

Direct Action

For Workers' Direct Control of Industry

Inside—Cornish china-clay dispute : Irish tinkers take direct action : The coup d'etat in Brazil

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION

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Fourpence

SCABS INCORPORATED

MARTELL & CO. were all ready to step in if the Post Office dispute was on. They claim that within a few days 300 receiving centres would have been opened. All volunteers in the "scabbing" operation were to receive full expenses (fares, petrol, telephone calls, etc.). The question is often posed, "Where do the scabs get their money?" Obviously from similar faceless men who subscribe to the Tory Party and Aims of Industry, etc.

The question of labour is easier to answer. An advert in the *New Daily* requires retired men for a few regular hours a week. It goes on to ask if they can drive and are available for night and week-end work. There you have it, "paid scabs." I wonder if these retired types would dig coal, empty dustbins, work in sewers, but on reflection some bods will do anything for a few pieces of silver.

What is relevant ?

RON SMITH, UPW General Secretary, has obtained his committee of enquiry. It is an ad-hoc committee with limited terms of reference. Its job is to interpret the paragraph of "fair comparisons" with pay outside industry in the Priestly Commission's report. The snag in this set-up is "what is relevant and what isn't." The terms of reference are so narrow that one can foresee the enquiry getting bogged down on "relevance."

After the enquiry the UPW will negotiate on the basis of the committee's findings. If negotiations break down, the UPW will go to arbitration.

This whole affair smells, as usual when one deals with the Government as an employer. The basic rate of postmen is between £11-£13 per week approx., earnings have to be made up on overtime. The majority of men are only too pleased to grab overtime—they must on £13 basic. Also,

L. A. MITCHELL (METAL PROPELLER) LTD., CROYDON

AN official dispute exists with the above firm over victimisation and instant dismissal of the Shop Steward for carrying out his Trade Union duties.

Following the dismissal of the Steward at 5.15 p.m., Thursday, March 26, 49 members of the Sheet Metal Workers and Coppersmiths Union and the Boilermakers Society demanded his re-instatement and, when this was refused, had no alternative but to withdraw their labour.

Financial support is urgently needed. Donations to : W. Pettey, Treasurer, 1 Park Hill Rise, East Croydon, Surrey.

you are expected to do O.T. at a moment's notice, in fact it's an "order." One could go on for hours about the wonderful conditions in the Post Office.

Basically you sell your **freedom and basic wage** for the price of a steady job, uniform, and pension. Is it worth it? In one area the wastage is about 12 per cent. Sounds very much like the situation on the buses, doesn't it—same employer.

Rise and fall--and rise?

The anti-war movement in Britain has lost its impetus. Easter 1964 was the most disappointing since the foundation of CND. The march to Ruislip attracted fewer than 1,000 people and only 300 Committee supporters sat down outside the base; the Rosyth demonstration was even smaller. YCND's rally on the Sunday was a flop and the grand Washington-style march on Easter Monday was a pale shadow of previous marches. Only a demonstration outside RSG Monck Street (ignored by the BBC and most newspapers, including *Sanity*, CND's own) relieved the oppressive tedium of the Trafalgar Square rally with its endless stream of speakers telling us that the movement was flourishing. I suppose the Canon thought that his depleted flock needed encouragement.

Now that he has deserted the sinking ship we know what Collins really thinks. In a document reported in *Freedom and Peace News* which begins "Parts are carefully marked to indicate that they should not be communicated to the Press—including *Sanity*," he tells us that the campaign has lost ground since 1961, that the Committee of 100 has brought bad publicity and disunity to the movement, that CND's organisation is inadequate. Apart from the accusation that anarchists are more concerned with "disruption of the body politic" than with nuclear disarmament, the Canon's funniest remark is that in future there should be more strict observance of majority decisions. So now we know. All these years he has struggled to implement resolutions passed at CND conferences, including those he's disliked such as the one on industrial action. Why didn't he tell us before?

The departure of Collins is only a timely incident; it is not a major event; it solves no problems.

The Unilateralist Forum on April 18 didn't solve any either. Only about 250 people turned up (Conway Hall holds

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Power bosses toe the Government pay line

AT time of writing a Court of Inquiry is attempting to sort out the electricity power dispute. On the first day Bill Tudor opened for the unions. He claimed that for power workers to earn as much as the average for all industries, they had to work 2½ hours more, and the reason for their falling behind appeared to be the result of political and economic pressures which were quite exceptional. Sixty per cent. of new investment for the industry had to be self-financed, which included uneconomic rural electrification.

Tudor also referred to the Prime Minister's intervention in November, 1961, when he rebuked the Electricity Council for the terms of the wage settlement which had just been agreed.

R. D. V. Roberts, for the management, denied there was a "ghost squad" directing the course of pay and hours in the industry. I venture to suggest that there was a very tangible ghost in November, 1961.

Roberts claimed that neither the government nor the Minister of Power had any influence over negotiations, but when asked by Bob Willis, TU member of the inquiry, about the electricity management's attitude to Nicky's pronouncements, Roberts stated it must obviously take regard of the Government's economic policy as stated in the White Paper. In a nutshell, the electricity management were not going to leave themselves wide open for bollocking from this Prime Minister.

