

# A change of Faces in Algeria

THE RECENT OVERTHROW in Algeria of Ben Bella has been called a reactionary coup by the 'progressive left' and most of the Communist parties. In this line-up however the Chinese seem to be out of step and their early recognition of Colonel Houari Boumedienne, the new leader, is seen as a diplomatic mistake and a set-back to their increasing influence in Africa.

The international oil companies stand to lose by the new Franco-Algerian oil deal, which is on a 50-50 basis, whereby a 'co-operative association', a state company, is formed by the two countries. This of course gives the French Government a strong influence in its former colony.

Whether this can be claimed to be the reason for the overthrow of Ben Bella is questionable. The 'Friends of Algeria Committee', in their statement on the overthrow say that 'Two years ago at a similar juncture in the negotiations, the Algerian Foreign Minister, Mr. Khemisti, was shot dead by an unknown assassin and he was immediately replaced by Colonel Boumedienne's protégé, Boutefflika, who is now in power. It smells of oil.'

This committee supports Nasser in his present opposition to the West German Government. They say that Bonn 'is the heir of Nazi Germany and her close military alliance with Israel under cover of "reparations" is a menace to peace in the Middle East. Behind the present junta lurk Bonn and Washington'.

This all smells like an explanation by Communists or fellow-travellers. To them Ben Bella was in the Socialist camp and to this, Fidel Castro has added his piece. He actually ended his speech with a piece of good advice for all dictators, whether left, right or centre. 'If Ben Bella had been more ruthless, he would still be in power. Alas he was too kind.'

However, Ben Bella practised a funny sort of kindness, throwing into prison and exiling any sort of opposition. There

were rumours that Boumedienne was next on the list and so he had to act.

Before Algeria won its independence from France, this same struggle for power was going on. Then it was a struggle to eliminate other nationalistic groupings. The Algerian Nationalist Movement (MNA), of Messali Hadj was a victim and it seems that once this and others were eliminated, the struggle for power was then carried on within the FLN itself. The recent elevation of Boumedienne was a further outcome of this internal struggle, and with the support of the security forces and the army, he is in a formidable position.

Whether this change of leadership will bring any improvements in the social or economic conditions of the Algerian people remains to be seen, but what is uppermost in the minds of those supporters of the 'left' at the moment is what will be the ultimate fate of Ben Bella and they are calling a campaign for his release. Fair enough, but I do not recall them agitating for the release of the victims of Ben Bella.

*The Week*, which is a News analysis for Socialists, says in an article by Pat Jordan, 'We must campaign for the release of Ben Bella: this is not merely a humanitarian move or the saving of a great revolutionary; Ben Bella can act as the focal point for a revival of the left in the Algerian Revolution'.

How cynical can you get. I should have thought that humanitarian reasons were enough for a release campaign. While we as Anarchists can join with 'socialists' in support of freedom from colonial powers, we should disassociate ourselves from their support of the 'socialist tendencies' in the emerging Governments, who after all only take over from the colonial powers. The struggle for real independence for the people does not end at this point and they must continue in opposition to these new rulers.

P.T.

# Wanted: Anarchy on the Railways

IN COMMENTING on the go-slow tactics of the Southern Region railwaymen, and proposals for strike action, politicians, journalists and even Mr. Sidney Greene, the NUR secretary, have brought out the old bogey of imminent 'anarchy'. The railmen have a claim outstanding for a three guinea a week bonus payment, and a committee representing British Rail and the unions have been discussing it for nine months. It happens that in this industrial dispute, pretty well everyone, including the capitalist press and the Orpington Railway Users Association, agrees that the claim is completely justified, and the only reason it isn't paid is bureaucratic muddle. It seems therefore, that what the Southern Region is suffering from is not anarchy but government!

A dispute on a public service offers a particular challenge to socialists, anarchists and communists. To the first group for instance, it should cause some concern that Clause 4, nationalisation and even a Labour Government cannot provide either a satisfactory train service or a work relationship satisfactory to the workers in it, even in an undertaking where there is clearly no need to make a business-like profit. The reactions of the socialists vary from groups like *The Week* (out of power) who believe in workers' control within nationalisation, to the outbursts of Wilson and Gunter (in power) on the wickedness of direct action.

