

Direct Action

For workers' direct control of industry

Inside—Engineers' one-day shutdown : Free French Powell and the fascist threat : Strangest strike

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION (IWMA)

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Sixpence

Class against class in France

ONE STEP FROM REVOLUTION

WHATEVER THE OUTCOME of their struggle, the workers of France have taught their brothers and sisters the World over a lesson. They've shown them the power that lies in their own hands. In days, with almost no warning, they paralysed the normal economic life of a modern industrial country—which lies only 20 miles across the English Channel.

May Day in London

FOR THE SECOND year running, London workers celebrated May Day on May Day, with a demonstration during working hours. Behind the banner of the London May Day Committee, an alliance of rank-and-file workers from various industries (notably print, engineering and construction, with several others including dockers), some 2,000 workers and students marched from a meeting on Tower Hill through the City to join up with the engineers' pay-claim lobby at Transport House.

Speakers on Tower Hill stressed the need for solidarity against the Wage Freeze, sackings and rent rises, as well as the menace of Powellite racism, and not least that May Day is an occasion for demonstrating international solidarity against capitalism itself. As the march moved off it was jeered by a handful of racists, some of them dockers, from a safe distance.

Placards and slogans on the march, by one political group in particular, tended to make it look and sound at times a bit like a lynching party for Enoch than a show of class militancy, and there was an unfortunate clash between pro-Powell dockers and students outside Parliament later, an Oxford student who was trying to prevent it happening getting the worst of it.

However the whole occasion had many times the life and urgency of the stage-managed and sterile rallies of the Labourites, Trotskyists and CP the following Sunday put together.

Next year should be bigger still.

LATER about 60 people marched to the Belgian and Spanish Embassies to protest against the threatened deportation from Belgium of the Spanish militant Octavio Alberola. Police showed the international solidarity of governments and made two arrests.

They made a General Strike the like of which hasn't been seen in Western Europe since the War.

Workers hoisted the flag of revolt over ships, shipyards, shops, offices, factories, depots and stations in a wave of militancy that's left their bureaucratic leaders stumbling breathlessly along to keep up with them. Events have shown that the passage of time's done nothing to lessen the ability of workers, once roused, to take direct action against their exploiters, class against class. While first-hand reports from France describe all the electrifying state of self-confidence and jubilation that throughout history has always possessed the masses of the people when they start to rise from their knees.

It's the best of the old adapted and extended in the setting of the new. The revolt starts with sociology students in the new university at Nanterre who do not wish to become cogs in the machinery of exploitation of modern, bureaucratic capitalism, do not wish to manipulate workers, either on the factory floor or in their leisure, as industrial sociologists, time-and-motion men, personnel managers. The revolt spreads to the ancient Sorbonne, and the police go in for the first time—except under the Nazi occupation—in the centuries of the University's existence.

OLD WINE, NEW BOTTLES

The "old-fashioned" barricades go up—thanks partly to pneumatic drills—and cars form ready raw-materials. The barricades are manned by the youth in crash-helmets, who take anti-flu tablets against the police teargas. Years ago, Engels wrote that barricades were outdated, but the inhabitants of the Latin Quarter, their own cars ablaze, show traditional anti-police solidarity and the students win all their immediate demands.

Old wine, new bottles. "Solidarity", the battle-cry of the rank and file since the birth of the working class, becomes the watchword and the young workers, many of whom have joined the students on the barricades, provide the link and the impetus for class action. That most modern spectacle, the Cannes Film Festival, is overtaken by the wave; the starlets must flog their charms elsewhere.

The workers show inspiring competence from the off. Instead of blindly closing down the papers, as in the British General strike of 1926, leaving the State with a monopoly of the mass media, printworkers instead set up editorial com-

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FRENCH LESSON (cont.)

mittees to ensure nothing's printed *but* the facts. And before a march can reach the radio and TV station, the broadcasting staff themselves take over and force the daily objective reporting of events, including a lengthy film of anti-student police brutality.

In factories and elsewhere, workers organise patrols and maintenance of the idle machinery, giving the Government no excuse to attack. Nor do the strikers try to starve themselves back to work—fresh food supplies are maintained.

It is magnificent. Overnight almost, French workers and students have created a revolutionary situation and have been joined by schoolchildren and farmers and even whole layers of the middle class, from shopkeepers to ship's officers. Pompidou may talk of Civil War—but how can a united people fight one?

It is magnificent—and it could happen here. We could make it happen. The power to do so lies in our hands. And workers the world over share the same problems—fear of the sack, debts, speed-up, being bossed about; rising prices, attempts to reduce living standards, the scrap-heap of old age after a lifetime of toil; the threat of their masters' wars of greed.

A general stay-in strike is but a short step to the Social General Strike—keep the factories, lock out the bosses for good and restart production under workers control on the principle, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need."

This will be the only lasting solution to workers' problems the world over. The politicians offer nothing. You can just hear the "solution" of the politicians over here if such a situation should arise: "Nationalise!". One wonders what would be their reply if it was pointed out how the giant Renault Paris works have played such a big part in the French workers' fight—for what symbolises modern capitalism better than a nationalised car factory?

