismissals and transfers. Work sharing is opposed.

Works' Councils in Sweden are broadly intended to increase productivity, promote workplace order and discipline and ensure economy in manpower and materials. When first formed, employers believed these non-compulsory councils to be the thin end of the workers' control wedge. They need not have worried—in fact, through them workers help bosses to exploit them.

Piecework is lapped up in Sweden, with compensation where it is not practicable and open recognition that "piecework is the best foreman".

With minor modifications this Swedish set-up would suit Tory industrial policy, let alone the TUC and Labour Party. One can certainly expect the TUC's "new thinking" to be along these lines, especially on productivity. You have been warned.

BILL CHRISTOPHER

Canadian depression

PROSPECTS of employment for many tens of thousands of Canadians this winter look very bleak. The Canadian Labour Congress Research Department has estimated that due to the Tory government's austerity programme and a downward trend in the Canadian economy, the number of unemployed may reach 800,000—the highest number since the depression of the 1930's.

The spectre of more and more workers chasing fewer and fewer jobs, as technological advances eliminate old jobs faster than they create new ones, and population increases result in more and more people looking for work every year, has not yet affected the thinking of the Canadian working class. It has started to impinge on the consciousness of trade union officials, who see their membership figures (and hence their income and power) falling year by year.

Will this consciousness of impending disaster lead to an intensified fight between individual unions for the control of an ever-decreasing number of potential members, or will it lead to inter-union co-operation to fight, in the interests of the whole working class, against the employing class and their managerial minions?

An interesting example of these two conflicting courses of action is seen in the metal mining and steel fabricating industries. Two unions, United Steelworkers and Mine, Mill and Smelterworkers have been fighting each other for years to control the workers in these industries. Steel has recently had its biggest victory confirmed by the Ontario Labour Relations Board, who over-ruled objections by Mine, Mill and gave Steel sole rights to "represent" over 14,000 Nickel miners in Sudbury, half of whom wanted to be represented by Mine, Mill. This decision will be opposed by Mine, Mill through the courts, so that the divisions and animosities created by the two unions amongst the Nickel miners will continue to nobody's advantage but the employers, International Nickel.

Here in Alberta, up to a few years ago, workers in the steel fabrication plants were represented by Mine, Mill. Then Steel succeeded in wresting certification rights away from them: but the spectacle of two unions fighting each other, instead of the employers, caused many workers to drop out of both unions in disgust.

The repercussions of this were seen two years ago when, during a strike called by Steelworkers against Dominion Bridge Company, ex-members of Mine, Mill showed their resentment against Steel by organising scabs for the company. This led to Steel losing the strike and its popularity further declined. Mine, Mill has been capitalising on Steel's unpopularity to rebuild its strength and now feels strong enough to attempt to win back its bargaining rights from Steel.

May we suggest that both unions set aside their power struggles and agree to let workers belong to the **union of their choice**. Then the two unions can jointly apply for bargaining rights and, before any contract negotiations are initiated, can meet together and formulate a mutually acceptable set of demands. Only thus can plant-wide solidarity be re-established and improved working conditions won from the employers.

BILL GRFENWOOD

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Showdown at Ford's

THE Ford management are bursting for a showdown, not only within the Ford Empire but all over the country. In other words, they are asking all employers in any industry to crack down on the industrial rank and file.

In "Ford Bulletin" November 12, Sir Patrick Hennessey stated that he did not believe the problem facing Ford of Britain to be exclusively a Ford problem.

"It is", he said, "in my view, the most vital issue facing the nation at this time and the future prosperity of us, our families and the country depends on it. In this respect it is bigger than any individual company".

Fine words but are they "old hat"! Every employer spits out the "good of the country" line every time he has industrial bother.

These last few weeks have seen a ghastly jamboree at Fords, every body getting in the act to prevent the strike NOT to get the seventy men reinstated.

At last the "love the boss" brigade have got the women going. This has been their aim for years—get the wives to badger their "striking" husbands, turn on the "economic tears".

Let's be very blunt about this. In any strike of some duration, or a prolonged series of strikes, families of the strikers must suffer, and it must be a nightmare for the housewives to make ends meet. May I venture to suggest that the solution is not for the women to climb on their husband's backs alongside the employers, but help to pull the employer off, once and for all.

This could be a tough battle on a life and death issue, "Who elects the shop stewards?" Ford's management want to, indirectly, because they are saying that they really require "yes" men. The official trade union hierarchy would like to have a tighter control on the issuing of credentials, so that the rank and file can be kept in line. The only people who elect shop stewards are the rank and file, no one else. Any deviation from that must be fought tooth and nail.

The wives who are screaming blue murder should therefore direct their screams towards all workers throughout the country, calling for their support in defence of a vital principle.