In discussing broad sociological questions in the setting of a specific strike action, I do not wish to blur the issues, since anarchists are unreservedly on the side of the workers and ordinary travellers, and against the managers, union leaders and officials, and would be glad to see more militant action of this kind, strengthened by being more consciously planned and organized. However, it has been a tradition of the movement to link specific struggles with the social movement as a whole, and unlike the *Observer* and similar papers, we are not thinking in terms of a 'national incomes policy', at least not the way the politicians mean.

First of all, there are some undertakings which cannot be carried out on a human scale. If there had been workers' control in ancient Egypt they would never have built the pyramids. The idea of a massive metropolis surrounded by dormitory suburbs, each inhabited by a particular income level, and the necessity for commuter travelling, can only exist in an unfree society. Any group of people, railwaymen or travellers, who stand out and say, if society is going to be like this we are not going to be the ones who suffer from it, are completely justified and if enough people take that line, it could cause enough pressure for the sociological trend to be reversed, and not accentuated as in the South-East Development Plan.

Secondly, the dispute brings into relief one of the anarchist arguments against any form of economic differentials between workers, and consequently against the wages system by which these are effected. The motormen have to work a seven-day week for £18-£19, at a tiring and demanding job. Yet when they take action for more pay they are abused by business men who would think themselves badly treated if they got twice as much for five days, and grumble because their lunches are not tax free any more. No doubt the travellers include useful and useless people, workers and parasites, like any section of mankind, but in the present situation, none of them could carry out their work if it were not for the services of the railwaymen. What reason therefore, is there that the railway workers, whatever their particular job, should get a penny less than the fattest businessman in Orpington? Far from asking too

much, the workers as usual are demanding far too little.

Thirdly, it is of some interest that the people in Orpington have formed themselves into a Railway Users Association, which shows that they realise the importance of looking after their own interests and not leaving it to their elected representative, even when he is a Liberal. It seems possible that groups of this kind could become sounding boards for groups of reactionaries to attack the unions and workers, or could provide constructive ideas, and function in co-operation with workers' organisations to work out a mutually satisfactory transport service. It is this kind of loose organisation set up for a particular purpose, forming links with other groups operating in related fields, which anarchists envisage as the basis for organisation in society when we have got rid of the state and its authoritarian inefficiency. Are any readers in a position to make the libertarian view heard in groups like these, or can anyone give an account of their activities?

Lastly, a suggestion to ease the inconvenience of the travelling public, about which so many crocodile tears are shed by press and politicians. Obviously this does not apply to people like hospital workers who feel an obligation to be at their jobs, but now that so much is heard of the growing power of the white collar unions, why not a united declaration that everyone in capitalist or government offices is going to leave home at the usual time and get home at the usual time. Strikes are directed against the state and the bosses, not against the people. Let us make sure that they hit the right target.

P.H.

# Communist Defence Minister Sanctions Attack on Hanoi

ONE HAS LONG learned to be wary of the Communists and their fellow-travellers so it came as no surprise when the Committee for Peace in Vietnam talk-in was made an occasion for a lamentable display of American baiting. Badges displayed read 'Hands off Vietnam' in bold letters and in smaller letters above this 'UNITED STATES'. According to Edgar P. Young in the *Daily Worker*, these badges are issued by the British Vietnam Committee.

It has not always been obvious that the Communists were interested in the welfare of the peoples of Vietnam, come to that, not even of the people of Hanoi, who now daily decorate the *Worker's* front page with heroic poses of defiance.

He who does not remember history is condemned to repeat it. We may not have forgotten the betrayals of Kronstadt and Mahkno, the terror of Barcelona, and the slaughters of Budapest, but study of the history of Vietnam brings to light other betrayals which should not be forgotten.

On January 22, 1947, with the installation of Vincent Auriol as first President of France's Fourth Republic, the Communists took five seats in the Cabinet of Premier Ramadier. They were: Maurice Thorez (the well-known deserter), Vice Premier; Tillon, Reconstruction; Croizat, Labour and Social Services; Marrane, Public Health and Population (!); and Billoux, National Defence. The Defence Ministry was to co-ordinate the ministries of War, Navy and Air, who were all non-Communists.

