

# WORLD LABOUR NEWS

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## GHANA

### Economic blitz is met by direct action

THE new post-war Leftism, which equates nationalism, chauvinism and autocracy with progress, has been shaken by the recent strike of Ghanaian workers. The Government of Nkrumah, while the big man left for a few months' holiday in Russia and other Iron Curtain countries, launched an economic blitz directed, in the good old-fashioned way, mainly against the workers.

The workers at once protested that the fiscal measures increased their cost of living by 20%, while the State was, further, taking 5% of their wages in compulsory "savings". As to the latter, Ghana's workers, by their cynicism towards borrowed pie in the sky, showed

more savvy than did the British workers (many influenced by Communist advocacy), when faced by the identical "post-war credits" of the war-time government.

The price of motor trucks was raised two-thirds, petrol increased by sixpence a gallon and diesel oil by a shilling—a heavy charge in a country without sufficient railways. Clothing and shoes increased by a third, flour by twopence a pound and sugar by threepence. The prices of spirits, beer and tobacco were heavily increased. A land tax threatened higher rents and Nkrumah decreed a wage freeze.

Faced by criticism of his own and his lieutenants' heavy spending, "The Redeemer" ordered an investigation of the dubious extravagance of some of his men and a "war on corruption". So far the only social war has been one against the strikers and their sympathisers, against whom he sent armoured fighting vehicles and on whom he imposed a curfew.

On September 4, railway workers at Takoradi struck against the budget. Finance Minister Gbedemah flew from Accra to persuade the workers to return, while in Accra the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union met the Ghana TUC to urge action against Nkrumah's measures. Workers in Takoradi docks which, like the railways, are State-owned, joined the strike. The Government promised full protection to blacklegs. In many parts of the country, groups of workers joined the strike, which was, however, centred mainly on Takoradi and Kumasi, two of the three biggest towns, with 6,000 workers out.

In both towns fights between strikers and police were reported. The Government became scared at a strike threat by the Post and Telecommunication workers. The Government mouthpiece, the "Ghanaian Times", which carries Nkrumah's mocking slogan, "The welfare of the people is the supreme law", called on the workers "to tighten their belts." The strikers replied by pointing to the lavish expenditure of the Government, with large and expensive dele-

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### ROOTES WORKERS FIGHT FOR A PRINCIPLE

WILD ACCUSATIONS about "extremist disruptive elements" which aimed to wreck Britain's motor industry and cause "industrial anarchy" were made by Lord Rootes and his brother, Sir Reginald Rootes, when on October 16 they announced the sacking of 8,000 workers at Coventry, Luton and Dunstable, because of a strike at the Acton, London factory of British Light Steel Pressings. And once again the boggy-man of "Workers' Control" was paraded by the capitalists to justify their attacks.

The Rootes brothers may earn themselves the applause of the AEU Executive, who have sided with them throughout this dispute, which began on September 4, but they will not deceive rank-and-file workers, who know that men do not sacrifice pay packets for six weeks simply to satisfy the political jugglers of the Communist Party or Trotskyism. In fact, of course, the BLSP strike is in defence of a basic principle of solidarity.

It was called because the workers at Acton learned that the management planned substantial sackings—probably more than 300—at the factory. A proposal by the shop stewards' committee, that a four-day week should be worked, so that all might share the work available, was rejected out of hand by the employers, who have stubbornly refused to negotiate with the men on the job, saying they would deal only with the four unions concerned. Faced with this situation the 1,000 Acton workers came out solidly. About half their number belong to the AEU and, within a week of the strike beginning, these were threatened with expulsion from the union by President W. J. Carron. A return to work was also ordered by the executives of the National Union of Vehicle Builders and that of the National Society of Metal Mechanics, but the National Union of Sheet Metal Workers quickly declared the strike official.

The BLSP shop organisation, which has long had a militant reputation, remained solid in face of all attacks and they have had the support of many other sections. On October 3, for example, a meeting of AEU stewards from 35 factories in the Park Royal and Acton area called for the resignation of Carron and those of the union executive who supported his anti-strike stand. And on October 10, strikers marched on AEU headquarters at Peckham, carrying such banners as the pointed query: "HOW MANY SHAREHOLDERS REDUNDANT?" In view of the firm's increase in profits, from £3.6 million in 1958 to £5.5 million in 1959, the question answered itself.

The strikers were given notice by the firm, expiring on September 28. But the BLSP workers have maintained their ranks intact. It is worth recording that, as a result of past struggles, skilled and semi-skilled at the factory get the same wage rates—and that they have always been generous in support of others in dispute.

This battle between workers organised at the point of production, irrespective of union, and the combined forces of employers and trade union leaders is one that sets the pattern of other struggles to come. The BLSP workers deserve the support of all their fellows in industry. Contributions to the strike fund should be sent to Bro. F. Cole, 160 East Acton Lane, London, W.3.

### What about it, Mr. Foulkes?

IN THE CURRENT wage claim for 120,000 workers in power stations, put forward by the federated trade unions, F. Foulkes, Communist president of the ETU, acted as spokesman to the National Joint Council for the industry.

In the electrical power industry, he said rightly, manual labour costs formed but a small part of the whole cost, so that a wage increase here would not be so serious as in most industries. Speaking of the low wages paid in this nationalised concern, he said a man with a wife and three children on National Assistance would receive £9 19s a week. A power station labourer received for 42 hours £9 9s, minus offtakes, leaving £8 18s minus, possibly, income tax. Skilled men received £13 16 9½d.

In the past year sales per head of employee had risen 8.8%, wages for manual workers by 5.4%. The last rise was in August, 1960, since when the cost of living had risen from 110 to 116 points. To stand still, even, they would need a rise of 5.5%.

Wages under nationalisation were below those of comparable capitalist industries. For the power stations, labourers were 52nd and craftsmen 67th from the top of the Ministry of Labour list of wage rates. "The industry", said Foulkes, "should at least pay the equivalent of rates being paid by the advanced section of private industry."

Fair enough, Mr. Foulkes, but the Communist-controlled ETU, which naturally is in a leading position in the industry, makes nebulous boasts of the high wages it has won for its members, while the ETU, Communist Party and Mr. Foulkes called for the nationalisation of the electrical power industry. And the policy of the Communist Party is to nationalise ALL industries.

One who has left the industry.

gations to the UN and to Communist and other countries and the trappings of a power with a dozen times the population and wealth of Ghana.

The Government declared a state of emergency in the strike towns, reinforced the armed police there and prepared to arrest the strike leaders. After seven days it was reported that Nkrumah, still on a prolonged holiday in the Crimea, had ordered his Cabinet to get tougher. The Press, using the standard jargon of Bolshevism, said the strikers were tools of "big business men, scheming and conspiring with reactionary foreign forces." The "Accra News" declared, with red headlines, "Counter revolutionaries will be crushed. Foreign enemies, emissaries, agents, plotters, saboteurs, internal detractors and traitors, confusionists and obstructionists doomed!" Echo of Stalin!

The workers, who had looked to Ghana TUC for help and "a lead" were badly let down. After hesitation, the Labour leaders came down on the side of the State and "austerity". The General Secretary of the TUC, John Kofi Tettegah, returned from Belgrade and threw the weight of his authority against the strikers.