How stupid do these people think the workers are? The Government is in the background waiting to chop heads if managements of nationalised industries stray from the "guiding light principle."

SCABS INC. AGAIN

MARTELL & CO. were waiting to pounce again. A front-page lead in the *New Daily* (1.4.64) said that if their press (Sapphire Press) had been held up for only a few minutes due to the power dispute, they would have taken legal action. Counsel's opinion had already been obtained. The article also stated that if anyone's life had been endangered, they would take legal action. What an sanctimonious statement! The power workers would never allow that situation to arise, they had already stated they would cover such a situation for nothing—and Martell realises this fact. He will pull any stroke to gain support.

NATIONAL UNION OF VEHICLE BUILDERS— OFFICIAL STRIKE—FINISHING SHOP—WEYMAN'S LTD., ADDLESTONE, SURREY

THE workers in the above shop (84 members of the NUVB) have now been on official strike almost seven weeks, having walked out in protest at a particularly vicious attack by the management against TU organisation in the factory. This took the form of redundancy notices being issued to 13 finishers on February 14, eleven of whom had been in the shop under three years.

The remaining two, aged 40 and 41, have been with the firm 23 and 27 years, the latter having been offered a supervisory job a year ago which he refused. Both these workers have been shop stewards and members of the Works TU Executive Committee continuously for ten and nine years respectively up to December, 1963.

The finishing shop immediately met when it was known that these active TU members had been sacked, unanimously decided they were being victimised, gave the management

until 11 a.m. on February 17 to withdraw the notices and, having met with the management's refusal, came out on strike from that date and time.

Numerous attempts have been made by the NUVB to get talks between their officials and the management to discuss terms for a resumption of work, even to the extent of asking the Ministry of Labour to help, but the firm appear to be hoping that they will collapse and go crawling back on their knees. However, thanks to the support which is beginning to be received from many directions, their determination to stay out until victory is won is being consolidated.

All donations to: NUVB (London Branch) 24, Exeter Road, N.W.2. Please mark correspondence: "Weymanns Dispute."

BILL CHRISTOPHER

AFB for workers' control

The following is a statement of the aims and principles of the newly-formed Anarchist Federation of Britain.

"Anarchists do not accept the present national political organisations, which exist to defend the power of wealth and to perpetuate the power of the State.

"These powers must be overcome and replaced by a society of free people, in which voluntary agreement and personal responsibility replace the coercion of government.

"Therefore the Anarchist Federation of Britain aims at developing ways and means of overcoming authority and encouraging the creation of social organisations through which workers can themselves control the means of production and distribution to satisfy the needs of the community.

"Modern states depend on maintaining conflict and class division between people everywhere. Not through politicians but by our own direct action shall we ever be free."

The Anarchist Federation of Britain was formed during a two-day conference in Bristol on April 11-12 and attended by some 70 individuals and delegates. In addition to accepting the above aims and principles the AFB also delegated a national committee of three (T. Jackson, general secretary, B. MacDonald, correspondence secretary, and J. Wallis, treasurer) to carry out the work of co-ordination between groups until the next conference. (Conferences are to be held "annually or in exceptional circumstances.")

An international committee was also delegated (M. Hart, W. Hicks and J. Rety) to deal with the AFB's relationships with the international libertarian movement. Both committees are resident in London. Another comrade was delegated to attend the forthcoming European Anarchist Conference.

The main activities of the AFB during the coming year will be anti-election and anti-conscription campaigns. The first "official" act of the AFB was to send a telegram of protest to the Belgium Minister of Justice regarding our imprisoned comrade Francisco Abarca.

Solidarity with the Spanish people

March on Sunday May 10, 3p.m.

Marble Arch, Speakers Corner

National Confederation of Labour

China-clay men need support

THE CHINA-CLAY industry is the second biggest in Cornwall and, in this country of high unemployment, what happens in it is of great significance. Possibly because of the unemployment, disputes are rare—the last “official” strike took place 51 years ago; however we believe the apparent lack of militancy is a myth and the reason for failure to struggle effectively due directly to the men’s reliance on bureaucratic “leaders”, rather than on themselves and their own solidarity and organisation at work.

Now, in a bitter struggle, a new consciousness has begun to emerge, one which sees a boss who was not recognised before: a monster with three faces. One face that of English Clays, Lovering Pochin & Co.; the other, a two-faced creature, namely the Union hierarchy as represented locally

Abarca speaks out

AS WE GO to Press, a final decision on the case of Francisco Abarca, a Spanish militant threatened with extradition to Switzerland by the Belgian Government, is still awaited.

Protests have multiplied against this act of collusion with Franco. In bitter cold weather, five Spanish comrades in London staged a 48-hour hunger-strike picket outside the Belgian Embassy on April 7-9. Mass demonstrations have continued in Belgium.

The following are extracts from a letter sent to Belgian Minister of Justice, Pierre Vermeulen, by Comrade Abarca:

“I am a Syndicalist militant, an anti-Franco resister . . . I am above everything victim of a false charge, as I was, two years ago in Paris, the object of an attack by the Special Brigades of the Spanish secret police; as a result of which I underwent surgical treatment.