Also in "Ford Bulletin" November 12, parts of Lord Citrine's House of Lords speech and James Callaghan's Party Political broadcast are quoted. Lord Citrine "believes it to be a deplorable situation when control of conditions of labour have passed into the hands of shop stewards". He goes on to say it's a problem not only for employers, but for the trade unions too and that they cannot on the one hand sign agreements with the firm intention of keeping them and at the same time allow repeated breaches of these agreements.

Surely while employers have the right of hire and fire, every agreement is signed under duress? Agreements are interpreted in the way the interpreter desires. The employer stands firm on his interpretation and the workers have to struggle to "right it", because the employer contends he has "read it correctly". The "sacred agreement" argument is a beautiful red herring.

Callaghan plays it both ways. He has a dig at the management, asking them to take a "long cool look at themselves to see what is the matter". Then to the workers he says, "Unofficial strikes over trivial issues show a degree of irresponsibility that we can't afford, nor should tolerate".

"Nor should tolerate". That charming phrase bodes well for the future. If a Labour Government gets in, you'll not only support it, but will do as you are bloody well told. These boys have been "unemployed" so long they have forgotten what work in industry is like.

The cause of the trouble at Fords is "speed up". This is an American import which the Ford workers must control, not the management. The targets set by the management are sometimes impossible to achieve. It's all very nice sitting in the House of Lords or Commons, or in Peckham Road, telling the lads on the belt what to do and what not to do. One has to work on the line to appreciate the strain. All this speed up is preparation for the Common Market and the Ford's workers are wise to this.

The 70 so-called trouble makers deserve closer scrutiny. Among

them are shop stewards and former stewards. What about the rest? Have they been deliberately left out by Fords, to be used for a future compromise with the unions, thus ensuring that the shop stewards never return? Bigger strokes than that have been pulled before. This issue has to be fought now, with the active and financial support of every worker.

This is a three-cornered fight, the union bureaucracy, the shop stewards and Ford's make the eternal triangle. Of course, this set-up is true of all concerns where shop stewards try to do their jobs honestly. Because of this, the trade union officials shed no private tear when the shop stewards are sacked. At Ford's now, as with the earlier case there of McLaughlin, the bell-ringer, TU officials are willing to sacrifice the stewards. After that capitulation, the militancy of Ford workers began to slump. A further surrender will cause an even greater fall of morale.

The Communist Party, which has been strong at Fords, follows the TU bureaucracy pattern. The CP is willing to throw overboard the shop stewards, even their own members, to safeguard the position they have won in the bureaucracy. This is a policy which has been followed by the party for years, even pre-war. Persons count for nothing to the CP, they are expendable. What matters is party power.

Now, as in the case of Haxell and other Communist members of the ETU, the CP is willing to sacrifice, even expel, its own shop stewards, but there is nothing new under the sun. It happened to Jonah.

This issue at Fords, which shows the shape of things to come elsewhere, has to be fought out, with the active and financial support of all workers.

B.C.

SHIPOWNERS CUT CREWS

RANK AND FILE seamen went after the following four aims in 1962:

- 1, Ships' Delegates;
- 2, A 40-hour week;
- 3, Increased overtime rates;
- 4, A decent overall pension scheme.

After decades of struggle by the rank and file to obtain crew representation at sea, the National Union of Seamen hierarchy caved in this year. The AGM in October voted its approval for shipboard representation, by means of elected crew representatives, and called on the EC to frame rules covering the said ships' reps.

The National Seamen's Reform Movement is to be applauded for achieving this aim of ships' delegates. One of the original 1960 NSRM aims, printed on the backs of membership cards, in Ships' Delegates. Early in 1962 Hogarth informed NUS officials by circular letter that, due to rank and file pressure over the last two years, the EC had been forced to revise its ideas re Ships' Delegates (Direct Action May Day issue, 1962).

40-hour week: We got nothing concrete on this point. It was mainly because of our having a rank and file candidate in the ballot for election of a new general secretary that more action to back our 40-hour claim was not carried out.

Increased overtime rates: We got a wage-raise of 30s. a month and 3d. per hour on the overtime rates. We are still lacking such things as time-and-half and double time for week-end work, etc. An AB get 4s. 7d. per hour for all overtime. Like the 40-hour week, the campaign during the six months' balloting period for general secretary held up rank and file moves here.

A decent overall pension scheme: The NUS and shipowners are in process of drawing up a pension scheme, according to Hogarth at the AGM. I have seen no details of this scheme yet. We have no pension scheme right now, apart from the farce of the Royal Alfred (10s. weekly maximum, annual review, for suitable applicants with at least 25 years actual sea service).

So the thing is, seamen will need to apply a bit more pressure in 1963 than they did in '62, for the 40-hour week and so on.

However, we are faced with new problems now—problems which demand the utmost unity and militancy to combat them successfully. First, the reduction of ships' crews, usually among the day working staff, by shipowners. The outdated Board of Trade manning scale gives shipowners scope for fairly drastic crew reductions and the owners are putting the burden of the present shipping slump on to seamen's backs by this method.