It is true that this coalition did not last long—the communists resigned on April 30, 1947—but then, French governments weren't lasting long in those days!

But as far as Vietnam was concerned, those were important days. With the

defeat of the Japanese in 1945, the Vietnamese who had been ruled by the Japanese on behalf of Vichy France, wished to be independent. In 1945 Ho Chi Minh had forced the abdication of Bao Dai, the French-Japanese puppet, but the British decided that the British should be responsible for disarming the Japanese south of the 16th parallel and the Chinese for disarming the Japanese in the North. The British Commander in Saigon declared martial law and used Japanese troops to maintain law and order against the Viet-Minh who were in control of the city.

The British released French military forces who had been interned and disarmed by the Japanese, and gave them permission to attack the Viet-Minh. A simultaneous attack was made by Chiang Kai-Shek's forces in the North.

However, these attacks failed and on March 6, 1946, an agreement was reached at Fontainebleau giving the prospect of Vietnamese self-government in five years. In December 1946 the French who had been offering constant provocations attacked several towns and presented the Vietnam Democratic Government with an ultimatum. This was the point at which M. Ramadier took over.

There was no radical change of policy for on February 10 the French relieved Hué and on February 14, with no doubt the approval of the splendid Maurice and under the chairmanship of M. Billoux, French forces attacked Hanoi. They attacked with strong air support and after heavy artillery preparation, attacked in strength against the nationalist forces (Viet-Minh) at Hanoi with the aim of relieving the garrison there (which had been besieged since December 19) and

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# IS AN ELECTION NECESSARY?

AS IF WE hadn't got enough troubles we are given as a ray of hope from time to time the prospect of an impending election which, we are told, will change the administration and solve all our problems. When the member for Aughtermuchtie goes down with the gripes, hope springs eternal and the marginal seat elections have the newspapers sitting on the edge of their seats. Plots are hatched to overthrow the government (quite democratically of course!). The opposition plays 'cops and robbers', the government plays 'cowboys and Indians'. The deletion of a semi-colon in The

Finance Bill calls forth cries of 'resign' while the retention of a comma in the same bill is a vote of confidence in the policy of Her Majesty's Government.

We are not madly keen, to say the least, about the present government but the prospect of an election fills us with alarm and despondency. That bacchanalia of bunkum, that orgy of flatulent oratory, that surge of synthetic pappagee, that plethora of palpably unfulfillable promises, that denunciation of despicable rascals by despicable rascals for despicable rascals which during elections never seems to perish from the earth, the air, or the TV screen fills us with dismay. This expense of effort in a waste of shame is perhaps tempting but is it really necessary?

'The best government' we are assured by anarchist theoreticians 'is that which governs least'. If that is the case, the government of Harold Wilson is the best government we have had, or at least, have got. Their policy of masterly inactivity seems preferable to the manic activity which seems to be the only alternative. That such inactivity is not of their choice is a fact which does not resound to their credit. They point to their small majority, their financial dependence on the Americans, their military dependence on Nato, their moral dependence on the Western way of life, their duties to the left-wing of their party, their duties to the right-wing of their party.

But what we had thought to be a King Stork turns out to be a King Log. Those who had hoped for a government which would give a moral lead to the world (like a dog!), would solve its balance of payment problems, would step up production and would harmonize the interests of Capital to make as much money as possible and of Labour to do the same, are disappointed—well they might be!

Sir Alec, by the way, does not seem overkeen to grasp the reigns of power to give a moral lead to the world, etcetera. He has had some, and it is doubtful that he (if he could get the electorate to distinguish and if they wanted to distinguish between his brand A and Mr. Wilson's brand B), could solve the balance of payment problems etcetera.

All he could do would be to change the image, he would lash us with the whip of disinflation, rather than the scorpions of inflation, and change very little only to remain just the same.

So why an election? 'To change the masters is not to become free.'

J.R.

