

WORLD LABOUR NEWS

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Fourpence

French miners occupy condemned pits

Police, the world over, have well-established patterns of behaviour. The French variety showed their colours when attacking demonstrators against the Fascist OAS in Paris on February 8. Eight anti-fascists died—and the funerals of four of them, five days later, was marked by a general strike in Paris, with half-a-million mourners in the streets . . . and not a copper in sight. The bodies were borne to the Père Lachaise cemetery in the working-class belt of Belleville-Menilmontant, there to be interred near the victims of an earlier, exercise in State brutality, the massacre of revolutionaries that followed the suppression of the Paris Commune (1871).

These events, with the imminent ending of the Algerian War and the apparent threat of an OAS coup d'état, have overshadowed other French news and, outside that country, little has been written about one of the most significant struggles by workers there since the occupation of the factories in June, 1936. This time, too, it is a stay-in strike—by miners of Decazeville in the small Southern basin of Aveyron. From a French comrade comes this report, highlighting the great courage of the "gueules noires" (black mugs), as the miners are known, and the cynicism of Left-wing politicians, who have been doing their usual utmost to hitch this important economic struggle to their own ambitions.

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DECAZEVILLE: population 12,000, 613 km. from Paris, 173 km. from Toulouse. Mountainous region, difficult of access. 66% of population over 65. Small coal deposits, among those surrounding the Massif Central, developed mainly before the First World War (opened up in 1830). Present breakdown of French coal production: North, 50%, Lorraine, 25%, Seven Southern basins, 25%.

Two deposits in Aveyron—opencast "La Découverte", output 8,900 tons; mines, output 1,500-1,800 tons (national average 1,900). Soft coal used for coke, gas, railways, heating, nearby power station of Peuchot.

Production: 1900, 1,100,000 tons by 9,000 workers; 1920,

Six savage sentences

AS WE GO to press, six members of the Committee of 100 have been sentenced at London's Old Bailey to savage jail sentences for offences under the Official Secrets Act—helping organise the sit-down at Wethersfield (Essex) USAF H-Bomber base last December. Terry Chandler, Ian Dixon, Trevor Hatton, Pat Pottle and Mike Randle get 18 months; Helen Allegranza 12 months.

Their defence had been made impossible, as the judge ruled out question after question. After the six refused an offer of leniency—unanimously recommended by the jury—if they undertook to drop their support of civil disobedience, the judge said: "I have to pass a sentence . . . that will deter others."

That was clearly the object of the trial—to smash the campaign by intimidation. To have people about who not only oppose mass-murder, but are prepared to take action against it, is more than the State can stomach. Our solidarity to the six—and those who have taken over from them.

Union threat to militant

JOHN HUNTER, a member of the Glasgow SWF group, is threatened with expulsion from the Constructional Engineering Union—reputedly one of Britain's Left-wing TU's, for advocating militant industrial action.

On January 8, the committee of the Glasgow branches of the CEU voted, by four votes to two, with two abstentions, in favour of his expulsion for "anti-union activity." This consisted of distributing the National Rank and File Movement leaflet, "Unite for Militant Industrial Action", among fellow CEU members.

An appeal will be heard by the CEU Executive during March. Meanwhile John's workmates are organising a petition in his support among rank-and-file CEU members, who remember his active record as a shop steward and his role in the big Paisley site dispute last summer.

1,900,000 tons; 1950, 800,000; 1958, 700,000 by 3,000 workers; 1960, 600,000 (including 200,000 opencast); 1965 (plan), 200,000 by 600 workers.

At the present time there are 2,000 workers, including 931 underground face miners, with 200 at La Découverte. Working the Decazeville pits presents several difficulties, due to firedamp, fires caused by spontaneous combustion of coal and very heavy overhead pressure.

Production of de Lacq gas has raised the problem of the mines' future. Three plans were drawn up; that giving the lowest production (200,000 tons) was adopted. On November 21, 1961, the mine manager told the workers' delegates: "It is our task to prepare the closure of the mine. The end is near, very near. At the rate of today's economy, it is due tomorrow."

To the Government decree, the miners replied: "We have been passing through a difficult period. But we are now nearing an appreciable seam. Soon we shall have under our picks a seam of 4 million tons of high quality coal, whose cutting will enable us to beat production records."

No difficulties in disposing of the coal: the Peuchot power station and other needs of the area could absorb 400,000 tons a year. The plan for 200,000 tons could not meet expenses—payment of indemnities to former mineowners (the industry was nationalised in 1946) and surface costs.

On this technical plane it is a dispute of deaf men, however. It is mainly the technicians of the political parties and trade unions who centre discussion on this level, because it enables them to give a political sense to the miners' action. Each claims to be right because, he sees himself in the roll of management (capitalist or bureaucratic) or views things from the aspect of the party, what is profitable or unprofitable. At this level is dragged in nationalism ("French" coal), the struggle against Germany and the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (this fits in with CP policy), the "humanism" of the United Socialist Party technocrats, etc.

But basically the struggle of the miners is an elemental, defensive social battle to maintain their standard of living. That is why it has taken on a radical character.

"It is essentially a story of the family budget. Many of them have borrowed too heavily to build houses, or send their children to college, which would have been impossible had their means been

continued on page 2

Rank and File Conference

ARISING out of the Rank and File Conference of January, 1961, the Rank and File Movement was born. Since that date some progress has been made and initial teething troubles overcome. Advances have been made in the form of Rank and File groups in Glasgow and Manchester. In London Rank and File propaganda has been circulated throughout industry. The Sunday Press have been more than interested and shown concern about our policy of Direct Action and Workers' Control.

The Rank and File Movement will hold its second Conference on Sunday, March 11 at the King and Queen Hotel, 67 Harrow Road, London, W.2 (on Paddington Green) from 10.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. This gives the opportunity to discuss common problems, not only on the job, but affecting workers in general. The need for a Rank and File Movement is more urgent than ever, as the TU leaders have integrated themselves with the boss class, negotiating and compromising to the detriment of their members. We urge all militant workers to attend this Conference. Admission is free. Buses 6, 8, 16 or 60 to Paddington Green; Edgware Road underground.

EAST GERMANY—Last year 207,026 people fled to West Germany. The West Berlin Committee of Free Lawyers reported that prison sentences for political "crimes" in East Germany were known to have been passed on 629 people, but that as such sentences were sometimes only disclosed after they had been served, there were probably considerably more.

more modest. They therefore find themselves faced with a sudden drop in living standards, because the wages they could get in factories of the region are below their present rates." **Le Monde**, 30.12.61.

Examples: Miner's wages, 25 NF a day (underground), 18 NF (surface), rent-free housing, six tons of free coal a year, repayment of all medical expenses, better retirement rates at 55; Wages of a "resettled" worker, 1.70-2 NF a hour, 13-16 NF daily and loss of all perks, 32-35,000 NF a month, instead of 55,000.

Proposals of the 4th reconversion plan: building of factories, (now few in number); "guarantees" to "resettled" miners—three months' wages as compensation; 90% of present wages guaranteed for two years; certain small retirement concessions.

Psychological role of the elections: Cantonal elections were due and each political grouping (even those who voted for the plan) claimed to support vigorously the demands of the population. During the election campaign, Jacques Duclos (leader of the CP) came to Decazeville (17.12.61); he said little of the mine, but spoke mainly about the "anti-national" policies of the Government.

A stay-in strike took place from 17.9.61 to 5.10.61 in an iron mine at Lorraine (80 miners), which was to be closed; the management gave way. A "small strike", but one of importance that was to find an echo at Decazeville.

