

Freedom

Anarchist Weekly 60

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MANIFESTO TO INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTIONARIES

WE RECEIVED a manifesto from the First of May Group (extracts appear in this issue). We do not know the authors of the manifesto. The letter came by post, and without signature.

At the time of the machine gunning of the US Embassy, the police raided many organisations including Black Power groups and pacifist or non-violent groups like the Committee of 100.

The machine gunners sent letters to the press 'claiming the action'. The police put out a statement doubting the validity of the First of May Group's claim. The general impression was that the machine gunners were Latin American (Castroite) Communists.

The manifesto now acknowledges a debt to the 'strategic policy traced by the FIJL'. This is an open anarchist revolutionary group, well known to us. We have recently printed an appeal for a FIJL member living in France (harassed by the French police) which contained a denial of such a connection.

Nevertheless, there are some libertarian phrases in the manifesto. It will probably come as a shock to many to whom anarchism and pacifism is practically synonymous that many libertarians still advocate the Armed Struggle.

Now we read in the *Daily Telegraph* (13.11.67):

'Two bombs exploded early today at the Greek and Bolivian Embassies in Bonn, smashing windows but injuring nobody. Police said both attacks were believed to be the work of pro-Communist foreigners.'

'After the explosion at the Greek Embassy, a note was found signed by an unknown "Revolutionary Solidarity Movement—May 1 Group". It demanded that West Germany end support of Fascist dictators in Greece, Spain and Portugal and of the Vietnam war.'

'The Bolivian Embassy asked for police protection. An Embassy spokesman said the attack appeared to be connected with the death of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, who was killed leading Bolivian guerrillas last month.'

Once more the authorities are trying to create the impression that the 'unknown' people are 'pro-Communist' foreigners.

Secret groups cannot fail to sow confusion. We are printing a summary of their document so that the large open anarchist movement should be informed of the activities of their more militant comrades.

SUMMARY OF THE MANIFESTO

THE CONTROVERSIAL 'First of May Group', in its new 'Manifesto to International Revolutionaries', makes a plea for 'an approach to the struggle against dictatorship by means of revolutionary violence'.

Pointing out the failure of both private and state capitalism to provide genuine freedom, the manifesto denounces attempts to fight 'oppression and Imperialist aggression' by 'legal and pacific means'. The experience of Third World guerrilla forces and US negroes shows that armed struggle is the surest way to the Social Revolution. Sectarianism among the revolutionary movement is blamed for the present apathy of the masses, by presenting them with contradictory dogmas.

The manifesto maintains that the 'Revolution is not the heritage of any particular Party', but of all oppressed

people who fight against, and refuse to compromise with, Imperialism. It therefore calls for a common front of revolutionaries against 'Imperialist aggression and capitalist exploitation in all its classic and modern forms'.

1. We believe the issue of violence or non-violence is up to the individual.
2. The proposal of the 'Common Front' to us is fraught with danger therefore we could not support such a proposal.

EDITORS.



WE GO TO PRESS ON MONDAY. LATEST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF MSS., LETTERS, MEETING NOTICES IS THE MONDAY IN EACH WEEK OF PUBLICATION.

The Wage Freeze Cometh

ALTHOUGH GUY FAWKES' day is November 5, fireworks are still being exploded. Speculators have made a comfortable profit and if the American dollar is devalued they will make a fortune. The national press have not had so much 'copy' for years, and after ploughing through a fair percentage of them, the conclusion one comes to is that they are all agreed on two points—to gain full advantage from devaluation there must be a wage freeze and at least 2 per cent unemployment.

The economic experts are busily informing the Government that it must get tough on the wages front and at least implement the part of the Incomes Bill which delays wage increases for seven months. They also recognise the fact that the cost of living must rise. To be fair, the present situation creates an ideal climate for 'climbing on the bandwagon'. Such actions are in line with Government policy—they want to restrict spending.

Sorting through all the economic jargon of the economists, the City Editors and the Financial Editors, one comes to another conclusion: Joe Soap is going to get his usual 'end of the stick'. Did he expect anything else? If he did, he was a

fool. The battle on the industrial front is going to be twice as tough, to hold even what we have, let alone make any advances. The TUC, when it met Peter Shore, Secretary for Economic Affairs, must have had its fingers crossed when it agreed to support the Government. Shore also meets the Confederation of British Industry who will tell him in no uncertain terms to legislate to prevent wage increases. Wage drift will be halted by consolidating a pool of unemployment. Wilson can scream all he likes about unemployment not being Labour's policy, but along the path he has chosen to tread it is not only inevitable but essential.

