

DIRECT ACTION

PRICE ONE PENNY

HOUSING REVOLT

Workers Refused to Await Election Results—
Took Direct Action.

The uselessness of parliamentarism was shown in no uncertain manner during the Election. The politicians of the various parties made their usual promises—houses, jobs, “social security” etc. The usual “scares” were raised by the Tories. Bevin, Morrison, Attlee & Co., rehashed the speeches made by MacDonald, Snowden, Thomas & Co. after the last war for democracy. It all seemed very familiar. The same old gang with the same old promises and the same chances of the promises being made good. The mixture as before.

Meanwhile, news reaches us from the industrial field throughout the country of increased “redundancy” (longer dole queues in plain language) and dropping wages. The housing situation gets steadily worse, and the food shortage does not improve. Coal, we are informed, is to be in shorter supply than ever next winter. The piping days of peace have returned!

The solutions offered by the politicians give no cause for optimism. The Tories offer us Churchill’s “four-year plan.” It seems hardly necessary to repeat that the Tories represent the interests of the landowners, industrialists and bankers. Any “plan” put into operation by them will aim at safeguarding the class-position (and profits) of the capitalists. It matters little to them that the worker is jobless and without a house—the profit’s the thing.

The Labour Party’s aim is reforms. The record of Labour in office in 1924 and again in 1929, together with the role played by Mr. Churchill’s Labour ministers during the war should be enough. The Labour governments were responsible for applying the Emergency Powers Act and the Anomalies Act (forerunner of the Means Test), for bombing the people of Iraq and for sending unemployed girls into domestic slavery. They did little or nothing about unemployment and housing. They just talked.

The Communists, in a pre-election pamphlet “Your Vote — how will you use it?” advocated a new “National Government” to be formed by the Labour, Liberal and Communist(!) Parties, if they succeeded in gaining a majority, to include “Tories like Churchill and Eden.”

Let us make our position clear. There will be no end to the social evils which confront us today under the capitalist system. Nothing, therefore, will be achieved by voting for politicians. They do not aim to destroy capitalism only, in some cases, to reform it. The capitalists will only use the “democratic” facade of Parliament as long as it suits them. If they felt their power threatened by any parliamentary party, Parliament would be abolished.

Voting solves nothing. The only way to change things is by direct action.

During the housing shortage after the last war, workers successfully seized and occupied property. Reports from Brighton indicate that the “Vigilantes” committee there are using the same method in order to find houses for ex-servicemen’s families. While families are forced to live four and five in one room in London at the present time there are dozens of houses standing empty in the middle-class districts. The remedy is surely simple enough?

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Demobilisation

Remembering the mutinies and mass desertions from the army after the last war, the Ruling Class have carefully prepared a demobilisation plan to prevent a repetition of these events.

Under this plan Age and Service Group Numbers have been allocated to all members of the Forces. The particular group into which each man falls is calculated by coupling the year of birth with length of War Service. Reckonable service embodies all time with the colours since 3rd September 1939 with the following exceptions:—

- (a) Release to the Reserve.
- (b) Absence without leave.
- (c) Leave without pay.
- (d) Time spent in desertion.
- (e) Time spent in detention, imprisonment or field service punishment.

All this plan gives is the order of demobilisation—no more. It does not give any indication as to when a man is going to be demobbed. The first twelve groups of the army will be out by the middle of August; the next eight or so may be out by the end of the year; the remainder—who knows? Next year—the year after—sometime in the future?

Realising some of the men may get "brownd off" waiting to be demobbed and decide to take the law into their own hands by deserting as their fathers did after the last war, an amendment was added to the plan which states:—

"In the case of (d) time in desertion, a soldier who deserts on or after the 1st February 1945, forfeits for the purpose of release, all service prior to the date of such desertion on conviction of desertion by Court Martial."

If a soldier deserts now and is caught, after serving a period of detention he will be placed in the demobilisation group in which he would have been if he had just joined, and made to do all his service again.

By this plan the Ruling Class have a greater strangle-hold on members of the Forces, conscripts or volunteers, than they have ever had before. The Armed Forces have not realised it yet, but they will in time, and then —

The War Office now states that if a man deserts and has taken the awarded punishment, all he has to do to restore his forfeited service is to keep clear of an adverse entry in his regimental conduct sheet for 18 months. This does not alter the position much when one remembers a soldier can be charged for such petty things as forgetting to polish his great-coat buttons or failing to salute an officer. It is obviously aimed at making an ex-deserter more servile.

BILL LEAN

HOUSING REVOLT

(Continued from page 1)

When the tubes were closed at the beginning of the "blitz", and we were told they could not be used as shelters the workers of London walked in and occupied them. The authorities were powerless.

Direct action can be applied on other fields. If you want results don't leave it to the politicians—do the job yourselves!

By the use of direct action workers will learn that their's is the power if they have the will to use it. From there it will be a short step to the revolutionary struggle to put an end to capitalism and class-rule through Workers' Control of Industry.