Tettegah has the reputation of being a "militant" with a strong belief in nationalisation. His tendency towards militarised labour was given scope when he became, for a while in 1959, commander of the uniformed Builders' Brigade. He is a fervent "neutralist", of the "some are more neutral than others" brand, but is not neutral in the class war. There he is on the side of the masters.

Certainly the TUC saved the Government, for most of Accra's industrial workers were on the brink of striking, as were the busmen, and there was bitter unrest among the cocoa farmers, an important economic group.

But the strikers had friends. The courageous "Ashanti Pioneer" had censors thrust upon it to doctor the strike news and refused to publish for two days as a public protest. The jolly and high-spirited market women of Takoradi fed the strikers and Nkrumah's steel-helmeted police swooped on the market to make mass arrests. By evasion and resistance, the stout-hearted women of the food market were able to curtail the extent of the arrests.

At the end of the first week of the strike, the Government intensified its campaign against the workers. More arrests, including many local strike leaders, were made, the censorship tightened and the strikers were told that, if the strike did not end at once, they would be dismissed and lose their pension rights.

Faced by these threats, the National Railway and Harbour Workers' Union called for a return to work. But the strike went on. The Government tried, in vain, to run a skeleton rail service; strikers were accused of derailing a scab train; the city streets, unswept, began to be impassable; more armed police appeared on the railways. Many short, sharp strike demonstrations occurred in the capital, Accra. Skeleton staffs of officials and scabs attempted to set going the power stations and clear the railroads.

On September 16, President Nkrumah returned from his prolonged stay in Russia, China and the Communist countries, where he had been solving world problems, and turned his attention to Ghana's. His order to cut the power of the police to detain people without charge from 72 to 48 hours, to lift the curfew and to release the strike prisoners was received with healthy scepticism.

But on its fifteenth day the strike was still going strong, the President's appeal ignored. The Cabinet received from Takoradi copies of a pamphlet calling on the workers to "shake off your shackles and save Ghana now". The "rubber-stamp Parliament", it said, must be overthrown and a daily wage of 10s 6d paid to all workers.

Faced by the force of a near-totalitarian state and betrayed by their own TUC, the workers, after three weeks returned to work. A week later the rail and harbour workers of Sekondi and Takoradi came out again, in protest at the continued jailing of their local leaders and following further arrests of 50 workers, market women and four opposition MPs.

Returning since, the workers have threatened a go-slow. It now seems strange that the strike areas had voted 100% for Nkrumah and his party at Ghana's general election. The solid, militant core of the strikers included hundreds of keen members of that organisation, the Convention Peoples' Party. Of course they have now left it.

The workers of Ghana have learned fast . . . learned not to trust union bosses, politicians and self-styled "saviours", but to rely on their own collective effort. May they never forget.

TOM BROWN

**LIBYA**—On September 27, following the failure through internal dissension of a general strike for higher wages, amendments to the labour law were announced making strikes by Government employees illegal and prohibiting strikes by other workers before arbitration procedures have been exhausted and a fortnight's notice given.

## 'Nkrumah does no wrong' —a discredited slogan!

"To say that the Government of Ghana is introducing dictatorship is nonsense. After all, every five years we shall go to the polls for the country to decide the next Government. As for me, I am competent and calm. I have big eyes and ears and shall continue to do certain things in this country as Prime Minister because I see that as the only way by which I can put you on the path of true parliamentary democracy." **Dr. Nkrumah**, (3.10.57).

**T**ODAY, four years later and only four-and-a-half since independence was won, Ghana can boast (according to figures given by a Ghana High Commission spokesman in London) between 200 and 300 political prisoners, detained without trial under the Preventive Detention Act passed in July 1958. Ghana's brief history is peppered with repressive measures—press censorship and deportation of foreign correspondents, bans on Opposition meetings and rallies, dismissal of dissenting University teachers, political imprisonment or banishment to special areas of the country for people whose presence is "not conducive to the public good." The latest legal shackle is a Bill setting up a special division of the High Court to deal with offences against the State. The new masters of Ghana have indeed proved adept pupils of the old masters.

"We in Ghana are so happy with the steps being taken by our leader to purge the nation of all quislings and imposters . . . our gigantic Nkrumahist reconstruction programmes of socialist transformation of Ghana life . . . We as a people are fighting hard—with our Osagyefo in the leadership—to destroy and remove all traces of the British colonialist system and erect in its place a new system . . . That system, that philosophy, that ideology, that scientific teaching is Nkrumahism, the peoples movement of Africa." **Ghanaian Times**, (11.10.61).

In theory, at least, all power is concentrated in Nkrumah's hands. As President, both the army and the police are under his direct control. So is Ghana Radio. One of the slogans of the Convention People's Party is "The Party is the State", and as its General Secretary and chairman of its central committee, as well as its leader in the legislative assembly, Nkrumah is the party.

"Nkrumah does no wrong. Nkrumah is our leader. Nkrumah does no wrong. Nkrumah is our Messiah. Nkrumah does no wrong. Nkrumah never dies."—**Slogan of the Young Pioneers of the Convention People's Party**.

Even in the Bolshevik totalitarian states there has not been, since Stalin, a parallel for the measureless adulation showered upon Nkrumah by his apostles. He is called Osagyefo, "the Victorious Leader", his head appears on Ghana's postage stamps and currency, his 20-foot bronze effigy has been erected in one of Accra's main streets, the village hut where he was born is being preserved as a national monument, and, like the Queen, he has an official birthday, known as Founder's Day.

Nurtured by idolisation are Nkrumah's grandiose dreams of becoming Osagyefo of a united black Africa, dreams largely responsible for the squandering of the reserves of £250 million which Ghana inherited on independence day. Ghana Airways loses millions of pounds every year and millions more are spent on ostentatious State functions and magnificent buildings; £100,000 is being spent on raising and extending the walls and defences of Nkrumah's castle, former residence of colonial Governor Generals; a loan, which the country can ill afford, has been made to Guinea; and Ghana, with a population of only 6 million, spends more on diplomatic representation abroad than Nigeria, with some 35 million people.

Under the British, the army and police combined were about 6,000 strong; now they must exceed 20,000, including the Workers' Brigade, whose recruits, like those of the factory brigades of Russia's satellites, receive military training. And now 400 cadets are being sent to Russia for training. If Ghana's new rulers feel that such forces are no luxury, they have largely themselves to blame, with their interminable plot scares and their suppression of civil liberties.

The puny parliamentary force of the Opposition United Party, which represents in the main the traditional hierarchy of tribal chiefs and the small urban middle class, has been broken by detentions and deportations. Now "Napoleon" and his "Squealers" (to quote a favourite Opposition gibe) have turned on the "Snowballs"—the non-conformists—of their own party.

But it is not in the political sphere that the true opposition to Nkrumah's authoritarian travesty of socialism is growing. As long ago as 1955 the **Times** correspondent reported: "In the great seaport

of Takoradi-Sekondi [centre of the greatest militancy in the recent massive strike] . . . there is opposition from within the trade union movement, particularly its left-wing elements. They say that the CPP used them to climb to power and then kicked the ladder away; they cite the disparate rates of pay between workers and CPP members of the Legislative Assembly; and they fear that an independent Gold Coast government might suppress trade unions altogether."