The Tories smell blood, preferably Wilson's, but he has forgotten more about political infighting than they will ever remember. They pontificate about honesty to our foreign friends—what a lot of boloney; since when has party politics been honest, be it foreign or British. The headline of Ronald Butts, *Sunday Times* (26.11.67), summed up the situation correctly: 'Parliament Devalued'. It does have a value, it generates enough hot air which could be used for industrial purposes.

The shadow boxing will continue

in both Houses of Parliament. The Tories shout at Labour, the Liberals shout at both (saucy bastards), but all in all they are all good friends. They 'pair', they drink together, it's all good clean fun. The Communist Party is mad keen to join them but only with the left Labour MPs because they are different—they scream their protests a bit louder before dashing into the voting lobby to support the Government.

This last week has shown what the politicians, the bankers and the speculators can do for us and they can do it very effectively—'cut our throats'. As they become more powerful and richer, Joe Soaps all over the world drop deeper into the mud. Whilst we are not starving, somebody else is, we drift from one financial crisis to another, war or hunger all stem basically from the same root; the capitalist system of society, with state capitalism using similar tactics 'to keep up with the Jones's'.

We know what we have to do, destroy the system; but having said that, we still have to live tomorrow and the next day, and to do that we will have to fight but certainly harder than we have in the past. All this 'don't rock the boat' business, and 'give them a chance' jazz is played out. Whilst we are struggling in industry for our demands do not let us forget the people who cannot struggle or who find it difficult, the OAPs and nurses. Industrial action goes wider than a half-penny an hour extra, it can be effective enough to dump the whole rotten system. BILL CHRISTOPHER

On the Road in Italy

THE GREAT MAFIA TRIAL at Catanzaro, which began a fortnight ago, is going to last most of the winter and has at any rate begun as a real drag. All the crimes were committed in the winter and spring of 1962-63 and the more spectacular ones are described in Norman Lewis's book *The Honoured Society*. The old history is being raked over again, and the defendants (their immaculate dress and elegant manners described in detail by the newspapers) are defending in classic Mafia style by saying that they know nothing. The reason the State is staging this mammoth trial (being held in a school gymnasium because there is no court-room of sufficient size) is not to stamp out oppression of the poor; of the murders (over 100) committed by these people, most were of members of rival Mafia families or of Mafiosi who failed to obey orders, a few were of passers-by, but several were of policemen.

Recently two 'Mafiosi' monks lost their appeal for a reduction of their sentence (a third, aged over 80, had died in prison). Their activities are described in Lewis's book.

At the end of October six members of the Palermo cemetery Mafia were arrested. These individuals had in effect been levying an 8% 'tax' on plots of earth bought in the Cimitero di Sant'Orsola in Palermo. (In Italy, you have to pay for a 'permanent' plot in a cemetery—in Milan, 500,000 lire (£290) per square metre; maybe a little less in Palermo—otherwise you have someone else buried on top of you after 10 years.)

EDITOR SENT TO PRISON
On October 28 the editor of a Communist weekly magazine was condemned to 5 months and 10 days in prison for having published a letter from a priest which defended the principle of conscientious objection. (The priest died in June, before he could be sentenced.) The accusation was of 'having condoned a crime'. Conscientious objection here is a criminal offence.

VIETNAM MARCH
Last Saturday, November 4, I took part in the first stage of a march for peace in Vietnam, which is due to reach Rome, where it will meet up with a

simultaneous march from Southern Italy, on November 29. The first stage in the north was from Milan to Pavia (35 km.). About 2,000 people perhaps—not bad for a Saturday when most people have to work—and more than that both at the start and for the last few kilometres in the rain into Pavia. Most people were Communists (only *l'Unita*, the PCI daily, had publicised the march, and there hadn't been many posters in Milan), either party faithfuls or pro-Mao.

No beatniks although there are plenty in Milan; earnest people with short hair, workers and students; a lot of girls. Many red Che Guevara scarves. Favourite slogans: 'Che, Che, Guevara!', 'Ho-o-o-o-Chi-Minh!', 'Johnson Boia!' (Boia = Hangman). These shouts reached a peak soon after the start, dropped off as people's feet began to get sore, and then were used to interrupt boring speeches at the meeting in the civic theatre in Pavia in the evening. Songs: partisan songs from the war, such as 'Bella Ciao', and occasionally 'We Shall

Overcome' and 'Yellow Submarine'. No official Communist banners. Most placards were exclusively anti-American (except those which said 'We are with the other America'); e.g. 'From the Same Country—Coca-Cola and Napalm'. These are approved by practically everybody—even the Demo-Christian *Corriere della Sera* has anti-USA articles about Vietnam—since all classes in Italy (and France and Spain) hate, fear or envy the US quite apart from the Vietnam war.