Whatever happens in France, the French labour movement has set a wonderful example, and their struggle is, in the end, our. So let's be on our guard and not be used against them. SOGAT printworkers have already pledged "complete solidarity" with the French workers at their national delegate meeting. Let's follow their example.

That way, we'll not only take a step towards following the example of French fellow-workers one day, but also be able to count on their support when we do so.

MARK HENDY

LITERATURE

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What We Stand For

THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION seeks to establish a free society which will render impossible the growth of a privileged class and the exploitation of man by man. The SWF therefore advocates common ownership and workers' control of the land, industry and all means of production and distribution on the basis of voluntary co-operation. In such a society, the wage system, finance and money shall be abolished and goods produced and distributed not for profit, but according to human needs.

THE STATE: The State in all its forms, embodying authority and privilege, is the enemy of the workers and cannot exist in a free, classless society. The SWF does not therefore hope to use the State to achieve a free society; it does not seek to obtain seats in the Cabinet or in Parliament. It aims at the abolition of the State. It actively opposes all war and militarism.

CLASS STRUGGLE: The interests of the working class and those of the ruling class are directly opposed. The SWF is based on the inevitable day-to-day struggle of the workers against those who own and control the means of production and distribution, and will continue that struggle until common ownership and workers' control are achieved.

DIRECT ACTION: Victory in the fight against class domination can be achieved only by the direct action and solidarity of the workers themselves. The SWF rejects all Parliamentary and similar activity as deflecting the workers from the class struggle into paths of class collaboration.

ORGANISATION: To achieve a free, classless society the workers must organise. They must replace the hundreds of craft and general trade unions by syndicalist industrial unions. As an immediate step to that end, the SWF aids the formation of workers' committees in all factories, mines, offices, shipyards, mills and other places of work and their development into syndicates, federated nationally. Such syndicates will be under direct rank-and-file control, with all delegates subject to immediate recall.

INTERNATIONALISM: The SWF, as a section of the International Working Men's Association, stands firm for international working class solidarity.

Work: a dangerous poison

THERE are work drunkards, just as there are drunkards from alcohol or narcotics; this was revealed yesterday at a medical congress at Houston, Texas, by Dr. Bradley, chief of the psychiatric service at an Illinois hospital. "The work drunkard may seem precious to his employer," said Bradley, "but his production is in fact deceptive. In five hours' overtime, the work drunkard does what could normally be done in one hour." Overtime, he said, was the symptom of this intoxication and he cited one man who had not taken a holiday for 17 years.

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STOP THE POLITICAL LEVY. New leaflet asks "Would You Pay a Man to Pick Your Pocket?" Calls on trade unionists to stop financing the Labour Party—the Party of the Wage Cut. Plain words, concisely argued, backed by facts. Price 2s per hundred, £1 per thousand, from SWF.

ONE-DAY SHUTDOWN: WHAT NEXT?

IT WAS an impressive demonstration by any standard. The 24-hour engineering shutdown achieved a nearly 100% response, and even some sympathetic support, which the public in the south of England was able to celebrate by release from the daily moralising of Press barons.

Already engineering workers are being promised "informal talks", which will seek to "find a formula". This, of course, means that bosses and union bureaucrats will get together to assist each other in reaching a not-too-obvious sellout and without too much loss of face from either side.

The AEU knows perfectly well, Hugh Scanlon as well as anybody, that with the bosses and the government ganged up together, and the creature PIB acting as "arbitrator", victory for the workers is just not possible this side of revolution—and revolution at this point of time is a non-starter. The AEU demands as they stand are an eminently moderate packet as a start towards decent working conditions in a modern industrial society. But neither the bosses nor the government are concerned with decent working conditions; all they worry about is the survival of capitalism. The EC of the AEU knows, too, that demands are always pitched on the basis that only a token measure has any chance of being conceded. In the present political atmosphere the concessions are not likely to be very fundamental, and as the membership generally is, well aware of this, there is little chance that future sanctions will carry much conviction.

PIE-IN-SKY AUCTION

What the rank and file member has learnt over the past generation is that national negotiations are merely a charade for the pleasure of full-time officials to justify their existence. It matters little whether the negotiations are led by Right-wing Carron or Left-wing Scanlon; it is still the membership who'll have to do the fighting. To fight on a national scale when there has been absolutely no attempt to prepare the members for serious struggle, when boss and Minister stand allied to take the offensive, is sheer lunacy unless there is a genuine determination to struggle for something very much more fundamental than a few pence an hour to wages.

The AEU member can always be relied upon to praise his union's democracy. Yet the undoubted democratic structure of the AEU has conjured up nothing but paradox. The National Committee is the policy making body and is composed entirely of rank-and-file members, yet its indirect election ensures that it does not represent the rank and file. Most National Committeemen are there to serve their time as next-generation full-time officers; they are more concerned to create an image for their future election than to forge a credible union policy. An essential ploy for anybody contesting an election is to denigrate those already in office.

Therefore, when Carron was President, we heard a great deal about the energetic but frustrated Left; now that Scanlon is President, it is the Right which is making the running. Factions, whether Left or Right, are responsible only to themselves, and the rank and file exists only to applaud their unseemly antics. In deliberating union policy, the AEU national committee can always be expected to conduct an auction for pie in the sky, issuing instructions which embrace everything in general. The only noticeable effect is to enable the EC to declare that anything in particular is not union policy.