Since independence, inequality, far from being reduced, has been multiplied, and the working class of Ghana is hardly likely to be mollified by Nkrumah's new ruling that, "to conform to the modest and simple way of life demanded by the ideals and principles of the Convention People's Party," Ministers and officials must surrender to the State properties in excess of certain limits which, in the case of two regional commissioners, are given as two houses of a combined value of £20,000, two cars, and plots of land with a total value of £500.

While Ghana's trade unions have not been suppressed, they have been bound hand and foot. Those still remaining outside the Trades Union Congress were forced to disband in 1959. Every worker is supposed to join a trade union, but in order to belong to one he must be a member of the Party, which is also a condition for membership of the United Ghana Farmers' Council, the National Council of Ghana Women, and the co-operatives, whose international relations are being compulsorily severed.

In August, 1960, announcing pay increases of over 30 shillings a month for all workers earning less than £360 a year, Nkrumah boasted of Ghana's "remarkable record of wage restraint," but threatened direction of labour to combat "idleness" and drastic measures against those who incited the workers against the interests of the State.

In January, 1959, Kojo Botsio, one of the Ministers who has just fallen from favour, told a Party conference that "it is ideological heresy for party members [of the trade unions] to elect a non-party worker as leader of their organisation . . . our party must support our friends within these unions to make sure their leadership returns to the hands of CPP labour leaders. Any labour leader who falls within this particular category and does not accept the 'whip' of the TUC cannot claim to be a party labour leader and must be dealt with accordingly." Such words are a sure indication of widespread disenchantment within the trade unions, even among Party members.

J. K. Tettegah, despotic general secretary of the Ghana TUC, who condemned the recent strikes, told the 1958 annual congress: "In our view Ghana life must be militarised, not for war but for peace, not for destruction but for service, not for aggression but for production, not for feudalism, but to free our people's minds of a colonial mentality."

British trade unionism was condemned in a statement by the Ghana TUC executive, made shortly after independence, as "a conservative and therefore capitalist-inspired system, bureaucratically imposed on poor colonial peoples and based on master-and-servant relations." Its faults are indeed legion, but even in its worst moments it has never reached such depths of servility as official trade unionism in Ghana. Fortunately the "despicable rats" (as one Minister called the striking workers) are not as easily shackled as their unions.

DOV

## IRELAND

BLIND WORKERS STRIKE  
AT ELECTION TIME

IT SEEMS a true reflection of the morality of our society that when Ireland went to the polls on Wednesday, October 4, 70 blind workers employed by the Ministry of Health in the manufacture of baskets and lampshades should have to strike in support of a claim for an increase in their meagre £7 a week. While the politicians of the two main parties representing the capitalist system, which has proved such a horrible failure in Ireland, were promising a rosy future under their guidance, these poor workers were forced to parade through Dublin to publicise their disgraceful allowance from a government that had the temerity to exhort people on their posters "to keep the wheels moving" by voting Fianna Fail.

The election campaign itself was carried out in a big way by the two main parties representing capitalist interests, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. While Fianna Fail daily inserted half-page advertisements costing £250 in the national papers, a small party, the National Progressive Democrats around Dr. Noel Browne, fought their whole campaign on little more than that amount. Fianna Fail and Fine Gael to all practical purposes commandeered the radio station, using it on alternate nights to bore the public with their lying propaganda. A small handful of NPD people put up a limited number of posters around lamp-posts—and Fianna Fail employed legions to tear them down as quickly.

However, despite the censored Press, the controlled radio, the

employed thug companies, the use of the "Communist bogey" and the gerrymandering (Sean MacEntee, Minister of Health and Noel Browne's main opponent, refixed the constituency, understandably to his own fancy by cutting off working-class districts loyal to Dr. Browne). Noel Browne was returned to the Dail. In Roscommon, where the other NPD candidate, Jack McQuillan, was faced with similar tactics, he topped the poll. A third NPD candidate in Carlow, Kathleen Brady, notched over 1,400 votes in a first try. This outline of the campaign seems to prove that "parliamentary democracy" is just a contemptible farce.

The reformist Labour Party did very well, losing one seat, but gaining five. Their victory was mostly in the rural areas and Cork. There is only one Labour TD and one NPD TD in Dublin, but 23 representing capitalist interests. When the full results were out, it was realised that Fianna Fail had lost their overall majority, the position being Fianna Fail 70 (78), Fine Gael 47 (40), Labour 16 (12), NPD 2 (2), while assorted small bourgeois parties and independents scored 9. Whereas formerly there might have been what appears now as the almost incredible line-up of Fine Gael and Labour, the Labour Party made it clear in their campaign that they would maintain their independence—and they scored their extra seats on that basis. So, to the great anger of the Fine Gael leader, James Dillon, the Labour Party stayed aloof and Fianna Fail, with the support of two Independents, formed a government.

Whether the new Labour Party policy is due to the notorious anti-Trade Union bill brought in before the election by Fianna Fail and supported by Fine Gael, or to a realisation that it was a suicidal policy, this election represents the birth of a new phase in Irish politics. It is the first change of political line-up since 1948, when Labour went into coalition with Fine Gael and we might, perhaps, be on the threshold of the biggest change since 1918, when the people threw out the Nationalist Party, in exchange for Sinn Fein.

The major question now is will the people turn to the reformist Labour Party, which clearly would not make any more fundamental changes in society than did the British Labour Party in Britain in 1945-51.

The working class must realise its own strength and take control of their own destiny by seizing direct control of the means and instruments of production and setting up a national workers' council, representative of workers from each socially useful industry, and excluding the parasites.

PAT KELLY.

## Union sells out teachers

LIKE MOST OTHER so-called white collar and professional workers, teachers are in general more notable for a self-delusion that they are not really "workers" than for militancy. However, those two bold knights, Sir David Eccles and Sir Ronald Gould, are making a valiant effort to change all that.

With Sir Ronald's defiant blast on his war horn still echoing in their ears, his astounded men-at-arms suddenly hear that their captains have surrendered.

Denunciations of their executive's stab in the back poured in to the NUT headquarters from all over the country. Among demands for the resignation of the national executive was one from nearly 500 Coventry teachers, and a movement was launched in London to organise a mass resignation of teachers from the NUT unless the executive members who supported capitulation resign. In many schools teachers walked out to show their disgust and anger at a "despicable and cowardly decision".

The reason for the capitulation is clear. The Government's threat to introduce legislation imposing a settlement made the bold Sir Ronald and his captains quake so much that they did not even dissent from the statement made on behalf of the Burnham Committee that it would not oppose Government plans to exercise greater control over salary negotiations for all public employees as long as teachers alone were not discriminated against.

And so, with a fine disregard for the democratic decision of their followers for a one-day strike, the NUT oligarchy have sold them down the river. Teachers will have learned more about the world in the past few weeks than they'll ever learn from their text-books.

## GOD SAVE THE QUEEN . . .

A patriot complains that people do not respect the National Anthem at the end of cinema performances, but edge towards the exits and shuffle out. One night he stood at attention, eyes front, until "God Save the Queen" ended. When he looked around, he was alone—not only that, he was locked in! BBC TV broadcast.

ERITREA—On October 12, Emperor Haile Selassie ordered an inquiry into a clash between police and farmers demonstrating against the commandeering of part of their land for the extension of Asmara airport. Two farmers were killed and six wounded by police fire.