The best part of the march was the welcome we had in the small towns on the road, whose Communist mayors welcomed us a little pompously and the town co-operatives distributed free soup, sandwiches and wine to everyone. When we reached Pavia, where the city council is run by a coalition of Christian-Democrats and Socialists, we filled the splendid baroque theatre and either interrupted or applauded speeches from (among others) the mayor, a professor, Danilo Dolci (who is marching all the way), a Vietnamese woman, and a girl representing a Catholic youth movement who spoke of the Peoples' Democracies and had the raving Che Guevara scarf-wearers shouting with delight.

This is the first march of this type in Italy so let's hope it gets some good support along the road. TIM OXTON.

YCND Conference '67

AFTER LAST YEAR'S YCND Conference, I wrote an obituary of that particular movement. This year, the spirits arose to haunt us with what turned out to be a transition into the realms of pure fantasy.

YCND is now committed to a campaign of non-violent sabotage, disaffecting US Servicemen, providing shelter for deserters, 'facilitating their escape to a safer country', and putting 'moral law before state law'.

These notions will, of course, be ignored by the new General Council and by the mass of campaigners who, by their absence from the conference (turn-out was the smallest for many years), put on record their apathy and their total lack of ability to direct the council, who thus cannot really be blamed for going their own sweet way.

Other perennial favourites, on peace action projects and work camps, were

also passed again, and will be duly ignored once more as they have been in the past, by both General Council and campaigners alike.

YCND is also to co-operate with the Young Liberals, a dynamic advance in policy which is bound to have world-shattering implications for the future of peace-making.

The Easter nose bounce (the annual four-day exercise in masacho-exhibitionism) was again supported by conference. Amidst all this, useful motions passed against the 'workers' bomb', against all weapons of mass destruction, and for non-alignment on Vietnam, seemed only to emphasise the whole ludicrous farce. Perhaps congratulations are in order to Nigel Wilson on his election to NYCND General Council.

Annual conferences in the peace movement are now a totally irrelevant, nostalgic piece of verbal masturbation, straight from the realms of fantasy. This was the over-riding impression of the NYCND Conference 1967.

PADDY FIELDS.

'Give Flowers to the Rebels Failed'

IN HISTORICAL RETROSPECT, the classical syndicalist movement of the early decades of this century must be judged the great heroic movement of the proletariat. It was in and through this movement that proletarian socialism reached its apogee. Using and developing the organizations that the workers had built up to defend themselves against capitalist exploitation, the syndicalists sought the final emancipation of labour and the complete reconstruction of society in the proletarian image. Of all socialist movements, it was the only one that took seriously the injunction of the First International: 'the emancipation of the working classes must be won by the working classes themselves'. In their strategy and tactics and, above all, in their vision of the future society, the syndicalists owed nothing to bourgeois theorists: the new world was to be made by proletarians for proletarians and using proletarian means. The defeat of classical syndicalism provides the essential clue to the understanding of subsequent developments; whatever else it may be and by whatever name it may be called, post-syndicalist socialism is not proletarian socialism. The eclipse of syndicalism represents the shattering of the proletarian dream.

The story of the Wobblies is, of course, the story of syndicalism in the USA. In the book under review* the story is retold by an independent observer who combines scholarship with readability and academic detachment with sympathy and insight. Here, for the general reader and a new generation of socialists, are the essential facts for an understanding and appreciation of the most crucial phase in the history of the American labour and socialist movement.

The 'founding fathers' of the Industrial Workers of the World—Big Bill Haywood, Vincent St. John, Daniel DeLeon, Father Hagerty and others—who launched the new organization in Chicago in June 1905 were a diverse group of dissident socialists and militant unionists. Inspired by the French syndicalists, they believed that working class power would be won by direct action culminating in a general strike, when the workers would seize their industries, lock out the employers, and establish the industrial republic. Their strategy of revolution, however, differed from that of the French syndicalists in two important respects: they insisted that the unions should be organized on an industrial and not on a craft basis; and they favoured the policy of dual unionism, i.e. the building of a militant union organization outside the existing union structure—in the USA, the American Federation of Labor.

These differences reflected the different situation in the USA compared with France. The decades immediately before 1905 had witnessed a spectacular development of American industrial capitalism. This was the classic era of the 'Great Robber Barons' and of the creation of enormously powerful capitalist trusts. Only if the workers organized themselves in One Big Union, subdivided on industrial lines, could they hope to match, argued the Wobblies, the new power of the bosses. The other idea, that of dual unionism, was a response to the realities of the situation in the American labour movement. The AF of L, dominated by Samuel Gompers with his policy of 'business unionism', offered no prospect of success for militants attempting 'to bore from within' on the lines pursued by Pelloutier and others in the French trade union movement.