Who is organising the strike? Each pit or service has an action committee formed by union delegates (CGT, CFTC, FO, CGC); an inter-union committee studies and proposes activity and demands; decisions are taken at each pit, or by general assembly of the miners. Although the unions have nominal participation in the committee, differences often arise with their regional and, above all, national leaderships.

Development of the strike. At the beginning of November, notification of eight miners to be fired. **December 19**, the strike begins, 1,000 miners go down the mine, determined to stay there until their demands are met. The eight sacked miners are among them. Wives are alerted to prepare meals for the stay-in strikers. **December 21**, Demonstration of 15,000 people at Decazeville, general strike in the town. Slogan: "The Decazeville miners have as much right as the Algerian repatriates." **December 25**, Sentimental exploitation of the strike by newspapers and radio; stressing the "solidarity" of peasants and shopkeepers (like those in Borinage, Belgium, 1959); political appeals to the Government, De Gaulle's arbitration called for—no results.

December 27, six miners' sons on hunger strike; 24-hour sympathy strike by Hérault miners; "favourable response by the bishopric and by peasants, who declare themselves ready to barricade roads at the request of the strikers. But some begin to fear a political influence, that could destroy unity." (**Le Monde**, 29.12.61). **December 28**, 3,000 Decazeville women demonstrate outside the Rodez prefecture; general stoppage in Aveyron; token stoppages in Northern mines. **December 29**, the mayors of the mining basin resign in protest.

January 2, 307 mayors of Aveyron decide on an administrative strike. **January 3**, Press conference of the inter-union committee at Paris, where delegates declare: "The strikers will not leave their pits, their workshops, their offices until their legitimate demands are met." **January 7**, 24-hour sympathy strike in the Provence basin. **January 9**, General 24-hour strike in Aveyron province; march of 30,000 to Decazeville; Paris-Toulouse railway line blocked for five hours at Capdenac; peasant barricades on the roads.

January 11, Youths burn reactionary newspapers in the square at Decazeville. **January 13**, Government declaration: "Under no circumstances will there be discussions while the strike lasts; no question of changing decisions already taken." **January 14**, Written question by Thorez (Communist MP) to the Minister of Industry: "This is a political problem of national interest" (while the miners were declaring "our strike is not political" and were striking in defence of their living standards).

January 17, 24-hour solidarity strike called by CGT in Northern mines; 44% response. Other strikes at Moselle, Carmeaux. FO and CFTC opposed to these stoppages. CGT raises slogan of "French coal" and violently attack FO and CFTC, who "have done their utmost to sabotage the solidarity strikes" . . . and adds "It is an important step in the fight of the working class . . . to finish with the policy of economic and social degradation by the Gaullist Government . . . the population has realised . . . that we must adopt policies more in conformity with the interests of our country." CFTC "denounces the attitude of the CGT, which has sabotaged solidarity by refusing to organise collections in common and by trying to make of this elementary duty an inadmissible propaganda operation, for which the strikers are paying the cost." (**Le Monde**, 30.1.62).

January 18, Miners' wives visit Paris to present petitions: "We want work for our husbands, a living standard equal to that we have had up to now." **January 19**, 24-hour strike of Lorraine miners (response from 6 to 60%); 24-hour strike of uranium miners (all called by CGT). **January 20**, 700 Tarn miners march to Decazeville with 10,000 demonstrators. **January 26**, 17 South Western departments declare their solidarity. Demonstrations in several towns, but far less well supported than on January 9. Official pressure:

"Yesterday important Government instruction, transmitted by the Prefecture, were distributed, stressing the illegal nature of this strike."

January 29, 43rd day of the stay-down. Solidarity received, 70,000,000 AF (about £50,000). **January 31**, Hunger strike planned. **February 1**, The Government makes proposals to trade union leaders in Paris (not to the inter-union committee directly representing the miners), after consultation with the OEEC. These are: 1. Temporary allowances to miners over 50 (variable percentage of pension); 2. Resettlement bonus of three months (instead of two), raised by one-tenth of a month's pay for each year of service above 15; 3. Guarantee of same wages; 4. Special housing allowances, education fund to be set up for children. These proposals were transmitted to the inter-union committee by the prefect.

February 2, Miners meet; rank-and-file committees unanimously reject terms offered and vote to continue the strike. General meeting of women. 200 volunteers for hunger strike; the stay-down goes on. **February 5**, 20 miners, drawn by lot, begin hunger strike. Message of support from Bishop of Rodez. Speech of Prime Minister Debré at Toulouse: "Those pushing the miners to despair are criminals." **February 6**, Counter-proposals of inter-union committee: 1. Maintenance of mining activity after 1965 (progressive closing of the pits); 2. Sharing out of resettlement advantages; 3. Introduction of new industry, with obligation to hire 50% young people; 4. Guarantees for the 1965 stage. Delegation of women to the Elysée (De Gaulle's official residence).

February 7, 52nd day of the stay-down. Two miners, both on hunger strike, brought up and replaced. **February 8**, Parliamentary commission visits Decazeville.

Differing attitudes towards the strike: These can be divided in three—Sentimental, to a greater or lesser extent hypocritical; Technocrats, who consider it "backward"; Politicians, for whom it is not a social struggle, but one of politics. Examples:

Sentimental: Message from the Bishop of Rodez—"The strike continues, conserving its incontestable character of courage and dignity. This strike is hard, because it is long, fatiguing, because wives and mothers must face heavy burdens without the help of their husbands . . . This strike is hard above all because the workers have still not been heard . . . economic policies must never involve the sacrifice of this dignity to the material or technical interests of organisation . . ." (this clear-cut position is explained by a fairly strong Catholic influence in the department of Aveyron).

Technocrats: **Le Monde** (3.1.62): Under the headline, "Social conquests or working-class Poujadism" declares, ". . . The need to keep his job, his social standing, even often outweigh that of improving his living standards . . . the march of progress, by its nature, thus even exaggerates feelings of insecurity . . . Privileges conceded the miners are because their job is particularly hard. Why should they keep them if they leave the industry without physical harm." M. Aron, in **Le Figaro**, compares the strikers with Luddites of the 18th Century. **La Vie Française** (financial paper) ironically compares the lot of the miners with that of North African workers, or Breton peasants.

The Politicians: Firstly, a criticism of the way planning is being carried out, coming either from liberal capitalists (Mendes-France), technocrats (United Socialist Party, PSU), or Communist Party (accent on economic nationalism and against the Common Market). One could also ask to what extent there may be concealed here an economic conflict between finance capitalism (in power behind De Gaulle), which seeks to reduce the power of national undertakings, and the bureaucracy (planners, Left parties, trade unions), who seek to increase it [for example the suggestion of national undertakings for resettlement, dependent on the nationalised coal industry, or the suggestion of M. Paul (CGT) and Thorez (CP) to build a new national electric grid, dependent on the nationalised EDF]. The struggle of the miners thus serves as a pretext for a settling of scores between finance capitalism and the technocracy. This is also the meaning of PSU criticism (article of Serge Mallet in **France Observateur**, 1.2.62), seeking to take the struggle into the street (that is to say political), instead of occupying the mines (social struggle) and criticising "false planning", citing Mendes-France "the deliberate abandonment of a policy of economic concentration in the name of the mechanics of free enterprise."

One final point: Fears of seeing the strike "take the wrong turning", expressed by the political parties, because they would then be forced to disown it, as FO and CFTC are beginning to do; "Defeat of the strikers would not fail to cause resentment and bitterness." (**Tribune Socialiste**, 20.1.62).

HENRI SIMON.

Strike ended Feb. 23. "... the miners seem to have obtained much more favourable terms... than were offered before the strike began." **The Times**, 21.2.62.

