

THE

Syndicalist

FOR WORKERS' CONTROL

Vol. I No. 12

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Twopence

What Have the Workers Got to Celebrate?

Churchill and the Circus

THERE must be few politicians, in recent times at least, whose careers have been more affected by lucky circumstance than our present Prime Minister.

During quite undistinguished periods of political office, events have taken place which gave him opportunities for self-advertisement quite out of proportion to his merits. For instance, during his brief spell as Home Secretary, from 1910-11, a group of Anarchists became involved in what has since become known as the "Siege of Sidney Street", in which armed police and military were mustered in force to deal with four men suspected of robbery and murder. The incident is never recalled in the press without the famous photograph of Winston Churchill peering round a shop-doorway appearing with all due prominence.

Nothing more can be remembered of his tenancy of the Home Office, but the fact that he was Home Secretary at that time is known to everybody, thanks to the actions of four poor foreign workers.

Similarly, his period of office as Chancellor of the Exchequer, from 1924-1929, is famous only for the occurrence of the General Strike—although it can certainly be said that he may have been in part responsible for the vicious attack on the workers' standards which caused that strike. Those nine days of May, 27 years ago, however, gave Churchill once again the



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opportunity of bringing out the troops, as well as of getting his name connected with the *British Gazette*, the official Government bulletin of the time.

From then on, the poverty of his political thinking was reflected by his being in the wilderness from 1929 right up to the outbreak of war. But bloodshed and carnage, and the opportunity to play soldiers once again brought him to the fore, and we all know how he won the war, as from 1940, pretty much all on his own. (Well, with Errol Flynn, at least).

His Luck Holds

After the 2nd World War an ungrateful people booted him out of power, but once again his luck has brought him back just in time to strut on the stage of history—probably for his last time—among the colour, glamour and hide-bound hokum of the Coronation.

His present period of office, like the present Queen's reign has not, yet, been particularly distinguished, except, as one would expect of a Churchill Government, for a steady lowering of the standards of living of the working-class. His presence, however, will be felt and seen on all the cinema and television screens of the world and if there is an autumn election and he retires, the Churchill luck will have stuck right to the end, and he will go out in a blaze of glory, the more sinister aspects of his administration nicely covered up by tinsel and lace.

Now what of the Coronation itself? How convenient was the death of George VI! (And

incidentally, of Queen Mary, late enough to add poignancy to the young Queen's accession, but not too late to muck up the arrangements!) What administration, faced with a growing trade depression, could have hoped for anything better than the circus about to be performed?

Not only does it fulfil all the traditional requirements of the Roman circus, in that it takes the people's minds off their own slavery, giving them opportunities to identify themselves with pomp and circumstance, colour and pageantry, and bring a little brightness and excitement into dull working lives. It is also good for trade.

Foreigners (particularly Americans—the dollar-elite) will flock to the country by hundreds of thousands. The racket in accommodation will reach new depths (£500 has been asked for one week's tenancy of one house near the procession route!) but far and wide will go all the Union Jacks, the Coronation Mugs (the china kind), all the hideous trays, vases, lace curtains, wall-plaques, horse-brasses and other junk bearing the face of our young and beautiful sovereign and her handsome consort. In thousands of working class houses hard-earned money that could be better spent on a day in the country or a new pair of boots for one of the kids, will be blued in celebrating (what?), or in putting out flags "to make a show". And when it's all over—back to the daily grind, the increasing short-time, "redundancy", the rising cost of living, while traders and landlords count the reward for their patriotic effort.

Age of Opportunity

The New Elizabethan Age will have dawned, with the call to Adventure (in Malaya?), to create a new Spirit, a new Culture (on sponsored T.V.?), to offer to the world a wider concept of Freedom (in Kenya?), a new Prosperity (6d. off Income Tax) and lasting Peace (hail Malenkov!).

And young men in the Forces can serve with pride, knowing that another young man, just like them, has risen to the highest rank in all three Services, at the remarkably youthful age of 29. Every working-class conscript in the Elizabethan Age can carry in his knapsack the batons of a Field Marshal, Air Marshal and an

Continued on p. 4

Railways

Signalmen to Strike

NOTICE has been handed to the Ministry of Labour that a state of dispute exists between the Railway Executive and the Union of Railway Signalmen.

