

Freedom

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Threepence

DO YOU SUPPORT A POLICY OF HEAD-HUNTING

In their crusade against what they call "Reds", "bandits" or "terrorists", the Malayan Government has taken steps which puts them, to our mind, on a lower level than the head-hunting Dyaks of North Borneo. In the first place, anyone found guilty of supplying or receiving food for the guerrillas may be sentenced to death.

Secondly, in an attempted round up leading members of the Malayan Communist Party, a new scale of rewards for civilians who bring them in—dead or alive—has been announced. Alive, the secretary-general of the Central Executive Committee of the party is worth \$80,000 (Malayan) (£9,150) to his captor. Dead, he is worth only \$60,000. Politbureau members, alive, are worth \$65,000.

Finally, a guerrilla who surrenders is encouraged to bring along a Communist Party member with him for which he will be given half the reward on his head.

It is pointed out that police and troops are not eligible for these rewards.

Are we really to believe that the Malaysians will be convinced of the superiority of the "democratic way" of life by such measures? And are we aware

of the fact that these orders are made in our name—and that by remaining silent we condone such action? (Remember at Nuremberg it was decreed by the democracies that the German people, by their silence must accept their share of responsibility for the concentration camps.)

Or have we, like the Communists and the "democrats" who see the communists lurking in every corner, accepted the idea that the ends justify the means?

That is a dangerous road for, as we are always pointing out, inevitably the means become the ends.

"SPEAKING AS A CHRISTIAN SOLDIER"

That self-styled "Christian Soldier", Field-Marshal Montgomery, speaking as the new President of the Royal Society of St. George at the Society's annual banquet last Monday, compared Communism with the dragon and Britain, of course, in the rôle of St. George.

To be carefully noted is the following passage from his speech:

By standing firm against Hitler and refusing to give in, Britain and her Empire had saved civilisation, said Lord Montgomery. He continued: "And now it seems that we are faced with another dragon. This time it looks as if its objective is even wider—not only to dominate large parts of the world territorially, but actually to destroy European civilisation

altogether, and to establish the tyrannical and godless rule of communism over the whole of the Eastern hemisphere and as much as possible of the Western.

"Communism is anti-Christian, retrograde, and immoral. As a Christian soldier I declare myself an enemy of communism and everything it stands for."

It would appear that Hitler is now viewed by the Field-Marshal as an Imperialist pure and simple, and that Russia is a greater menace because in addition she aims at destroying European civilisation altogether; implying that Hitler did not. What a change in tune from 1939-1945 when we were crusading for spiritual values and all that kind of thing, what? V.

FOREIGN COMMENTARY ELECTION SEASON

Last month and the current month provide us with a crop of elections, mainly in Europe, the results of which have very little real social importance, but which nevertheless capture the headlines of the world press.

Italy's municipal elections at the end of May, covering one part of the country to be followed this week by similar elections in the other half, may be useful pointers for the politicians, showing if anything, a trend towards the Right. We say this in spite of the increase in the Communist vote by about 7%. The usual trend is for disgruntled electors to show their disapproval not with the opposition (which after all has been expressing much of their frustration with government policy) but with the party in power. And therefore the losses suffered by the Christian Democrats cannot be looked upon as a serious move away from the de Gasperi policy. And, what is more, not all the votes lost by de Gasperi have gone to the Communists. They have actually been absorbed by the neo-Fascist M.S.I., whose policy is to the right even of de Gasperi. (In Milan, Italy's largest industrial city, the M.S.I. have increased their vote from 15,000 in 1948 to 50,454 in 1951.)

But to add to the already complicated business of assessing public opinion from election results, the issues in the Italian elections have been whittled down to one issue: "Communist" or "anti-Communist", which, of course, makes a farce out of municipal elections in which local issues should, we gather, be the deciding factors for the electorate. Thus, on the one hand, there is the Communist bloc, composed of the Communists, led by Togliatti (who helped to complicate matters when he declared: "I have never been anti-clerical") allied with the fellow travelling Nenni Socialists. On the other hand, the anti-Communist bloc, a most unholy alliance, led by the De Gasperi Christian Democrats, with splinter Socialist parties (Saragat, Romita) Republicans, Liberals, United Social Democrats and presumably, the 337,000 votes for the neo-Fascists. This alliance

has succeeded in ousting the Communists from a very large number of little towns and village communes (they have lost 439 of the 641 previously held by them) and in 27 provincial capitals have held 15 but have lost ten—in spite of the increased Communist vote.