“This international mandate against me by the Swiss government is a clear plot against democratic Spain. I did not commit the action in question. Had I done so, I would have assumed full responsibility for it . . . but I must point out that the acts committed in Frankfurt, London and Geneva caused no victims. The Spanish resisters have never sought innocent victims, but have aimed at gaining the sympathy of international public opinion and drawing the world’s attention to the Spanish problem.

“Everyone knows that the millions of pesetas which flood into Spain through tourism do not improve the living conditions of the workers and peasants. While this money allows tourists to pass their holidays in the sun, Franco uses it to maintain a regime of corruption and repression by means of his army and police. Unconsciously tourism is the accomplice of fascism . . .

“Solidarity towards Spain is again growing. There have been demonstrations in Brussels, Milan, Genoa, London, etc. The dockers of Genoa refused to discharge cargoes from Spanish boats . . . The Spanish people are prepared to struggle, as shown by demonstrations and strikes, especially the magnificent example of Asturias.

“They accuse me of a criminal act? They speak of violence? Who is the criminal? Who is the violent one?

“Is it he who, in 1939, conquered with a million dead on his conscience? Is it he who was a friend of Hitler and Mussolini . . . who shot Grimaud, garrotted Granado and Delgado, deported entire families, shaved the heads of miners’ wives, tortures and imprisons? Or is it the people who, after 25 years of tyranny, still find the strength to rise up and show their discontent, their will to struggle, their suffering to the world?”

by “Adolf Hitler’s brother” (as one dryer described him), Dick Grose, District Secretary, who is paid £26 per week to sell out his fellow trade-unionists.

The nature of kaolin is such that, during its drying process, it must be under constant watch. This interferes with tea-breaks, lunch breaks etc., a fact which has always been accepted by china-clay workers. However, over the years the employers have developed the view that this concern for the job is a sign of weakness.

Since about 1950 the pressure has been stepped up. Tea-breaks have been arbitrarily denied. Men who have insisted on taking their lunch-break have been told to stay at work by the *District Secretary* and, crowning insult—the cause of the present dispute—where men have worked the lunch-hour, they have not been paid at all, because the lunch-hour is not a working hour! Incidentally, the overtime rate in the industry is the flat-rate; one earns £10 a week gross, unless one works over the weekend.

In 1952, the two-shift system for Saturday was extended by a third shift from 3 p.m. until 9 p.m. with 10s. compensation. Finally in 1962 at Colvazeth pit, where the present dispute started, a four-shift Sunday was started without compensation and without negotiation, agreement or extra pay. This was done by the management approaching individual workers with the threat of being given lower-paid jobs or their cards if they did not accept. This spells INTIMIDATION. At a recent meeting the management said it could not afford compensation; it has £3 million behind it and its dividend has just risen from 9 to 11 per cent.

Naturally such appalling conditions have aroused deep resentment and finally unofficial action was taken at Colvazeth over unpaid lunchtime compensation ten weeks ago. The men were assured the matter would be settled within one month. The settlement when it came was that the employers could not afford the payment, and the first the men knew of it was when some of the managers put copies of it on the Works noticeboard.

Consequently between 400 and 500 men in the drying-sheds at Bar-Rotary (St. Austell) withdrew their labour, and the seven striking shop-stewards have been sacked, but the men are continuing without a strike committee or spokesmen, since their decision was unanimous. Some support has come from the AEU, which has instructed its members not to teach any new personnel, but so far the drivers have not joined the dryers—vital support needed to bring a quick and successful conclusion to the struggle, which is causing a loss of production of 18,000 tons per week.

Unless the strike is extended, logically it will fail as there are no strike funds; already individuals are returning to work. Secondly, the lesson is to trust oneself, not the union boss over whom one has no control. Thirdly, china-clay workers, like workers everywhere, must think more in terms of industrial solidarity that cuts across the ridiculous barriers of craft unionism; we stand for rank-and-file controlled industrial unions, with all delegates subject to instant recall. This would deal with types like Grose who has refused to meet shop-stewards involved in the strike, only those remaining at work.

Lastly and perhaps most important, was it necessary to strike at all? A work-to-rule with all tea-breaks and lunch-hours rigorously observed, combined with a partial or total ban on overtime and Sunday shifts, would work wonders. The kaolin would be sabotaged through lack of supervision in the drying sheds, until the workers’ just demands were met, and that vital part of apparel—the pocket—would scarcely be affected.

D. BLUNDELL

Building houses on sand

Red Deer, Alberta.

THE house-building industry, largely supported by government loans, is considered fair game by Canadian politicians. In order to reduce winter unemployment, always a bugbear to politicians, one of them had the bright idea last fall of paying a bonus of \$500 per house built over the winter months from November to the end of March. This bonus would reduce the down payment on a new house, encourage people to buy houses in the winter, and hence keep building workers employed during the winter months.

This scheme was a success insofar as more houses were built during the winter 1963-64 than during any other Canadian winter. Unfortunately the houses purchased during the winter were those that would normally have been bought this spring. This is indicated by the drastic decline in new houses started in March, and hence unable to be completed in time to qualify for the winter bonus.