The U.R.S. has a membership of 8,000 signalmen out of the 22,000 in Gt. Britain and is claiming recognition of its right to negotiate on their behalf, maintaining that although the Transport Act of 1947 mentions only the three recognised railway unions, the Railway Executive could give others at least partial recognition if it so desired.

Following a ballot of all members, and the exhaustion of "all the peaceful means available", the U.R.S. executive is now planning strike action. Once the necessary three weeks' notice has expired the signalmen will be legally free to strike anywhere and at any time, but they are not giving specific notice "so that the other side can't make any preparations to meet it" as the Gen. Sec. Wallace Williams put it.

The signalmen have chosen certain areas as "action areas"—undoubtedly areas where their membership is strongest—and have stated that "we place full responsibility for whatever action is taken from now upon the Railway Executive."

THE SYNDICALIST deplores the splitting up of workers by craft divisions, and we think that three main organisations in the railway industry are already too many. Nevertheless, the signalmen obviously feel that they are not getting a fair deal under the wing of the N.U.R. and would be better represented in an organisation of their own. And until a proper industrial union, or railway workers' syndicate, emerges, wherein all railway workers can join together in the common interest, we can expect to see more grades demanding recognition, and if it will be to their benefit, we wish them luck.

Mines

Miners Seek Inquiry into Nationalisation

THE general disappointment with nationalisation among the miners is beginning to show itself more openly.

The union representatives of 40,000 Nottinghamshire miners have agreed on a resolution to be submitted to the N.U.M. annual conference in July. It reads:

"This conference considers the time is opportune for a full enquiry into the working of the nationalisation of the coal-mining industry.

"It maintains that the increase of supervisory, clerical, and administrative staffs and the creation of positions since nationalisation constitutes a serious threat to nationalisation."

Note that the Notts men have not expressed

any disillusionment with the idea of nationalisation itself, but only with what they consider to be abuses of it. Syndicalists, however, have long since recognised that State control means centralisation and bureaucracy.

Nationalisation is a political idea, and in politics there are always "jobs for the boys". Only workers' control can mean the final elimination of the supervisory and administrative staffs and only a free economy can reduce clerical staffs to a minimum.

We shall be surprised, however, if the Notts resolution does not receive very strong opposition from the N.U.M. National Executive. Dog does not eat dog, and too many top-ranking trade union leaders have found good jobs on nationalised Boards for mutual criticism to be anything but embarrassing.

The Revolutionary Situation

THOSE with a cursory knowledge of social theory often sneer at "outmoded conceptions of the barricades", etc., when such conceptions are (if one may coin a word) hardly ever in-moded. The view of anarcho-syndicalists has always been that the essential social transformation is that which takes place at the point of production. This may well be accompanied outside by clashes with authority. Such is unavoidable, but it is not the revolution; indeed the clashes can come without any revolution taking place, as has often been the case in France, for instance.

What is in fact the revolution is the occupation of the places of work, and the lock-out of the employing class, so that production continues according to the wishes of those engaged in the industry. This is the general strike as a revolutionary weapon. A general strike can serve many purposes, such as being the last stage of a sympathetic strike, or for the enforcement of social or economic demands. As well as strikes against lowered conditions, or for the defence of living standards, there have been general strikes for the defence of civil liberties or against militarism or dictatorship. Naturally the general strike is not something that can always be invoked like "abracadabra" nor have Anarchists ever suggested this to be the case.

A recent criticism I read of Anarcho-Syndicalism suggested that we believed in the myth of a General Strike like a Messianic change that would alter all society for evermore. Yet nearly twenty years ago this was cited as follows: "The ridiculous claim, which is so often attributed to the Anarcho-Syndicalists, that it is only necessary to proclaim a general strike in order to achieve a Socialist society in a few

days, is, of course, just a silly invention of evil-minded opponents bent on discrediting an idea which they cannot attack by any other means". (R. Rocker, "Anarcho-Syndicalism: Theory & Practice", 1936). This view of anarcho-syndicalism and the general strike belongs to the fabrications of Parliamentary Socialists in the pre-World War I years. We do not say that any general strike can lead to a revolutionary change, but that in order to have a revolutionary change, social transformation—by means of the general stay-in-strike—is essential.