Secondly, shipowners are importing crews from Hong Kong to join UK ships under the poorer Hong Kong conditions for pay, hours, etc. A new Hong Kong crew arrives at the "Stack of Bricks" Sailors Home, Limehouse (where I'm living pro tem) every fortnight. That means another crew of UK seamen rendered unemployed by blackleg labour. What is the NUS doing? What would you expect? Nothing.

Seamen must get down to brass tacks and get moving soon on these points.

The General Secretary ballot will not be dealt with in this article—it deserves one to itself!

G. FOULSER, A.B.

THREE NEW PAMPHLETS

Anti-nuclear facts—and strategy

BLACK PAPER ON H-BOMB WAR. (Peace News, 6d.) and **THE BOMB, DIRECT ACTION AND THE STATE** (SWF Direct Action pamphlets No. 7, 6d.).

THE Black Paper lives up to its name and proves without a shadow of a doubt the correctness of the policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament. It starts with the atom bomb and goes on to describe how the madmen have created and financed bigger and better bombs and methods of destruction, of which the public know little or nothing.

The pamphlet goes on to explain that H-Bombs are old hat and that nuclear missiles are now the rage, thus presenting a "hair trigger situation". To quote: "Political mistakes, too, could lead to situations where, for instance, one side could be tempted to call the other's bluff—when they might not be bluffing".

Even the "strategies" concocted around the H-Bomb could lead to situations that might start a war. Suppose the British Government decided to launch a real civil defence programme, with deep shelters, intensive training for the public and detailed evacuation plans, the Russians might well think these were preparations for a nuclear war in earnest—and then what?

The Black Paper vividly describes World War Three, giving facts and figures of probable destruction and death. As the pamphlet states, "This is not science fiction—it is what many responsible people think is bound to happen within a few years, if Russia and the West go on building up H-Bomb stocks and preparing to use them".

Civil Defence is exposed as a tragic farce and the slickest confidence trick of the century. The Government, we are told, has issued a series of Civil Defence Manuals, also a 9d. booklet, "The Hydrogen Bomb". But in an emergency, they say, "More detailed advice will be distributed free to everybody in the country".

The Black Paper asks, "Where is the pamphlet?" Are we to get it while the bombs are falling? The Civil Defence section must be read to appreciate the hollowness of any Civil Defence policy.

The section on casualties should drive everyone to join the Committee of 100. It is stark and frightening. To quote from the paper, "Here is a scientist, Dr. William T. Ham Jr., speaking before an American Congressional Committee set up to hear about the effects of H-Bombs, "You are faced here with the instant production of perhaps millions of burns casualties and the question is, what can we do about it?"

"The answer we are trying to drive across is that the ordinary treatments that we do adopt under the best conditions for burns would be absent and the mortality figures for burns would be much greater under such conditions".

A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE: "You are saying that the medical profession would simply be unable to cope with such a situation?" **DR. HAM:** "Exactly, Sir."

We have played at Cold War, we have stock-piled our weapons and we have had the bloodiest massacre in history. What's left? The pamphlet states "Hell on earth" and "Hell in the mind" and goes on to remind us of the dress rehearsal in Hiroshima, with a very small bomb, and how a Mr. Tanimota, lifting slimy living bodies, had to keep consciously repeating to himself "These are human beings".

The Black Paper presents the facts that the Government will not make public. In this it is doing a service to mankind. It is impossible to ignore these facts.

Now comes the 64,000 dollar question. What do Joe Soap, his wife and kids do about it? Here the Black Paper falls down; it suggests that writing to the papers or writing to your MP will influence Government policy. This is pure baloney.

Nuclear armaments, NATO, are all part and parcel of the State machine; national economies and foreign policies are geared to nuclear weapons. Therefore, I suggest that in conjunction with the Black Paper "The Bomb, Direct Action and The State" should be read. This pamphlet does not pretend to be the solution to the problem of fighting against nuclear weapons.

In the opening chapter, the Direct Action pamphlet stresses a most important point, that the Bomb is NOT an isolated issue, then goes on to expose the politics in all their glory—the Labour Party "for the bomb" and "nearly against the bomb", the Communist Party climbing on the band-wagon, attempting to use unilateralists as a potential source of membership.

The punchline of the pamphlet is Direct Action—basis of Syndicalism, and it describes syndicalism in practice in Italy, USA and Australia.

What does it all boil down to in simple plain language? It means that you and I and everyone else who have no ambitions for suicide must take action ourselves. The days of the leaders in Westminster gasworks, in the Kremlin, Moscow and in Washington, USA are numbered. We have heard all their bullshit before and it has got us precisely nowhere.

The authors of the Black Paper and of The Bomb, Direct Action and the State, have done a good job and are to be congratulated on their lucid analysis. Black Paper obtainable from, Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London, N.1.

JOAN CHRISTOPHER.

London's outcasts

"HOMELESS!" Solidarity Pamphlet No. 12, 6d.

