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 sporting the usual rubbish—these in power making sympathetic and encouraging noises, while those seeking power are crowing over the embattled 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 3.8 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 bureaucracy 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 pressing. He cannot do things like labour-saving, 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 has 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, to the new joint super-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.

Spain—Syndicalists jailed

Franco’s military tribunals continue to sentence members of the Spanish Libertarian Movement to long terms of imprisonment for revolutionary activity. A number of the 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;
JAIMÉ 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 370 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 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 innumerable difficulties both in the printing and the postal fields. We are still hopeful of a monthly paper in the 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 subscription 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, whose output may be obtained 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 many books and articles 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 capitalist economy. Governments were forced to abandon 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 scheme promulgated 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 1939, 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 regulate unemployment on the boom slump cycle. An inquiry, in fact, by the Government, in 1945, into the causes of unemployment, reported: "The cause of unemployment is the boom slump cycle in action".

The only alternative is to find a way to break the boom slump cycle itself, by eliminating the capitalist system. The only people who can discover a cure for this evil are the workers themselves, for they are the creators of the boom slump cycle.

The workers resist the rising unemployment. They are morally and physically exhausted, and they refuse to lose their jobs. In other places they are trying to produce goods for their own use. They are producing the goods that they need, and they are producing them in a way that does not require the use of machines.

The workers are fighting the rising unemployment by creating new jobs for themselves. They are fighting the rising unemployment by creating new jobs in their own homes. They are fighting the rising unemployment by creating new jobs in their communities. They are fighting the rising unemployment by creating new jobs in their countries.

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 resist the rising unemployment and halt the boom slump cycle, a system that can actually turn a man into a "humiliation"—out of the window.

**Brian Hart.**

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**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 comrades, Jorge Conill Valls, was under sentence of death in Barcelona, ended—after a great anti-fascist demonstration in the court-room—with all being given "symbolic" suspended sentences and released on parole. Three of the defendants—Diego Pedret, Albertino Tomolino and Gennaro Vitrano—were already in custody when their trial began.

The seventh, Amadeo Bucalo, after being brought up in the court-room of the Palace of Justice at Varese, was saying that he wished to share his comrades responsibility for their action. The court's public was crowded and the trial was punctuated by prolonged outbursts of "Long live the International", "Long live the anarchists" and "Long live the communists". On one stage the commissariati escorted one internee from the room, while he yelled "Down with Franco... and Spain!"

The defense of our comrades was that their action was fully justified by the conditions prevailing in Spain. They were being tried in France, to the ill-treatment of political prisoners there and to the underground struggle against the fascist regime, which culminated in the massacre 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 Merencio, 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 setback of 50 years!"

Summing up, the prosecutor bowed before the anti-fascist storm that the case had aroused and asked only that suspended sentences from two to seven months should be imposed: They should be arrested quickly and then suffer a sentence that would be more likely to disarm multilaterally (a large suspension). Against this action by the Executive without Conference mandate, we—the Italian Nuclear Disarmament Group—would have to take a stand that would show that a Conference cannot be called in all levels with Unilateralist movements in other countries.

**Laurens Otter.**
DIRECT ACTION

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 TUC structure by British trade unions. 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 TUC leaders, to study the experience of collective bargaining.

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. The Swedish approach is to make sure that all costs, productivity is the goal of bosses and workers alike, and that workers are employed to work together, so that the bosses can win and the workers obtain a few “curtains”.

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 structure, has survived constant attempts by the employers’ body (S&F) and the reformist trade unions, Landorganisation (LO), to exclude it from representing the workers. Johnston does cite one reference work on Syndicalism (Svensk Syndikalist by Valter Aman, LO Stockholm, 1938), but this is probably written from a social democratic standpoint.