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SOUTH AFRICA—Mark Shope, general secretary of the multi-racial South African Congress of Trade Unions, has been banned by the Minister of Justice from attending political meetings for five years.

BRITAIN

The postal work-to-rule

DURING the whole of January (Jan. 1—Feb. 1), the GPO were working-to-rule in protest against the pay pause. Working-to-rule means strict adherence to "working" rules, as laid down by the postal authorities. These rules for the most part are made to protect the public and employers' interests, though some, governing maximum loads, early morning bus concessions (i.e. a man may have to start work at 5.30 a.m., his bus service may not start till that time and consequently he arrives at 5.40 a.m.; this is officially overlooked if he reports it), meal reliefs, etc., have been forced on the employers by the union.

But for the most part, to ensure a quick, efficient and amiable public service, the rules are ignored. Everyone knows what happened when working-to-rule was applied—giant pile-ups in city centres and smaller ones in the towns. The employers' reaction to this was to enforce the petty rules regarding dress, concessionary tea breaks were cancelled in London (this meant the early morning 4 a.m. supervisors missing their own "cuppa", so this was soon restored) and the three hours per day per man compulsory overtime was also enforced. The GPO is not a closed shop, thus in smaller centres it wasn't necessary to make everyone toe the line, as non-unionists filled in. This was in the initial stages of work-to-rule, which had forced the stoppage of parcel post in and out of London.

The employers then installed a system which operates at Xmas to relieve pressure on London offices. Smaller centres have London mail sent to them for sorting. This was done by supervisors, their wives, etc. and on union-sanctioned overtime. This example reveals the weakness of the Union of Post Office Workers, for basically it accepts the rules and regulations as a basis for working (a classic example of double-think). Thus, for an infringement of any rule, one can find oneself in the unenviable position of fighting both employers and union stewards.

If the dispute had continued and the UPW had called for a ban on overtime, this would have still have meant only voluntary overtime; the compulsory three hours per man per day would still have stood. This would have meant a half-hearted battle, although the pile-ups would have continued. But a ban on ALL OVERTIME would have brought the GPO to a standstill and the dispute to a rapid and successful end. It would also have brought home the lessons that the postmen do run the GPO, that the majority of rules are unnecessary and should be for guidance only, that bureaucrats are parasites, and it might also have revived the old workers' control policy.

But the sands of time move but slowly, although the fact emerges that excessive overtime earning is all wrong and that the raising of the basic rates is an immediate objective.

J. G. L.

Transport men must link up

PUBLIC TRANSPORT workers are the Cinderellas of industry, always trailing in wages and conditions. The reason put forward is that Public Transport is in the "red", skint. Before the war (1939), if you were employed on the buses you were laughing, not only from the point of view of security, but wages as well—in fact there was a waiting list for jobs. Nowadays LTE employs press gangs to obtain crews.

On the question of public transport one must get down to basics. Is the profit move the be-all and end-all; must everything be sacrificed to this end? Replying for the Government, LTE, etc., the answer is yes, therefore any plan they devise, be it from theorists, economists or any other confidence tricksters, is doomed to failure. Public transport should be a Social Service; it can be run no other way if it is to benefit the people.

Looking at the bus service through the eyes of a poor bastard who has to wait hours in the rain for a vehicle which, when it arrives, is full, the service is chaotic. And looking at it through the eyes of a busman it's worse, doing shift work for peanuts and taking insults for a service (or rather lack of service) over which you have no control.

When the buses were nationalised, everything was going to be different; this was a "socialist" measure, busmen and passengers were going to get a fair deal. In fact the service deteriorated and wages and conditions of busmen stood still. The bus service is such a cracker that there are more cars on the road than ever before, making bus drivers' lives a nightmare.

In view of this situation, busmen are choked; their demands are refused, their work is harder and their hours longer in their endeavours to take home a living wage. What is the solution? Negotiation? Hopeless, the LTE offer 5s.,—and in fact take back 7s. 6d. Strike? In isolation? Suicide, as was proven in 1936 and again last year. So far as the LTE was concerned, the busmen could have stayed out till they rotted.

Where can one look for a possible method of struggle towards a solution? A possible answer is a public transport liaison committee at rank and file level. Busmen, railwaymen, tube men and coach drivers acting in unison. One section cannot fight alone.

Railwaymen are still on the verge of a dispute, despite the three railway unions' acceptance of Dr. Beeching's bitter pill, the 3% prescribed by fellow quack doctors Macmillan and Lloyd ("I don't know how I am going to get my membership to accept this", moaned NUR secretary Sidney Greene). Rank and file railmen are breathing down the necks of the leadership, who are reluctant to move.

Railway workers must have the patience of Job. The Guillebaud Report stated clearly that they were far behind other workers in comparable trades. The British Transport Commission offered 6d. in the £1 (2½%), which the unions refused. The Government then took a hand and asked the Chairman of the Transport Commission to refer the pay claim to arbitration. The findings of such a tribunal are not binding and, if it awarded more than the prescribed amount, the Government would advise (instruct) the Transport Commission not to accept. All the negotiation fanny amounts to so much shadow-boxing and rank and file railway workers have taken action accordingly, as did the underground workers when London's traffic ground to a jam-packed halt on Monday, January 29.

A showdown must come sooner or later, the Government White Paper throws down the gauntlet—fight, or accept 6d. in the £1 (or thereabouts) for good behaviour. The TUC are shaking in their shoes—some diplomatic bod mentioned the wicked words "General Strike" and panic set in: "Industrial strength must not be used for political ends."

Gaitskell appeals for discipline—one must not embarrass the Labour Party and queer their pitch for the next General Election. If the railwaymen, busmen or any worker is looking for his salvation through parliament, he is flogging a dead horse. Parliament is for the benefit of the ruling class. Our only salvation is in Direct Action through our own efforts—and linking up with our mates in related industries.

The links between busmen and railwaymen must be strengthened and next time either section moves into action, it must be with the other's support. Forging those links at footplate and driving-cabin level is the immediate task for rank and file militants.

BILL CHRISTOPHER

TWO NEW PAMPHLETS

Strikes—1926 and now

THE BRITISH GENERAL STRIKE by Tom Brown (Direct Action Pamphlets, No. 6, 4d.).

THE STORY of the British workers' greatest industrial struggle, the General Strike of 1926, is told, telegraph fashion, in the sub-headings of Tom Brown's pamphlet, now re-published by the SWF. They read: "Storm clouds . . . On the First of May . . . Lions led by rats . . . Class against class . . . Revolutionary beginnings . . . Betrayed . . . Thirty pieces . . . Post mortem . . . We shall rise again."

The rats were the Labour leaders, who tried until the last moment, to avert the strike and then, when the direct action of "Daily Mail" machine-room men made that impossible, did everything possible to stab the workers in the back. Men like Ramsay MacDonald ("All my life I have been opposed to the sympathetic strike"), Jimmy Thomas ("I have never disguised that in a challenge to the Constitution, God help us unless the Constitution won") and J. R. Clynes ("I told my own union in April that such a strike would be a national disaster") were determined that no effective support should be given to the striking miners.

The General Strike has many lessons that apply to our struggles of the present day, when the heirs of Thomas and Co. still control the British Labour movement. The need in 1926 was for a militant rank-and-file movement, with Syndicalist methods and a revolutionary perspective. Tom Brown's pamphlet, which gives a documented history of the 1926 battles and is written by one who took an active part in them, should be read by every industrial militant—and by all who mistakenly believe workers should leave their affairs in the hands of TU or Labour leaders, instead of themselves taking control.

STRIKE STRATEGY (National Rank and File Movement, 2d.).