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## Figs and thistles

"In many respects the policies now being pursued by the American administration closely resemble those of the Labour Party." **Hugh Gaitskell at the Labour Party Conference, 4.10.61.**

THE "Leader" of Britain's Labour Party accurately summed up reality in the above quotation from the Blackpool Follies. The Labour Party, like its Democratic Party counterpart in the US, is an organisation devoted to making capitalism work more efficiently, with large doses of State control and direction. It has never, in any real sense of the word, been Socialist and to think it ever can be is sad self-delusion. Based on social reforms and welfarism, Labour's policy has, through the years, been consistent in just one respect: it has never, at any time, aimed at ending the economic basis of the profit system.

Bluntly stated, those are the facts. And the sad thing about British Left-wing politics is not that this should be so, for in the scheme of things it could not be otherwise, but that so many young people, whose aspirations—however woolly—are towards a free, socialist society, should waste their time trying to change the Labour Party from within, instead of recognising that only the independent self-organisation and direct action of the working class can achieve a revolutionary change in the social and economic order.

To campaign against the Gaitskells, Browns and Healeys, in the belief that Transport House machinery can be geared to a radical, left-wing policy, is to live in cloud-cuckoo land, to believe that figs can be made from thistles, silk purses from sows' ears. Defeat of the Scarborough anti-nuclear policy, which neither the Labour Party executive nor the Parliamentary Labour Party ever implemented, was a foregone conclusion, but—even with the typically muddled opposition to Polaris and German bases—it showed how the dice are loaded.

Fortunately, increasing numbers of people are recognising this and quitting parliamentary politics for the fruitful field of direct action. The support given the Committee of 100's civil disobedience campaign is one encouraging sign. The reliance of workers on their own shop organisation in struggle—as at British Light Steel Pressings—is another. What is needed, both by young anti-militarists and industrial militants, is a goal towards which their actions can be directed. The logical extension of both their activities is to reject the State and political parties, as irresponsible forms of social organisation, and to work for industrial democracy and workers' control.

**SWITZERLAND**—Three young Anarchists, Jean Langendorf, Claude Frochoux and Alain Lepere, arrested by the Swiss police in March, following a petrol-bomb attack on the Franco Consulate in Geneva, were released on bail in September, pending trial.

**CUBA**—Luis Miguel Linsuain, a well-known Syndicalist militant who was general secretary of the Federation of Catering Workers for Oriente Province, has been under arrest since August, on the trumped-up charge of plotting an attempt on the life of Raul Castro, brother of Fidel Castro and a key man in the Communist take-over of the Cuban Revolution. During the insurrectionary struggle against dictator Batista, Linsuain was a lieutenant in the guerilla forces fighting in the Sierra Cristal mountains, under the command of Raul. His real crime was Syndicalist activity. Having failed to discredit him by a campaign of personal attacks—an old Communist tactic—he was removed from office in the Catering Workers union by the police. His father was a Spanish Anarchist militant, who played an important role in the struggle against the Machado dictatorship.

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## IWMA CONGRESS CALLS FOR REBEL LINK-UP

THE NEED for closer collaboration between revolutionary and libertarian workers throughout the world was a theme of the XI Congress of the International Working Men's Association, held at Bordeaux, France from September 22-24. One of the IWMA's main tasks, it was unanimously agreed, must be to establish firm contact and co-operation with all working-class movements which opposed capitalism and the State.

Sections of the IWMA represented at the Congress were the National Confederation of Labour (CNT) of Spain, the National Confederation of Labour of Bulgaria in Exile, the Regional Workers' Federations of Argentina and Uruguay, Italian Syndicalist Union (USI), National Confederation of Labour of France, Syndicalist Federation of Norway and the Syndicalist Workers' Federation of Britain. The Friends of the IWMA in Venezuela were directly represented and fraternal delegations came from the Swedish Workers' Central-Organisation (SAC), The Dutch Syndicalist League (NSV), Iberian Federation of Libertarian Youth (FIJL), International Anti-Fascist Solidarity (SIA) and the Bordeaux section of Confederal Invalids.

Greetings and apologies for non-attendance were sent by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), War Resisters' International (WRI), Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (CTV), Libertarian League of USA, Sydney Anarchist Group, International Anarchist Commission, the Anarchist Federations of France, Italy, Uruguay, Mexico, Chile and Japan.

The secretariat's report showed that steady progress had been made since the X Congress in 1958. Groups of Friends of the IWMA had been formed in a number of countries, where no section existed, notably Chile, Venezuela and Australia. The existence of three strong groups in Chile—that in Santiago had 50 members—promised the re-constitution of a section there in the near future.

Owing to the existence of the IWW in the USA, no attempt had been made to form groups in that country. The Congress expressed the hope that fusion between the IWMA and IWW would be possible in the near future.

Also hoped for was the re-affiliation of the SAC and NSV, both of which had withdrawn from the IWMA following tactical disagreements. An interesting report by one of the three Swedish delegates, Evert Arvidsson, revealed that the SAC's membership had increased from 16,000 to 18,000 during the past three years. The Swedish organisation remained in full agreement with the IWMA's principles, but would like them to be phrased in a more contemporary way.

One of the Bulgarian delegates, a young comrade of 32, who had spent ten years in jail as a political prisoner and succeeded recently in fleeing his native country soon after release, gave an encouraging report of the emergence of a new generation in Bulgaria, who were bitterly opposed to the Communist regime and had embraced libertarian and syndicalist ideas.

The sessions of Congress were held in the meeting hall of the local unions of CGT-FO, who entertained delegates to a party on the first evening. The hall was well decorated by CNT comrades, who tape-recorded all the debates.

To enable the Secretariat to carry out the various tasks assigned it, Congress resolved to increase dues payments per member from 200 to 300 francs (about 4s) a year. The Secretariat was re-elected for a further term of office, with Germinal Esgleas remaining General Secretary.

The IWMA's present Statutes were ratified, but it was agreed that a sub-committee of the Secretariat should prepare a new draft, on the basis of suggestions received and that this, with the various proposals made, should be sent to sections for discussion before the next Congress, in 1963.

This was not a congress at which millions of apathetic card-carriers were represented by politically-ambitious leaders, but one of organisations believing in workers' control as a real alternative to the horrors of private and State capitalism. The discussions were conducted in a serious, but friendly atmosphere, without the acrimony and back-biting so often associated with international congresses. The XI Congress marked a small, but significant step forward for our International.

KEN HAWKES

**SPAIN**—The Second Intercontinental Congress of local federations of the Spanish CNT in Exile was held at Limoges, France, on August 26 and following days. It marked the first meeting of the IWMA's Spanish section, since the split which had divided the organisation since 1945 was healed. Discussion centred on a memorandum submitted by the clandestine CNT in Spain itself and practical decisions were taken to intensify the fight for the overthrow of the Fascist regime.