However, in order for this transformation to take place, it is necessary first for the workers to want the change, and consciously to organise the change-over. The essential task of the moment, therefore, is the building up of an industrial organisation, which should not be directed by any party or group, but come spontaneously from the workers at the places of work. Once such a task has begun, there is no need to deplore lack of any revolutionary situation, for such opportunities come frequently without the "plots" beloved of the writers of criminal romances. Since the war we have seen such situations existent in many countries: first of all, Italy after the fall of Mussolini, when the workers were occupying the places of work; then Rumania and Bulgaria before the grip of the Red Army became too strong; Poland, where the workers had once attempted to seize control of the factories while the Nazis were still there; France in the post-war crisis; finally Korea, where some occupation of the workshops took place before the two rival imperialisms set out to fight each other and, incidentally, destroy the Koreans.

In all these cases, had there been a revolutionary movement able to seize the economy at the critical moment, the governmental authorities might have been resisted whether they labelled themselves "democratic" or "new democratic". At the moment there is more possibility in this country that we shall be faced with a revolutionary situation than there is the possibility that at such a moment the workers will be ready to respond with a general stay-in strike with the clearcut objective of a free society.

But this can happen and it is the aim of Anarcho-Syndicalists that it will happen.



Talking Points

More Holidays!

THE religious struggles of past generations coincided with the rise of the middle-class against feudalism. Hence in the Protestant countries the bourgeoisie in sweeping aside Papist ideas, took good care to make something for themselves by abolishing the saints' days. Having abolished superstitious observances on the holy-days, they granted nothing as a holiday in place of same! Naturally the Catholic bourgeoisie in other countries followed suit by cutting down on the number of observances. There are now few enough left, but the voice of cold reason is ever with us, and periodically chambers of commerce and manufacturers' associations suggest cutting out this or that holiday as anachronistic.

The favourite target at the moment is Bank Holiday, which being entirely secular has no chance of being defended in the same way as Easter or Whitsun. Many propose to cut out Whit Monday, and the thin end of the wedge will be seen this year when many firms will try —just as an experiment, mind you—to cut it out or give in return the Monday before Coronation Day (which most people will take off anyway).

There is only one way to counter this, and that is not by mere resistance to holidays being taken away but to press for more. A week's paid holiday is grossly insufficient, and there should at the very least be two weeks, as is common in most trades. However, that is by no means the limit. After all, Civil Servants and professional people find a much longer holiday essential. It is not that they need more recuperation from their arduous toil, it is simply that they are in a position to demand it. Let us likewise press for a longer summer holiday, paid, and a few more days besides. Great Britain is very poorly served in this respect—after all, Republics get Independence or National Day each year, but our Coronation Days only happen once in a reign!

And how about a few days off totalling say seven in a year—to be credited to sickness or shopping or any other reason? Must one for ever toil and never go to a football match or look in a shop? These are not excessive demands, it is merely that they are up to now demands which have not been made by any except office workers. As for managerial and professional staffs, they take them for granted.

The battle for paid holidays was not finally won in 1870 when we got a day off in the middle of August, nor is it won by the granting of a week's or a fortnight's holiday. If and T.U. boss says that having got such a "concession" we must now refrain from any further demands, let him go on talking to empty committee rooms, but at the place of production let us put forward new demands that will be taken for granted by future generations, which we may achieve sooner than we think, and which at the very least will stop Chambers of Commerce from thinking that we are now so satisfied that even that which we have may be taken from us.

History

The Lessons of History

THE series of articles on syndicalism in various countries has been short, both for reasons of space and limitations of knowledge. It is unfortunate that many of the revolutionary movements of vital concern to us have not received sufficient documentation. It should be our constant aim to add to this knowledge, as there is something positive to be gained from it.

The cursory reader might regard it as being remote from his interest that such-and-such a revolutionary strike took place in such-and-such a country. Likewise, as most of the material which comes to be published on it in English is in the nature of protests against repression, he might draw the one-sided conclusion that all such revolts are doomed to failure, and find, perhaps, sympathy but not inspiration.