It is also feared in the industry that people who would normally have considered buying a house this summer will not now do so, but wait until the fall, in the hope that the government will repeat its offer of a \$500 bonus for houses built next winter. If this should be the case, building workers who worked throughout the winter are going to find themselves out of work in the summer.

All the politicians will have succeeded in doing, other than spending a large amount of other people's money, is to move the slack season in the house-building industry from the winter months to the summer. In order to have steady, year-round work, building trade workers themselves must control the industry. Maybe they can learn from the history of the building workers' guilds, that flourished for a time in the British construction industry during the 1920's.

Social democratic politicians have added their support to the Conservative, Liberal and Social Credit varieties in calling for the introduction of conscription in Canada. The apparent anomaly of a move to introduce conscription at a time when the numbers of the armed forces are being reduced is explained by some of the reasons advanced—conscription will help develop a bi-cultural nation; it will help reduce unemployment among young people who have too much freedom—some discipline would do them good. Of course, you could reduce unemployment, promote bi-culturalism and provide lots of discipline by establishing slave labour camps in the Arctic. But conscription is so much more democratic—and it **sounds nicer!**

- The unemployment insurance fund went broke at the end of March, but the politicians found extra money somewhere to continue payments to the unemployed.
- Shipyard workers' unions in British Columbia, Quebec and the Maritimes called on the government to build more warships in order to keep their members employed.
- Alberta film censors, having decided the people of the province would be corrupted by the movie, "Tom Jones," prohibited its showing. The local politicians had a special showing in the Legislative Buildings—doubtless feeling themselves incapable of any further corruption.

BILL GREENWOOD.

Thanks!

PRESS FUND—March 14 - April 15 1964

S.W.F. London Group £6 10s; London NW6, S.G. £1; Portland, Oregon, J.C. £1 8s; Chicago, F.A. £1 15s; London W2, R.E. 10s; London W1, T.B. £4; Clapham Common sympathisers, 3s; London W2, D.M. 10s; Croyley Green, Herts, P.McC, 3s. **Total: £17 2s 6d.**

Direct Action

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WORKERS' FEDERATION

HELP. . .

Shortly before Easter the SWF printshop was burgled. The thieves got away with our entire range of display faces, our large stock of small movable type and the linotype metal for nearly two complete issues of **DIRECT ACTION**. To make good all these losses, we need about £150.

We appeal to all members of the libertarian movement, all sympathisers and all readers of DA to send as much as they can, as soon as they can. So long as we are fighting the capitalist system, we will need money. Right now the need is desperate. Please make all postal orders, cheques, etc. payable to Mark Hendy. All contributions will be acknowledged.

SWF NATIONAL COMMITTEE.

GROUP NOTICES

S.W.F. (LONDON)

Open Meetings

- May 6 The Australian Labour Movement Mike Callinan
- 13 Background to the British libertarian movement Ken Hawkes
- 20 The Catering Trade Desmond Macdonald
- 27 Social and bring and buy stall

Wednesdays, 8.30 p.m., at the White Swan, 28, Farringdon Road, London, E.C. (near Farringdon St. Station, in loop off main road on other side of railway line).

OXFORD ANARCHIST GROUP: Details from Laurens Otter, 5, New Yatt Road, North Leigh, near Witney, Oxon.

NOTTING HILL ANARCHIST GROUP— All correspondence to the Secretary, 38 Oxford Gdns., W.10.

EDINBURGH. Would anyone interested in forming a group in Edinburgh, please contact Alasdair Macdonald, Torphin, Torphin Road, Colinton, Edinburgh 13.

BIRMINGHAM AND W. MIDLANDS. Contact Peter Neville, 12 South Grove, Erdington, Birmingham 23.

SOUTHERN FEDERATION. Contact Ken Parkin, Old Tea House, Brockenhurst, Hants.

GLASGOW FEDERATION OF ANARCHISTS meet every Thursday evening at 7.30 p.m., 4 Ross Street, Glasgow S.E. (off the Gallowgate).

LIVERPOOL—Those interested in forming a libertarian discussion group on Merseyside, please contact Vincent Johnson, 43 Millbank, Liverpool 13.

BRISTOL FEDERATION OF ANARCHISTS—For details please contact the convenor, Ian Vine, 3 Freelaads Place, Hotwells, Bristol 8.

ROMFORD AND HORNCHURCH ANARCHIST GROUP—for details please contact Chris Rose, 34 Newbury Gardens, Upminster, Essex, or John Chamberlain, 74 Upper Rainham Road, Hornchurch, Essex.

MANCHESTER AND DISTRICT—Contact Jim Pinkerton, 12 Alt Road, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancs.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS ANARCHIST GROUP meets on 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month at 8 p.m. at 4, Mount Sion, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

CAMBRIDGE ANARCHIST GROUP. Meets Tuesdays (in terms), Q5 Queens. Details, town and gown, Adrian Cunningham, 3, North Cottages, Trumpington Road, Cambridge.

Lenin and workers' control

Two opposed principles

DOBB quotes an oft-repeated story by Lenin (taken from M. Farbman, *After Lenin*): "When workers' delegations came to me with complaints against the factory owners," Lenin once said, "I always said to them: 'You want your factory nationalised. Well and good. We have the decree ready and can sign it in a moment. But tell me, can you take the organisation into your own hands? Do you know how and what you produce? And do you know the relations between your product and the Russian and international market?' And inevitably it transpired that they knew nothing."