# The Committee of 100

THE biggest in a series of Committee of 100 demonstrations against nuclear war and for unilateral disarmament by Britain took place on September 17 in Trafalgar Square, despite a Government threat that anyone found in the area could face a three-month sentence. The meeting was to have preceded a public assembly and sit-down in Parliament Square, as part of the campaign to launch a mass resistance movement throughout the country, to demonstrate the bankruptcy of the traditional political structure and restore the initiative to the people. Arrests totalled 1,314 and some demonstrators were beaten up by the police in a campaign of organised thuggery after midnight. The naked violence under the foundations of our society was thus revealed. The true role of the police was exposed. The world wide publicity achieved from the time of the imprisonment of 37 members of the Committee the previous Tuesday was unprecedented. Millions were made aware that survival is the issue.

We publish an eye-witness account of the "Battle of Trafalgar" by Laurens Otter, an SWF member who has been jailed for direct action against the Bomb and was one of the anti-Polaris canoeists at the Holy Loch. His criticisms are all valid, but there are a few points on the credit side worth remembering when assessing the role of civil disobedience in the revolutionary struggle.

It is clear that the fight against war is our concern; more than this, our immediate concern, for, as the power blocs stagger from one contrived crisis to the next, like the sword of Damocles, the megaton child of capitalist genius is suspended delicately over the defenceless heads of all humanity. Logic tells us that even the power-crazed politicians are aware that a nuclear holocaust would be to no-one's advantage, but study reveals that defence by East and West has been so geared to nuclear technology that conventional warfare on a global scale is regarded by military authorities as no longer being practicable.

It is for this reason that a mass resistance movement has emerged, that many people consider such activities must take priority over all else. Let us be frank, this is the only issue which could have made thousands follow the initiative of the Committee of 100. The unity of those who would not otherwise be unified is our only strength and no single group can, or should, expect to influence this amorphous body of opinion exclusively. I say this while remembering that the anarchist and pacifist influence has always been considerable. We should not worry unduly, therefore, if the new movement does not immediately adopt a Syndicalist approach to industrial matters and the State. One can detect among supporters, not only a reaction against all political parties and the ballot box, but also against all groups which have entered the nuclear age with unmodified lists of imperatives.

To all who consult neither Marx nor the Gospels before acting, the empirical approach of the Committee must seem attractive. The starting points were these: aim, resistance to nuclear war; method, mass civil disobedience; principle, non-violence. All these assumptions have been challenged since, but practice has proved them to be quite valid. This does not mean to say that any of the members of the committee seriously thought that to attack nuclear war would not constitute an attack on war altogether; nor that if any successful outcome was reached, the basis of society as it stands would not be undermined and a new democratic formula would not have to be discovered; nor that sitting down on the streets of London was a revolutionary method likely in the long run to supplant the strike and direct confrontation at the point of production and delivery. All these aspects are constantly being discussed within the Committee and among its supporters, with a view to generating a flexible and long-term programme which goes far beyond the banning of the bomb. Until the movement develops into revolutionary proportions though, the ban the bomb slogan must be the mainstay of the image presented to the public.

One indication that the need for industrial action is realised is a recently published leaflet in the form of an "Appeal to trades-unionists". Here in simple terms is an attempt to acquaint the industrial worker with his all-important role in the fight for peace. Syndicalists would be encouraged at the number of times the term "workers' control" crops up in discussions and articles on the future of the Committee. An industrial sub-committee has been set up which has had the immediate effect of stimulating active support among AEU shop stewards, workers in the London Docks, the miners in South Wales and workers in the Clyde area near the Holy Loch. Those of our readers who are shop stewards or active trades-unionists are urged to contact the Industrial Sub-Committee, 13 Goodwin Street, London, N.4, if they can offer help.

Great strides towards organisational democracy have been accomplished and important decisions are usually reached after discussions by all members of the Committee. The day to day work is carried

out by a working group, which consists not of an elected few, but of all those who have the time and the inclination to work. Any member of the Committee can participate in the working group or sub-committee meetings, should he wish. Autonomous Committees of 100 are springing up all over the country, notably in Bristol, Oxford, Cambridge, the North-West, Croydon and the Clyde, and regional demonstrations are being planned. The London-based organisation is fast becoming a South-East regional committee. Decentralisation is regarded as the key to avoiding bureaucracy and spreading support evenly all over Britain. International contacts are being established and a Committee of 100 is being formed in Germany. The next few months will show whether democracy in intent will mean democracy in practice; what impact civil disobedience will make on industry. After the sit-downs must come the strikes, the stay-in strikes. Remember the Rank-and-File slogan, "A general strike against war". If success can be possible, this must be the aim. If success is not possible, or if the movement does not live up to expectations, total disaster seems highly probable.

T.S.

## —but why the gasworks?

THE Direct Action Committee was started in 1957 with two basic good ideas: first that if one wishes to oppose a social evil, the best way is not to worry about the gas-house at Westminster, but to go to the workers who are engaged in putting that evil into effect; second that since radicals cannot hope to compete with the Press and other establishment publicity, it is necessary to physically demonstrate one's arguments, to convince by actual obstruction.

The Committee of 100 was conceived last year with two other such ideas; one that though marches, pickets and suchlike used to get good publicity, the law of diminishing returns demands something more definite and, since Direct Action had always got publicity, it seemed logical to suppose similar methods would fill the bill; the other that it is possible to obstruct Government totally and thus enforce radical demands. The DAC was not always true to its theory and it had not, perhaps, sufficiently considered the logic of its ideas; nor, because of the conditions under which it worked, was it capable of avoiding a bureaucracy inimical to its own beliefs; but nevertheless it was within its lights consistent.

The Trafalgar Square demonstration of September 17, clearly showed the confusion between two ideas of resistance and that, by trying to satisfy both conceptions, the Committee of 100 is satisfying neither. The desire for publicity caused the Committee to look for big names, rather than people with knowledge of non-violence or with revolutionary views. As a result the newspapers were full of how Vanessa Redgrave had been perplexed as to what to wear, how Shelagh Delaney had sedately walked to the police van, rather than suffer the indignity of being carried and of how John Osborne, after saying he was not afraid of prison, paid his fine.

At the briefing meeting on the previous Tuesday, servile speeches were made about conveying respects to "our Leader (Bertrand Russell)". Too many petty dictators of the Left got appointed Marshals for the rally and proceeded to give conflicting orders to all and sundry. At one stage 30 Marshals came along at short intervals to say, that, "the Marshals have just had a meeting which decided everyone should wait till midnight, then march to Parliament". (Mike Nolan was asked by one demonstrator: "Are you someone on the committee, are you someone in authority?" and answered; "Yes I am on the committee; no, I am not in authority. I came here to protest against authority".) Until it is realised that one point of non-violence is to get people to take responsibility for their own actions, rather than blindly obeying governments and that this can be done only by people who are doing just that themselves, not blindly following leaders, we have achieved nothing.

Various Leftists have been glorifying in petty legal triumphs, such as getting police to admit that it was not they that arrested the prisoner concerned and have wanted to prosecute police for violence to demonstrators. But it is the nature of the police to use violence, when they think they can do it without being seen, and while it is worth getting maximum possible publicity for such violence, it blurs the image to go to law to prosecute them. It also blurs the image to try for petty legal scoring points, so that if one's chief aim is publicity, it is absurd to try for them. Not recognising the court on the grounds that it is aiding and abetting the State and Government in the preparation of genocide, is quite different from a publicity angle. If we are at this stage trying to obstruct, why not try to escape, or something else far more positive?