It is in the nature of revolts that many have been successful in lifting countries out of a morass of feudalism that persisted in modern times, but naturally none has finally achieved a free society which exists unchallenged and flourishing. This could not possibly be the case in the political circumstances of the world to-day, with an unabated trend to dictatorship and monopoly. If one thing had not caused a libertarian achievement to go under, another would have followed. Hence the record of foreign intervention in countries like Spain and Mexico on occasions when it was possible that the authoritarian society might collapse.

From the industrial struggles and revolutionary attempts that have taken place we can, however, draw many conclusions. That a consciously Anarcho-Syndicalist movement can be built up is proved by the Spanish experience, and that workers' control can be put into practice was seen in the collectivised undertakings

of 1936. We have also found that political influence can creep in (which can be seen in Mexico, when twice the anarchists have abandoned syndicalist movements they had built up, which had later been corrupted, in order to build again on a libertarian basis). The example of the Argentine shows how political influence can be kept out, and the struggles of the F.O.R.A. are closely parallel to those of the I.W.W. in North America. In both cases, however, we have seen the unavoidable wane of influence when militant workers turned to the Communists under the "glamour value" of the Russian Revolution.

The spontaneous possibilities of the workers, even without a positive syndicalist movement, are seen in the struggles in Germany after the fall of the Kaiser. There the workers were in a position to seize their workplaces, and likewise establish free communes. The latter, a typically anarchistic conception as opposed to the conquest of State power, was something seen in Spain which was a rebellion against the Marxist tradition in Germany.

Syndicalism as an industrial weapon was perfected in France, but with the decline of influence of the Anarchists owing to the rise of social-democracy and chauvinism, such syndicalism became corrupted and used against the workers, both by social-democrats, and later, by communists. In England we have seen that syndicalism faced the possibility of becoming merely a "trend in the labour movement". This proved fatal to it, for revolutionary syndicalism has flourished when it is separate and apart from the reformist labour movement. It might be pointed out to those who wail about "splitting the workers" that in many cases it has been the reformists who set up the dual union (often at governmental instigation or with the blessing of companies) because of the activities of the revolutionary syndicalists (e.g. Italy, Spain, and many South American countries). At other times the revolutionary union has been the challenger, but it has not split the workers according to crafts, as the reformist unionists take for granted.

A libertarian idea cannot be one that rests upon preconceived philosophies and written theories, but one that has been fashioned by experience. It is hoped, therefore, that a historical series such as the present has contributed towards the clarification of the theory of anarcho-syndicalism.

INTERNATIONALIST.

Reading

SYNDICALISM—THE WORKERS' NEXT STEP

By PHILIP SANSOM

48 pages

One Shilling

FREEDOM PRESS

27 Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1

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WITH reference to I.W.W. in the Syndicalist could disagree except that he does not he is talking of the I.W.W. when it exists

The Syndicalist We've

THIS issue of THE end our first year with great regret that it also brings to as a monthly, at least. We began, last May, and optimism, feeling and fellow-workers were in contact in industry port of a paper dealing trial matters. Our criticism and discussion view, and we believe diligent and lively man has arisen, as well as our own case.

But the fact of the be that there is not—we know of to maintain paper at a circulation doubt if we had wanted may have found more responded to advertisements in socialist specimen copies. By subscriptions—presumably they might be in a ideas for the industrial attitude to politics.

More disappointing of some whose ideas for us to be hopeful if not from the start way. But even here too strong, and they the only anarcho-syndicalist anywhere in English anywhere in

For this, perhaps, ourselves. We mis-judged for anarcho-syndicalism anything else and optimism. We enough militant work CALIST circulating.

But the determination started off with the making appeals in that would only mean from existing Fund steady and heavy loss on those already in writing and production £50 in the first year not continue to do so.

All this, however, Credit side there are comrades who did not financially, but know even such a modest they could to help.

But beyond this the work of distribution carried on. We should particular T.O.M. of Miner" of Radstock contributions of artistic way they tackled among their fellow go too to R. Lynn of distribution in "Scissor Bill" and throughout the country regularly.

Now for the future Committee is not going time to time, according

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Anarcho-Syndicalism and the I.W.W.