In the introduction to "Homeless", Bob Potter says, "This pamphlet describes how human beings are living in London at the end of 1962. It describes life in the 'reception centres' and 'half-way houses' provided by the LCC for London's homeless." This, indeed, is what the pamphlet is all about, with particular reference to Newington Lodge, Durham Buildings, Battersea Bridge Buildings and Morning Lane (Hackney). The method used has been to go directly to the tenants and ask them to write down their experiences and feelings while in these various places.

When Bob Potter describes this method of tackling the problem as "a distinct advantage", he almost understates the case. These articles, based on experience, give a far clearer picture of what is happening in these hell-holes than could any second-hand report.

The articles written by tenants take three-quarters of the pamphlet and tell, as the introduction promises, "... appalling stories of rejection, squalor and dehumanisation." The common theme is one of filth, bullying, overcrowding and privations, resulting in human misery to a degree that most people possessing homes would find difficult to imagine. One housewife, six months pregnant at the time, spent the first part of her stay in Newington Lodge in a room containing seven adults and nineteen children. She comments: "I have never seen a more disgusting, dirtier place than Newington Lodge. I had four months of it. During this time I experienced nothing but filth and sickness. In my opinion the only way to clean up the place is to burn it down."

Another housewife writes of Durham Buildings: "For the first time in my life I feel ashamed when visitors call, for they have to walk through dirt and stench to reach my door." And the stories all tell of appalling conditions which go to create an existence that is degrading and dehumanising.

But, and this stands out very clearly, despite these conditions, many of the people themselves have not been degraded or dehumanised. Their spirits have not been broken—they are organising and beginning to fight back. Obviously aware of the distorted scale of preferences in this form of society, they have discovered the futility of appeals to the authorities, who are responsible for their present plight. They now know themselves as the only people on whom they can depend.

As Sheila Jones, Secretary of the Battersea Bridge Buildings Tenants Association, puts it, "To some of us it is beginning to be clear that if we want anything done we will have to do it ourselves."

From this point they are realising that only direct action will achieve results. The suggestions made of possible forms this action might take are both imaginative and intelligent. In the remaining quarter of the pamphlet, the editors examine the housing problem, first specifically, then in a wider context. Their conclusions both with regard to the existing problem and its solutions, are those we would draw from the same facts. This is an excellent pamphlet. I recommend it to all readers of "Direct Action". By encouraging other people to read it, you will be assisting London's homeless in their struggle. It is obtainable from Bob Potter, 18 Kingsley Road, London, S.W.19. **B.L.H.**

'THE BOMB, Direct Action and THE STATE'

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A "DIRECT ACTION" PAMPHLET 6d (post 2d)
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One-third discount on orders for 12 or more; 100 copies, £1 10s.

A short lesson in robbery with violence

THE magistrate crouched, Quilp-like, though less malign than grumpy, on his throne. He was plainly determined to see summary justice done in his petty kingdom. The military precision of the pleas of "Guilty" was spoiled by a voice muttering "I don't wish to plead". It was my own. A look of extra irritation crossed the king's face as he indicated curtly to his chief minister that the offender's name was to be entered in the "Not Guilty" column, where it was joined by two more "Not Guilty" pleas.

The "Not Guilty" were marched out and marched back in again a few minutes later. A scarcely audible muttering issued from somewhere around the throne (I thought I caught the words "Remanded until the first") and the marching out began again. It seemed about as meaningful as the old nursery rhyme about the Duke of York.

"Well, that's that till Thursday", I thought. But the marching didn't stop outside the courtroom; it went on, straight into a police cell. The police sergeant kindly explained: "Remanded means 'in custody' unless the magistrate says 'on bail'".

It had that kind of inexorable feeling. It all followed from that spine-chilling moment during the Trafalgar Square demonstration when the big white chief had stood opposite me, silently listening to our seditious conversation, while neither he nor I betrayed by so much as a flicker of the eyelids that we recognised each other. But I knew now where I had gone wrong. It was clear that no one was to blame but myself. It was my careless words that had switched me into this dreadful siding, instead of being propelled straight on to my predestined goal—"Pay two pounds and five guineas costs"—a siding that looked like terminating with the sack. I was being processed correctly; I had nothing to complain about.

The black maria bumps and twists along in a meaningless, lunatic dance. Desultory, disembodied voices speak and answer one another. I look through the grille. Across the narrow passage a dark-skinned disembodied hand clutches the top of another steel door. But there are no bodies except mine, no bodies at all. Only when the beast stops twice to gorge itself, the bodies glide briefly down the alimentary canal and vanish with a rumbling and a rattling. It rolls at last into its dark lair and spews its indigestible burden into the maw of a bigger beast!

The processing continues. A grotesque concern for proper labelling is shown by a species of black-coated creatures that stand on two legs like men. They ask our names, how old we are, how much we weigh, how tall we are. They do not ask us if we love our wives, whether we're fond of music, where we'd like to go for our holidays, what we think of life. They feed us (unsweetened tea and pre-digested sausage-meat), strip us, cleanse us. They confiscate our pens and watches. They make us toe a white line, whose magical properties evidently confer on a cursory glance at the genitals the virtues of a medical examination. And constantly they classify us—but they do not know who we are.