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# ANARCHY 53

DISCUSSES  
WHAT HAPPENS  
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# Low paid workers fight back

**MUNICIPAL BUS EMPLOYERS** have issued a warning to corporations expressing concern about the payment of wages above the nationally negotiated rate in an attempt to attract labour. The Federation of Municipal Passenger Transport Employers met in London on July 15. They passed a motion deploring bonus scheme or deviations which make the national rates of pay and conditions virtually nonexistent. The difficulty they face is an acute labour shortage in towns like Leeds, Bolton and Nottingham where, if one concedes an increase, it starts things moving in other towns.

Leeds busmen are prepared to fight for a bonus payment and within a short space of time could be

joined by many. For too long have busmen in general, and provincial busmen in particular, have had to be satisfied with peanuts. The times are over when a job as a local busman can be called well paid and secure. Now is the time to make their stand, all transport workers together or, if that is too utopian, at least all busmen together.

## MINISTRY OF LABOUR USE SCAB LABOUR

ASSET, in support of a pay claim, has withdrawn its labour from all establishments throughout the country where International Computers and Tabulators computers are maintained. ASSET claim that one of the four men on strike at the Ministry has since returned. A breakdown in talks called to end the wages dispute for field engineers employed by IC & T has led to an extension of the dispute. Clive Jenkins, general secretary of ASSET, stated that some sections of this management are bitterly anti-trade union. The wage demand is for a 20% pay increase and an end to the two kinds of overtime under which they only get paid for extra hours put in on behalf of customers. The engineers claim they get no pay for overtime worked for the management. IC & T have offered 13½% plus another 4% at the management's discretion. Obviously, the 4% is for the blue-eyed boys and the boot-lickers. No union worth its salt could stand for that chicanery.

## STAY SICK OR PAY

Doctors believe they are entitled to more pay. I don't doubt that they are, a GP's job is a 24-hour effort. But surely the answer to the problem is not to make the patients pay but the parasites on the pharmaceutical side. These monkeys make a bomb out of patent medicines and if you look very closely

many are duplicated. They compete against each other in advertising. This is where the money is to be found for the GPs who do the graft, not out of the pockets of the patients.

## NUMBER PLEASE!

TWO THOUSAND men telephonists on night switchboards in the London area have threatened a strike from Monday, July 19, onwards. They plan a two-hour stoppage from 10 p.m. till midnight for a week. The strike is over the rejection of a claim for a £1 a week rise in the London area. The Postmaster-General has stated that a national three-year agreement was signed by the National Guild of Telephonists last year and the £1 increase was not provided for.

One can truthfully say that a post office telephonist's job (men and women) is a nerve racking affair, where nerves are stretched to breaking point. But as usual, in Government departments, they expect the job to be done for nothing. If the three-year agreement was not tied up with the cost of living, we can rest assured that any increase the telephonists obtained would be well and truly swallowed up by the rising cost of living.

## CLERICAL WORKERS TO DOWN PENS

IT IS INTERESTING and heartening to note that clerical workers have had a gutfall at being at the bottom of the wage scale. The National Association of Clerical and Supervisory Staffs have decided to call a one-day strike over a pay dispute. They are calling for support from other white collar unions with members employed by local authorities. The Association is part of the T & GWU. Their decision follows a rejection by the management side of the Joint Council for an amendment of the present three-year pay agreement to permit an increase in pay.

Long range agreements in this day and age prove to be suicidal. You receive an increase in one week, and the next week it is swallowed up. The escape clause in these agreements which allows workers to come back for a wage increase before the agreement expires is so small that it means a fight all the way.

BILL CHRISTOPHER.

## Contact Column

**Back to the Soil?** Would anyone like a fortnight (August 14-28) on a farm, in return for a few hours help in the house? Anne Albon, The Stable, Glynleigh Farm, Pevensey, Sussex.

**Hitch-hiking.** Clare Albon wants hitch-hiking companion (whom she knows) to go to French camp. Wants to start on July 29 or 30. Contact at The Stable, Glynleigh Farm, Pevensey, Sussex.

**New Zealand Federation of Anarchists.** First Annual Congress, December 26 to January 6. Enquiries Box 5455, Auckland C.I. NZ.

**Canadian Camp.** Libertarian Summer Camp to be held on the week-end of August 20 at Doug Worthington's, Church Road, Sooke BC, Canada. Informal discussion groups, etc. Activities to be decided on by the participants.