There is no scrap of evidence to support Lenin's fable, but there is abundant evidence, including that of Dobb, to the contrary: "Many factory committees went beyond the legal powers awarded to them in the Decree on Workers' Control, and eventually took the administration of factories into their own hands. This was a continuation of the spontaneous movement of direct action on the part of peasants and factory workers, which had gathered momentum under the Provisional Government." (ibid, p.88). "In the spring of 1918 a syndicalist tendency had become widespread among factory committees; the notion that factories should be run directly by the workers in them, and for the benefit of those workers." (ibid, p.89).

"Against this illegal nationalisation on the initiative of factory committees and local Soviets" the Bolshevik Government took action (p.90), but the movement went on as though the workers of Russia had never heard Lenin's fable, the "know nothing" workers seemed very confident.

In December, 1917, *Sovnarcum*, the Cabinet, instituted *Vesenka*, Supreme Economic Council, to supervise control of industry from the centre. *Vesenka* and the Cabinet, on April 27, 1917, again ordered an end to industrial confiscation. "But the instructions continued to be disobeyed: and efforts made by *Vesenka* in the direction of centralisation met with considerable resistance. The case of a group of factories in the Urals which the central authorities had decided to leave in private hands was not untypical. The local factory committee, declaring that the attitude of the owners was provocative, announced their intention of taking over the factory." The State-controlled "Central Council of Trade Unions" sent a delegation from Moscow to prevent the seizure and backed it with a telegram forbidding such action against the owners.

To this telegram the only reply was a laconic report announcing the date on which the factory had been taken over on the authority of the local Soviet. Of individual firms that had been nationalised prior to June, 1918, only 100 were nationalised by decree of the centre, while 400 had been nationalised on the initiative of local organisations. When the starch and molasses factory, *Zhivilov*, was nationalised by the Government, the factory committee refused to hand over to the administrator whom *Vesenka* had sent to take charge; and when the District Economic Council of the Northern Region instituted a system of government inspectors to bring the metal works of Petrograd

under its control, serious conflicts ensued between the inspectors and the factory committees (see also British Labour Delegation Report, 1920, p.96). In the railway shops there actually appeared an organisation grandiloquently terming itself the "Alliance of Workers' Representatives," which agitated against centralised control in the interests of "the autonomy of the workers' committees." (Dobb, pp.90, 91).

It will be noted that Dobb equates collectivisation and workers' control with nationalisation, that is State ownership and centralised State control. A strange attempt to reconcile two obviously opposed principles.

The Left S.R.'s were continually protesting against Bolshevik attempts to turn the popular tide of collectivism and develop capitalism under a "Junker State" type economy. Against such protests Lenin wrote his pamphlet *The Principal Tasks of our Day*, calling "State capitalism" a "gigantic step forward" and talking of a future society in which "elements of both Capitalism and Socialism," would exist together (partly republished in *Selected Works*, vol. IX, 156-7).

Dobb speaks of some moves in that direction, thus: "For certain enterprises, particularly where foreign capital was involved, proposals were canvassed for the creation of 'mixed companies' in which State and private capitalists should participate jointly." And—"some abortive negotiations took place in March (1918) between the Soviet Government and a group of capitalists headed by the wealthy Moscow merchant *Meshchersky* for the formation of a mixed company in which foreign capital should participate, to control a certain group of enterprises in the metal industry . . . a similar proposal came from a company known as the *Stak* and a similar proposal came from a company known as the *Stakhaev Company*."

"In the early summer a commission instituted to frame conditions on which concessions might be given to foreign capital was considering certain proposals made by a Norwegian firm and a Russo-Dutch syndicate for railway extensions in Siberia and the Donetz Region."

"In the circumstances of the time very little was to become of these projects, although they were later to be revived on a limited scale after the civil war in the early period of the New Economic policy." Dobb, S.E.D.S. 1917, p.85.

Bolshevik Russia looked like being a very unhealthy and uncertain country in which to live. The enterprises were not adventurous enough to risk wealth and life in a famine and bureaucrat ridden land. The great plans for capitalist expansion soon came to nought, foreign capital shied away and those merchants who had the wealth to do so left the country—except those who found jobs in the bureaucracy. The wage workers and peasants were left, on them fell the sabre cuts of dictatorship.

(More next month)

TOM BROWN.

How Labour Governed, 1945-1951

Forgotten? Too young to remember? This pamphlet is essential reading in election year, for voters and anti-voters. It describes how, in six years, and despite an overwhelming Parliamentary majority for nearly five of them, the post-war Labour Governments betrayed every socialist principle.

Price 6d. a copy, plus postage.

(Bulk orders welcomed—but please send cash with orders if possible. This will help offset costs of reprinting.)

JAMES CONNOLLY COMMEMORATION SOCIAL

Pindar of Wakefield, Grays Inn Rd., London, W.C.1.

Saturday, May 9, 8 p.m.

Irish Socialist Republican League

Tickets 2s. 6d. from Liam Daltun, 243 Grays Inn Rd., W.C.1.