We are marched to the cell block for untried prisoners. It is no different from the others—and nor are we, except that we may wear our own clothes and buy food and fags through the Food Officer if we were lucky enough to have money on us when we were picked up. It is like the penitentiary in an American gangster film—a great steel mantrap, tier on tier of locked cell doors linked by steel balconies and flights of steel stairs.

And now I am alone, in my own private apartment. It is unremarkable—crumbling brown walls, stone floor, iron bed, wooden table and chair, bare bulb, tin jug and basin, broken mirror. On the floor stands a tin chamber pot complete with lid. To complete the room service, for the use of the desperate or the foolhardy, there is a belloush. At the far end of the cell, underneath the high, barred window, a large pipe runs along the floor. It is just warm to the touch.

I make my bed and undress quickly in case the light should be switched off before I have finished. It seems like only an hour or so later I am awake again. A broken steel slat is sticking up through the thin straw-filled palliasso. It is not really dark. My prison bars are shadowed on the ceiling by the light from lamps in the streets, where the rain falls with dreary insistence.

I have no impression of sleeping again, but I must have dozed off at last, because it is morning. There is a murmuring of many voices. Cell doors are being unlocked, wash basins and chamber pots emptied. I dress hurriedly. We collect our breakfasts—unsugared porridge with no milk, unsweetened tea, bread and marge, and the inevitable predigested sausage-meat. We carry our multi-mess tins up the steel stairs and are locked in our cells again. And there, but for the two half-hour periods of exercise (walking round and round beneath the prison wall), the collection of meals, and the obsessive checking of labels, we stay.

Twenty-four hours inside, that is all. For me, no hours have ever been half as long. By the grace of the kindly police sergeant, who allowed us to 'phone a solicitor, we are released on bail. "Any complaints", we are asked, as we sign for our money and our watches. I cannot resist a last weak sally. "Only the usual". Considering the circumstances I thought it a remarkably mild, almost genial crack. But the officer didn't smile; he asked curtly what I meant.

The last doors are unlocked. We are free. I walk among people again, look at them, all of them, with delight. Now I am greeted by my wife and children. I am sitting by the kitchen stove drinking a cup of sweet tea. The splendour of my home astonishes me—all the colours and the comforts. I lie on the most luxurious bed imaginable, and my woman lies besides me. All this I have taken for granted—and shall do again. But tonight I feel like a beggar being entertained by the Caliph of Baghdad.

The morning comes all too soon. I enter the office with trepidation and soon discover that my escapade is known. I prepare my desperate defences. But the "prowling boss on the look out for subversives" is at heart one of us. I get off with a caution.

And now, once again, I stand shorn before the king. I did not make my impassioned pleas before and now can only ask plaintively why I was not granted bail in the first place. I am given to understand there were reasons, but hardly have time to appreciate the honour when the inevitable incantation is uttered in magisterial tones—"Pay two pounds and five guineas costs". The official processing has been completed. Justice has been done.

Twenty-four hours in the nick, that is all. Yet what revolutionary could devise such a brilliant and effective short course on the State and the Individual? The system has been designed with the utmost ingenuity to crush the individual's spirit and—even worse—his sense of humanity. Its object is to create unpersons, and regimentation and petty humiliations may reasonably be assured to further this end as well as old-fashioned blows.

Indeed, it achieves a fair measure of success—on the warders! This is not really surprising, when one considers that they are more than usually conformist in character, otherwise they would never have chosen the role of cogs in the millstone machinery of State justice; they would not take part again and again in a form of robbery far worse than those of which most of their captives are guilty—the robbery with violence of great chunks of a man's short life.

Their captives, on the other hand, are more than usually non-conformist. Without, for the most part, having really worked it out, they don't quite see the beauty of the unequal society. It may be just life to them, but they want to get on in life as much as the next man.

At all events, they are men. To see for oneself the patent failure of the legal machinery to dehumanise its victims is wonderfully heartening. Our intake was a mixed bunch in age, background, character, intellect, and criminal accomplishment. Yet in one respect they were all typical criminals. Cheque-forgers, safe-breakers, and petty burglars, their transgressions were efforts to redistribute the nation's wealth in favour of themselves and their families—efforts as non-violent as sterling investment and golden handshakes. The vicious rat of bourgeois nightmares is as rare among criminals as noble men are among peers.

My fellow victims were highly gifted with that most rare quality among humans, honesty about themselves. Neither boastful nor humble, their fatalistic conviction that they would never escape from a life of crime did not prevent them from being strongly aware that, by getting caught at least, they had brought misfortune and unhappiness on their families.