A SIMPLE ABC of strike action has long been needed in Britain. As this Rank and File pamphlet points out, ". . . we know from regretful experience that there are large sections of the industrial front where these principles (of struggle) are only half understood, or even unknown, or have been learned too late in a strike to be effective . . . we can no longer rely on habit and tradition to see us through a strike. Strike tactics, even the simplest, must be studied and propagated."

And this is done by "Strike Strategy", with whose proposals and conclusions we are in complete agreement. An invaluable two penn'orth!

Both pamphlets are available from SWF, 25A Amberley Road, London, W.9. Add 2d. for postage.

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

Swedish Syndicalists hit Franco's tourist trade

SYNDICALISTS of the Swedish Workers' Central-Organisation (SAC) and their weekly paper, "Arbetaren", are keeping up a steady campaign of propaganda and action against the Franco dictatorship. Articles in the Syndicalist paper, giving news of the repression in Spain, are widely quoted by the Swedish Press. A letter was sent by the SAC to the French ambassador in Stockholm, protesting at the ban imposed by the French Government on papers of Spanish anti-fascist exiles. The official Swedish news agency put out a despatch reporting this and the liberal daily, "Dagens Nyheter", published it. This led to the Socialist Youth sending a protest telegram to Paris (reports the CIO bulletin).

On the initiative of SAC comrade Helmut Rüdiger, Sweden's four big youth organisations (liberal, agrarian, conservative and socialist) decided to campaign for boycott of tourist visits to Spain.

The labour movement's travel agency, RESO, had previously been advertising "Trips to the country of the sun" and "the land of the flamenco, where the Swedish crown has high purchasing power", but its leaflets and brochures now stress the socially reactionary and dictatorial character of Franco's regime.

The Franco Embassy in Stockholm protested to the Swedish Foreign Ministry about this. RESO's head replied through the Press that his agency was not organising the boycott, but felt it right to tell clients what conditions were like in Spain. Gejer, chairman of the Swedish TUC and of ICFTU, was recently quoted in the Press as supporting the boycott. From small beginnings the campaign has grown and it is now probable that many Swedish crowns will not be going to swell Franco's treasury.

SICILY

A HERO OF THE PEOPLE

ON DECEMBER 20, 1961 the curtain came down on one of the most remarkable dramas in the sickening story of the Sicilian Mafia, when four of its members were sentenced to life imprisonment. Retribution had at last caught up with the killers of a Sicilian trade unionist—for the first time in a post-war catalogue of some fifty similar crimes against union militants.

Salvatore Carnevale, the murdered man, was a peasant who taught himself to read and write so that he would be a more effective champion of the rights of his fellow workers, first on the feudal estate of Princess Notarbartolo at Chiara and later in a quarry belonging to the estate.

In 1951 he founded a branch of the Socialist Party in Chiara and organised an unofficial labour exchange. He led a symbolical occupation of the land by the landless peasants and a strike in the quarry for an eight-hour working day and the payment of arrears of wages. He was the first Socialist labour organiser to appear among the peasants of Chiara.

For 150 years there has been in Sicily an unholy alliance between the feudal gentry and the Mafia. The four men brought to justice, together with a fifth whose body was found in a water tank soon after Carnevale's murder, were all members of the Mafia and employed by the administrators of the Notarbartolo estate. They warned Carnevale to stop his militant activities and tried to bribe him with an offer of an olive holding. "I prefer to live in poverty but honestly," he replied.

Not even the threat of death could deter him, and on May 16, 1955 he was shot.

Had it not been for the matching courage and tenacity of his mother, who would not be terrorised into silence, we should never have heard of Salvatore Carnevale, just as history has failed to record the names and deeds of countless other heroes of the people. Yet it is the quiet courage of men like him, not—with few exceptions—to the great names of political history, that we owe what measure of liberty and social justice has been won, and it is such men who are still patiently building the new society of the free and equal, that will one day replace the sham democracies of both East and West.

ITALY—A general strike in protest against police brutality was called in Trieste on January 26, after six people had been injured in a demonstration of 1,500 shipyard workers.

U.S.A.—Workers for two of New York's biggest privately-owned bus companies, normally carrying more than a million people to work, struck for higher wages on New Year's Day. A settlement was reached on January 4. Building operations were brought almost to a standstill by a strike (which began on January 10) of 9,000 electrical workers for a 20-hour week with no reduction in pay. One of four employers' associations agreed on January 18 to a 5-hour working day and a substantial increase in their hourly wage.

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New strike patterns

STRIKES heralded 1962, as they closed the old year, but the dominant pattern of wage battles has shown a new development in the social struggle of Britain. Which makes us reflect that for a decade we have been told that Syndicalism is outmoded, because it is based on the industrial workers and the non-industrial, or white-collar workers, are daily becoming more numerous and significant.

It is not, of course, true that Syndicalism is based exclusively on those workers who get their hands very dirty; it is on ALL wage workers as the central base of general social struggle that Syndicalist activity revolves. True, Syndicalist activity has been highlighted by strikes in heavy industry, but that is because workers there have always been in the forefront of the class struggle.

The employing class has long been able to persuade large sections of office workers to identify themselves with their masters by such cheap tricks as "staff jobs and staff canteens", or even smaller teacups, or calling wages "salary". Driven by economic problems, a little growing social consciousness, or even a desire to help keep up with lorry driver Jones, our fellow workers are learning, little by little, a few Syndicalist lessons.

Within a few months we have seen action, or the desire to act, by large groups of workers considered strike-proof. Schoolteachers called a few isolated day- or week-long strikes. Timid, but a beginning. Civil servants began their struggle against the pay pause. Bank clerks in a polite sort of manner have developed the rudiments of struggle with some success, though not yet on a national scale. Actors and other performers are on strike against the money-lords of commercial television. Post Office workers have used the work-to-rule strike.

This method, always associated with Syndicalism, is only one of many ways of striking evolved by our comrades here, in Europe and America. It was first used in France before the 1914 war by Syndicalist railwaymen, who were forbidden to strike by State decree and who decided (since politicians claim that industries can only be run if they make the rules) to carry out all lawful orders. This soon resulted in the complete tie-up of the railroad system.

In Britain, too, the method was used with great success by railmen in north-eastern England on the proposal of a Syndicalist rail group in their ranks some 40-odd years ago. Little more was heard of this method in England until, in 1940, the first edition of the pamphlet "Trade Unionism or Syndicalism" aroused some discussion among engineering and post office workers. The SWF pamphlet "What's Wrong with the Unions?" (a title borrowed by Penguin Books for one of their best-sellers) and the pages of "Direct Action" furthered discussion of this effective method. No one, except perhaps the wage slaves of Whitehall, is in a better position to beat the red-tape statesmen at their own game than are the postmen.

This brings us to a strike method which is not Syndicalist—the "one-day strike" of the engineering workers. While, of course, we walk out with our fellow workers in such stoppages, we do so without illusion. A one-day strike is an excuse for not striking, it is no more effective than an extra Bank Holiday Monday. It is a salve to one's conscience—and a demonstration of weak will to one's opponents.

Even worse is the poster parade and procession, when they take place not as incidents in a strike, but as a substitute for strike action. Shouting and banging drums will not scare the enemy. Sooner or later one has to grasp the nettle.

GHANA—The arrest of Daniel Kwame Apedoh, an Opposition member of Parliament, and some 80 other people in the Volta region brought the number of people held under the Preventive Detention Act to about 500. Five new recruits to the ranks of Ghana's political prisoners are the editor and four journalists of the **Ashanti Pioneer**, the only Opposition newspapers. The January 29 issue was banned, and the paper is now effectively controlled by the Government.