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

LO is tripartite in structure—councils, representatives of affiliated organisations and the executive (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. In the executive, consisting of the secretariat and representatives of affiliated unions, meets twice a year and is supreme between congresses. LO’s councils, elected by affiliated unions, include three full-time paid officials, elected by congress and appointing others 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) labour legislation
(b) plans for organisations
(c) wages policy and negotiations
(d) procedures in disputes and awards for initiating or treating

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 to LO, which represents the representatives and congress. This threat of withdrawing finance is tied up with “the interest of society” and “inconvenience to other unions.”

Up to 1928, the central organisation’s strikes councils, normally in importance, were located in LO’s side. Then, when rules were drawn up by the representative assembly, giving the Secretariat supervisory powers, “socialist 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 (COSE), the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (SACO) and the Federation of Civil Servants (SR). Total membership of about 60,000 is increasing. Relations between TCO and LO are fair, but “growing steel” as LO 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 involves 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 Mediation Act also made it illegal to threaten 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. An agreement or individual bond 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, as provided 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. 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 assured under social democratic capitalism in Britain or America. Employers have the right of hire and fire and will not let labour supply be channelled through the unions. The employers’ position has been strengthened through judgments of the Labour Court. LO claims that short-time working rules unemployment in its policy to mobility through dismissals and training. Work sharing is opposed.

Works Councils in Sweden are broadly intended to increase productivity, provide workplace order and discipline and ensure that workers’ representatives have the right of hire and fire and will not let labour supply be channelled through the unions. The employers’ position has been strengthened through judgments of the Labour Court. LO claims that short-time working rules unemployment in its policy to mobility through dismissals and training. Work sharing is opposed.

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 measures to cut back social services, the workers 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 the power and influence of the unions) falling year by year.

But what will this consciousness of impending disaster lead to an intensified fight between individual unions for the control of an increasingly reducing number of potential members, or will it lead to union co-operation to fight the growing unemployment 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 working 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 ruled that over-calculated objections by Mine, Mill and Smelterworkers over 14,000 Nickel miners in Sudbury, half of whom wanted to be represented by Mine, Mill through the courts, so that the divisions and animosities created by the two unions amongst the Nickel miners will continue to hinder everyone’s advantage of the two unions, the International Nickel.

Here in Alberta, up to a few years ago, workers in the steel fabrication plants were represented by Mine, Mill. Then Steel succeded in wresting certification of plant, but the employees preferred a spectable of two unions, rather than the employers, organised 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 able to organise on Steel’s unpromising base and now feels strong enough 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 unions can work together and, before any contract negotiations are initiated, 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 Greenwood
Showdown at Ford's

THE Ford management are bungling the showdown, not only within the Ford Empire but also throughout 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 exactly the same as Ford professor.

“Isn’t it,” 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 concern.”

Fine words but it makes the old hat “every employer spits out the “good of the country” line every he has industrial bother.”

These last few weeks have seen a ghastly jamboree at Ford’s, every body getting into 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 bolster their “strike” husbands, turn on the “economic heart.”

Let’s be 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 the present Ford scheme is not only to claim 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 ship 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 over the issuing of credentials, so that the rank and file can be kept in line.

The only people who elect ship 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 sermons towards all workers throughout the country, calling for their support in defence of a vital principle.

Also in “Ford Bulletin” November 12, part of Lord Citrine’s House of Lords speech and James Callaghan’s 2nd Party Political broadcast of October 27th, had this to say: “It is to be a deplorable situation when control of conditions of labour have passed into the hands of ship stewards.” He goes on to say it’s a problem not only for employers, but for the trade union 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 in 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 bit of hypocrisy. 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 won’t only support it, but will do as you are bloody well told. Those boys have been "unemployed" so long they have forgotten what work in industry is like.

The cause of the trouble at Ford’s is "speed-up". It 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. 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 new set? Have they been "bought off" by Ford’s, 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 all workers.

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 had no private fears 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’s workers took a major jump. A further surrender will cause an even greater fall of morale.

The Communist Party, which has been strong at Ford’s, follows the TU bureaucracy pattern. The CP is willing to throw overboard the shop stewards, even a few, 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 Hasell 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 Johnson.