The best commentary, to our minds, of the value of elections is provided by the results in Forlì which was Mussolini's birthplace and a former Fascist stronghold. After the liberation it went over to the Communists and at last month's elections was won for the Government coalition by three thousand votes!

As we write, elections are taking place for the Sicilian regional Parliament—now five years old. The burning topics in this election are described by a correspondent as the trial now going on in Viterbo of Giuliano's one-time band, with its alleged revelations about connivance between the Italian Government and Giuliano; the attempt of the Monarchists and of the M.S.I. (neo-Fascists) to capture a lot of votes; the violent Communist campaign against the use of the Sicilian port of Augusta by Atlantic Pact Powers.

The results for 3,000 of the 3,800 voting districts showed that the neo-Fascist M.S.I. have more than trebled their 1948 vote, though included in their 232,000 votes there are many votes which last time went to the now defunct "Common Man" Party—also Fascist. The Communist bloc had secured 559,000 votes compared with the Christian Democrat-Fascist-Monarchist bloc's 967,000.

IRISH ELECTIONS

One of the conclusions drawn from the results of the recently held Irish elections is that it is possible that the Government coalition may be rendered unstable by the balance of (voting) power being in the hands of a group of Independents and already there is talk of another general election in the autumn.

We are not sure whether we are to assume that the politicians have such contempt for the electorate that they hope to make them switch their votes in a matter of a few months, or whether one may expect the introduction of two blocs (Costello, de Valera) and (as in the British elections) witness the elimination of the "Independent" Members of Parliament.

However, whatever happens, one thing is certain (as was pointed out last week in *Freedom*): it's the Bishops who rule Ireland.

MORE TO COME

And to look forward to are the elections in France with more or less the same actors, and the procedure slightly changed. Alone in opposing the whole farce are the French Anarchist Federation, who have used the back page of their weekly *Le Libertaire* this week as a poster giving brief histories of the various contending parties and putting forward a practical plan of action that can be taken by the workers on the economic and political fronts.

And in Burma next week the first general election of the Burmese Republic will be held in what the *Manchester Guardian's* Rangoon correspondent describes as a "fantastic setting" because, according to the Burmese Government's own figures, at least three millions of the population are living under "rebel" jurisdiction. "It is unsafe to travel beyond a five-mile radius from the bigger towns and the Government still has virtually only control of the main townships and lines of communication."

The opposition parties are protesting against the holding of the elections on the ground that the Government-armed Home Guard and anti-rebel guerrillas will be used as instruments of intimidation. And the ruling party, the A.F.P.F.L. (Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League—a suspiciously authoritarian-sounding title these days!) also objects on the ground that some of the opposition parties are in league with the insurgents who will terrorise certain villages where the Government's jurisdiction is not very secure! The result is that the Elections Supervision Commission has ruled out thirty-six "doubtful" constituencies, and going ahead with the other seventy-six. And, lurking in the background, are the big powers—East and West.

LIBERTARIAN.

INDUSTRIAL NOTES

The strike of dockers in Manchester which has dragged on for more than six weeks has now been provisionally ended, the men having returned to work but at the same time giving twentyone days notice that they will resume their strike if their grievances are not settled.

The strike began with suspension of two dockers after a dispute regarding the working of overtime. In Manchester, as in many other ports, it has been the practice to work overtime on a ship only when notice has been given from the beginning of the work on her that a quick turn-round is required. The men have

HAULAGE MEN WIN THEIR POINT

THE lorry drivers who called a strike to protest against the extension of State "snooper" patrols can chalk up a victory.

13,000 drivers at 241 depots all over the country compelled the Road Haulage Executive to withdraw their proposal to establish more road patrols with semi-police power (see *Freedom*, last week).

The unions originally stated that full consultation had taken place before the measures were agreed to, but a two-hours' meeting with the Minister of Labour drew the following official statement:

"The trade union asked that, before the proposed new arrangements were proceeded with, it should be given an opportunity of further discussion with the Executive and further consultation with the union members."