But what blurred the image most was indifferent spectators, there to see the fun, out for a picnic as if to the zoo. Among them was a hooligan group that police stool-pigeons managed to whip up, to discredit the demonstration. From a publicity angle the demonstration was a success only in the sense that there is no such thing as bad publicity; it totally failed in its main purpose of showing how man can live without violence. I mention stool-pigeons: there was on the platform of a small statue, a group of boozers and jeerers, which spent considerable time calling to demonstrators to knock the police down—periodically challenging constables to fight.

Outside the Square proper all afternoon and evening there were a lot of sympathisers, with no more non-sympathisers out than in. These were trying to dodge the police, or to annoy them and being driven all over the place by these latter. While we were having difficulty trying to get back to the Square, we suggested a sit-down there, on the other side of the road, which would have been far harder for the police to manage. (As was shown under similar circumstances after Sharpeville, in the same area). But demonstrators separated from the main body of squatters were not prepared to squat in small numbers. Another point: it is frequently possible in a police station, while waiting to be charged, to get up and walk out and even where this is not possible a large number of people attempting to do so would considerably complicate the job of the police. Also, it would be the easiest thing in the world to break out of Drake Hall open prison.

It is time the Committee and its supporters considered why they believe in non-violence and what they mean by it. Do they want to use it to convert people intimately connected with the bomb, by shocking them into considering their case? Do they want to publicise the movement by demonstrating disarmament in action? Or do they think we are already at the stage that we can make Government unworkable and that if we do, we are as yet ready to substitute the Industrial Commonwealth. (For a Labour Government would certainly be no better than a Tory one.)

What is the point of concentrating activity around the gasworks of Westminster? If one wants a direct confrontation with the State on an issue, it should be where the State puts into practice its decrees. Action outside Parliament merely perpetuates the myth of Parliamentary Democracy. Since, unhappily, most demonstrators are not yet ready to challenge the State at all points and since they still demand leaders, actions outside Parliament are wrong on all counts. They do not give the best possible publicity, they do not create the maximum chaos in the running of the country and they do not go directly to the workers involved.

For worthwhile civil disobedience in future, the Committee must go where the workers work on the bomb, while they work on the bomb (or missiles or component parts). Secondly, a lot of medium-size demonstrations simultaneously up and down the country would be far more effective than one in London, vast though it may be. Thirdly, they must decide what they wish to achieve and suit their form of resistance to their objectives. Any further demonstrations on the lines of Trafalgar Square on September 17 would be disastrous.

LAURENS OTTER

## IWMA world call

THE TENTH CONGRESS of the International Working Men's Association (Toulouse, September, 1958) agreed to support the formation of "Groups of Friends of the IWMA" in all countries where sections have not yet been set up, with the aim of gaining sympathy for our International and of spreading its principles and propaganda as widely as possible.

We address ourselves especially to comrades and sympathisers in Africa, Asia, Australia and the Americas, Uruguay and Argentina excepted.

It is desirable that "Groups of Friends of the IWMA" should keep close contact between themselves in each country and they will receive our Press, propaganda and news of other countries through the international secretariat.

A group can be formed by five, ten or more members. It will give you the chance to maintain regular contact with the IWMA and of being in touch with the affairs of the international movement.

All interested in this proposal should write to the IWMA Secretariat (AIT-CNT), 4 rue Belfort, Toulouse (H.G.), France.

**LIBERIA**—Monrovia, Liberia's capital, returned to life on September 14 after a general strike which paralysed industry, commerce and communications. After the arrest of two union leaders on charges of organising unofficial strikes, 15,000 workers marched on the presidential palace. President Tubman demanded drastic emergency powers to quell labour unrest.

## The lonely isle

ALL ENGLISHMEN, perhaps all men, love an island. For this reason, as well as the human pathos, few will not share the sorrow of the 290 people of Tristan da Cunha, now they have had to leave for ever their bleak but beloved island. Situated 1,600 miles west of Capetown and 2,200 east of Montevideo, with nothing but water between, Tristan is often called the world's loneliest island. But although little more than a mountain top, now a volcano, Tristan has supported a small, mainly European colony since 1816.

With their stone-built cottages, resembling the crofts of the Scottish Western Isles, their potatoes, fish and mutton and their homespun clothes of wool and flax, they shared a communal life in which each helped the other and money, until the recent introduction of a crayfish canning factory, was unknown. Happier, certainly, than their far distant fellow workers, who have television, cars, spin-driers and cocktail cabinets.

Those who have lived with the islanders, such as the previous British administrator, have testified to their happy nature, courtesy, kindness and contentment. Half hidden in many books are warm and detailed accounts of these kind and happy people. Strangely, many of the poorest of remote communities are among the happiest. The Eskimo, who live the hardest life of all, are acknowledged to be the happiest.

It will be said that the folk of Tristan have known no other life, but in capitalist society there are countless cases where the poor have also known no other life, yet have been unhappy.

Although called "the lonely isle", Tristan's sons away from home have said they knew only loneliness in lands and cities abroad, which testifies to Francis Bacon's statement: "A crowd is but a gallery of faces."

Tristan was free from most of the stresses and strains of class society. Not only do direct class relations strive to tear society apart, but many of what we think of as personal problems and aberrations have their roots in our mutually antagonistic society—possibly far more than we accept.

Nor is the division one only of capitalists and the rest. Capitalism has grown strong because it has been able to identify with itself, in some degree or other, a large "petty middle class", who, even when they work for a wage less than a lorry driver, call it "salary" and show an unhappy determination to treat their horny-handed fellow workers as if, like Dives and Lazarus, "between them was a great gulf fixed."

D. M. Booy, who during the war lived on Tristan as a naval rating, tells in "Rock of Exile" how this miserable, snobbish tension was introduced to the island. At first the islanders were too shy to mix with the ratings, who had established a radio station. There were the islanders, the nine naval ratings and a third community—the surgeon, a lieutenant-commander, with his wife and children, a nursing sister and the chaplain. "They made up the quarter-deck society and lived a life as remote as was ours from that of the islanders."

In the diary of a member of Scott's fated South Pole expedition we are told how the rear party missed the brief fine weather, in which they were to have retreated to their ship. Condemned to stay for nearly a year, they made a room lined with snow deep in the ice. There were seven officers and two NCO's of the British Navy, so a line was drawn down the room, the officers ate and lived on one side, the NCO's on the other. Two societies in one hole, when all needed to draw on every scrap of memory and variety of personality of his fellows.

I recently mentioned this to an official of the Falkland Islands Survey, the British body for the Antarctic. He made some paltry excuse about it being done for the sailors' benefit and told me of another case, about ten years ago, of one of his Antarctic parties, there for a three-year stay. One man was left alone by the others; he had done no wrong, they made no charge against him, they found no fault in him, but they talked to one another, not to him. The poor man committed suicide.

Poverty of spirit can be more harmful than lack of commodities. All around us is this lack of communication, this fear of one's fellow.

I am indebted to Sally Belfrage's "A Room in Moscow" for this appropriate quotation from a Russian poet:

"Stranger, if you passing meet me and desire to speak to me, why should you not speak to me.

"And why should I not speak to you?"

T. B.

**SOUTH AFRICA**—Imposing fines of £5 each or ten days' imprisonment on 136 Africans who took part in a strike for higher wages at a Durban match factory, the magistrate said that he was taking into consideration the loss of their jobs. (Times, 23.8.61).