WITH reference to R. Lynn's letter on the I.W.W. in the last issue, no Anarcho-Syndicalist could disagree with what he says, except that he does not make it plain whether he is talking of the present or the past. The I.W.W. when it existed as an industrial unionist

The Syndicalist..... We've Had It!

THIS issue of THE SYNDICALIST brings to an end our first year of publication. It is with great regret that we have to announce that it also brings to an end our publication as a monthly, at least for the time being.

We began, last May, with great confidence and optimism, feeling sure that the comrades and fellow-workers with whom we were already in contact in industry would rally to the support of a paper dealing exclusively with industrial matters. Our columns have been open to criticism and discussion from varying points of view, and we believe we have dealt in an intelligent and lively manner with what controversy has arisen, as well as with the presentation of our own case.

But the fact of the matter simply seems to be that there is not—yet—sufficient support that we know of to maintain an anarcho-syndicalist paper at a circulation that can support it. No doubt if we had watered down our policy, we may have found more response. Many workers responded to advertisements and editorial notices in socialist journals by asking for specimen copies. But they did not take out subscriptions—presumably because, although they might be in agreement with syndicalist ideas for the industrial field, our uncompromising attitude to politics was too much for them.

More disappointing, however, was the attitude of some whose ideas are close enough to ours for us to be hopeful of getting their support, if not from the start, then when we got under way. But even here we found sectarianism too strong, and they maintained indifference to the only anarcho-syndicalist paper appearing in English anywhere in the world.

For this, perhaps, we should simply blame ourselves. We mis-judged the strength of support for anarcho-syndicalist ideas and cannot blame anything else but our own enthusiasm and optimism. We thought we could find enough militant workers to keep THE SYNDICALIST circulating. We were wrong.

But the determining factor is finance. We started off with the determination not to start making appeals in order to keep going, for that would only mean drawing money away from existing Funds. The result has been a steady and heavy loss which fell almost exclusively on those already doing the most work in writing and production. We have lost over £50 in the first year's publication and just cannot continue to do so any longer.

All this, however, is the Debit side. On the Credit side there are compensations. There are comrades who did not wait to be asked to help financially, but knowing the cost of producing even such a modest journal as this, did what they could to help.

But beyond this there has been the splendid work of distribution that a few comrades have carried on. We should like to mention in particular T.O.M. of Edinburgh and "Johnny Miner" of Radstock, both for their regular contributions of articles and for the enthusiastic way they tackled the job of distribution among their fellow workers. Our thanks must go too to R. Lynn for taking the responsibility of distribution in Glasgow, to "Dan" for "Scissor Bill" and to those other comrades throughout the country who took bundle orders regularly.

Now for the future. The Anarcho-Syndicalist Committee is not going out of existence. From time to time, according to the state of the kitty,

IF YOU LIKE
The Syndicalist
why didn't you DISTRIBUTE IT!

body was certainly a militant body without the need for control by the centre (only in its first couple of years was this De Leonist tendency present).

It is erroneous to say that "anarchist militants guided the policy of the I.W.W." (this would be contrary not only to I.W.W. but also to Anarchist ideas), it was indeed controlled by its rank-and-file members throughout the United States, and it added some glorious chapters to the history of revolutionary struggle. De Leonism was completely thrown overboard and throughout its existence the I.W.W. was—if not in name then in practice—as near to the anarcho-syndicalist conception of a union as makes no odds.

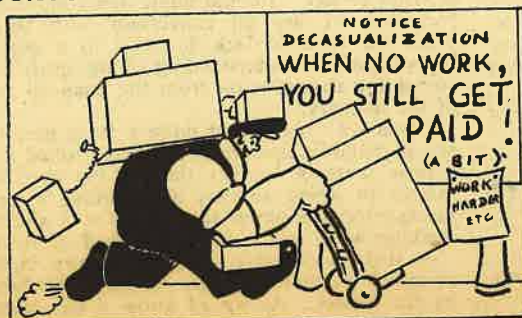
If, however, we are considering the present moment, then we have unfortunately to recognise facts as they are, which is that the I.W.W. (in common, one hastens to add, with the majority of anarcho-syndicalist unions in other countries in the world) lost ground by standing true to its principles and remaining a revolutionary body in a period when social-democratic opportunism, bolshevik betrayal and fascist suppression, were the order of the day. There are some I.W.W.s who still talk of their organisation as if it were still of the proportions it possessed in 1919 when it stood the attack from American vigilante fascism and communist betrayal. In some other countries we find Anarchists doing likewise. This is a pity because it gives a wrong impression to the workers. The truth is that these organisations, from being industrial unions, have become propaganda bodies for industrial unionism. There is nothing unworthy about the fact that this has happened. Far from it. To have remained mass bodies would have meant (things being what they were) that they had compromised. Why, then, give a contrary impression?