They did not scoff at us. ("At least he's in here for his principles", a skilled forger remarked to a highly intelligent house-breaker, who asked me to tell him about Anarchism.) Nor did they discriminate in any way against the coloured boys in our bunch. We were all in it together, up against them, and the small kindnesses and the little acts of solidarity—the sharing of fags and the passing round of paperbacks and slyly sexy American magazines, above all perhaps the sympathy even for two greenhorns in the nick for three days at the most—were very touching.

If only they could believe that things could be different, what splendid revolutionaries they would make.

DOV.

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PAGES OF LABOUR HISTORY

THE GENERAL STRIKE IN THE NORTH-EAST

THE GENERAL STRIKE IN THE NORTH EAST (History Group of the Communist Party, 1s. 6d.). This is almost a review of a review. Before reading the pamphlet itself, I saw a review of it in the Trotskyist *Labour Review* (Vol. 7 No. 1) and found the Trots were very pleased with it: "This pamphlet is an enthralling study of one area during the General Strike of 1926. At the centre, during the struggle, was the Durham mining village of Chopwell—known as Little Moscow for many years afterwards." The latter statement reminds me of a man I know who claims Birmingham is the capital of England; the former describes a pamphlet which is, at best, very stodgy.

I have a special interest in this area, for it is "my own, my native land", although at the time I was on strike in Coventry, returning North at the end of May, 1926, and I knew most of the characters in the narrative. North Eastern England contains within its undefined borders a dense area of population: both banks of the Tyne, the Wear and the Tees, crowded with towns, factories and shipyards and their hinterlands of coal and iron mines in Durham, South Northumberland and the narrow strip of Yorkshire called Cleveland. This area, about the size of one of our smallest counties, is isolated from other dense areas of population by, in the west, the Pennine Chain, to the south by the Yorkshire Moors, the east by the North Sea and to the north by the Northumberland moors and the Cheviots. An ideal area for working-class organisation.

Into this area in 1926 came R. Page Arnot, Executive Committee member of the Communist Party and director of the labour Research Department (the LRO was captured by the CP), who had a plan, rather like the man Carlyle spoke of who carried a complete French Revolution in his head. May 1, 1926, "I jotted down headings for a plan of campaign in the Durham-Northumberland area" . . . "That evening, before a gathering in the (Chopwell) Miners' Club, Steve Lawther and three officials of Lodges in adjacent pits discussed and agreed on a plan of action."

Off to see trade union officials in Newcastle, to whom the plan was presented. It is said that nature abhors a vacuum and, presumably on this principle the plan was sucked in.

It was not based on the dense industrial areas of Tyne-Wear-Tees, as almost any Northern worker would have expected. The scheme originated in the cocoons of clever men who could think only politically. So it was based on the ancient political divisions of the counties of Northumberland and Durham. Now, even political society has rejected the county as the chief unit of social organisation, the main areas of population, industry and commerce being wrenched from them to form independent county boroughs by successive Local Government Acts, especially that of 1888.

A school atlas with a density-of-population map would have set right the clever men (the three-river area, well over 500 per square mile; half of Northumberland has less than 30), but political units, and those of mediaeval society at that, it had to be. This meant cutting off the south bank of the Tees, including the great steel town and port of Middlesbrough. But it did include the hills and rocky dales of Durham. It did include the capital of Northumberland, Alnwick, population 6,700, and all the land of the county west and north, including the great moors, the Pennines and the Cheviot Hills, the Roman Wall, Keilder Forest, the National Park where seals and the aboriginal wild cattle breed, holy Lindisfarne, the Farne Islands and the sheep on a hundred hills.

The constitution of the strike council was as clumsy and ill-thought-out as its location. It was not based on the groups of workers on strike, or waiting to strike, according to their work, that is on factory, dock, power station or steel mill. Its first basis was the trade union bureaucracy, the full-time officials of the bigger unions, who were already tied up in administrative work, T&GWU, SAU, NUGMW, Boilermakers, Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions, RCA, NUR, Building Workers' Federation and the miners' unions of Durham and Northumberland. Later came the ASLE&F, the ETU, AEU, TA, Plumbers' Union, NUC, the litho printers, the bookbinders and—we've got to make it political—the Gateshead Labour Party, the Newcastle Labour Party and the ILP, bodies whose function was not to run a strike, but to collect votes at the next General Election. The well-organised shop stewards and works committees were out, except insofar as one of their members might slip in by being a member of the ILP or other affiliated body.

It is important to note that the "Joint Strike Committee" had not the power to call out on strike one man, woman or child. That was the function of the particular trade union concerned, acting alone and through its officials. That was, of course, the constitutional case and the council and strike committee were resolved to stick to constitutional behaviour. The TUC direction was "that the actual calling out of workers should be left to the Unions participating in the dispute."