In any case—or so it must have seemed in 1905—the future lay with an organization open to all workers and not with one confined, as the AF of L then was, to a mere 5% of the working class—a labour aristocracy of skilled craftsmen who could afford its high dues. The IWW consequently directed its appeal to, and achieved its greatest response from, the semi-skilled and unskilled workers—the Western miners, the Eastern textile workers, lumberjacks, construction workers, and migratory agricultural labourers. Many of these, as Renshaw points out, were first generation Americans—men and women carried to America on the second great wave of emigration from Europe and consisting for the greater part of workers from South and East Europe. They occupied a position in the American social structure below that of the earlier, largely Anglo-Saxon and Irish migrants. Negroes apart, they constituted the weakest, the poorest and the most oppressed sections of labour. In the IWW they found their first and most effective champion.

'The Wobblies'

The characteristics of its membership go a long way to explain both the strength and weakness of the IWW in its heyday. The Wobblies were mainly those who had not yet been 'integrated' in American society. Their origins, their modes of life, and the kinds of employment open to them made them peculiarly responsive to the Wobbly vision. The toughness and violence of their lives, together with the strong sense of mutual aid, camaraderie, and good humour characteristic of groups on the frontiers of society, are all reflected in the organization's early years. The resulting amalgam was distinctive; and the Wobbly ethos, captured in its many songs, retains its strong appeal down to this day. At the same time, such a 'clientele' proved extremely difficult to organize on any long-term basis. Perhaps as many as one million workers held IWW cards at some time in their lives; but the turnover of membership was high and only on rare occasions did the actual membership exceed 100,000. The experience at Lawrence illustrates this particular difficulty. In 1912, at



Elizabeth Gurley Flynn:
IWW 'Rebel Girl'
author of 'Sabotage'

the height of its influence, the IWW organized a strike of the textile workers in this Massachusetts town. Workers of 25 different nationalities—symbolic of America's 'melting pot'—were led to a brilliant victory in a nine-week strike which seemed to be the model of the social revolution in miniature. Threatened wage cuts were turned into wage increases for 30,000 workers. From a total of 200 in 1911, membership of the local IWW rocketed to 14,000 in 1912. But two years later the ranks of the revolutionaries had dwindled to a mere 400.

Given all the circumstances the surprising thing is not that the IWW failed but that it achieved so much in so short a time. High on the list of its successes must be placed its free speech fights of 1909-12. The Wobbly organizers found one of their best sources of recruitment in the 'slave market' sections of the Western big cities where the migratory workers gathered between jobs and were fleeced by employment offices and various labour sharks. The organizers' success soon frightened the businessmen into persuading the city authorities to pass ordinances banning IWW speakers from the streets. 'In answer to this challenge,' writes Renshaw, 'IWW organizers summoned footloose Wobblies from all over the country. Jumping rides on freight trains, riding the rails in boxcars, they would throng to the chosen town, asserting their right to freedom of speech, and assemble on improvised soapbox platforms at street corners everywhere. They would be quickly arrested. Before long the jails would be dangerously full of high-spirited men and women. Crowded prisons, congested legal time-tables, and the high cost of paying extra police and feeding extra prisoners often drove desperate officials to scrap the anti-IWW ordinances. Then the whole process would start all over again.'

The technique of the free speech fights represented a significant contribution to the syndicalist armoury and showed the power that could be wielded by demonstrations and passive resistance—a power that has been shown again in our own day in the 'freedom rides' and 'sit-ins'. But the successes were bought at a price. The important long-term work of building up strong local unions was neglected. The Wobblies became identified in the public mind as a band of professional agitators, little more than a rabble, rather than what the vast majority of them were, 'decent working men, more perceptive and spirited than most, who revolted against intolerable working and living conditions; migrants unable to find permanent jobs using the only weapons they had at hand to assert the dignity of their labour'.

Savage Reprisals

The false public image of the Wobblies was sedulously fostered by the ruling class and laid the organization open to savage and bloody reprisals. The IWW did contain a few criminal members who joined the union, as Renshaw puts it, 'because it was the best way to separate the bindle-stiff from his bank roll'; and on occasions violence was used against scabs and blacklegs. But the IWW was in no sense committed to violence as a philosophy of life and none of its members was ever found guilty of planting dynamite or endangering life or property by acts of sabotage. The violence that was inseparably linked with the history of the early IWW was above all the violence of the ruling class in deadly fear of losing its power and privileges. The sorry story of the lynchings, the beatings-up, and the calculated frame-up trials of the Wobblies provides a clear vindication of the class theory of the state. When institutionalized violence would not suffice to scotch the revolutionaries, the authorities connived at the mob violence of bands of super-patriotic vigilantes. The spirit that animated most of the ruling class was well expressed by that 'robber baron', Cornelius Vanderbilt: 'Law! What do I care about law? Haint I got the power?'