So far as this particular country is concerned, we would make ourselves ridiculous if we pretended to have in being an industrial syndicalist movement of any sort, other than purely propagandist, at the present moment. Both we, and our comrades of the I.W.W. propagandist groups, have much in common. The difference is merely one of emphasis, but we know full well that it is for the workers, spontaneously, to choose what they would prefer. A libertarian organisation cannot be put upon them ready-made. It may be that it will be industrial-unionist, specifically anarchist, council-communist, or one form or another. It may have more in common with one organisation or another—the C.N.T. of Spain, the I.W.W. of America, the German revolutionary movement of 1918.

we shall produce leaflets or broadsheets either on topical issues or on specific industries. We should like to come out with a survey of a particular industry, perhaps once a quarter, presenting the anarcho-syndicalist alternative and policy for that industry, but we can make no promises. We are not giving up the task we have set ourselves, but we are adjusting our commitments to our resources. As soon as we feel we are in a position to appear regularly again we shall do so. Whatever we do produce will be available through the distribution channels already established and will be sent automatically to all present subscribers to THE SYNDICALIST.

All subscribers with subscriptions still not exhausted who would like their cash refunded will be promptly repaid if they will let us know at our usual address.

SCISSOR BILL



Sold Again



For that reason I think it would be a mistake to talk quite in the terms R. Lynn does as if it were a question of (to-day, here) choosing whether or not we should work in the industrial unions of the I.W.W. He need not have any fears that two bodies will be formed—one anarcho-syndicalist and the other I.W.W.! This did indeed happen in Mexico and Chile, under propaganda from two different points of emphasis (Anarchist militants from Europe, and local militants who had been in the U.S.A.). The inevitable result was fusion in a revolutionary organisation. Academic differences need not worry us, even to the point of discussing how to overcome them.

ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST.

Support for Exploitation

WITH the usual spate of Trade Union Easter Conferences over, one finds the problems of the workers are well known to Delegates and Executives. Claiming enlightenment or militancy, Delegates still give support to lesser degrees of exploitation for the workers directly concerned with the Conferences. At the same time give organisational support to the overriding principle of the continued exploitation of all workers.

This may suggest that the solution to the economic problems of all workers lies in Anarcho-Syndicalism.

A. LAZENBY.

Bakery..... Why "Yield"?

GUERNSEY.

THE dominating word in the bakery these days is "yield". Not what kind of a loaf one can produce; not the pride in a well-finished article, a pleasure to the eye and to the palate, but how many loaves can you get out of a bag of flour.

Master-baker, manager, foreman, supervisor, charge-hand or what-not, their main worry can be summed up in gallons of water, or—"yield". There are such things as bread-improvers, but these despite their name are looked on merely as aids to increasing the yield and thus the profits.

No matter if the slice you intended to cut suddenly becomes transformed into a crusty collar with a huge hole in the centre, so long as yield is maintained and you get your 108 or 110 loaves to the bag.

Outside the bakery, too, yield is very important. The principal concern of the T.U. district board is how to make the workers yield to the bosses latest demands, and General Secretary Halliday, late Co-op worker, has to devise ways and means for getting "operatives" to yield to some further restriction of their own desires or some further extension of working capacity.

Going further afield and into industry generally, the main theme of T.U. effort so far as the leaders are concerned is—yield! Give up all along the line. Many advantages gained in former years have been thrown away in the last score of years and the debacle will continue unless the workers realise and act on the principle that only control of all industry by their own efforts is the key to the situation.

With a money system and production for yield or profit, such a thing as pride in a fine job of work can exist only in a very small minority of cases. We are men, not bags of flour, so why yield?

B.S.

Must We Always be the Clowns?

EDINBURGH.