"Accordingly," says the pamphlet, "when members of the

committee assembled . . . nearly all had a set of telegraphic instructions from their own union office." That was on May 4 (the miners were out on May 1). The first few precious days of the Strike were bedevilled by long discussions on the constitutional issue and the committee had to sit in debate for most of the time. I do not say that the TU officials on the committee were not able men; I believe they knew their jobs well, but it was asking too much of them. The job could have been done more easily and quickly by committees of action of the strikers, cutting across union borders and unconcerned about constitutions or legalities and certainly concerned with picketing.

Picketing was organised locally by such groups of strikers and even spontaneous action went on, especially road pickets, on the Great North Road and other arterial highways and on the streets, where fierce baton charges by the police occurred daily. But such action could hardly be the concern of the JSC, whose responsibility was, according to TUC instructions, "organising the Trade Unionists in dispute in the most effective manner for the preservation of peace and order."

Certainly the Labour Party representatives on such committees were very much concerned about the public peace; they did not want to lose any middle-class votes and some of them were magistrates. Of this committee the Trotskyists say, "In the Russian Revolution these types of organisation were called soviets," (*Labour Review*, *ibid*). Now you know what a soviet is . . .

But while the mock parliament sat, the battle of the roads went on and the pickets were winning. The strikers knew, though they might have lacked "political theory", that the State is strong only when it keeps open its lines of communication. The rebels have to cut these lines; they are strong locally, but not in centralisation. But the TUC instructed the post and telephone workers to continue work and tried to control the whole strike from London, a principle to which the Northern JSC and similar bodies agreed, although it was very difficult to maintain contact with the TUC.

At Newcastle Quayside, dockers, members of the NUGMW, not the T&GWU, were unloading food, in accord with TUC direction, when the State moved in men of the OMS, their scab organisation, to help unload ships. The dockers at once struck work, refusing to continue alongside blacklegs. At the same time warships (two destroyers and a submarine) were moored alongside, their guns pointing to the docks. The dockers also refused to work under this threat.

According to a very factual report by the Joint Strike Committee and statements in the House by Martin Connolly, MP for Newcastle East, Sir Kingsley Wood, State Commissioner for the area, came to the committee and tried to open negotiations for the transport of food. At a later meeting Wood arrived with General Kerr Montgomery and Mr. Moon, the Food Controller, and tried to get an agreement to work the docks, etc., on a 50-50 basis of control. So strong was the picket, that Wood was forced to take this humble course.

After the failure of the talks, the Government issued a denial of the incidents in, strangely, a few words. Julian Symons, in his book *The General Strike*, doubts the truth of the trade union statements, but his only evidence is reports in the local Press, produced by scab labour. On the other hand, it is strange that the Government did not prosecute the authors, outside Parliament, of these statements. They certainly had ample power, plus the will and malice to do so, if the statements were untrue.

But the credit for this near-submission of authority must go, not to Grand Committees, but to the striking dockers of Newcastle and to the numberless pickets who acted, and suffered bruises and jail, on their own initiative.

Apart from its organisational plan of control, the Communist Party played little part in the General Strike in the North East. Like the party nationally, the district party did not know what to do in a strike and was cowardly to boot. The self-styled "vanguard of the working class" hung on to the coat tails of the labour leaders.

The CP ran the Minority Movement, a trade union left wing, which they claimed had a million members in Britain (see *Serving My Time*, Harry Pollitt). The SWF pamphlet, *The British General Strike*, states: "during the Strike, in which it played no part, it even ceased to hold meetings." This is confirmed by the CP pamphlet, which does not even mention the MM, whose largest section was in mining.

The tasks of a revolutionary body were easy to see: first, to make the strike general, for only some of the workers had been called out; engineering, shipyard, iron and steel, chemicals, all big industries in the N.E., as well as building and others, were not called out until the last day, after the Strike was called off. Yet the area CP did nothing to get the men out.

In Coventry, where the engineers were not called out, most of the town was at work, but when we went to work at Whitley

Aerodrome and found troops on guard, we refused to work, posted pickets and sent flying squads round to the motor and other factories and in two days had the whole town on strike, but without any help from the CP. This was similar to the action of the Newcastle dockers, among whom was not a single Communist.

The second task should have been to intensify picketing. This the CP did not do; indeed, by initiating a highly constitutional body it helped to obstruct effective picketing. The workers of the N.E. for more than a hundred years before the Strike had a glorious record of picketing, but only a little reference to the successful militant action of the strikers is recorded in the pamphlet and the two most notable incidents are omitted. One was the derailment of the blacket "Flying Scotsman" train to London by Cramlington miners; the other, published in a BBC broadcast, the capture of Middlesbrough Central Station by strikers, who blocked the line with heavy wagons. But such action was hardly in keeping with the dignity of a body of TU officials, town councillors and magistrates.

A revolutionary body would have gone on to warn the workers daily against trusting the General Council, who were sure to betray the Strike, and call on the workers themselves to control the Strike. Instead the local CP repeated the slogan of the party nationally, "All power to the General Council." All power to traitors?