This issue at Ford’s, 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 League of Seamen hierarchy caved in. 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 Federation 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 only because of 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-rate 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 gets 4s. 7d. per hour for all overtime. Like the 40-hour week, the campaign during the six months’ bargaining 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 face of the Royal Albert (10s. weekly maximum, annual review, for suitable applicants with at least 25 years actual sea services).

So the thing is, seamen still need to apply a bit more pressure in 1963 than they did 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 ship crews, usually among the day working staff, by shipowners. The cut-rate 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, there 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 “Stuck of Bricks”. Sailors Home, Limehouse (where I’m living pre-tom) every day working, always underemployed 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!
THREE NEW PAMPHLETS

Anti-nuclear facts—and strategy

THE BLACK PAPER. (Peace News, 6d.)
THE BOMB, DIRECT ACTION AND THE STATE (SWF)

THE Black Paper lives up to its name and proves without a shadow of a doubt the correctness of the policy of unilateralist nuclear disarmament. It starts with the atom bomb and goes on to describe how the madmen have created the biggest and best-bombed war터 than the war of methods of destruction, of which the public has little or nothing.

The pamphlet goes on to explain that H-Bombs are old hat and that nuclear weapons are now the rage, thus presenting a "hair trigger" picture of the future. "Political mistakes, they argue, 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-Bombs 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—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 slightest confidence in it is impossible. Therefore, 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 question on the policies should drive everyone to join the Committee of 100. It is stark and frightening. To quote from the pamphlet: "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 millions of burials 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 burials would be abortive and the mortality figures for burials 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."

"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 destruction of the bomb. But it is a very small bomb, and how a Mr. Tanimoto, 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 gives the key to the solution of 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, that the politicians in their "play-pens" for the "bombs" and the "assailants of the bomb", the Communist Party climbing on the band-wagon, attempting to use unilateralists as a potential source of membership.

The pamphlet on 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 are the only people who have the right to fight for the world—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 nowhere preciously.

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 us the introductory promises of "appealing stories of rejection, suffer and dehumanisation." The common theme is one of filth, bullying and overcrowding, resulting in human misery to a degree that most people passing homes would find difficult to imagine. One householder, for example, 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, dirty place than Newington Lodge."

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 public opinion in this form of society, they have discovered the necessity 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.

At Shell 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 have to do it ourselves."

From this point they are realistic that any direct action will achieve results. The pamphlet is a recognition that this direct 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 available from Bob Potter, 18 Kingsley Road, London, S.W.19.

B.L.H.

THE BOMB, DIRECT ACTION AND THE STATE

What they say about it...

"A clear-cut programme of Direct Action"—SOCIALIST LEADER.

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A short lesson in robbery with violence

The magistrate, Quill-like, though less malignant than gumpy, on his throne. He was plainly determined to see Sunday's proceedings in his petty kingdom. The military precision of the plea of “Guilty” cost me dear. I had nothing 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 there was no more work for me to do in the “Not Guilty” column, where it was joined by two others of the “Not Guilty” plea.

The “Not Guilty” were marched out and marched back again a few minutes later. A scarcely audible muttering issued from spectators around the throne (I thought I caught the words “Remanded until the next sitting”). The morning started out again. It seemed about as meaningful as the old nursery rhyme about the Duke of York.

“Well, that's till Thursday", I thought. But the marching didn’t stop. Now is the courtroom; it went on, straight into a police cell. The police sergeant knocked, knocked, and no answer. I was “Remanded in custody until the magistrate says 'on bail'”.

It had that kind of inexorable feeling. It all followed from that spine-chilling moment during the Trial Square demonstration when the big, black hands clamped me into thecreated sensation, while the shouting of my bettor and I by so much as a flicker of the eyelids that we recognised each other. But I knew where I had gone wrong. It was clear that no one was interested in me. I was merely a meaningless word that had switched me into this dreadful side, instead of being a real person, dedicated straight on my predestined goal—"Pay two pounds and five guineas costs—a side that looked like terminating with the sack, and that was being pressed to do something to complain about.