BBREAD and Circuses, the time-honoured means by which the ruling classes pacify "the masses", have come to the rescue of Edinburgh Trades Council. On May 2nd, Edinburgh and district workers are being asked to show their solidarity with the workers of the world *not* in a procession as in the past but at a Sports Meeting!

Sports meetings are of course alright in their place. Considering however that there are dozens held in Edinburgh during the summer what little significance May Day held for the workers in the past is now apt to vanish completely. The reason given for the abandoning of the traditional May Day procession is the lack of interest shown by the workers' organisations in the last few years.

This is true enough as the bands have outnumbered marchers on the last two occasions! Before blaming the "apathy" of the workers for this state of affairs it should be pointed out that to march two or three miles for the doubtful privilege of hearing some superannuated Labour M.P. bolstering up the capitalist system is not every workers idea of what May Day should be.

Add to this the banning of the Commies and we get a clearer picture of what May Day in Edinburgh looked like. While we may think, *as we do*, that the Commies are merely ventriloquists dummies there seems no reason to ban them on that account unless of course the Labour fakirs can't even hold their own against dummies.

Be that as it may, the facts are that the workers in this and every other country are being dragged along behind their respective rulers in the name of "Freedom", "Democracy", "Dictatorship of the Proletariat", etc.—and May Day is celebrated in Moscow by a display of armed might!

Funerals, Coronations, Cup Finals and now May Day! Bread and Circuses!—must we always be the clowns!

Stand on Our Own Feet

THE "offer" of 3/6 per week made by the local authorities has not been accepted at the time of writing *but*—if there is anything a trade union boss fears it is action by the workers themselves. The thought that the workers may get wise to his game keeps him on the alert for any signs of militancy amongst the members of his particular union—and at the first sign he starts a *counter-attack*. This is not confined to the Deakins and Tanners, even the small fry who rarely make the headlines are at the same game.

One such, J. Brannigan, M.B.E. (what for?) has gone into action against the Glasgow Local Authority employees in *The Highway*, official organ of the Scottish Horse and Motormen's Association. Commenting on the fact that proposals re barring overtime (and a strike ballot

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Churchill and the Circus

Admiral—and all he has to do to get promotion is to marry a Queen.

Finally, a word to the Scottish Nationalists. To be emancipated from English rule is obviously a laudable aim—every English syndicalist has the same ambition. Why not join hands over the Border to get rid of rulership altogether? Instead of getting heated about a number of pillar-boxes and arguing as to whether the present Queen is Elizabeth I or II of Scotland—why not join with all those of independent thought, who cannot stomach the hypocrisy, snobbery, symbolic mumbo-jumbo and dead traditionalism, completely out of place, *like patriotism and nationalism*, in what should be an enlightened age.

How about working towards making it Elizabeth the Last?

Read: • • • • •

FREEDOM

The Anarchist Weekly, 3d.

From: *Freedom Press*, 27 Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1.

which Brannigan doesn't mention) were made by certain sections of workers in local authority employment. Brannigan calls these "irresponsible threats" which result in "bitter experiences" for the workers.

Now to a certain extent Brannigan is quite correct! Any group of workers who take action on their own behalf and expect help of any kind from the "Brannigans" in the T.U.'s are in for some "bitter experiences". Assistance is the last thing to expect from that quarter and it is to be hoped that the workers in the West learn from the "bitter experiences" of the Edinburgh men that anything that even looks like action will be branded "unofficial".

Once this is understood by the workers the way ahead is a little clearer insofar that the unions can be "scrubbed" from the start and we learn to stand on our own feet.

To those workers who imagine that the union

officials have anything worthwhile to say during "unofficial" strikes, forget it. All you will hear is a chorus from officials and bosses. "Get back to work". It is true of course that few workers pay union dues expecting the officials to back up the bosses, this unfortunately is exactly what does happen and the only reason the worker is surprised is because he has never taken the trouble to check up on the racket.

Space forbids a detailed explanation of just what does go on but there is one other little item in last month's *Highway* (Feb. 53) which may give those interested a clue. Under "Expenditure — Trade Union", the highest single item is Officials' Salaries: £13,920 approx., and a little lower down we see Strike Benefit: £229 approx.