Expulsion threat halts Rhodesian school strike

Salisbury, S. Rhodesia.

THE POSITION regarding strikes and unrest in this country has changed considerably recently. Last month I contended that it looked likely that the strikes would spread and increase in intensity. Although this has not happened, the contention has been disproved only by repressive actions on the part of the Government, or because the Government has given way.

The strike by primary schoolchildren against school fees did spread in a half-hearted fashion from Salisbury's African townships to Bulawayo, but the children suffered a setback when the Government announced that all schoolchildren would have to re-register at school before March 13, or be thrown out. This has not entirely undermined the spirited action of protest by the children, but throughout Salisbury attendances have increased daily and the strike has practically finished.

However, it has taken a particularly nasty action by the Government to halt the kids; the order of re-registration or a notice to quit school ended the endurance of children who set high value on education and had already suffered a week's lack of schooling, thus jeopardising their examination results and their subsequent careers. The "Rhodesian Herald" (the settler daily) wrote (10.3.64) that: "The time for dilly-dallying has passed. The Government certainly cannot compel African children to go to school, but equally there can be no compulsion on the Government to keep open schools in Salisbury if the children are not going to use them." It

did not, of course, suggest a reduction of school fees for African children, it merely wanted some inquiry into "cases of hardship". In fact, if an honest inquiry were made into cases of hardship, no fees could legitimately be charged.

The action by the children has been enough to make the Government show its ugly teeth, the Minister of Law and Order, Mr. Dupont, claimed that the strike was not about school fees, but the work of a few political agitators. To back this up, he pointed to community schools, which have functioned normally throughout the strike, where fees are paid. He claimed that as fees were paid to these schools without complaint, it could not be fees that worried children at Government schools. In fact, kids at community schools pay higher fees than those at Government schools, but the money does not go to the Government and if the children were not able to go to community schools they would have no school at all, simply because the Government does not supply a sufficient number of Government schools.

The strike at Waukie colliery by 4,000 men ended during the second week of March, with the men winning their demand to have pay instead of rations. As a result of this strike, several firms have had to cease production, through lack of coal, but everything is getting back to normal. However, this strike, along with the children's protest, has been a qualified success, which is heartening, because so often African resistance has been weak and ineffective in this country.

The North Rhodesia rail strike lasted only four days and did not spread to S. Rhodesia. The copper mines were soon wailing in panic, as was the Kaunda Government, about the "disastrous effects" of a strike and the only joy the strikers have is that an enquiry into the causes of the strike is being instituted. Also whites on the railways will possibly think twice before calling their fellow workers "kaffirs" again.

KALI.

BRAZIL—the poorest richest country

BRAZIL is a country of enormous resources, mostly unexploited. Big landowners swallow hundreds of miles of jungle, plains and mountains, to keep serfs in. The cities are on the sea coast, unaware of the interior. The finest architects have built those cities, flourishing with industries and the main product: coffee.

The coffee plantations exploit the serfs and the owners of the plantations, become aristocrats with so much money, seek more money by becoming politicians. The more money they have, the bigger they consider themselves, or the bigger their demagoguery to increase chauvinism in the country. The common saying by the Brazilian of a city is: "Brazil, the biggest country of the world." The middle-class proudly says it, because it sees it all the time: the biggest theatre, the longest beach, the biggest Christ.

But the poor don't say anything but: "Ours is the biggest poverty of the world." The massing of industries in the cities of the coast have produced the migration of workers, produced the slums, the famed "favelas", huts made out of petrol cans and rotten timber, with no sanitation.

For many years, long before the dictator Vargas' time, there was talk in Brazil of an expansion and diversification of the economy. The necessary thing was to conquer the jungle, building cities in the interior, especially one right in the middle of the country, which could be named Brasilia.

Just by pure coincidence, there was a man who owned a little bit of land right in the middle of the country. When the architects had Brasilia set down in their blueprints, he began to buy up all the land he could all around his small plot. It was very cheap, as it was jungle. Then the law came to build Brasilia in the land of this man, simply

because it was right in the middle of the country.

It was another coincidence that when that law was passed, the President of the country and the landowner were one and the same person. The first buildings of Brasilia went up, roads to it were built and prices skyrocketed. So, slums, more "favelas", have grown round the new city.

Of such stuff was Goulart, the deposed president. His error was to try to be another Vargas, an absolute dictator. But in Vargas' time, the Americans didn't help the Brazilian Army so much, so the Brazilian Army wasn't so strong. The Americans modernised the Army after the Brazilian generals sacrificed three regiments in Italy during the last war. After the war, the Brazilian generals began speaking about conquering the rest of Latin America. They always had that dream of really being the biggest country of the whole world.

Goulart wanted power à la Franco, and to get it tried to be a demagogue like Vargas, promising the poor justice. It was to slap the big landowners, industrialists and generals, also big landowners, to become the only landowner. He did not ally himself with his lot, like Kubitschek, the owner of Brasilia land, did. They threw him out. And the poor are still poor.

The Communists are a minority, that have a small success in the cities. They ask for reforms, but fear them, for reforms in Brazil signify a complete revolution. And the poor of jungle, plains, and sea are too anarchistic to believe in Communist or Right-wing demagogues. With no guns, the dwellers of the favelas know they can't do anything.