Now that a one-day strike has been successfully concluded—and a repetition would almost certainly be an anti-climax—one wonders what the response of the members or the reaction of the bosses will be to an overtime ban or a

rejection of piecework. It is as well to remember that the average district rate for skilled workers is only a few shillings over £12 per week, although everybody knows that this is only a bogeyman story for naughty boys; but the joke would be pretty sour if workshop sanctions did reduce earnings to this level. Full-time AEU officials are fully aware that they are still circumscribed by the Procedure for Avoiding Disputes, drawn up in June 1922 under duress at the end of the disastrous lockout of that year, and that in the 23 years since the end of the War, neither the Executive Council nor the National Committee have shown any enthusiasm for terminating that iniquitous document.

"RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES"

The bosses declare that they won't pay up anyway. The government insinuate that agreement can be reached on a basis of greater productivity. The union bureaucrats pay lip-service to the fetish of productivity. But productivity is only another name for speed-up, and if less men produce the same quantity of goods, the answer known to every junior schoolboy is unemployment—unless workers and not capitalists are to control the means of production. It was always my idea of socialism that it meant less work and not more.

In this search for productivity the red herring of restrictive practices once more trails its stinking corpse. The middle class concept is that manual work is so elementary that anyone can do a skilled job, even if it means wrecking expensive machinery in the process. Of course, doctors, lawyers, accountants, stockbrokers, merchant bankers, teachers even, all have their restrictive practices, but then they are known as professional codes, and that is different. Instead of the maniac urge to turn out shoddy products which fall to pieces because of the non-availability of skilled labour, nobody has even thought that perhaps a well-paid and highly skilled labour force, which cherished its professional expertise, might not be very much better. After all, we are continually being warned that executives can only do their stuff when they are excessively paid, so why should workers be different? In any case, workers do not exaggerate their worth to the extent that executives do.

TRADING A DECENT PRICE

To rely upon national negotiations is to court disillusion and probably defeat. However, this does not prevent workers in their own factory making their own decisions, presenting their own demands and enforcing their own sanctions.

In the shop, the worker is not inhibited by outdated and onerous agreements. Some lighthearted discussion can soon elaborate simple means for making the boss's life a misery. We all know that safety regulations are disregarded all day long; inspectors can upgrade their productivity and be encouraged to become properly energetic and persistent; foremen are there to give orders, but their advice must be sought for carrying the orders out; few pay packets are comprehensible, and the wages department must explain their cipher in working time; the boss should provide all the tools for making *his* product; chairs or at least stools, have to be provided when the work is suitable (a demonstration can show that even sweeping up is best done sitting down).

The variations are infinite, all that is needed is a little ingenuity and determination. Productivity will sink to an unimaginable all-time low if only workers will behave like the morons they are supposed to be and claim all the rights they are supposed to have. It may not be in the national bourgeois interest, but individual capitalists will be willing to

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The strangest strike

THERE are strikes which happen when men see an opportunity of enforcing their demands on their employers with a reasonable hope of success. There are, less often, strikes of despair, when workers are driven to resist with their backs to the wall; but these are conflicts between workers and employers. It takes a Socialist government to devise circumstances which compel men to strike where there is nothing at issue between wage worker and employer.

Such was the strike of 1,400 Newcastle-on-Tyne busmen. The busmen conceived their demands, their union presented them to their employers, the Tory-controlled Newcastle City Council. The Council agreed the demands were reasonable and, after an amicable discussion, granted £1 a week rise and enhanced overtime rates. Both sides were happy.

In stepped PIB and Barbara Castle, the rise was suspended, but in uncertain terms which the Minister would not clarify. The Council proposed that the rise should be put on ice, being paid in July with back pay to December. This was possibly illegal, again no straight statement could be extorted from the Minister. In any case, the busmen bluntly said that since the beginning of the pay claim the Government had broken its word three times. Then, still with no reply, they said, "We cannot accept the word of the Government, we will believe nothing but money in our hands."

All 400 buses were left in the sheds on Saturday, April 27. In Gateshead, where the buses are privately owned and the men had already won their £1 a week, the workers refused to run the usual Newcastle routes (both towns' buses run on each other's routes to avoid passenger changes) and stopped at the Tyne bridges. The company agreed, rather than have a strike.

The Wallsend and Tynemouth bus services also stopped at Newcastle's eastern boundaries. Not one crew would cross the line. After two days the men found that the company (one company owns both services) was docking their wages for the time lost by the restricted service. All 400 men then struck.

After 15 days, the Newcastle men were persuaded to return by the TGWU, but still no one is certain of when they will get the rise and back money and if it will not be snatched away again even then.

GROUP NOTICES

ABERDEEN: Contact R. Comrie, 288 Hardgate, Aberdeen.

BELFAST—Contact Tony Rosato, 103 Deer Park Road, Belfast 14.

BRISTOL: Contact Adam Nicholson, 10 Bellevue, Bristol 8.

CROYDON: Contact Laurens Otter, 35 Natal Road, Thornton Heath.

GLASGOW: Contact R. Lynn, 16 Ross Street, C.I.

HULL—Contact Jim & Shelagh Young, 3 Fredericks Crescent, Hawthorn Avenue, Hessle Road, Hull, Yorks.