PAGES OF LABOUR HISTORY

THE BATTLE OF GARDNER'S CORNER

WALKING EASTWARD through the City of London, passing St. Paul's, the Exchange and all the great houses of commerce and civic rule, one comes to Aldgate High Street. Beyond the shops on the south side of this street are the Mint, the Tower of London and the Thames; at its eastern end is Gardner's Corner; on the right Leman Street leads to Tower Bridge; on the left Commercial Street; in front Whitechapel Road cuts through the populous heart of the East End and Commercial Road takes us to the docks. Here, at the gate of London's East End, the workers fought a nascent, triumphant Fascism in a struggle which has become known as the Battle of Gardner's Corner.

Mosley's Fascist force was certainly growing in strength and numbers in the mid-thirties. Money was pouring into its coffers, it claimed tens of thousands of uniformed storm troopers, the mighty Rothermere press, headed by the "Daily Mail", supported it, the Fascists claimed that the Law was on their side, they daily grew more aggressive and Jew-baiting was becoming intensive in the East End.

Flushed by this success, Mosley announced triumphal marches through this concentration of workers' homes and places of employment, through the streets of Dockland, the working-class Jewish quarters, the streets where dwelt the market and transport workers. Four columns of storm troopers, 7,000 in all, backed by civilian supporters, were to march from Tower Hill to Victoria Park; to Stafford Road, Bow; to Ashe Street, Shoreditch, and Solomon Lane, Limehouse on October 4, 1936.

In the little factories, the shabby streets and the crowded markets, neighbours spoke with sureness of the pogroms that would follow the march. Among the rank and file of the workers there was no hope of any help outside of themselves. But the local politicians believed that they could stem the tide by appealing to the State, although all experience pointed the opposite way. Protests from the Labour Party mayors of East London boroughs were made to the Government, which was expected to ban the march. It was even suggested that the mayors should put on their chains of office and don the robes of motheaten mediaevalism and go in procession to the Home Secretary. In fact he, Sir John Simon, flatly refused to ban the march and went on with elaborate police preparation to ensure its success by clearing the streets of hostile gatherings.

What else could the politicians do but hold harmless meetings and pass resolutions to send to their enemies? No word of self-defence. The Communist Party and the ILP did at least call for a counter-demonstration and held meetings in support of this call, but the appeal was not to fight Fascism and prevent its storm troops invading the East End in support of its members there; the joint call could only mean something akin to the Olympia "counter-demonstration", when men and women were sent into a Fascist rally, there to be cruelly beaten up and have their wounds exposed to the public as good propaganda. The Labour Party said, "Stay at home", the others said line the streets and boo.

The majority of local workers were made indecisive by such advice and probably recognised the folly of it, but a militant minority, independent of any political party, were determined to fight, for a new factor had to be reckoned with. The Spanish workers in that year had made the first big stand against Fascism and these London workers translated the slogan of the Spanish syndicates, "No Pasaran!" into the English "They shall not pass!" And they were ready to translate it into deeds.

The Commissioner of Police completed his plans and early on Sunday, October 4 assembled east of the City the whole of the Mounted Division and 6,000 constables. A police aeroplane scouted overhead, wireless vans travelled the streets. Sir Philip Game, the Commissioner, himself took command, setting up his headquarters off Tower Hill. The Special Constabulary was mobilised to take over the duties of the suburban police and a police reserve force assembled.

The militant workers, with that instinct for correct strategic action which is so often the attribute of a revolutionary force, assembled, singly and in small groups, about Gardner's Corner, which, in the peculiar topography of that part of London, was like the narrow end of a funnel, the broader part of which opened out to the broad expanses of East London's bricks and mortar. Had the venue been nominated by politicians, it might have been the Houses of Parliament or even Hampstead Heath.

The Blackshirts assembled early on Tower Hill, backed by civilian supporters who also moved into the streets of the route. The police had for hours been trying to clear the crowds from the streets, but without success. The militants moved into a thick, tight circle at the top of Leman Street. They looked determined in their workday clothes and it seemed they had followed Ibsen's advice: "Never wear your best trousers when you go out to defend liberty." The police pushed and the defenders pushed back.

Blows were exchanged, fighting became general. Hour after hour on that dull October morning the fighting went on. The newsreels shown in cinemas next day revealed a great crowd at the "Corner", which swayed a little outward, then swayed back again. Inside, above the heads, was the police cavalry, long batons rising and falling. The sound tracks recorded the constant banging of fire-crackers beneath the horses' hooves and, now and again, a cry of "Stand fast!" or "They shall not pass!"

The street markets became deserted, many traders shutting up their stalls. News of the fight flowed along the great main roads of Poplar and Mile End and trickled up the little streets. Would the politicians, the "people's leaders," be able to keep the workers passive while the gallant minority battled for freedom, or would they come out and sweep away the Blackshirt enemy?

The fight went on, sweating men and horses now almost tied to one spot. There seemed no way for Mosley that day. Whitechapel and Commercial Roads were still barred and, though hundreds had been hurt and there seemed to be more police, the crowd held. The bells of the City churches chimed and a great booming trembled on the air—one . . . two. A cheer went up, two o'clock and Mosley had not marched—yet.

But there is another way into the broader East End. Between Commercial Road and the Thames lies a poor thoroughfare of working class homes and shops, Cable Street. It was then decided that instead of four, there should be a single march of Fascists, penetrating the area by this street. Cable Street would be cleared. But the wily inhabitants had thought of that, too, and a barricade

'DIRECT ACTION' AGAIN

THE SWF is now again publishing its original paper, DIRECT ACTION, which has incorporated "Workers' Voice." This appears fortnightly, edited by Bill Christopher in duplicated form, and gives first-hand information on all aspects of the workers' struggle against capitalism and State oppression. Specimen copy 3d. (plus 2d. postage) from SWF, 25A Amberley Road, London, W.9., or 5s. for 12 issues.

went up. The gates of a builder's yard were burst open, a wagon was overturned to form the centrepiece, planks and scaffolding poles went on, furniture was thrown from the houses, a length of rope lashed together, sailor fashion, this little symbol of revolt and heroism. Bottles were smashed and thrown about the street before the barrier. Already in the flanking houses doors and lower windows had been barricaded, the rooms vacated. Upstairs, at open windows, defenders stood with boxes full of bricks ready for the Blackshirts. Some agile ones were waiting on the roofs.

Police, mounted and foot, charged, but the barricade held. Again the charge, and again; how many times no one counted. At last the defence was breached and police poured through to halt suddenly before—another barricade. Cable Street held out!

Elsewhere, too, the fight went on, shop windows broke as crowds were pushed back, only to go forward again. Three o'clock, Mosley had not marched. At 3.30, the Blackshirt storm troops sprang to attention as Mosley, in a black military uniform, with peaked cap and jackboots, arrived on Tower Hill in a black sports car—and a brick smashed the windscreen. With an escort of Blackshirt motor-cyclists, Mosley went on to inspect his troops.

In the streets came that feeling of approaching crisis which, in such events, so often moves and men spoke of going over to the offensive on the flanks of Tower Hill. The police were tiring. How ironic, thought many, that the police should bear the burden of the day, while the organisers of discord were safe beside the Mint. There, too, came the portent of crisis. The Commissioner, from his field headquarters in a side street off Tower Hill, summoned Mosley and on his own responsibility ordered the Fascist leader to call off the march.

Guarded by the police reserve, the Fascist columns retreated through Eastcheap and Queen Victoria Street to the Thames Embankment, followed by the smaller groups from the fringes of the Corner. There the workers were, at first, unbelieving of the reports of retreat, thinking it might be a trick. Then the police fell back. The workers followed until, at the Temple, the police formed a great barrier and the Fascists marched away to disperse.