They remain stationary, but in the way which means waiting for the opportunity to strike.

JUAN NOVEDADES.

Irish tinkers take direct action

THE TINKERS of Ireland (known officially as itinerants) have much in common with gypsies, principally their nomad-type of existence. To some people theirs seems a romantic, carefree life, while to others they are shiftless, lazy and dishonest. The falseness of both images was perfectly demonstrated by the campaign recently waged in Dublin by the Itinerant Action Group, to secure for their children a decent education. It showed them in a truer light as loving parents and resourceful, responsible citizens, and was a classical justification of the Syndicalist philosophy of direct action.

The difficulties encountered by nomadic or itinerant peoples, in the effort to live their type of life, arise from the enclosure of land and the development of large urban agglomerations, with their stifling bye-laws on the one hand, and the pressure towards conformity and integration by bureaucracies, which hate what they don't control, on the other.

In Ireland the problems became so acute that the State set up a commission to examine the tinkers' plight. For three years they waited anxiously to hear what would be done to educate their children. Towards the end of last year, the Report was published. The education situation, it said, was desperate and immediate action was essential.

The sparks of hope were soon quenched. Official reaction to the official report—Nothing could be done for at least two years. The tinkers had waited years for the Commission, then three more while it gathered facts, but now

another two (at least!) was just too much. However, their innate instinct for self-reliance prevented despair.

The Itinerant Action Group was formed and announced its intention of building a school on an unoccupied Corporation site. The result was an immediate and enthusiastic reaction from a dozen quarters—a contracting firm offered free materials, teachers offered their services on a rota basis, a soldier made a set of classroom furniture, two doctors offered a clinic service, subscriptions were sent to supply books and meals. Tinkers from all over Ireland converged on Dublin with their children.

On Monday, December 30, Peadar O'Donnell, one of Ireland's best-known writers and a veteran socialist, performed a simple opening ceremony. The ramshackle wooden building contained 50 eager children and there was an atmosphere of enthusiastic determination. However, the heavy hand of officialdom was soon to cast its shadow. Dublin Corporation served a week's notice of eviction, threatening prosecution for trespass, etc.

The dignified reaction of the tinkers and their determination earned them increasing public support and help. When the week was up the perplexed Corporation dithered uncertainly for another day, then sent along a squad of workers, backed up by police and officials, to carry out the demolition of the little schoolhouse. The tinkers put a picket round the site, appealed to the workers not to pass it, and pledged that whatever happened they would not offer any violence or resistance. The workers refused to pass, but there was some doubt how long they could sustain this gesture without losing their jobs, so the tinkers announced they would move, but in their own time. Some hours later they withdrew in orderly fashion to another corporation site and settled down again, stating, "We will stay here until we are moved on again. We will not resist, but we will camp in one site after another until the government do something about the Itinerants' Commission."

Throughout all this the school continued to function and the children showed an eagerness for knowledge. The Corporation alternated between indecision and dire threats. The tinkers staged protest demonstrations and when again evicted they marched their caravans across the centre of Dublin to a new site. Support was now pledged from the civil liberties organisation and student bodies.

At length the Action Group decided to bring matters to a climax by staying put and letting the Corporation carry out its plans to destroy their school. A contingent of 30 workmen was sent to do the dirty work. Almost half of them refused to obey their orders and were promised Union support. The rest found themselves obstructed by students and members of the public, who lay across their path in protest. Eventually, with the help of police reinforcements, they broke through the barricade of caravans and bodies and finished their task. By this time, however, the campaign had focussed public attention on the tinkers' position and won great sympathy for them.

One of the campaigners on behalf of the itinerants, 25-year-old pacifist Grattan Puxon, is now remanded on bail in the sum of £500, charged under Section 30 of the Offences against the State Act with possession of explosives—a trumped-up charge, in an effort to discredit the Itinerant Action Group.

A protest demonstration and march, in support of the itinerants and Grattan Puxon, organised by the SWF, was held from Hyde Park to the Irish Embassy in London on Sunday, April 26, supported by the Irish Socialist Republican League.

Hang down your head

Hang Down Your Head and Die, Comedy Theatre.

Enough has already been written on the merits and defects of this production. The comparison with Littlewood's "Oh, what a Lovely War" has been flogged to death. This venture in total theatre is a success because on the whole it avoids both over-conscious declaration of its message and an over-conscious attempt to conceal it.

It makes hanging seem absurd and its abolition logical, as "Dr. Strangelove" makes bombs seem absurd and their abolition logical. It does this with humour, pathos and an imagination which is responsible for several brilliant moments. We wait as the Rosenbergs die, we are inveigled into singing "Hang him up on Tyburn," we watch at third remove as the condemned prisoner sees Punch hang the hangman, we follow the prisoner in all but his last moments (the Lord Chamberlain spared us the death which, of course, would not have been in the tradition of British theatre).

In the second half, especially, when the note of didacticism is replaced by a personal involvement, emotional tension runs high and there is little relief from it. A few found it by giving vent to a short, sadistic cry of "Long live capital punishment" as they emerged from the theatre. This reaction is in some way a measure of the production's success.