The wave of chauvinism that swept across the United States after she entered the war in 1917 provided the ruling class with an opportunity to deal its most savage blow at the Wobblies. In place of the earlier derisory tag that IWW stood for 'I Won't Work', the Wobblies were hailed as 'Imperial Wilhelm's Warriors'. The IWW had not in fact taken a clear stand against the war but this did not suffice to save it. In September 1917 the organization was raided by federal agents and 165 of its leaders indicted on charges of conspiracy against the state. The subsequent trial proved to be a monumental disaster for the organization which at one fell swoop found itself with most of its prominent leaders either in jail or—like Haywood—fled to the Soviet Union.

Direct or Political Action

Judicial persecution, however, was not the only cause of the IWW's decline. Factional struggles within the organization also played their part and became increasingly important. The first of such struggles centred round the question of political action and the personality of DeLeon. While by 1905 DeLeon had become converted to the strategy of direct action, he and his followers were not prepared to abandon political action altogether. DeLeon, it soon became clear, had accepted the compromise formula of the first convention—that the IWW should agitate on the political as well as the industrial field but should not affiliate with any political party—only because of the waning influence of his own Socialist Labor Party compared with the growing influence of the Socialist Party of America. The issue was resolved at the 1908 convention when the anarchist and syndicalist view emerged victorious. The original compromise formula was expunged; the IWW henceforth became a basically anti-political organization; and 'the Pope'—as DeLeon was called—went off to form his own (largely ineffective) IWW at Detroit.

If the political issue may be seen as a division between anarchists and syndicalists, on the one hand, and left-wing Marxists, on the other, the second issue, which was not so easily resolved, found the anarchists ranged against the syndicalists. Here the question was one of centralization and the nature of the organization's leadership. Broadly, the anarchists favoured decentralization, the maximum of local autonomy, and what was called 'collective leadership'. Their attitude was well expressed by a group of Western Wobblies when asked, 'Who is your leader?' The response was imme-



Joe Hill's Funeral Procession

diately and unmistakable, 'We are all leaders.' The syndicalists, in contrast, favoured centralization, emphasized working class solidarity rather than local autonomy, and wanted greater control by the union's General Executive Board. The syndicalists feared that the union was dissipating its energies in free speech fights and propaganda battles when what was needed was the building of a strong industrial union capable of grappling with the complex problems of organizing the unorganized, the foreign-born, the unskilled and the semi-skilled. To a large extent, Renshaw suggests, the two factions represented two different sets of interests within the Wobbly fold: the footloose, migratory workers of the lumber camps, mines and wheatfields of the South and West; and the immigrant workers in the great East Coast industries. Anarchistic principles of spontaneous organization worked well among the migratory workers but seemed ill-fitted for industrial towns like Lawrence and Paterson where the mass of partly assimilated immigrant workers needed firm direction to unite for industrial action on a permanent basis.

Centralizers Win

By 1914 the centralizers had gained the preponderant influence and attempts were made to consolidate the organization. In the next few years the fundamental dilemma of syndicalism began to manifest itself. As the organization became more secure, it became more like an ordinary union, accepting all the responsibilities and compromises that a permanent mass membership imposes. It began to enter into the kinds of bargain and agreement with employers that it had scorned at the outset when its object had been, not to bargain with the bosses but to impose union law on them. (How the latter procedure operated in the early days among the miners of Goldfield, Nevada, was described by Vincent St. John: 'The minimum wage for all kinds of labour was \$4.50 a day and the eight hour day was universal. . . . No committee was ever sent to any employers. The unions adopted the wage scales and regulated hours. The secretary posted the same on a bulletin board outside the union hall, and it was the LAW. The employers were forced to come and see the union committees.') Had the war not intervened, it seems probable that the IWW would have carved out a place for itself in the industries ignored by the AF of L and which remained unorganized until the CIO was formed in the 1930s. If this had happened, it would have made itself the permanent spokesman of the semi-skilled and unskilled workers—but at the price of diluting its revolutionary objectives.

In the event, as we have noted, the war provided the ruling class with the opportunity to hound and persecute the organization. The Great Trial of 1918 had the effect of removing the most prominent centralizers from office and the imprisoned leaders tended to be replaced by decentralizing anarcho-syndicalists. But by this time a new factional issue had arisen: the question of the IWW's attitude to the Bolshevik Revolution and relations with the Communists. The GEB, after initially expressing sympathy for the Third International, rejected the idea of affiliating with the Red Trade Union International. Nevertheless, in the period 1920-24, Communist influence increased among the membership and eventually led to a split, with many of the best organizers quitting to join the Communist Party. The decentralizers remained firmly in control but of an organization which had become a mere shadow of its former self. By 1928 membership had dropped below the

10,000 mark and when a new general secretary took over at headquarters in 1932 he found that the union had exactly \$29 in the kitty. The IWW, of course, still survives but as no more than one of 'the socialist sects'.