**French Camp Travel.** Anyone going to Anarchist Summer Camp, France in August with a spare seat? Share expenses. Frances Edwards, c/o Marlow, Manor Farm, Wood Eaton, Oxon.

**Accommodation Wanted.** Young man, ex-freedom-school pupil would like bedsitter with cooking facilities or full board, or share flat with one or two others, South London area, before end of July. Please phone: STReatham 6085.

**Birmingham Group to Libertarian Camp.** We propose renting a Minibus to the Summer Camp, estimated cost £20 a head (eight people), plus food and personal expenses. Anyone interested reply as soon as possible (also state age, sex, driving licence—clean preferred). Must pay before leaving. May rent two buses. Either middle weeks or last two weeks of August. Peter Neville, 12 South Grove, Erdington, Birmingham 23.

**Vietnam Posters.** 'Who Loses in Vietnam—Always the People'. 4d, each. 30/- per 100. Orders to Freedom Press.

**Help Needed.** To sell anarchist literature outside Bromley library. From 11.30 a.m. every Saturday morning.

**Room Wanted—London.** Shift worker would like room with mod. cons. South, or West Kensington. Box 11.

**Fifteen-Year-Old Comrade** from Paris wants to stay with family (including someone of similar age) for the month of August. Write Box 12.

**Leicester Accommodation.** Unfurnished cheap weather-proof accommodation wanted by mature (?) student, wife and two children. Any proposals (sharing, etc.) considered. Mike Radford, 90 Westfield, Harlow, Essex.

**L.A.G. Two.** Barn/Studio/Basement wanted to house meeting place, library, etc. for LAG II. Suggestions, ideas, details and details of rent required to J. Rety, 10 Gilbert Place, W.C.1.

**London Accommodation.** Couple and son (two years) seek 2/3 unfurnished rooms, North London. Box 8.

If you wish to make contact let us know.

## ... and we will still start at 8 ...

I WROTE TWO weeks ago about the dispute over starting times on the Electricity Board. The Board gave us one time, and the shop stewards another. We and all the other areas involved have been sticking to the times set by our representatives (that is an 8 a.m. start instead of 8.30 a.m.) but since then some changes have occurred.

When I went to the Union branch meeting on Monday, July 12, I found exactly 11 people there. The fact that a branch meeting has only 11 people there when there is a dispute on, shows that something is very, very wrong with the Electrical Trades Union. We were informed there that the Board's representatives had refused to discuss the issue (though a special meeting had been called with this as the only item on the agenda) with our representatives who had walked out. Arguments started as to whether they should have walked out or registered a 'failed to agree', but it was all rather pointless since there were six hundred members in that particular branch and all the shop stewards weren't there, leave alone the men themselves.

On Thursday, 15, however, came the news that there was to be a meeting at 5.30 p.m. The meeting opened and our steward told us he had had instructions from the area official that we should start work at 8.30 a.m. as the Board ordered, pending negotiations. The stand against the Board seems to be collapsing

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throughout the area. Other depots had decided to obey the union (under protest), though at one depot the men were protesting by not paying union dues, as well as starting at 8. We heard also (off the cuff) that any negotiations would end with the same result as last time. So what is the point of changing our minds, awaiting negotiations if we already know that we will not be listened to?

## A CHANGE OF HEART

Three votes were taken at a quite well attended meeting at work on Thursday evening (the correct place for union business). At the first, only five voted to disobey union and management; this five however managed to talk the others round and it was decided that we will still start at eight and finish at five. In Birmingham there are people on strike over this issue. It is really over whether we have our time off when we want it or when they want to give it to us. We want the time off at night when we can use it and not in the morning. Added to that, on our job in particular we would certainly get better results as regards productivity by starting at eight. In fact it's really a struggle over job control. It's also becoming a struggle over who controls the union; the men in it, or the executive. The thing that seemed to get everyone's back up was that we were being told to do things by management and union. As it was pointed out by one who shall be nameless: we pay the executive, we elect them to do our bidding, not to give us orders. It seems that the whole idea of unionism has been turned upside down and needed turning back again. Apparently in the ETU (since the event of the new anti-totalitarian leadership) the executive gives orders to the area official who gives them to the shop steward (whether he likes it or not) who is supposed to give