# Mahler's fifty-year fight against injustice

Special to World Labour News

NEW YORK CITY

**H**ERBERT MAHLER, 70, oldest labour defence organiser in the United States and one-time General Secretary of the militant Industrial Workers of the World, died in Columbia Presbyterian Hospital on August 17 after a long illness.

He is remembered for outstanding achievements on behalf of American workers falsely accused of crimes, and for being one of the prime movers in organising protest action here which helped prevent execution of five CNT opponents of the Franco dictatorship in Spain in 1952. He is survived by his wife, the former Bessie Freiberg.

At funeral services attended by more than 175 people, tribute was paid to Mahler by Norman Thomas, long standard-bearer of the American Socialist Party, and three veteran IWW members, James Phillips and Richard Brazier, fellow-prisoners of Mahler in Leavenworth penitentiary following conviction in 1918 for opposition to US participation in the European war; Sam Weiner, for decades a spokesman for the IWW; and John Nicholas Bffel, editor, author, and publicist.

Mahler had an eventful career. Born in Chatham, Ontario, on November 6, 1890, he went to British Columbia when about 18 and became pilot of a freight boat on the Fraser River. It was a rough-and-tumble time and a man had to know how to use his fists.

He learned that essential quickly and it helped him make a living after he left the river boat, for he became a sparring partner of Victor McLaglen, who was a boxer of note in Western Canada before he went into the movies. Later Mahler worked in the lumber woods, and in 1912 joined the IWW, then intensively signing up loggers in the Pacific Northwest and migratory construction and farm workers West of the Mississippi River.

He was quick to see the value of the IWW as an industrial union, which could present a solid front in strikes in contrast to the craft form of the American Federation of Labour.

By 1916 Mahler was IWW secretary in Seattle, Washington, on the West Coast. There was much resistance to the organisation's members, who had widely adopted the term "Wobblies", an enemy epithet for them.

On November 5 of that year a boat named the *Verona*, bearing some 300 Wobblies assembled in Seattle, steamed into Everett, a lumber town 30 miles North, to carry on a free-speech fight. Sheriff's deputies and many local citizens, some armed, were on the dock to fend them off. Shots were fired, and seven persons were killed—five IWW members and a deputy and another Everett resident.

More than 200 Wobblies were arrested and 74 of them were held, charged with murder or being accessories to murder. Mahler immediately formed a defence committee, serving as its secretary, and is credited with organising the first labour jury in a murder case, a group comprising men from half-a-dozen unions who reported to their fellow-workers and to the labour press what they observed in the subsequent trial of one defendant, Thomas Tracy.

Awaiting the trial, Mahler discovered that at least one agent provocateur, a Pinkerton detective, smuggled himself into the crowd of free-speech champions on the boat. Tried in Seattle, Tracy was acquitted when the defence proved that the deputy was killed by a bullet fired by one of the mob on the dock. The charges against the 73 others were dismissed. A shining victory had been scored.

In September, 1917, the Department of Justice staged nation-wide raids on IWW centres, and 100 officials and organisers were jailed, accused of obstructing this country's war effort. Mahler hastened to Chicago and formed the General Defence Committee, an autonomous unit, which has continued active ever since.

Soon he, too, was arrested and indicted with the 100. On trial for five months 94 of them were convicted and sentenced to serve up to 20 years in Leavenworth. Mahler was given a five-year term. In June, 1923, President Harding released more than half the prisoners. Six months later President Coolidge commuted the sentences of the rest to time served and in 1933 President Roosevelt gave unconditional pardons to all 94.

Mahler was elected general secretary-treasurer of the Industrial Workers of the World in 1931, serving until 1933. He withdrew from the organisation in 1936, but did not cease his activities on

behalf of its members, nor for the welfare of other workers.

In 1933, he had become secretary of the Athos Terzani Defence Committee here, of which Norman Thomas was chairman. Terzani, a young follower of Carlo Tresca, Italian Anarchist editor (whose own murder here in 1943 is still unsolved) was accused of killing a friend, Antonio Fierro, in a free-for-all battle at a meeting of the Khaki Shirts of America, a Philadelphia Fascist outfit, in Astoria, a suburb of this city. The two, with others, had gone to heckle and a fight started when someone booed an enthusiastic mention of Mussolini.

Investigation, guided by Mahler, turned up evidence that Fierro was killed by Frank Moffer, bodyguard of Art Smith, Khaki Shirts commander-in-chief. A jury acquitted Terzani in 32 minutes, and after the defence committee had brought great pressure to bear on a reluctant District Attorney, Moffer and Smith were sent to prison, the latter as an accessory to murder.

In 1937 four union coal miners were serving life terms for the alleged killing of a mine guard in a clash during a 1931 United Mine Workers strike in Harlan County, Kentucky. The IWW press had carried various stories about them and Mahler felt that the UMW, headed by John L. Lewis, had neglected the interests of the four prisoners. He organised the Kentucky Miners Defence and began a searching investigation. In the transcripts of the various trials (one defendant had been acquitted and three others convicted, had been realised) he found radical conflict and contradictions.

Al Benson, one of the defendants, had been accused of firing a high-powered rifle from a window of a store building on a high cliff in the small town of Everts and thus killing a man perhaps 1,000 feet away in a valley. Mahler's inquiry, in which surveyor's instruments were used, demonstrated (and this was supported by new pictures) that the photographs introduced by the prosecution in Benson's trial, were taken from the wrong level.

And a tree expert testified that if Benson had been in the store building window on the murder date he could not have seen the site where the victim stood, even with a telescope, because foliage completely blocked any possible view.

An appeal for commutation, plus a brief detailing the new evidence, was submitted to the Governor's office. But justice in Kentucky was slow and Mahler had to find ways to bring new pressure to bear. Fortunately he was able to gain editorial support from the liberal *Louisville Courier-Journal* and finally the combined effort resulted in a full pardon for all four miners on January 22, 1941.

Several years ago Mahler organised picketing of the *New Republic* offices here as a protest against an article by Wallace Stegner, which he and his old friends in the IWW declared was a libel on the memory of Swedish-born Joe Hillstrom, better known as Joe Hill, labour songwriter (and author of the famous satirical song, *Pie in the Sky*), who was executed by a firing squad for alleged murder in Salt Lake City on November 19, 1915, (the Wobblies have always held that Hill was framed.) The *New Republic* responded by publishing a 3,500-word answer to Stegner from the protesting group.

When Mahler spoke here this year at the memorial for Ralph Chaplin, former editor of the IWW weekly *Industrial Solidarity*, fellow-prisoner in Leavenworth, and author of the internationally famous workers' song, *Solidarity Forever*, and when he spoke at a Commemoration of Labour's Martyrs held in Libertarian League headquarters here last November, his and the other speeches were tape-recorded, and are available.

## STORM OVER THE TEACUPS

**E**XTENSIVE STRIKES in defence of that splendid British Institution, the Tea Break, have recently occurred in the building trade, including one at 10, Downing Street (by the workers, not the inhabitants) and in the motor industry.

Trade union leaders have recently been willing to sign away all the afternoon break and most of the morning one, in return for a slight increase in the weekly wage. Even this rise is often doubtful, as it is included in a rise that was coming in any case. The workers, however, have shown themselves willing to defend the Break with as much fervour as the barons displayed in defence of Magna Carta. They are willing to fight on the beaches, in the fields, and in the streets—including Downing Street.