Defeat is an orphan, but victory has many fathers. Many have claimed this victory as theirs, some even halted the Fascists single-handed. But the single, evident truth is that the Blackshirts were stopped by the spontaneous action of anonymous workers, who received no support from the "people's leaders."

Tired, hungry and bruised, we trudged home. Yet our hearts were happy, for on that day, October 4, 1936, **THEY DID NOT PASS.**

TOM BROWN

Ireland and the Common Market

Statement by group of revolutionary comrades in Ireland on the situation there, on the occasion of the Second National Rank and File Movement Conference in London, March 11, 1962.

FRATERNAL greetings from comrades in Ireland to British comrades meeting in Conference in London.

Since the General Election last October, the Irish Government has become more reactionary under pressure of the decision to seek membership of the Common Market. Several moves have reflected this trend. During a strike by Electricity Supply Board workers for a wage increase, the Government proposed a bill to coerce strikers back to work, under penalty of five year's imprisonment; under pressure the bill was withdrawn. In November the Government introduced the Military Court. Set up to deal with those charged under "Offences against the State Act", and aimed at the IRA and Sinn Féin, this has also been used to convict unemployed militants. It differs from "constitutional" Courts in that no jury is present. "Feelers" have been spread by Government spokesmen on public reaction to joining NATO. There has also been a clear shift in foreign policy, to make Ireland more adaptable to the Americans and their reactionary allies in Europe. Internally, the way has been cleared for invasion by Continental industrialists.

As in Britain, the Common Market has become the great grey "imminence". Once inside, weak Irish industry, without tradition and protected down the years by high tariff walls, will have to try to adjust itself to meeting vastly superior Continental competition. The capitalists make no bones about who will make Irish industry compete—as usual, the workers. From the Government, employers' organisations, the Chamber of Commerce and, alas, trade union leaders has come a rallying call to hard work and sacrifice—the old gimmick of the nation under siege, the "challenge facing the nation" as the capitalist Press likes to call it.

In plain terms, Ireland is about to be devoured by Continental monopoly capitalism, within which there will be no room for the small gombeen-man (small general merchant found in all towns and villages), with his pathetic attempts to set up factories producing goods for the home market and benevolently protected by his Government's tariff wall. This era of the gombeen man began with "independence" and "national sovereignty"; it is now at an end. They have sucked the blood and sweat of the working class here for 40 years and made a bold effort to fill in the shoes of the late ascendant class. The surplus population which, because of native capitalism's weak economic resources, could not be absorbed, was exported. There has always been an unemployment rate of 8-10% and an emigration figure which last year reached 74,000.

The Irish national bourgeoisie's efforts to assert itself met with opposition from British capitalists, with a vested interest in keeping it subservient. The two came in conflict during the trade war of the 1930's, the period of "radical" Fianna Fail Government. Fianna Fail then truly reflected the interests of the Irish bourgeoisie, but for fear of total economic war by Britain and a consequent threat of economic isolation, they were unable to pursue their policy to its aim of making the national bourgeoisie independent of British capitalism. This Fianna Fail Government fulfilled a role similar to Roosevelt's "New Deal" in the US, the British Labour Government after the war and social democratic governments elsewhere, which have saved the capitalist system by their reforms.

During the period of attempted national industrial revival, there was a law that all companies had to be 51% Irish capital. This is now a dead letter. Since the retirement of De Valera from the premiership and the succession of Lemass ("the hardheaded businessman"), there has been a departure from traditional Fianna Fail policy of isolation. Lemass has encouraged the import of foreign capital, in an attempt to stem the tide of unemployed. After entry to the Common Market, our surplus population—the unemployed, the further increased redundant population as a result of an agricultural programme dominated by the whims of big Continental capitalism—will be absorbed, not only in industrial Britain, but also will help fill the labour vacuum of West Germany and other parts of industrialised Europe. Undoubtedly many Continental industrialists will set up branch factories here. Some German and Dutch industrialists have already done so and Potez, the French aviation firm, is to build a big plant near Dublin.

What will the effect be of introducing Continental industrialists, accustomed to a more highly disciplined and regimented working class? To take two instances: first, last month the "Bulletin", organ of the Workers' union of Ireland, published a letter from a director of the German company of Mosbach Gruber, who have a branch here. Speaking of a claim for increased wages by the union, he threatened that, if this was proceeded with, he would close the factory. Although he was immediately denounced by the West German Embassy in a letter to the Press and the company later agreed

to meet union leaders to discuss the claim, it is a straw in the wind. Second, during a strike at another German firm (crane manufacturers) the factory was closed by the management, until the strikers returned to work.

Some people denounce the policy of importing foreign capital, but offer no Socialist alternative. We have no illusion that Irish capitalists behave any less ruthlessly, as recent experience in the nationalised Electricity Supply Board dispute clearly showed. But the point is that, within the Common Market, monopoly capitalists will not only be able to propose bills to jail workers for five years, their stronger resources will enable them to enforce such bills. In West Germany recently, 63 workers in a shoe factory, on unofficial strike, were fined a sum intended to cover the loss of five days' production to the factory owner. From this it is a short step to outlawing all strikes, once the union leadership is completely hinged on the capitalist apparatus.

The policy of Communists in Ireland, support for the aspirations of the national bourgeoisie, is a warning to revolutionaries in emergent ex-colonial countries. This policy, as opposed to giving the workers a clear class objective, is one of betrayal. It diverts the working class from its historical task of overthrowing capitalism, which today is not national, but international. Supporting the national bourgeoisie will everywhere have the same disastrous results (for the workers) as in Ireland.

The dangers of the Common Market pose the question: Is there an alternative to integration with this tyrannical monopoly-capitalist machine? Under capitalism, no. Macmillan's decision, best suiting the interests of British capitalism, leaves the Irish Government no alternative but to follow suit. It is, however, one of our fundamentals that the interests of the capitalist and working classes are completely opposed. We therefore say that the alternative to the Common Market is Social Revolution. The British and Irish workers must unite and organise to overthrow the capitalist system now. We reject the gigantic takeover bid, which will enable more highly-organised robbery from the workers of the wealth they alone create and which is perverted into the manufacture of H-Bombs and nuclear weapons for the further gain of cold war profiteers.

The conference of the Rank and File Movement, which is the embryo Revolutionary Industrial Union, the weapon through which the workers can overthrow the capitalist parasite class, must be the beginning of mass working-class resistance to this monstrous system of robbery and war.

PAT KELLY.

Death of two comrades

HARRY T. DERRETT

OUR OLD COMRADE, Harry Derrett, of Glendaruel, Argyll, has died at the age of 77, following a long and painful illness. A retired postman, Harry Derrett was active in the libertarian movement for very many years. Older comrades will remember his pamphlet, "Under the Fifth Rib," published by the Anarchist-Communist Federation in Glasgow before the last war and which made a slashing attack on the folly and stupidity of capitalism. His first introduction to libertarian ideas came from his brother, Fred Derrett, then a Glasgow tramwayman, who, now 88, survives him. Harry was among a group of old militants who joined the SWF on its formation in 1950; two others, Bill Organ (London) and Gerry Williamson (Belfast) have also left us for the last time. Telling us of his father's death, Harry R. Derrett writes:

"He willed his body to the Glasgow University Anatomy Department for use in medical research... My father left an overwhelming indictment of the present economic system in his collection of books, pamphlets, notes and cuttings, but our problem is—how to get the mass of our fellows interested? I'm afraid the big majority are still 'Ragged Trousered Philanthropists'".