'Give flowers to the rebels failed.' This first line of an Italian anarchist poem translated by Vanzetti before he was judicially murdered in 1927 seems a fitting epitaph for the Wobblies. In its effective life of less than 20 years the IWW had made a notable contribution to labour history quite out of proportion to the size of its membership. It sowed the first seeds of industrial unionism in the USA and the crop was harvested later by the CIO. It fought a valiant battle for civil liberties, setting an example for radicals today. In Frank Little, Wesley Everest and Joe Hill it provided three of history's most famous martyrs in the cause of labour emancipation. It demonstrated in its own day the appalling viciousness of the capitalist ruling class. And in its songs, particularly those of Joe Hill and Ralph Chaplin, it gave poetic voice to Labour's yearning for final emancipation.

Rebels failed? Yes, indeed; and we still need to ponder and reflect on that failure. Now that the working classes of the advanced industrial countries have been almost completely integrated in the developing system of corporate capitalism, both private and public, the prospects of reviving the myth of the proletariat as the vehicle of the liberating revolution are dim. New instruments and new myths, perhaps even a completely new strategy of revolution, must be found. The ultimate vision, however, remains as unsullied as ever. This vision the Wobblies possessed with a blinding clarity rarely surpassed. In the last analysis, it is their firm grasp of this vision which has made the Wobblies immortal. It is the vision expressed in the verse of one of Ralph Chaplin's sweet and simple songs:

For we have a glowing dream
Of how fair the world will seem
When each man can live life
Secure and free.

G.N.O.

*The Wobblies by Patrick Renshaw.
(Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1967, 45s.)

Social Evening

in aid of

Anarchist Black X

Monday, December 11, 7.30 p.m.

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Docks Fiasco

THE ROYAL GROUP of dockers finally voted on Monday to end their unofficial strike after eight weeks. Jack Dash said it had been the most bitter and dirty strike since 1945 and every effort had been made to discredit those on strike and personalities had been abused in attempts to break the solidarity of the dockers.

The press and television took a

Contact Column

This column exists for mutual aid. Donations towards cost of typesetting will be welcome.

Greek Embassy, Prisoners Picket, Sunday, December 3. Meet Greek Embassy, 49 Upper Brook Street, 12 noon. March to new Home Secretary Picket and Meeting till 2 p.m.

Student Anarchism. New fiery magazine starting beginning of next year. Enquiries from students, as well as articles, welcome. R. Bebb, LSE Anarchist Group, Students Union, Houghton Street, W.C.2.

Prisoners For Peace Day. This year's list of Conscientious Objectors in the world's prisons is available from WRI, 88 Park Avenue, Enfield. A greeting card from you or the group will be appreciated.

STOP IT Committee (The War not the Paper), 8 Rosslyn Hill, London, N.W.3, offers legal aid to draft-age Americans. Send for 'We Won't Go' petitions.

T.N.T. Manchester's first anarchist magazine out. Single copies 1s, post free; multiple copies 9d, each, plus postage from 9 Boland Street, Manchester, 14.

Removal Van (or other suitable vehicle) wanted for long haul. Can you hire or lend us one for three days in the middle of January? Phone Brian McGee, ARChway 7200.

Techniques of Peace Action (A Teach-in) on Saturday, December 2, 1967, from 2.30 till 10 p.m., at Dr. Johnson House (Central Friends Meeting House), Bull Street, Birmingham City Centre (next to Lewis's).

Camden Libertarians, anxious to preserve the Camden Campaign for Human Rights Year from bureaucracy, wet liberalism and the other ills such as flesh is heir to, should contact David Rose, Secretary, Camden CHRY, 44 Fitzroy Road, NW1—JUN 0711, Ext. 12 (between 2.30 and 4.30 p.m.).

Part-Time Work Wanted. Anything considered. Write G. Gladstone, c/o Freedom Press.

National Committee of 100. Quarterly Meeting, Saturday and Sunday, December 9 and 10, Birmingham, The Old Crown, High Street (near Bull Ring). Saturday 2.30 p.m. Evening Party. Sunday 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

Woman with Four Children needs accommodation in cottage/flat/caravan, ANYWHERE where a little toleration is shown towards children. Box

Anarchist Black Cross. To send money and food to anarchists in prison. Secretary: Stuart Christie (c/o Freedom Press).

International Anarchist Camp 1969. Proposed to hold it in S.E. England—offers of assistance, suggestions for suitable sites to Jim Huggon, 173 Kingshill Avenue, Northolt, Middlesex.

'Save Greece Now' Defence Fund. Donations for Terry, Mike and Del) to Brett Carthey, 8 Vincent Square Mansions, Walcott Street, London, S.W.1.