LONDON: Open meetings every other Wednesday at 8.30 p.m. at Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Road, WC1 (5 min Kings Cross). Correspondence to 34 Cumberland Road, E.17.

Next meetings:

June 5 and 19

MANCHESTER & DISTRICT: Contact Jim Pinkerton, 12 Alt Road, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancs.

POTTERIES: Contact Bob Blakeman, 52 Weldon Ave., Weston Coyney, Stoke-on-Trent.

"We are not fighting the council," said the strike committee, our enemy is the Government." Yet the busmen long ago federated to and financed the Labour Party.

The strike was 100% solid and the public ruefully accepted the situation and agreed the men's case was just. The fairly considerable number of Hindu, Pakistani and Sikh busmen were as loyal as the rest and played their part.

On May 11, CARD was to hold an "anti-racist" procession through the long streets of Newcastle, crossing and following the route of football fans going to see the vital Manchester City v. Newcastle United match at 2-3 o'clock, the football rush hour. Coloured busmen were asked to join this "monster procession." All races and sects refused. "I don't feel persecuted," said one of a group of Pakistani strikers to me. "I get on well with my workmates, I get on well with my neighbours. The two men who tried to convince me I was persecuted weren't interested in my health. I don't wish to annoy you people of Newcastle."

His friends, who were not so fluent, agreed. The procession numbered about 120 and was hardly noticed. Not more than 20 immigrants marched. Press, television and CARD had worked hard to create a picture of great violence and counter-violence and nothing happened.

By identifying themselves with their fellow workers the immigrant busmen had shown good commonsense.

The Labour Party's attitude was commented upon at the municipal election. In this Labour fortress, the Tories won 15 seats (including Labour strongholds Byker and Seotswood) and Labour five, one by only 23 votes.

GEORDIE

Two ways of looking at it !

Please cancel my subscription to your paper. I find myself at odds with your point of view on most subjects. From our safe, secure Canada your country appears to be in much trouble. You would be wise to bend every effort to pull your country together—take a voluntary pay cut, work extra hours for *no* pay, improve the quality of the goods you sell to us "Colonials". I could go on, but you probably get the point.

Yours for progress,

Nanaimo, B.C.

G. A. Watson

I am sending you \$3 for the paper. If any of you people are coming over to Canada looking for work, there is a lot of men and women out of work over here. They cannot get work and have a hard time to get a place to live. The city of Vancouver just opened a hostel, so the men can get board and lodging when they cannot get work. It accommodates 250 men and is expected to have a turnover of 1,000 men a month. This is the land of freedom—that's what we are told, anyway.

Vancouver, B.C.

J. B. McAndrew

WE MEANT what we said last month when we suggested you place a regular order for a packet of DA's on sale or return. We also suggested you send for a stock of our pamphlets, and let us know the names and addresses of potential postal subscribers. Don't forget!

Please don't forget, either, we need cash donations to keep going. It would be ridiculous to pretend sixpence covers the cost of a copy. May brought a fair amount LESS than our monthly target of £16 15s (£200 a year).

Many thanks, though, to those who've coughed up.

DIRECT ACTION FIGHTING FUND—May, 1968

London NW2, M.B. 7s; Ferryden, D.C. 10s; Harlow, D.P. 3s 6d; Accrington, C.R. 1s 6d; Southend-on-Sea, G.L. 1s 6d; Taunton J.D. 3s 10d; Aberdeen, I.S. 5s; Winslow, Ariz., F.I. 16s 6d; Vancouver, J.McA. £1 5s; Southampton, L.S. 5s; Wolverhampton, J.L. 12s; Manchester 14, R.B. 3s 6d; Tadworth, N.W. 4s; Ferryden, D.C. 10s; London NW3, M.H. £1 10s; London NW10, A.R. 10s; Sales of CNT postcards 6s 6d; SWF Group £2 5s 3d. Total for May £10 10s 1d. Previously acknowledged £67 0s 10d. Year's total to date £77 10s 11d

THE FREE FRENCH

THE SEIZURE in France by workers of the factories in which they work, the permanent students' council-open forum in the Odeon, mark a magnificent new step towards social revolution. It is impossible at this stage to know what hopes there are that the revolution will succeed, indeed whether the revolutionary demand of the abolition of the State will be made by all the workers, or will remain the aim solely of the most militant minority among students and workers. Also anything written at this stage will so soon be overtaken by events, that by the time DIRECT ACTION is typeset and printed this will be out of date, the situation will have crystallized far more.

But even if this workers' movement ends only in defeat, or is deflected into Communist and Social-Democrat channels, the event cannot be erased from history. In a country where the purely material standard of living of the established working class has risen since the war, at a far faster rate than in England, the working class has asserted once and for all time that affluence has not sapped its revolutionary potential.

EVER-GROWING BUREAUCRACY

Readers will remember from Henri Simon's recent article in DA that the Common Market has had the effect of creating a European sub-proletariat, distinct from the various established national working classes. (It will not, incidentally, be the first time in history, if the ruling class, to prevent revolution, now tries to exploit antagonisms between such different strata of the working class and, in so doing, calls the new ultra-oppressed for the first time into the political arena as a distinct class.)