As far as "Hang Down Your Head" goes, it does fine, but it also gives a frustrating glimpse of the potential of Total theatre, which it hardly began to exploit.

A great deal of psychology is directed at the audience, but very little to examining the society which produces murderers and has thought good to hang them for a long time now. We are given most of the effects of hanging, but few of the causes for it. The advantages of the stage for showing cause as well as effect are great, though certainly more difficult to exploit. Let us hope, however, that they will be in the future.

KATE SANDERS.

BILL CONNOLLY.

The Fascist threat in Britain

IN A RECENT DA I tried to show the effects fascism and racialism were having on the Borough of Southall, Middx. Southall, however, is only one part of a large picture. What is the position of fascism in the country as a whole today?

To begin with, who are the fascists? First there is Mosley's Union Movement, probably the largest and certainly the best financed fascist group in Britain today. Its chief activities are the publication of a weekly paper "Action" and the holding of open-air meetings in many parts of the country, chiefly London's East End and North Kensington. It maintains links with foreign organisations holding similar opinions, such as the French extreme right "Jeune Europe" group and the West German Deutsches Reich Partei, which includes many ex-Nazis.

Mosley himself has apparently decided to tone down his propaganda slightly since the war. He frequently denies that he is anti-Semitic or supported Hitler and proclaims that he advocates "a fair deal for black and white".

Slightly smaller and less well financed is the British National Party of Mr. Andrew Fountaine, a Norfolk landowner and former prominent Young Conservative. Like the Union Movement it holds street meetings and publishes a paper, "Combat". Its line is more extreme than Mosley's in several ways. Its programme includes, for example, sterilisation of half-castes and it believes in an international Jewish conspiracy directed from Moscow and Wall St. Like Mosley it maintains links with foreign groups such as the U.S. State Rights Party. "Combat" also circulates in South Africa and the Rhodesias.

Considerably smaller and more rabid than the Union Movement and BNP is Colin Jordan's National Socialist Movement. Its activities are semi-conspiratorial and its leaders make no secret of their ambition to exultate Hitler by forming fanatical Nazi cells and thus secretly infiltrating movements such as the Territorial Army (in fact the Conservative Party of North Kensington, where the movement has its HQ, has warned its officials to guard against such infiltration). The movement also maintains a National Socialist Youth group, with 200-300 members aged 14-16. In addition, it is affiliated to the World Union of National Socialists, an international fascist network whose members include Lincoln Rockwell's American Nazi Party and the banned neo-Nazi groups in West Germany.

There are several smaller groups, but these three organisations represent the main streams of British Fascism. What support do their ideas command? The answer is more than many people like to think. At several pitches in the London area the Fascists can command crowds of 50 or

more for their street-corner meetings. On special occasions the crowds are bigger. Mosley's Kensington Town Hall meetings are generally attended by 600-700 people.

Election figures also give clues to fascist strength. The last DA article mentioned the situation in Southall, where a BNP candidate polled, in one ward 479 votes, or 27 per cent of the poll. Equally illuminating was the North Kensington election of 1959, in which Mosley polled almost 3,000 votes (9 per cent of the poll). It is disturbing to think that in any constituency nearly one person in ten is prepared to vote for a man who openly supported Hitler.

However, the results of public opinion polls are perhaps most illuminating of all. In her book on West Indian immigration, "The Newcomers", Dr. Ruth Glass quotes nationwide surveys indicating that 71 per cent of the population disapproved of mixed marriages and 22 per cent approved of the much-publicised action of a Wolverhampton dance-hall manager in operating a colour bar. These figures indicate a very large amount of prejudice which fascists could exploit. Furthermore it seems possible that support for fascism may increase. "Remember Belsen" is still an effective slogan for heckling a fascist speaker. But Belsen is sinking into the same historical limbo as Mafeking and Waterloo and people may soon cease to equate British fascists with their counterparts of Nazi Germany.

But the greatest danger of all is that which will be created if a serious crisis, such as mass unemployment, develops in Britain. It is easy to see how people might look for scapegoats such as Jews or immigrants and thus fall for fascism in large numbers. It is also easy to see how the bosses might find it increasingly difficult to hold on to their wealth and how the money that nowadays flows from the profits of the big firms into the pockets of Martell and Aims of Industry might be flowing into the pockets of Mosley and Jordan.

All in all the situation is not one we can completely ignore. The louts and morons who congregate at fascist meetings may seem absurd at present, but they might one day form the spearhead of a serious attack on the unity and solidarity of the British working class.

ROGER SANDELL.

Rise and fall (cont.)

500) and although resolutions were passed condemning "Steps Toward Peace" and affirming support for unilateralism in all countries the meeting ended in confusion and frustration. It was obvious that most people present were angry unilateralists: it was not obvious what we were going to do next—apart from continuing the discussion at similar meetings.

CND may be on the decline but, as Christopher Driver said in the *Observer*: "peace movements never die, but linger on, sometimes active and sometimes quiescent, until they merge into the next, and the next." The immediate issue now is the possible reintroduction of conscription: a successful campaign to stop it would make the anti-war movement stronger than ever.

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