The blank mugs, the chairs and tables are a meaningless, frantic dance. Desultory, disenchanted voices speak and answer one another. I look through the grille. Across the narrow passage a dark-skinned, disabled hand touches the top of another steel door.

But there are no bodies except mine. I am alone. Only when the door steps twice to gurgle itself, the bodies glide briefly down the all-night passage and vanish with a rumbling and a rattling. It seems to me that even the air is fair and spews its indiscernible 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 their heads like men. They ask us our names, how old we are, how much we weigh, how tall we are. We 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 bread and butter. They ask us to strip for the inspection of our pens and watches. They put us into a big, black, all-magical properties evidently confer a curiosity glance at the genitals of a medical examination. And constantly they classify us as "Men", "Women", "Children", "Negro". We are marched to the cell block for unjust prisoners. It is no different from the others—and nor are we, except that we may wear our own clothes and buy food and drink from the Food Office if we are deemed and for our holidays, what we think of life. They feed us unsweetened tea and bread and butter. They ask us to strip for the inspection of our pens and watches. They put us into a big, black, all-magical properties evidently confer a curiosity glance at the genitals of a medical examination. And constantly they classify us as "Men", "Women", "Children", "Negro".

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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 jar and basin, broken mirror. On the floor stands a tin chamber pot complete with lid. To complete the sensation, for the use of the desperate or the foolhardy, there is a bell at the 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 brown steel slab is sticking up through the thin straw-filled pallasse. It is not really dark. My prison bars showed through the light from lamps in the streets, where the rain falls with deadly 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 and the doors are being unlocked, wash basins and chamber pots emptied. I dress hastily. The smell of unsweetened, unstriped sugar loaf, with no milk, unsweetened tea, bread and marge, and the inevitable predigested suet-mash. We carry our meals to us on trays and sit on the floor of our cell. 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 conditions?” we asked, as we sign for our money and our watch. “I cannot meet 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 astounds me; all the colours and the comforts. I lie on the most luxurious bed imaginable, and my memories last because 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 is too soon. I enter the office with trepidation and soon discover that men are sitting at their desks. I prepare for my desperate defiance. But the "protesting boss on the look out for subserviency is at heart one of us. I get off with a caution.

And now, once again, I stand short before the judge. I did not make my impassioned plea before and now can only ask plausively 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 humour when the inevitable incarceration 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 revolution could be carried out without any effective support, the State and the Individual? The State by 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 assumed to further this end as well as old-fashioned bludgeons.

Indeed, it achieves a fair measure of success—on the warders. This is not really surprising, when one considers that they are more than adequately compensated for their efforts. They are not supposed to have any sense of humanity. They are only expected to carry out their duties. The warders may be but they want to get on in life as much as the next man.

At all odds, they are men. To see for oneself the patent failure of the legal machinery to humanise its victims is wretchedly heartbreaking. 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, petty thieves, etc. They were expected to constitute the nation's wealth in favour of themselves and their families—efforts as non-violent as stealing, insurance and gold and handshakes. The vicious set of boggles, nightmares as are rare among criminals as noble men are among women.

My fellow victims were highly gifted with that most rare quality among humans, honesty about themselves. Neither beastly nor human, their biggest conviction that they would never escape from such 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 housebreaker, who asked me to tell him about Anarchism. Nor did they discriminate in any way against the coloured boys in our bunch.

We were still in it together, up against them, and of the small kindnesses and the little acts of humanity even the passing round of paperbacks and shlyy sexy American magazines, above all else the sympathy even for two greenhorns in the sick for threats at the mere mention of the word "prison.

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

DOV.

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NOTTING HILL ANARCHIST GROUP—meets on the last Friday of each month at Brian and Margaret Harts's, 57 Ladbroke Road (near Notting Hill Gate Station), London, W.11 at 8 p.m.
DIRECT ACTION

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 pamphlet. Before reading the pamphlet itself, I saw a review of The Strike: the North East, 1926, 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 valley of Shipley—known under the name of 'The Northumberland Coalfield,' a place that was one of the few instances in which the Strike committee assembled..." nearly all had a set of telegraphic instructions from their own union office." That was on May 4, the miners of the Durham coalfield had been called out by the Strike committee, and the Trots were bewildered 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 TUC officials on the committee were not able men, I think I know the Trots and the TUC members 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 picking.