It has also had the effect of removing the French working class even further from the mechanisms of social control, and creating among them a reaction to the centralising policies of the Eurocrats. The everyday experience of the French worker—perhaps even more than that of the British—is resistance to ever-growing bureaucracy, so anarchist arguments against bureaucracy, and the whole libertarian socialist case for workers' control of their own lives wins a spontaneous response.

Let it be clearly spelled out. This is not the flowering of a working class movement that has always been notable for its radicalism; it is not an exceptional case so radically distinct from our own conditions. There was singularly little resistance to the French imperialist wars in Vietnam, Tunis, Morocco and Algeria from the French working class as a whole. The North African wars inbred racist feelings into the French working class that were far worse than anything Powell has tapped, and even infected groups of the Far Left.

DIFFERING ELEMENTS

In *Freedom*, John Rety has given a blow-by-blow account of the students' rising (*Freedom* 18.5.68), and at the end of March *Freedom* also printed an excellent statement by the Nanterre Anarchist Group, criticising support for the Vietcong. The two together show quite plainly the distinction between the left students in France and those here in Britain. Daniel Cohn-Bendit came to anarchism through the *Socialism or Barbarism* group; he and those like him came to anarchism because they saw how Stalinism is an integral part in a managerialist period of ruling class philosophy. On Marxist grounds, they rejected Leninist concepts of organisation and, having travelled this way with anti-bureaucratic Marxism, came on to see that, whatever the validity of Marx in his particular phase of history, the only answer to managed capitalism is an anarchist answer.

But, having so come to anarchism, he also stresses that there is no clear dividing line between anarchism and the best in Marxism, and that a variety of libertarian tendencies can all contribute differing elements to one general libertarian movement. There are definite lessons we must draw. Although the French Syndicalist movement is not much larger than our own, masses of workers with no revolutionary syndicalist organisation to bind them have acted in a syndicalist way, occupying the factories.

NO STUDENT CONTEMPT

It is obvious that the CGT and the smaller union federations endorsed the strike only when it was already an accomplished fact. It is obvious, too, that since the official call was to come *out* of the factories, at a time when the workers were already engaged in *stay-in* strikes, that this was a conscious effort to put brakes on the revolutionary movement. The CGT has issued a call for the students to stay out of industrial strikes and not interfere in matters they do not understand and which do not concern them.

Though this has a fine class-revolutionary ring, with echoes of the early syndicalists, the aim is obviously not to turn a petit-bourgeois movement into a working-class one, for the CGT is at the same time negotiating, through its parent CP, with the Republican Parties and Gaullists of the Left. The aim is to isolate the workers from revolutionary ideas. But, there is in the French Left, no student contempt for "mere reformist working class issues". The CP is obviously attempting to counteract this and does not appear as yet very successful, even though it has been forced several degrees to the left in order to retain any influence at all with the militant younger workers.

RUSSIA AND HUNGARY

At a recent demonstration, Mendès-France was cheered and Mollet booed; Communist leaders have also been heckled on occasions, but generally given a fairish hearing. This would suggest that the revolutionaries are not so influential that they can make a head-on assault on all reformist politicians and that they can only try to inspire the workers to push the left politicians further than they wish to go. Mendès-France, despite his record over Tunis and the beginning of the Algerian War, did resist Mollet's betrayal in 1956 of their joint election promises, and his followers did more than either the Communists or the orthodox social-democrats to resist De Gaulle's assumption of power.

The development, then, has parallels with the early part of the Russian Revolution and with the Hungarian one, the formation at the base of workers' councils, coupled on the State level with support for left liberal politicians. As the workers' councils form and discuss common problems, both the self-confidence and the political understanding of the working class is enlarged and, as it grows, it engenders yet further demands and subsequent further growth. It may well be, therefore, that even if the CP succeeds in its present transparent attempt to cook up a Popular Front Government, it still will not be able to take the steam out of the revolution, and it will be swept aside later. De Gaulle can only physically suppress the workers if he can at least get the acquiescence of the Communists—by no means an impossibility, but he'll have to pay for such support.

De Gaulle has been the Western politician most ready to play with the Communists, so much so that American commentators have pretended that he is a Communist and that it was very generous of the USA to agree to have Peace Talks

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May Day arrests in Buenos Aires

TWELVE COMRADES, eleven of them members of FORA (Federacion Obrera Regional Argentine — Argentine section of the IWMA), were each sentenced to 30 days in prison here for defying a police ban on FORA's May Day meeting.

The FORA had applied for police permission to hold an outdoor meeting in Plaza Once, but they had refused permission to all workers' organisations to hold such meetings. The only meetings allowed were indoors. This semi-fascist State does not mind workers talking among themselves in their own premises, but it will not tolerate the spreading of revolutionary ideas to the people in the streets!

In the morning of May Day, which is a national holiday here, the comrades of the independent syndicalist shipbuilding union (Federacion Obreros en Construcciones Navales) held a May Day meeting in their dock-front premises, attended by about 100 people, including members of FORA.

In the afternoon, a few brave comrades defied the police ban and were immediately arrested by the police. Other workers' organisations also defied the ban in other parts of Buenos Aires and also in the provinces, with similar results — arrests and violent clashes with the police.