FELIX GURUCHARRI

FELIX GURUCHARRI, who died in London at the beginning of this year, was a CNT militant who will always be remembered by those who had the privilege of knowing him and particularly by the Barcelona transport workers, among whom his activity was carried out for many years. A man of action, he was marked down by the employers and imprisoned for the part he played in strikes of Barcelona busmen before the Revolution of 1936, when the industry was brought under direct workers' control. "Charri" was a member of the delegate committee that controlled bus transport in the big seaport from 1936-39, when the workers ran things themselves. Afterwards he shared the hardships of exile—concentration camps at Vernet (France) and Dielfa (North Africa). He arrived in Britain towards the end of 1944. Many comrades followed his body, the coffin draped in a red-and-black flag, to its last resting place at Willesden cemetery on January 5.

The SWF expresses its sympathy to the families of these two comrades; we share the feeling of bitter loss and can best honour their memory by redoubling our efforts in the struggle against Capitalism and State, to which their lives were selflessly dedicated.

BULGARIA—HOW THE WORKERS LIVE

The following report is the first part of that made by the Bulgarian delegation to the XII Congress of the IWMA, giving first-hand and fully documented details of conditions for workers and peasants in that country. The second section, dealing with the universal theft which is an integral part of the system, industrial accidents and the resistance movement, will appear in our next issue.

* * *

BEFORE the Stalinist dictatorship was set up, on September 9, 1944, Bulgaria had for over 20 years been under an absolute monarchy favourable to Fascism and Nazism, which had claimed victims by the tens of thousands. Traditional friendship with Russia and an affinity of language and racial origin between the Bulgarian and Russian people facilitated the growth of Bolshevism. The new regime's need for Allied support led to the declaration of war on Germany—a war that cost 40,000 lives and had no beneficial results, only accelerating economic and social collapse.

Stalinism in power soon organised repression against democratic and progressive movements and, as usual, the first victims were the Anarchists and Syndicalists, who form a significant minority among workers, peasants and intellectuals. Afterwards it was the turn of the Agrarian Party (representing the smaller peasants, who form the great majority of the peasantry). Nor were the Social Democrats forgotten and the terror extended to the bulk of the working class, always giving as its justification the fight against Fascist tendencies, imperialist agents and Western reactionaries. In fact, most Fascists, organised round the "Zveno" Group, adapted themselves to the regime, some becoming ministers and filling important Government posts. The most notorious Fascist leader, Kimon Gueorgiev, who was behind all coups d'état after 1923, is still minister in charge of electrification in the Communist Government.

Politically, the "Fatherland Front" comprises the entire adult population, with a separate youth organisation. All workers, manual or intellectual, must belong to the official trade unions, through which the hierarchy supervises the operation of its economic plans and controls the working class, crushing any attempt at independent demands.

Nationalisation and accelerated industrialisation enabled the Stalinists to turn the country into a vast prison. To crush popular resistance they needed 72 concentration camps and 24 extra prisons; hundreds of thousands were taken before investigating committees; of these, many never returned or came out with health permanently impaired. Enemies, real or imagined, were at one stage so numerous that there were not enough places to put them and civil buildings had to be turned into detention centres.

But imprisonment, together with third degree methods of such refined cruelty that they often result in death or insanity, are not the greatest burden the people have to bear. Repression and systematic terror have other less brutal forms, among them conscription of labour into work brigades.

Forced collectivisation has imposed on the peasants a variety of forms of restraint, disrupting their lives, provoking revolt on a scale never previously known in Bulgaria and leading to slaughter of cattle and flight of peasants in the frontier districts. The present CP leader, Theodore Jivkov, said last year (1960) that a progressive decrease in the number of bullocks and cows had not been halted since 1948.

Through police dictatorship a fresh division of society into two classes has been achieved. Although private ownership of the means of production has been almost completely abolished (100% in industry, transport and commerce; 95% in agriculture), fresh economic, political, professional and cultural privileges have created a new ruling class, greater in numbers and weighing more heavily on the poor than the old bourgeoisie. The poor, too, are also more numerous than the former proletariat, as they now comprise workers, all peasants and those professional people who do not belong to the CP.

The new ruling class includes, in the front rank, the leading military and political sections of the CP, who live a life of luxury in country manors and sumptuous town houses, shopping at special stores, having in their homes food and valuables of which everyone else is deprived, and travelling in large cars, with blinds down so that they cannot be seen taking their families about at public expense. These people are subject to no restraints.

In second place come the senior technocrats, administrators, TU bureaucrats and officials connected with cultural activities; and finally local officials, MP's, work-brigade foremen and overseers and privileged CP workers. The last-mentioned are all automatically police informers (and can choose where and at what they will work), their children get preference for entry to schools for political, diplomatic and military trainees. They have the best jobs and the average pay of those in industry is between 900 and 1,350 levas a month.

Even when temporarily under a cloud for lack of party work, they

never drop below 700 levas. To supplement, double, or treble their income they invariably turn to that theft which has become a general rule in the "socialist" countries. From this caste of "productive workers" come managers and workers for armament factories and heavy industry, deputies and foremen for mines and forestry, where wages are theoretically higher. Armament workers get 850-1,300 levas a month; agricultural machinery and machine-tool factory workers average 900 levas, plus production bonuses, while for a 12-hour day in forestry the rate is only 700 levas. In the food and clothing industries, where there is an eight-hour day, but a very high production rate, wages vary between 580-650 levas a month.

Among the children of the privileged are found the teddy boys, whom the Press claim are hangovers from the past.

Of a total population of 7½-million, about a million are industrial workers, a little more than 2½-million peasants and several thousand of the poorer professional men do not hold CP membership. This oppressed and disinherited class have no rights except to work, fulfil the various plans to build "socialism" and maintain a lazy and greedy ruling class.

Doctors, engineers, agricultural technicians, schoolmasters, scientists and artists not belonging to the CP get no credit for their work, all prizes, medals and honours going to the hierarchy.

Production rates are raised or lowered each year, while the average wage rate remains constant at around 500-600 levas. Shock brigade workers (Stakhanovites) are used to establish ever-higher production rates. Norms have to be overproduced by 15%—then new ones are worked out. If these are not passed, workers do not get their basic wage. The basic daily rate for unskilled workers is 17.40 levas; for skilled workers, 18.80; for highly-skilled and experienced, 22.60-24.40. Over-producing norms by the requisite 15% gives 20.01 for unskilled; 21.62, skilled; 25.99-28.09, highly skilled. From this 1.8 is deducted for union dues and the Patriotic Front and there are also subscriptions to the Red Cross and "voluntary" donations to China, Korea and Hungary, all deducted at source.

Payment for peasants in the collectives is even worse. Varying according to profits, it is adversely affected by the managements, which are in the hands of party incompetents. Official statistics put the average national peasant wage at between 5-15 levas daily for 130-220 days' work, giving annual incomes between 650 and 3,300 levas. During periods of self-criticism the Press, while boasting of high wages in special collectives (those on intensive production of tobacco, wine, early fruits) reveals that several collectives can maintain payment of only a few dozen centimes; these are jocularly known as "centime villages."

To estimate the cost of living by simple conversion into foreign currencies would be erroneous. For those who wish to do so, however, the official rate is 27.25 levas to the £1.

For a more accurate comparison, the first appendix, on prices, shows that workers, peasants and other employees can just buy a minimum of food, without having enough to dress decently, or to meet other basic needs. Above all, the desperately low living standard of the peasants allows the "Socialist" economy to function smoothly. The enormous gap between wages and prices puts the peasants in an even worse position, as the State fixes wholesale prices so low that they do not even cover costs.