The N.E. district of the CP had one more slogan, which they flogged with a will, the national slogan of the party, a call to return a Labour Government. Advice to men on strike: wait until the next General Election and Vote Labour! A Labour Government headed by MacDonald, who had declared himself against the General Strike. At the next General Election, three years later, a Labour Government came to office and for two years did little but watch unemployment and the Slump grow, ending with MacDonald heading a Tory "National" Government and the Mosley faction breaking away to form a Fascist party.

That the Communist cry of "A Labour Government" was nothing but the echo of the Moscow line was proven at that next General Election. By then the celebrated World Congress of the Comintern had taken place (1928) and the slogan went out from Moscow, "Social Democracy is the chief enemy." In Germany this led to the Communists attacking the Social Democrats and the Prussian Labour Government, in preference to attacking the Nazis.

In Britain the CP had to toe the "new line" and attack the Labour Party. In the 1929 election, Pollitt stood as the Communist candidate against MacDonald at Seaham Harbour, Durham. Here is his party's view of the Labour Party they had been boosting in that area three years earlier:

"The Labour Party calls for the support of the workers as the principal opposition to the Conservative Government, but the Labour Party is in reality, no less than the Conservative and Liberal Parties, the servant of capitalism and the capitalist state. The Labour Party professes Socialist aims, but its practical programme is the programme of capitalist re-organisation. It opposes the class struggle of the workers and advocates industrial peace. The Labour Party is the most dangerous enemy of the workers, because it is a disguised party of capitalism." **Election Address, 1929.**

In 1929 the MP for Seaham was Sidney Webb, a past and future member of Labour Governments. Here is what Mrs. Webb was writing in her diary at that time:

"May 4—When all is said and done we personally are against the use of the General Strike in order to compel the employers of a particular industry to yield to the men's demands, however well justified these claims may be. Such methods cannot be tolerated by any Government—even a Labour Government."

While the strike was in full swing and extending in the N.E., orders came from the General Council of the TUC: "Call off the Strike. It's over." The pamphlet quotes the *Newcastle Workers' Chronicle*: "Never in the history of workers' struggle—with the exception of our leaders in 1914—has there been such a calculated betrayal of working class in erests."

Betrayed by the General Council! Comrade Communists, what of the slogan you hawked round Newcastle and the Durham coal-field? The slogan, "All power to the General Council?" A council of traitors! And where do you stand on this Comrade Trotskyists, the fag-ends of Bolshevism?

TOM BROWN

FROM OUR POSTBAG . . .

YOUR PAPER is one of my "core" subscriptions. That is, one that I can't do without. Your coverage of the African Labour movement is far better than any I've seen elsewhere—bar none! Also, your comments on the Peace movement are generally very good. And you print practically all the labour stories that don't get printed elsewhere (esp. Spain).

Louisville was one of the few southern cities to have an anti-war demonstration during Cuba crisis. We have a chapter of the Student Peace Union here which worked with the Fellowship of Reconcilia-

tion in leafleting a UNO-Day celebration. Needless to say we had police trouble, but were somewhat effective. The old South has a long way to go yet, but it's on the right track.

Meredith troubles in Mississippi were only a small indication of the real programme of mass terror being waged against the Negro people in the South. Hardly a day goes by now without some act of violence directed against the leaders of the freedom movement. Field Secretary Chuck McDew of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee called the situation a "Nazi-like reign of terror". This was no overstatement.

JOKE: Roosevelt proved that you can always be President. Truman proved that anybody could be President. Eisenhower proved that you don't need a President. And JFK has proven that it's dangerous to have a President.

Best of luck in the coming year.

Louisville, Kentucky.

J.W.

ANNIKA BJORKKLUND

WITH DEEP REGRET, Direct Action records the death in December of our Swedish comrade, Annika Björklund, wife and fellow libertarian campaigner of Carl Björklund, former editor of the Stockholm Anarchist paper, "Brand".

Annika, born in Gävle in 1891, was a relative of Joe Hill, the IWW organiser and songwriter, legally murdered by the State of Utah in 1916. For 30 years she was a lecturer on music and became well known as a composer—the only woman whose work has been performed in the Stockholm Concert Hall since its opening in 1926.

She frequently travelled abroad to study musical tuition in other countries and in London came in contact with André Segovia, the great master of the guitar. Annika realised the guitar's potential as a popular instrument in Sweden—and became a leading authority on its tuition. Her instruction books are today used internationally, wherever the guitar is played.

An author of note, Annika wrote two well-reviewed novels and, under the pen name Ased Janke, a number of whodunits, as well as many poems and short stories.

She was a woman of enormous intellectual capacity and—as those, who like the present writer, had the privilege of meeting her in London some years ago will remember—an extremely sensitive, sympathetic person. She was always at Carl's side, fighting for the oppressed and downtrodden, and took a keen and active interest in the plight of old age pensioners.

To Carl, their family and Annika's countless friends and comrades, the SWF expresses its sorrow at the loss of a great and lovable personality.

K.H.

Literature

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