The comrades arrested in Plaza Once each received 30 days in prison. Eleven are members of FORA, the other a socialist woman sympathiser. Their names are: Hector Antonio Chiarelli, Argentinian (42); Juan Enrique Palmeiro, Argentinian (49); Maria Jesus Lera, Argentinian (62); Martin Rojo, Spaniard (59); Carlos Scharf, Argentinian (39); Oscar Rodolfo Loza, Argentinian (43); Nado Octavio Salas, Chilean (37); Saul Cordero, Spaniard (47); Jose Ramon Marcote, Argentinian (54); Jose Belton, Spaniard (61); Virgilio Lozoya, Spaniard (69); Natalio Luis Gargiulo, Argentinian (30).

At the time of writing (May 4), efforts are being made to secure the release of these comrades.

The Federation Obrera Regional Argentine, founded in 1901 and with its head office in the working-class port area of Buenos Aires, is a federation of syndicalist trade-unions, having sections for portworkers, drivers, plumbers and building workers. It also has very friendly relations with the independent syndicalist shipbuilding union, Federacion Obreros en Construcciones Navales. Although the FORA is nowhere near as strong as it was at its peak, it is still an active organisation and is well known in Argentina. Its May Day activities were reported on TV and in the press.

A re-union conference was held here in Buenos Aires from May 22–28, which successfully re-united the two previously separated factions of the FORA. There is now only one united FORA.

JOHN O'BRIEN

ENGINEERS' SHUTDOWN (cont.)

trade a decent price for greater productivity in exchange for abrogating restrictive practices framed for morons.

Of course I may be wrong, and whatever the workers do the bosses may insist upon a showdown. In that case, perhaps the solidarity which will be built up on the shop floor may lead to doubt in the whole system under which we live and work. And that will be a first short step nearer to workers' control and the elimination of both industrial bosses and trade union bureaucrats.

JIM PETTER

SAC manifesto

SWEDEN'S Syndicalist unions, SAC (Central Organisation of Swedish Workers), who have a growing membership of well over 20,000, published an excellent May Day Manifesto, which makes clear their position in the present world situation. Here are some extracts:

"It is obvious that the struggle between oppressors and oppressed, between the rich and the poor parts of the world, is entering a decisive stage. We understand the violent eruptions of men and women hit by hunger and despair, and we cannot find anything propitiating in the rich peoples' efforts to maintain, by the help of napalm bombs and other terror weapons, a situation which every day becomes more untenable . . . There is a lugubrious symbolism in the fact that the US, incomparably the richest nation of the world, has not been able to find a reasonable solution of the problems of starvation and race discrimination within its own frontiers . . . What happened to Martin Luther King continually happens to millions of nameless human beings and offers confirmation of the fact that, so far, the dominated masses of the world have had to be content with *declarations* of freedom and have not been educated to responsibility and participation in *building* freedom . . . To the peoples of poor and oppressed countries, napalm bombs and democracy melt together to a common notion: *napalmocracy*.

"But the prevailing state of things in our world does not offer a uniformly dark picture, stained with violence and oppression. Simultaneously a wind of freedom is blowing . . . With infinite satisfaction we greet the demonstrations for freedom, justice and, particularly, the right of self-determination, among students and other intellectuals in the East as well as in the West . . . We firmly believe that more is to come, despite the fact that the authorities (in the East) do not hesitate to take up the mantle of Nazism, shouting about the Jews being the originators of what is happening. We also note that this revolt of Youth has in many places taken place in the name of Syndicalism and that elements of syndicalist ideology have been given a renewed importance."

Spanish workers demonstrate

DESPITE the threat of massive police repression, workers in Spain demonstrated their opposition to the Franco regime and voiced their demand for free unions on May Day. Despite massive police concentrations in the centre of Madrid, several hundred workers gathered there on the afternoon of May 1 and, before being savagely batoned with many arrests, succeeded in affirming their demands. Demonstrations took place in many other Spanish cities and towns, notably Barcelona, Bilbao and Valencia. May Day manifestoes, distributed by the CNT and FAI, have since been republished by the Spanish libertarian press in exile.

IWMA's international call

A MAY DAY Manifesto from the International Working Men's Association, "To the workers of all countries", reaffirmed our International's struggle to end capitalist and state society and to replace it by one based on workers' ownership and control. In a reference to the Vietnam War, it stated: "The most powerful State in the world, with its super-perfected war material, its giant bombers, its tanks, its napalm and every possible means of destruction, under the phoney pretext of opposing the advance of communism, is striving to destroy the people of a small country who, with unexampled courage, is defending its independence and freedom and does not want to allow the law of the strongest to be imposed on it."

POWELL AND THE THREAT OF FASCISM

SOME time ago, apropos the Campaign to Back Britain's Bosses, I tried to show how far the symptoms of British politics are all pre-fascist. A disheartened, reformist left; an intelligentsia that has retreated to drugs and ivory towerism; a reformist centre that has patently failed to reform anything, and an economic malaise. Fortunately, the capitalists were peculiarly unsubtle in their support for the Britain Backers and frightened off the few tame trade unionists by their obviously slanted appeal. Then, with an extraordinary contempt for public opinion and disregard of their own image, the Colt Heating employers—having benefited by the additional half-hours of voluntary work to the point that they were able to cut staff—sacked some of the foolish virgins. On that occasion, the stupidity of the bosses prevented them from making full use of their opportunities. But the fact remains that Britain is rotten ripe for fascist adventures, as the recent support for Enoch Powell has shown.