Indeed, the first big showdown happened at No. 10, where building workers are on a big job of reconstruction (the fabric, not the Cabinet), but almost at once they were joined by thousands of others on London's big building sites. Demonstrations marched through the main streets, with banners and war cries: "We want our tea." Moving among the crowds, it seemed that more than half the strikers were Irish. There was a good sprinkling of coloured workers from

**GLASGOW:** Readers in the Clydeside area interested in SWF activity are asked to contact R. Lynn, 22, Ross Street, Glasgow, S.E.

**MANCHESTER:** For information about SWF activity in Lancashire, contact J. Pinkerton, 12, Alt Road, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lanes.

Jamaica and West Africa and at one point we met a group of Greek workers with the Tea Break banner.

Like the great charter, Tea Break cannot be limited to Anglo-Saxony—it has world significance.

News of demonstrations and strikes in other cities soon came in. In Liverpool, building workers demonstrated and announced more marches to come, with 80 Merseyside jobs stopped by the strike. At Durham City, workers on the new County Hall decided to continue their strike.

At Oxford strikes occurred at St. Catherine's College and at Marks and Spencer. The men went back when a union official said tea breaks with pay would be restored, if the men "did not abuse the time allowed." It is significant that in building, as in the car industry, the strike has been against the union officials, as well as the employers.

It is well to recall the history of the "break". Many workers are too young to remember the time when it did not exist. With a much longer working day, men travelled, often a long way, to work with little breakfast and had to work through, often with a hollow anatomy, until 12 or 12.30 without a bite or sup. Working on building sites, or in a shipyard, in winter was grim enough, even without this fast.

Some took a tea break, quietly of course, nourished by what our brother paper "Progress" calls concealed diet. The secret eaters grew in numbers, until they became a great host. By 1939, many firms had given in and allowed a 10-minute morning break. Cryptobreakfasters had nibbled like termites at the foundations of capitalist discipline. With the coming of war, the walls came tumbling down and soon afternoon, as well as morning breaks became general.

It is well that workers see the wisdom of defending such non-monetary benefits, rather than follow the advice of leaders and sell out for an Esau's mess of pottage—but I've got to finish now. It's my tea-time.

T. B.

## CANADA

# INTER-UNION BATTLE FLARES IN ONTARIO

EDMONTON, ALBERTA. Mineworkers in Sudbury, a northern Ontario mining community, should long remember September as a month of needless violence. Union meetings broken up by police using tear gas, union officials arrested on charges of unlawful assembly and court injunctions freezing union funds all bring to mind pictures of a bitter strike, in which the employers are using all their powers in an effort to defeat the striking miners.

In fact, there was no strike and no dispute with any employer. The whole sorry affair was the culmination of years of strife between two rival unions for control of 17,000 hardrock miners, members of Local 598 of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers (and who, incidentally, total half the total Canadian membership and contribute \$25,000 per month in dues).

Mine, Mill was expelled from the old Canadian Congress of Labour back in 1949, the excuse being that it was controlled by Communists. I say "excuse", because the real reason for its expulsion was more likely the fact that its membership was coveted by a rival union, the United Steelworkers of America. They wanted Mine, Mill expelled in order to give them an opportunity to start raising its membership, without incurring the displeasure of the official Trades Union movement. It is even rumoured that Steelworkers paid \$50,000 to have Mine, Mill expelled and it is a fact that they were granted jurisdiction over all Mine, Mill members as soon as it was officially expelled.

So for over 12 years Steelworkers have spent a lot of time, money and energy, not in fighting the bosses, but in fighting another union in order to steal its members. Over the years they have had some success in their efforts and no doubt feel these successes justify the bitterness and disunity they have left behind. Local 598, with over 17,000 members and \$25,000 per month in dues, has, of course, been their prime target, but until a couple of years ago the Communists had it firmly under their control. Then an anti-Communist slate of officers was elected and since then they have been trying to gain admission to the CLC. An independent mineworkers organisation in Sudbury would not have suited Steelworker union bosses at all. They wanted Local 598 for themselves and so the local officials were told that the only way they could get into the CLC was by first joining the Steelworkers' union.

This was how matters stood in September, when a mass meeting was called, to be addressed by Claude Jodoin president of the CLC; William Mahoney, Canadian director of Steelworkers and Larry Sefton, CLC vice-president and Steelworkers director. Six thousand men jammed Sudbury Arena for this meeting and when fighting broke out between rival factions the police used tear gas to break up the meeting.

Next day police arrested Ken Smith, National President, and four other Mine, Mill officials, charging them with "unlawful assembly". On the legal front Local 598 emerged from a welter of injunctions and counter-injunctions still in control of its treasury and with its local officials still in power. This seems to have been the result of anti-Communist bias on the part of the courts.

What happened was that the National Officials of Mine, Mill placed Local 598 under trusteeship, charging that its local officers had violated union rules (this, by the way, is a favourite tactic of union bosses to bring rebellious locals to heel. They can always find some obscure rule that the local officers can be charged with violating, then, once they put an administrator in to run the local, he soon sees that it comes into line). In the case of Local 598, local officials had undoubtedly violated union rules by negotiating with the Steelworkers union, so the National Executive were in the right (technically, at least) in appointing an administrator. The local officials of course appealed to the courts against this action and the Chief Justice of the Ontario Supreme Court obligingly dissolved the trusteeship and issued an order restraining the administrator from taking any action in the Local's affairs and restoring the Local's bank account of about \$700,000 to the control of the local officials.

Mine, Mill officials then, with the law courts against them, with the CLC against them and with the Sudbury local firmly in the control of their opponents, seem destined to lose half their Canadian membership. In this they deserve no sympathy as, for many years, they ran the Sudbury local in the dictatorial manner so beloved of Communists everywhere and would do so again if given half a chance.

There is no moral to this report. Trade Unions here are big business, run by professionals, who make a very good living out of selling the labour power of their members to capitalist business concerns. Socialism, freedom, solidarity and direct action are, to them, dangerous ideas to be sought out, fought and destroyed. Advocates of these ideas are anyway, all too often, lone voices raised in the apathetic throng. Given a set of circumstances such as these it is not surprising that trade union officials attach more importance to extending their jurisdiction and fighting rival unions than to building up a strong, united working class organisation. Workers who realise the need for such an organisation should realise also that it must be built **outside** the official Trade Union movement and that right from the start control should be in the hands of the rank and file members, not careerist paid officials.

BILL GREENWOOD

## Literature

"Direct Action" pamphlets:—

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE UNIONS?

by Tom Brown

5d.

THE HUNGARIAN WORKERS' REVOLUTION

6d.

NATIONALISATION AND THE NEW BOSS CLASS

by Tom Brown

6d.

WORKERS' CONTROL

6d.

HOW LABOUR GOVERNED, 1945-1951

8d.

THE BRITISH GENERAL STRIKE (now reprinting)

by Tom Brown

5d.

THE LABOUR PARTY ILLUSION by Sam Weiner

8d

ETHICS AND AMERICAN UNIONISM

by Sam Weiner

8d.

THE SOCIAL GENERAL STRIKE

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