Books Hand-bound and Engraved to Order. De-luxe Leather Bindings—Mosaics—Full-leather Parchment—Half-leather Bindings. All books hand-sewn and repaired. Designs for Parchments, Mosaics, are original. For further information contact Mr. J. B. Wagner, c/o American Consulate, Calle Serrano 75, Madrid 6, Spain.

If you wish to make contact let us know.

large part in this. The press in a cheap and callous story tried to blame a suicide on the strike. The Frost Programme urged dockers' wives to go to a meeting and shout Mr. Dash down—one (Mrs. Rose Cooper) went and slapped his face and received wide publicity and approval in the press.

But also to blame were the rest of the country's dockers who refused to support them and so made them particularly vulnerable. The philosophy of 'Divide and Rule' worked well for the employers.

The Sun commented, on November 16, on the unofficial strike in the Royal Group of Docks. It said: 'The London Dock strike is now in its seventh week. This is the sort of company report—based on hard facts and compiled by Sun reporter Michael Rhind—which one of the shipping firms affected by the strike could well prepare for its shareholders.'

The report starts by saying one of its ships is being discharged at Rotterdam because 'she arrived on October 28 at the Albert Dock, Tilbury, where her passengers left her. Because of the strike it was not possible to discharge her cargo of 7,431 tons of frozen meat.' Mr. Rhind's hard facts seem to ignore that the Albert Dock is not at Tilbury and Tilbury was not on strike on October 28.

But the gutter press sank to its lowest ever when it tried to use the suicide of docker Edward Murphy to stir up animosity against the unofficial strikers. They tried to make out he wanted to return to work but was afraid of being branded a blackleg.

In reality Mr. Murphy was a militant himself who spoke to the men at Surrey Docks urging them to join the strike. Also because of a holiday he had only been on strike for nine days when he killed himself in a public lavatory. He owed £40 rent and was threatened with eviction, with his wife and four children.

If anything it is more likely that the landlord and the employers, who refused to even negotiate for what he considered to be a fair agreement, prompted the suicide. But the press twisted everything and used this horrible tragedy for their own dirty little ends.

But perhaps even more tragic is how well this grubby little trick worked. When an unofficial mass meeting was called in Tilbury with the aim of calling a one-day token strike in support of the striking dockers, a London striker—Danny Lyons—was asked to speak.

Several of the Tilbury men said they wanted Tilbury speakers not London ones (as if it mattered where they came from). One shouted, 'You won't find me hanging in a public bog.' This came from a docker who has said in the past that employers prefer men to machines because when a machine breaks down it has to be repaired, but when a man breaks down he can be sacked at no cost at all.

Realising this, why did he not show a little solidarity in an effort to overcome it? The men of Liverpool stuck close together and ignored all threats that nothing would be considered until they returned to work. This way 75 per cent of their claims were eventually met BEFORE they returned to work.

But in London the dockers' famous solidarity is largely a myth—except in the Royal Group. Tilbury dockers are so parochial that they refused to listen to Jack Dash recently just because he is a Londoner. As Terry Barrett said, the

employers don't squabble about who comes from where when they meet. Their policy is 'to divide and rule'. Unfortunately they seem to be pretty successful at it.

The Royals could not stay out any longer on their own. They numbered only about four or five thousand out of the country's 65,000 dockers—so ships were easily diverted to docks that were not affected by the strike.

Yet the men proudly stuck to their guns. On November 23 they voted to continue the strike—despite a childish stunt from David Frost on television who urged the men's wives to go and shout Jack Dash down (one slapped his face). That they were still willing to carry on makes nonsense of the popular argument that the dockers either follow like sheep or are intimidated to strike. (Exponents of this theory soon forget it when they vote to return to work.)

On November 19 the Union called a mass meeting at West Ham Stadium to try and persuade the men to return. When they called for a vote a docker broke through the cordon and asked if a vote to stay out would make the strike official as it was an official meeting.

The democratic union officials rejected this and so the men did not bother to vote as it made no difference which way they voted.

Briefly, the men in the Royals were striking over the Continuity Rule which affects them more than other sectors. This ensured a docker stuck to a job to the end—working the good and bad cargoes.

This protected both employers and men. The men because it meant all got at least a small share of the good jobs, and the employers because it meant they could force the men to do the hard messy jobs for little reward. Under the new scheme which started in September it has been changed to protect only the employers—and a man can, under certain conditions, now be moved from a good job to a bad one if he is out of favour.

The employers have refused to negotiate or give the old Continuity Rule a try under the new system for an experimental period. So all editorials condemning stubbornness for 'wrecking the nation's trading life-line' equally apply to the employers.

Objections to the revisions of the Continuity Rule were voiced over a year ago when Jack Dash complained the men would be treated like ping-pong balls being hit backwards and forwards across a table-tennis table' (April 18, 1966, at Tilbury).