HOW FASCISM AROSE

But in saying this (and that Enoch Powell is an arrant and leprous racist), one is not necessarily saying Powell is himself a fascist. Fascism by definition is economically interventionist, it is a highly centralised form of State managerialist-capitalism, and it is therefore used by capitalists only as a last resort. When the working class cannot be won to support for the traditional *laissez-faire* right, then the "forces of order", if unable to maintain their power in any other way, combine anti-foreigner racism with the sop of social welfare schemes to win support.

Powell (and this does not necessarily include Nabarro, certainly does not include Pearman) is committed inextricably to *laissez-faire*; to cuts in social welfare, in pay and in health and in education facilities; he demands a frontal onslaught on the power of the unions, increases in council house rents and the rest of the High Tory case. On this basis, while a racist speech of his may get temporary support, he can never hope in the long term to win any appreciable working-class base. Workers who march for him today, will tomorrow return to voting Labour and it would be out of character for a high Tory to lead the equivalent of Mussolini's march on Rome. While, despite what the Communist Party says, fascist revolutions are not, repeat *not*, made by workers occupying factories—an action no capitalist financier would sponsor.

"WE'LL CALL IT ANTI-FASCISM"

Both in Germany (die Freie Korps) and in Italy (Uomo Qualunque) before fascism rose, there were earlier movements which, on an economically rightist basis, were able to win temporary working-class support through ultra-nationalism. But while in Italy Gabrielle d'Annunzio was able to get workers to March on Fiume and to yell for all Socialist deputies to be thrown in the River Tiber, he could not get them to vote for the traditional Right or march to restore the power of the Monarchy; the ex-servicemen's groups (fascies) were all pro-d'Annunzio, but not until Mussolini bound them into a single party with a nominally Socialist policy and its own trade unions could these become a real danger. Similarly, it was when Roehm welded the Freie Korps into the National Socialist German Workers' Party that fascism rose in Germany. Hitler is recorded as saying that he beat the Communists and Social-Democrats because he yelled more loudly than them for social revolution and because he used red more freely in his posters.

In Notting Hill, nearly ten years ago, there were frequent attacks by youths on coloured immigrants; undoubtedly many

of the youths were influenced by the White Defence League and the Union Movement, both fascist organisations with some strength in the area. But Mosley received a derisory vote. Some of the youth, interviewed in the *New Statesman*, said they read fascist pamphlets, but they considered fascists to be on the side of the bosses and had no intention of voting for them. (As the Labour MP for the area was said by most activists of coloured people's organisations to be worse than Mosley, this did not mean an awful lot. Incidentally, this gentleman has been appointed chairman of the parliamentary committee to push through the Race Relations Bill, which Labour "Leftists" herald as a wonderful new liberal reform.)

The youth expressed admiration for the Communists, who symbolised that power which their sado-masochistic urges needed to admire, and who were allegedly not on the side of the bosses. As Britain fought a war allegedly against fascism, the remnants of the fascist groups are openly equated with the political right and it is precisely this connection that fascism set out to disavow, knowing it could not otherwise win the workers. For this reason, any authentic future fascist movement will remember Huey Long's words, "When fascism comes to America, we will call it anti-fascism," and for this reason Pearman's supporters among the dockers get far more annoyed than would Powell at being called fascist.

THE REAL MENACE

Powell has not got what it takes to be a fuehrer, but if Powellism goes on much longer, one of his leading working-class supporters may consolidate his own position and go into racist politics on his own account with a fascist programme and some new name.

In the meantime, overmuch concentration on Powell may well divert our attention from the real danger. For while Quintin Hogg refused to continue to serve on the Shadow Cabinet with Powell and said the Conservatives must choose between his approach and Powell's, he was nevertheless proposing on behalf of the Tories measures very much in line with Powell's within the week. Not to be outdone, Judith Hart—still a darling of the Labour "Left"—was on the radio on May 3 to detail the Labour Party's schemes for encouraging the repatriation of immigrants. This is the substance, of which Powellism is merely the shadow. Menacing though the shadow may be, it is no use attacking it while ignoring the fact that racist measures are being enacted by the centre consensus, even while this consensus produces liberal phrases to damn Powell.

It is in this light that one must examine the tendency now apparent on the "Revolutionary Left" to call for the burying of all differences to fight Powell. Only those who really are sectarian, whose past divisions have been based not on theory, but a desire to have their own little groups merely for the sake of having them, should fall for this one. Serious critics of the Social-democrat reformism, the readiness of the Communist Party to change its position overnight, or the vanguardist-élitism and indifference to the wishes of the rank and file manifested by other Leninists, know that at moments of crisis such as this, more than at any other time, these evils handicap the working class. Experience has shown that when capitalist-democracy collapses and cannot continue, when the only viable alternative to fascism is Social Revolution, then the reformists and CPers start calling for a Popular Front on the basis of maintaining an untenable *status quo*. By so doing, they cut the ground from under the feet of the real working-class opponents of fascism.

LAURENS OTTER

THE CIVIL DEFENCE FRAUD

IT HAS been stated by the Minister of Defence that Civil Defence is to be disbanded and is to be reduced to a "care and maintenance basis".