As good Marxists, the Communists must know that when prices are lower than costs, a form of exploitation amounting to robbery is produced, as the gap is here bridged not from Capital, but directly from Labour. This form of "indirect taxation" pays for industrialisation and "socialist construction," and at the same time reduces all the peasants to ruin.

How can one live on such low wages? The powers-that-be have found a way to obtain payment several times higher than their official rates: theft. Unlike Rumania, Bulgaria has never previously been subjected to the

APPENDIX 1 SOME AVERAGE PRICES (in levas)

Country cottage	40,000	Half litre beer (app. 1 pt.)	5
Two-room flat	60,000	1 Kg. (2 1/5 lbs.) black bread	1.5
Medium-powered car	45,000	1 Kg. white bread	3.2
250cc motor-cycle	9,000	1 Kg. pork	12
Bedroom suite	2,700	1 Kg. Salami sausage	30
Bicycle	1,473	1 Kg. lamb	18
Sideboard	700	1 Kg. veal	14
Kitchen stove	1,250	1 Kg. mutton	15
Swiss gold watch	3,250	1 Kg. fish	8
Ordinary watch	1,300	1 Kg. cheese (white)	12
Alarm clock	160-240	1 Kg. sugar	10
1 metre good quality dress material	310	1 Kg. oranges	14
Suit (made to measure)	1,300	1 Kg. lemons	12
Shoes	250	1 Kg. potatoes	0.8
Poplin shirt	120	1 Kg. apples	4
Pants and vest	32	1 Kg. broad beans (dried)	5
Cotton handkerchief	8	1 egg	0.8

APPENDIX 2

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION COSTS AND SELLING PRICES (to State marketing organisation)

	cost	sale		cost	sale
Cow's milk	2.15	1.70	Eggs	0.75	0.70
Sheep's milk	2.80	2.20	Wheat	0.95	1.20
Pork	11.89	8.12	Maize	1.41	1.00

Sale prices are average for several counties, calculated on the basis of official figures given by Jivkov at the beginning of 1961.

Postbag

THE SEAMAN'S VOICE

MANY THANKS for the review of "Seaman's Voice"—the best to appear so far. "Fo'c'sle" is giving it a splash which should mean a big jump in sales. There was one small slip in your review, re the "Ivor Rita." You say: "It was the time of the big Canadian seamen's strike and the 'Ivor Rita' crew . . . had walked off in sympathy."

Our strike took place three months before the CSU deep-sea strike, which began in April, 1949. Goulandris had planned to put 40 Fort boats under the Canadian flag, with crews under British articles, and by this means to weaken the CSU fatally. The "Ivor Rita" strike repercussions in the UK, making all such ex-Fort boats black (even the NUS had to fall in line here), knocked the original plan on the head.

It was after this that the Canadian shipowners, while negotiating with the CSU under Government supervision for a new contract, and with the previous contract still in force, signed an illegal "back-door" agreement with the SIU. Instead of acting against this illegality, the Canadian Government moved against the CSU when the latter was forced to use strike-action. There are still plenty of Canadian seamen here and elsewhere who stay put because the vicious persecution by the Canadian Government of CSU strikers has never let up. Canadian maritime laws are even worse than ours, being of 18th Century vintage! A mate of mine, at present in the "—", dare not go to Canada to pick up some 1,500 dollars waiting for him, because he'd be lumbered as soon as he set foot in that country.

GEORGE FOULSER

London, E.14.

I WAS HANDED a copy of your paper by a friend and comrade in the Seamen's Reform Movement. I enclose 5s. for a subscription towards further copies. There is going to be a fight for the General Secretary's job of our union, NUS. It will be an education to see the tactics that will and have been used to defeat the working seamen, who want their union cleaned up and reorganised. They will need all the help and publicity they can get, as this is their vital year. Yours fraternally and for peace,

R. PENALANA

North Shields.

PLEASE RENEW my subscription to World Labour News and enter me for the next 24 issues of Direct Action. May I take this chance to commend you on WLN. It is top-flight and ranks as one of the world's best Left papers. As a member of the IWW I am always glad to see genuine labour action taking place. The SWF fulfils a great need.

JAMES WILLIAMS

Louisville, Kentucky, U.S.A.

I HAVE RECENTLY returned to the Rusty City (Manchester) after ten weeks of enforced penance in one of the State's "Get 'em back to work" institutions (War pensioners' hospitals) in the mountains of North Wales. Like any type of socialised crib run by the Establishment, the type of reading material available to the war-crippled inmates was as to be expected: strictly for the birds. I have therefore been out of touch with news of daily class struggle, both here and in the States. Can you let me have any old back issues . . . I would gladly send an order for a parcel of current SWF lit, only being unemployable through severe chest disability (legacy from capitalism's last global carve-up) and depending on pension and small NAB allowance for oats and stable expenses leaves me with hardly more bawbees in by bin than to just about avoid being arrested for vag. I pay room (30s. week), from my State hand-out of £3 18s. net, so a fellow doesn't have to be a maths expert to understand the kind of existence I pad around on.

MIKE FLANAGAN

Manchester 11.

THERE ARE a lot of men and women out of work over here. The slaves are doing a lot of talking, but that is all that they are doing. The labour fakers are getting a new labour party and it is so haywire it is hell. As long as these so-called leaders can hold their jobs, that's all they want. Labour does not want fakers—we want union men.

J. B.

Vancouver, B.C.

Cuban Syndicalists jailed

PERSECUTION of libertarian Syndicalists in Cuba by the Castro-Communist Government continues. Many are in prison, some sentenced to long years of forced labour, among them **Placido Mendez**, transport worker, 12 years; **Alberto Garcia**, clinic employee and ex-General Secretary of the Federation of Medical Workers, 30 years; **Joaquin Aubi**, of the Spanish libertarian movement, 30 years.

Among those detained who have not yet been tried are **Luis Miguel Linsuain**, catering worker, ex-lieutenant of Castro's rebel forces and former General Secretary of the Eastern Province Federation of Catering Workers, under detention for more than six months; **Antonio Dagas**, film worker, Spanish libertarian militant and assistant secretary of the CNT group in Cuba, detained for about a year; **Jose Cena**, worker at the "La Polar" bar and lecturer at Vibora Institute, arrested last July and now in La Cabana jail; and **Sandalio Torres**, peasant and building worker, arrested five months ago and several times threatened with imminent execution by firing squad in the Pinar del Rio prison.

All are lifelong libertarian militants, whose only crime is loyalty to their revolutionary ideas.

CEYLON—While power-seekers plot palace revolutions and those in the saddle multiply repressive measures, the discontent of the masses with their empty "freedom" is demonstrated by an almost endless series of strikes. As bus crews all over Ceylon returned to work on December 14, after a successful six day strike in defence of two workmates, 12,000 Colombo dockers struck for a guaranteed monthly minimum. Blacklegs in uniform were moved into the port and a 24-hour general strike was called on January 5 in protest, but was not widely observed. The dockers were still out in February, with bank clerks, who struck for higher wages on December 27 in resumption of a strike suspended last April, after the declaration of a state of emergency. Only the People's Bank remained unaffected. Other strikes lasting a week or more hit a cinema chain and the Standard Vacuum Oil Company on December 22.

PORTUGAL—Following the abortive New Year's Day revolt at Beja, a mass demonstration was held on January 31 in one of the main streets of Oporto, Portugal's principal port. Demanding an amnesty for political prisoners and shouting in favour of General Humberto Delgado, the demonstrators lay down in the road, unhooked the rods of trolley-cars and stoned police cars before being dispersed by fire hoses. A number of arrests were made. January 31 is the anniversary of the unsuccessful Republican revolution which broke out in Oporto in 1890.

Literature

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