On May Day, 1966, 900 dockers marched on Downing Street to complain that agreements were being signed by the Union on their behalf without consulting the men. So Mr. Gunter, the press, the employers or the nation cannot claim they were not warned.

On Monday the men voted to return to work on Tuesday. But unless the Union and employers have negotiated on the Continuity Rule by the end of the year another mass meeting will be held on January 1.

Without the support of their fellow dockers the strike of the Royal dockers was doomed to failure. And now they have returned to work it is not only their position that is undermined—but the position of those who refused to support them as well.

To again quote Jack Dash at Tilbury in April 1966: 'Once they get you in their power they will wring you out like a wet flannel.

Freedom For Workers' Control

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TO EARLY FOR TALKING

IN TERMS OF progress in the Roberts-Arundel dispute one is forced to report the now 'unfamiliar' cryptic remark 'No Change'. That is, Pomeranz is still holding out.

Ray Gunter met Martin Dukes (Employers Federation) and Hugh Scanlon (president of the AEU) on November 23, in the hope of making progress. David Bruce, the American Ambassador, has also agreed to examine the dispute. In view of the length of the dispute to date it is obvious that it is **too early for talks**, the Arundel management have shown that they really do want to play it the hard way, and everyone knows that there is only one answer to that game.

On Thursday, November 23, Ray Gunter announced that he was asking Pomeranz, the American chairman of the company, to meet him again to discuss the dispute. September 14 was the last time Pomeranz intervened in person and with the help of the MRA and the Salvation Army it was thought progress had been made, but as usual God was on their side. The Lancashire and Cheshire Federation of Trades Councils restrained from an intended December strike call because of that situation.

It is more than interesting to note that the Engineering Employers are really worried about the situation. Roberts-Arundel left the Employers Federation before the dispute started. The Engineering Employers have had no compunction in denouncing the attitude of the Arundel management. I would hazard a guess that, as far as they are concerned, the sooner Pomeranz 'goes to the wall' the better, if the dispute cannot be settled VERY soon. In fact they have offered to employ some of the strikers until Roberts-Arundel will employ them.

Manchester Airport freight agencies have already promised to take any necessary action AGAINST Roberts-Arundel. Their airport director, George Harvey, has advised his employers NOT to handle goods from the American-owned factory. The 270 porters employed by the freight agencies threatened to stop handling all cargo when it was discovered that Roberts-Arundel goods were being brought in under a different name. The airport director is reported to have remarked, 'We have so much other work to do we cannot afford to become involved in a dispute elsewhere.'

Pomeranz will have to be kicked into action, therefore before the 18th century employer arrives it will be necessary to spread the dispute. If the Minister of Labour does not intervene to force the Roberts-Arundel management to accept a settlement, the Lancashire and Cheshire Federation of Trades Councils will issue a strike call to all trade unionists in the North-West.

The lads who are out 'on the stones' in Stockport and their supporters on the picket line are having a tough and rough time. The police are carrying out their usual role in protecting the 'scabs'. On November 22, 30 policemen

They're going to give you a bottle of castor oil. Not all in one dose; spoonful by spoonful. But I'll guarantee you'll get the whole bottle in the end.'

The dockers' parochialism and separate agreements, that mean some get £16 and others £40, has already divided them. Now they will be ruled.

stood shoulder to shoulder to protect the main gates. John Tucker, district AEU secretary, has protested to the Chief Constable of Stockport about alleged police action against the pickets. The police may be very good at helping old ladies and children across the road but they are also good at other things as well.

The Roberts-Arundel dispute has to be won and the Lancashire and Cheshire Federation of Trades Councils have the correct and only policy, therefore it is up to all workers to support the strike call, after which talking may be of use.

BILL CHRISTOPHER.

TEACHERS SUSPENDED

IN THE Easington and Wingate district of Co. Durham 450 teachers were suspended, last Monday, without pay, and 14,000 schoolchildren sent home, when the teachers refused to undertake supervision of school meals, as part of a campaign to improve the pay, status and conditions of work of the teaching 'profession'.

The National Executive of NUT have promised that this will mean the extension of sanctions on school meals throughout the country next month, and many other LEAs have threatened more suspensions and closing of schools if this occurs.

It is a breach of contract **not** to supervise school meals, although it is **not** in breach of contract to refuse to mark dinner registers, collect money or do anything else in connection with the school meals service. Both kinds of action have been recommended by NUT National Executive and ought to come into force.

Teachers everywhere must refuse to be intimidated; they must resist, with solidarity, the madness of LEAs who are too blinded by their own pettifogging bureaucratic stupidity to see the justice of the teachers' case. Teachers, many of whom, including myself, work a full 40-hour week and more at school AND home for a fully-qualified take-home pay of only £12 10s. a week. What is the Libertarian Teachers' Association going to do about this?

JIM HUGGON.



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