It is clear, in view of the workers' determined resistance that, whatever discussion there was before the strike, was with the executive, not the union members. They are, of course, only the people who pay the dues.

The matter is not yet finally settled. The new patrols have been held up pending talks, but the original five patrols continue, and at some depots the men were not willing to go back until they have been withdrawn, too.

Undoubtedly, the Executive will make another attempt to establish the snoopers. But the drivers have the answer to that.

The Manchester Dock Strike

always agreed to work overtime on the last day, if the ship has to catch a tide, to get away immediately.

The Manchester Ship Canal recently proposed that this custom, which has been in operation in the Salford Docks for years, should be thrown over, and the men be prepared to work overtime whenever needed. The dockers' T.U. Branch rejected this proposal unanimously, but, behind their backs, the Joint Negotiating Committee agreed to the Company's proposal. This was not very surprising, since the Joint Committee was found to consist of seven bosses' representatives as against four workers' representatives—namely, two T. & G.U. officials and two dockers. Cynics may say at once that this made nine bosses' representatives against the two dockers!

To begin with, then, the Strike Committee maintain that the Joint Negotiating Committee is so unbalanced as to be unacceptable and unconstitutional.

The Suspensions

On Monday, April 23rd, an attempt was made to put the new arrangement into force. The foreman told two men working on the *Princess Maria Pia* that they had to work overtime on her that night, although overtime had not previously been worked on that ship.

The men refused to work after 5 o'clock and were promptly suspended by the Port Manager for three days. On the Wednesday, following a mass meeting of the workers, a deputation went to the management, who refused to lift the suspension, so the dockers, at another mass meeting, put a ban on all overtime and night work as a protest. But when those who had operated the

COSTS OF "PRODUCTION" FIGURES recently published on press advertising, not including posters, advertising by mail, etc., show that during 1950 £35,704,403 was spent by trade, and £1,209,496 by the government. Oxydol spent £299,368, Rinso £227,994. The battle between Wisk and Dreft cost £415,000 and that between Toni and Pin-up home perms cost nearly a quarter of a million. Mars spent £193,132, Ovaltine £173,419, Horlicks £165,393. C. and A. Modes in the hard-up clothing trade spent £203,723.

ban on Wednesday night, reported as usual for day work on Thursday, they were refused their books. Declaring this to be a lock-out, all the dockers came out, bringing the entire dock to a standstill.

The Ship Canal Company tried to get their foremen and staff to make up gangs to handle the "black" ships, and when they refused, stood them off.

Two days after the dispute began, the Union Area Secretary cancelled the regular weekly meetings of the Union branch—obviously because a majority of its members are in support of the strike and not of the Union's support of the unfairly balanced Joint Negotiating Committee or its decision.

Many Mediators

There have been, of course, many bright ideas put forward for ending the deadlock. A number of local clergy, headed by a Canon Delaney, have tried to secure the mediation of the Minister of Labour; the Minister himself, however, seems content to carry on where George ("Red Plot") Isaacs left off, and merely to talk about the "evilly disposed" men in industry who encourage strikes.

Mrs. Bessie Braddock, Liverpool M.P., has taken umbrage because, following a question at a Labour Party conference, she sent a letter to the Treasurer of the Port Workers' Committee putting forward her views on what should be done—and the ungrateful wretches have ignored it.

P.S.

Direction May Return

WHEN he was Minister of Labour, Aneurin Bevan said he would not introduce direction of labour in peacetime. Now he is out of the way, that can be forgotten, and his successor will undoubtedly be more careful in what he says on the matter.

For the Minister of Supply, Mr. G. R. Strauss, told a Press conference recently:

"We want to avoid controls on workers but if the demand for labour in a vital industry is such that it cannot

be otherwise met, direction of labour may have to return.

"There is no need for direction at present, and if the Government decides it is necessary it will only return by consent of Parliament."

Lancashire cotton mills, he said, might have to turn over some of their labour to the aircraft industry.

Direction will only return by consent of Parliament. Very democratic! But the most democratic processes can be used to bring in the most undemocratic measures—if the situation demands it.