The picking was organised locally by such groups of strikers and even spontaneous action went on. There were illegal pickets, on the Great Northern Road and other arterial highways, old men, and on the streets, where force often came in a storm of threats and a few of the strikers were badly hurt in the process. But such action could hardly be the concern of the TUC, whose responsibility, according to TUC instructions, was to organise the Trade Unions 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 Trots say, in the Russian Revolution these types of organisations were called soviets, (Labour Review, ibid). Now you know what a soviet is...

But while the local 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 so long as it has the "working class" in its hands. They had to cut these lines: they were strong locally, but not in centralisation. But the TUC instructed the post and telephone workers to continue work and to try to see that the wholesale strike from London, a prin-

But the following a few words of 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 the Government. 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 to the Strike committee, but to the striking dockers of Newcastle and to the numberless pickets who acted, and suffered bruises and jail, on their own initiative.

The constitutional plan of control, the Communist Party played little part in the General Strike in the North Eastern. 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 Serv. My Time, Harry Politty). The CP variously called for a strike, a "strike strike" or a "qualified strike" when they 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 constitutional 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, and the Strike was called off. Yet the 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 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 fear, i.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 new books of this terrible year. One was the report of the blanket "Flying Scotsman" train to London by Cramlington miners; the other, published in a BBC broadcast, the capture of the Middlesbrough Central Station by strikers, who blocked the line with cars. But such action was hard in keeping with the dignity of a body of T.U. 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 the CP?"

The N.E. district of the CP had one more slogan, which they plugged with a bell, 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, the CP urged, had taken place in 1928, and the slogan went out from Moscow, "Social Democracy is the chief enemy." In Germany it had led to the Communists attacking the Social Democrats and the Russian Labour Government, in preference to attacking the Nazis. In the CP had to adopt the "policy line" and attack the Labour Party. In the 1929 election, Pollitt stood on 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 election with their own, but with no success.

"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 the "Socialist" 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 immediate enemy of the workers, because it is a Government party of the T.U.C. 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. the orders came from the General Council of the T.U.C. 'Call off the Strike. It's over.' The pamphlet quotes the Newcasles' Workers' Chronicle: 'Never in the history of workers' struggle with the exception of the 1914—1918 there has been such a calculated betrayal of working class interest.'

Betrayed by the General Council! Comrade Communists, what of the slogan you hawked round Newcastle and the Durham coalfield? The T.U.C. is the General Council. Where do you stand on this Comrade Trotskyists, the enemys of Bolshevism?"

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**ANNIKA BJÖRKLUND**

**WITH DEEP SADNESS,** Direct Action records the death in December of our Swedish comrade, Anni Björklund, wife and fellow libertarian campaigner of Carl Björklund, former editor of the Stockholm Anarchist paper, "Brand." Anni, born in Gävle in 1891, was a relative of Joe Hill, the IWW organizer 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 soprano—"the only woman whose work has been performed in the Stockholm Concert Hall since its opening in 1926. She frequently travelled abroad to give musical tuition in other countries, and in London came in contact with André Segovia, the great master of the guitar. Anni realised the guitar's potential as a popular instrument in Sweden—and became a leading authority who has written several instruction books are today used internationally, wherever the guitar is played.

An author of note, Anni wrote two well-reviewed novels and, under the pen name Asl Janke, a number of songs, 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 Anni's countless friends and comrades, the SWF expresses its sorrow at the loss of a great and lovable personality.

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**K.H.**

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

**TOM BROWN**

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**IN LEADERSHIP** in leading 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 programmes of various 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 "Nazification reign of terror." This was no overstatement.

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

**Louisville, Kentucky.**

**J.W.**