Before those who have opposed this halfwitted organisation, and its attempts to make the public war-minded and more receptive to propaganda designed to make them think nuclear war is somehow "acceptable", rush off to celebrate, I would say, "Think a little". It is not the fact that the opposition to Civil Defence has influenced the government that prompted the Minister's statement, but that the powers that be are no longer even going to pretend that the civilian population can be defended in World War 3.

The Regional Seats of Government, the 14 RSGs throughout the country as survival boltholes for senior bureaucrats, are *still in existence and fully operational*. Many cities also have smaller command posts and shelters; these have not been closed down. Despite the fact that Civil Defence has been officially shut down, local bigwigs still have their boltholes, *unknown in most cases to the local population*.

Some cities have refused to sack their Civil Defence officers, others are setting up their own local schemes. Some of these schemes will be shrouded with even more secrecy than the present murky effort.

Since almost every local council is run by the local big business set-up (including places with Labour councils) it follows that these new local quasi-military elements could be effectively used for other purposes than Civil Defence. You've got it brother, STRIKE-BREAKING. Let's suppose the workers of a major city come out in sympathy with, say, the local busmen. Everything stops, the bosses would have to give in . . . OR WOULD THEY? Not if they had a readymade workforce, under para-military discipline, trained to replace the workers in such trades as power, transport and health. With such a body the bosses and the authorities could keep things running long enough until the people were starved back to work. So, if you council is planning to set up its own little force, under the guise of "helping the community in floods" and all that, then watch it. Lots of places never see a flood, but there are plenty of strikes.

In my own city, Aberdeen, preparations are well advanced for setting up such a force. THIS POTENTIAL STRIKE-BREAKING SERVICE WAS SET UP UNDER A LABOUR COUNCIL. Now the Tories are taking it up. One of the vilest points about the whole thing is that schoolchildren are to be recruited into this thing. Plans are being laid to tour city schools inviting senior pupils to join. Don't let your kid get conned into this. It will only turn out something like the infamous "Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies", which used Boy Scouts, students and

office workers to help crush the General Strike in 1926. Office workers will be involved in this, too; plans are being laid to recruit council staff to this racket.

There is some rank-and-file opposition to it among trade unionists in the council employ, but it must be remembered that most of the big town bosses are in total control of the local branch of NALGO, the clerks union.

If you find anything out about this sinister new ploy by our crooked council, let the Aberdeen SWF know. We will publish the facts, the local press, we can rest assured, will remain silent. Just like they always do. Only the people can drag this lot into the light.

ABERDEEN WORKER

MRA creeps back

SOME recent events in Aberdeen, and concerning Scotland generally, have pointed to the fact that Moral Re-Armament is creeping back again since they entered a bit of a decline after being made to look pretty stupid by John Calder in the famous "Edinburgh Nude" trial.

It is common knowledge to left-wing workers in Aberdeen that sections of the Labour movement in the city have been well infiltrated by MRA, particularly the Aberdeen city Labour Party. The election agent for Donald Dewar MP is a notorious MRA member and wields a position of some influence in the local TGWU. This union appears to have been their major target in Aberdeen. Full time officials of the TGWU are also said to be members.

Censorship has now become an issue in Aberdeen. Just the other day a bookseller was done for selling *Fanny Hill*. The raid on his shop was certainly inspired by MRA. A few months ago, city magistrates banned *Ulysses*. Some of the viewing magistrates were members of MRA.

The young too are being got at by MRA's neo-fascist propaganda. MRA shows—disgusting displays of ultra-nationalism—are put on in local school halls, with the connivance of the local education committee. Schoolchildren have been pressurised by staff to attend these little shows. Funny, how we've never heard any of our local "left" Labour councillors protest about the use of educational facilities to brainwash city children! Perhaps they know better than anyone the extent of MRA penetration of the Labour Party. If they spoke out, perhaps they wouldn't be councillors much longer.

Again, our Labour council gives a massive subsidy to a local theatre owner (who virtually has a monopoly in entertainment). When he refused to allow a play, *The Killing of Sister George*, to be shown on his stage, did we hear the left wingers, one of whom is City Treasurer, demand an end to the subsidy?

There has been an increasing MRA influence in Aberdeen, most of it strictly behind the scenes. Workers at an Aberdeen shipyard have had to put up with little MRA playlets during their dinner hour from time to time. The first rigged-up prosecution for selling "indecent" books (with MRA deciding what is indecent) has taken place. Something must be done to stop it. If any workers have any information about the activities of MRA in Aberdeen, tell the SWF. We alone stand against such neo-fascist groups. The "traditional" Labour movement is ridden with them.

IAN S. SUTHERLAND

FREE FRENCH (cont.)

in a Communist country. His friendship is not particularly important to Russia, which would equally be able to trade with a Popular Front Government, but it is vitally important to Mao, who cannot afford to see people he supports play an active role in De Gaulle's overthrow. Marshal Amir and King Faisal might suspect he was double-dealing them; for a long time while the Chinese Embassy here hasn't exactly welcomed the various Maoist sects that have broken with the CP, the one in France has positively discouraged their French equivalents. This will have many interesting repercussions, on this front as on so many others.

JEAN FRANCOIS

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