Think that one out and you will have a good idea whose "interests" the union is looking after!

The Municipal Elections

HAVING condescended to mingle with the common herd for the two weeks prior to the Municipal Elections, the big-wigs of Edinburgh Town Council are as usual outdoing each other with promises of things to come. As few people trouble to listen to them however, it is only through the medium of the local Press than the citizens of Edinburgh become aware of the achievements of these supermen.

Take Housing for example. Simple people, that is those who have never heard a Town Councillor speaking may be of the opinion that building trade workers were the people who built the houses. This is of course a misconception and one that Councillor Kean (Liberton) deals with: "During the past year we have built more houses than ever," he said. "We doubled our output in 1952 (compared with 1951)". What site he worked on perhaps some "brickie" can tell us.

Meanwhile over to Calton Ward where Councillor McDiarmid is busily engaged in pulling down the slums, presumably to make way for Kean and company! Mr. McDiarmid was "shocked" and "depressed for days" after seeing the conditions in the Calton Road area "recently".

It would appear that the slum areas are quite convenient places for councillors to visit and "recently", provided it is just before the elections, quite a convenient time. Unfortunately

nately for the inhabitants of these areas the slums are not a short cut to the Town Council, they have to live in them until they are "discovered" annually by the vote-snatchers.

And so the farce goes on. Had housing been a priority the slums would have disappeared years ago. We have heard all the excuses and explanations about this, that and the next shortage, strange how easily those "difficulties" are overcome at the first hint of war. What could be done then can be done now but don't expect something for nothing.

To really get anywhere regarding houses or anything else we workers must be prepared to fight, not at the ballot box, that only decides who is going to live off us for the next year or so, but at the point of production.

Nor should we restrict our demands merely to wage claims, this is only keeping our heads above water and it will be nothing to boast about if that is all we succeed in doing.

Only a fundamental change in the existing set-up leading to workers' control of the various industries is of any *real* use to us. The arbitration racket has bluffed many workers, others again are beginning to wake up and when there are sufficient of the latter we can point out to the ruling class that we are past arbitrating for "crumbs", and that we intend to take the lot! T.O.M.

Building • • • • •

The Time Has Come NOW

MAY I as a trade unionist (A.S.W.) say this to all workers in the building industry and other workers.

The time has come *now* to make a firm stand, otherwise our standard of living and working conditions will deteriorate even more.

On the average building site out toilet amenities still consist of a communal "Pole in the Hole"—the age-old question "where do the flies go in the winter?" is now solved.

The canteen facilities for the midday meal aren't exactly on a par with Lyons Corner Rooms but they have none the less a connection. In our case the "Corner" could be that of any room of the house in which we work—preferably the one excluded from a draught.

The name "Lyons" familiarises itself with us from the tins that are used to brew up a 'chaser' for the sandwich meal (supplied by ourselves).

These are only two examples of the medieval conditions that are prevalent in the building industry to-day. I could quote many more but feel sure we are all conversant with them. What we seem to lack, however, is a deeper knowledge and understanding of the graft and corruption that goes on from the financial side of the industry.

I find with regret that quite a large percentage of building operatives are being lulled into a false sense of security through the overtime ramp. In doing so they are forming a very reactionary section in the fight for a shorter working week and a better standard of living.

A striking example of this is shown in the so-called incentive schemes recently introduced by the bosses. As we all know it has caused

nothing but bad feeling, bad workmanship and bad conditions. Since its inception the target hours have been repeatedly revised and cut; the result is, a stage has been reached where it's the survival of the fittest in order to gain a few hours; I don't have to mention what happens to the older fellows when men are working a squad bonus.

On the whole the majority of us would be more than pleased to see the scheme scrapped and from all reports the bosses have started doing so, *but* we will still be expected to work at the same pace as before. So I say again the time has come *now* for all workers to take direct action and learn a lesson from the past when the action we hoped for was left in the hands of our so-called leaders in the trade unions—our present conditions are proof of what happens when we depend on leadership. Edinburgh. P.G.

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Meetings

The Anarcho-Syndicalist point of view can be heard in:

GLASGOW—
Maxwell Street Sundays at 7 p.m.

LONDON—
Hyde Park, Sundays at 3.30 p.m.

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