# FREEDOM For Workers' Control

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## Propagating Anarchism

THERE seems to be a certain amount of reaction against the working class by some comrades and some criticism, some of which has been published, has been directed against the back page of FREEDOM. Most of this criticism seems to come from those who have found themselves a nice little niche, and good luck to them, and have only themselves to support. They may be all right, but they often forget that there are others who have wives and children to support and to whom the 'scramble' for higher wages means a great deal. To some, this may appear undignified, but to the man who has to pay a high rent or has to meet mortgage repayments on his house, a pay rise can make all the difference.

I am afraid that some comrades live in an airy-fairy world where their economic problems are easily solved. It is easy to condemn overtime working, but what about the chap who has been kicking around in a furnished flat for years, waiting for his turn to come up on the council housing list. Is he to be sneered at when he decides to take out a mortgage to get a decent home for his wife and kids? He will probably have to work overtime to pay for it all, but good luck to him for it is worth it.

## A MARXIST HANGOVER

Why is so much propaganda angled at the workers? Let's face it, they grow the food, produce the goods and man the transport system. They form a high proportion of the population and when a section of them refuse to carry on

doing their job, we soon know about it. Perhaps our critics do not come up against authority very often, but the average worker does and on the whole, he does not like it very much. He is not in outright rebellion against this authority as we all know and it is a mistake to think that just because he is a wage earner, he should be a revolutionary. This idea might stem from Marx, but I assure you that the two main contributors to the back page do not suffer from this illusion. In fact those who criticise are generally those who use the workers as a scapegoat for the fact that there are not any revolutions and blame them for this. In so doing, they are not considering the worker as an individual, but as part of a mass. Here again is a Marxist hangover.

## NOT ALWAYS AT WORK

As was reported in FREEDOM the other week, most of the industrial disputes that occurred during last year were not over a question of wages, but were concerned with job control. Now this, it seems to me, is an important point, for it is the control of our own lives which is the aim of each one of us and if workers can gain some advance in this direction, then it is a good thing.

But of course it does not end here. The worker does not spend all his life at work, although one would think so from some 'left' publications. He comes up against the same capitalist motives in the question of housing, getting a place for his kids to play on the estate and as at work, an organisation is built up to defend his interests at home.

As wage earners, workers suffer the indignities and insecurities as much as anyone else, but those who perform the essential jobs that keep our society going are often subjected to further pressures. Their employers are only interested in them insofar as they can get more from them. Every worker knows this, or should do, but the majority do not realise that those who employ him play an inessential part in production.

I feel that any movement that propagates revolution must also prepare for the day following that event, for as this process is taking place, society must still be able to carry on. We still have to eat, we still need fuel, and we still need transportation for these. This is why we should address ourselves to workers. By helpful comments and taking part as individuals involved in their present day struggles, pointing out the full implication of such action, we can assist workers to win their disputes. In this way we can hope to gain their sympathy and change their outlook on life to an anarchistic one.

Workers today may not want the responsibility of the running of their own industries, but it is our job as anarchist propagandists to get people to be responsible, not only at work, but in all spheres of life.

P.T.

## LETTER

## INDUSTRIAL PEACE NEWS?

Dear Editors,  
Pat Arrowsmith, who was appointed to the newly-created role of reporter and feature writer on Peace News on May 5, was dismissed from the post on July 7. The editor told her that her reporting was unsatisfactory and he did not feel she could fit into the editorial team.

Pat felt that she had been unfairly treated, as she had been taken on without being told she was on three months' probation, and she was given scarcely any opportunity to discuss the work she was doing and to try to rectify any faults the editor may have thought were appearing. She was dismissed after two

months.

Pat appealed to the Peace News Board for a re-assessment of her work and a reconsideration of her dismissal. They disposed of the matter in half an hour, endorsing the editor's decision without discussing her work at all. The NUJ tried to get Pat re-instated without success.

Many readers have commented favourably on Pat's work. Many people in the peace movement are very concerned at Pat's treatment from the paper and a committee has been formed to consider what further action might be taken to secure her re-instatement. W.B.