From the Socialist Sixth of the World

Sydney Thursday.—Relations are strained between the Soviet Legation in Australia and the Commonwealth Government over the publication of views allegedly hostile to the Soviet Union reports a correspondent of the "Sydney Sun". These views were expressed by Mr. Joseph Maloney, Australian minister in the U.S.S.R.

During a recent visit home Mr. Maloney addressed a private meeting of the Federal Parliamentary Labour Party and it is widely known that the opinions he expressed about the U.S.S.R. were not favourable. They are said to have included these points:—

(1) The Russians have created a new aristocracy in so far as Communist Party members and high-ranking technicians are treated infinitely better than ordinary workers.

(2) Restaurants have five types of ration tickets dependent on the type of work done and the ticket holders standing in the Communist Party.

(3) In consequence, class distinction is as rigorous as it was in Czarist Russia.

(4) Black market operations take place without disguise in Government-controlled stores.

(5) Those in high positions can obtain almost anything they want, while ordinary workers have to go without.

It is understood that the Soviet Legation protested to the Australian External Affairs Department and asked for an explanation. The Australian Government is having quite a headache in phrasing the explanation.

How tactless, Mr. Maloney!

Spanish Comrades Freed from German Camps

News has just reached us that 400 Spanish comrades have been rescued alive from two concentration camps in Germany. The names of Mauthausen and Gusen II will be remembered by Spanish anti-fascists for generations to come. Some 8,000 of them mostly comrades from our Movement were imprisoned here after they had been handed over to the Germans following the fall of France. Over 7,000 of them were killed.

The records of the camps were taken over by our comrades from the fleeing Camp authorities at the time when the Americans advanced on the area. They show that more than 30,000 persons of all nationalities were murdered in these two camps, the greatest contingent being Jews.

The tragic exodus that shocked the world in the early months of 1939, when over a million people crossed the Pyrenees into France rather than surrender to Reaction had a still ghastlier postscript.

We shall not forget these unsung and forgotten fighters against Fascism and for human emancipation.

NOTES and COMMENTS . . .

If anyone called Mr. Harry Cowley, the leader of the Brighton Vigilantes and his various disciples up and down the country Anarchists, they would probably protest indignantly. If they ever heard of such an animal they very likely think that an Anarchist runs around with live bombs in his pockets and a knife between his teeth looking for people to assassinate. Or alternatively they believe that anarchists are utopian idealists partial to beards and weird and wonderful garments. Yet by their very actions they are putting a fundamental part of Anarchist doctrine into practice. And, what's more, they are showing us how successful it can be. We owe them special thanks for helping to dispel the notion that Anarchism is "impractical" that "modern Society is too complex for ordinary people to run it themselves". These lightning house removals require a good deal of organisation and friendly co-operation. If they can be achieved in one field of social activity who would deny that they can be equally successfully extended to all others.

DIRECT ACTION is the order of the day. The extraordinary and almost solicitous tolerance with which the fact is accepted by all and sundry ought to be an inspiration to the people. Some people need houses so they go and take them where they are. Some Canadians want to get back home, they start throwing stones. "Food Queue Revolt growing", our evening paper inform us. Taxpayer, magistrate and ordinary citizen are daily shocked by their breakfast paper. The worst shock however is not so much the lawlessness of these people. The real evil of it is that they get away with it. As a result of their Direct Action, homeless people have roofs over their heads, Canadians go home, housewives get their shopping done. Society is in peril indeed

Those, who with us, feel that a change would be all to the good and don't spend sleepless nights because of the threat to society, would nevertheless do well not to overrate these events. Direct Action is increasing and it proves the right method for the fight. But the cowed silence and tolerance with which it seems to be accepted is, by itself, not a sign of a better future. The Have's are keeping quiet to-day because they are weak, and frightened by the angry mood of their victims, in and out of khaki. But a single show of complacency on the part of the people will be enough to set them off again. Heavy feet are hiding ready to step on the worm at the first opportunity. The worm's only hope is to keep on turning. There is only one defence for the Have-Not, and that is attack.

An interesting slow-motion film is now on view at the London Docks. "The slow motion of the camera reveals the hidden secrets in the life of that little known animal, the worker", says the commentator. And revelations are not slow in coming. "The Times", for instance, has learned from the go-slow action of the dockers, that their pay-roll, by working on time-rate instead of the "incentive" system of piece-rate, has dropped from £95 to £65. The cost of unloading a ship at the same time increased from £850 to £1,900. So the owners, were generously offering 50% to the dockers, as "incentive bonus" in order to economise some 125% of their cost. At least we know now, for whom the incentive

works in the bonus system. Surely we can take "The Times'" word for it.

Talking of the cinema, the producers of the "Big Three" greatest star team ever assembled have been guilty of very bad stage management. To call a meeting so that the three very Christian gentlemen can settle all the problems of the world in amicable agreement may be in the best Hollywood tradition. But they slipped up when they chose their location. The sordid haggles of Russian politics and vegetables against Anglo-Saxon coal and politics in Berlin (with the Germans paying through the nose for their "warguilt" by serving as live shuttle-cocks) provided, to say the least, an unsuitable back-drop to a display of brotherly unity and love. Such involuntary contrasts are apt to make people think. And when ordinary people begin to think the consequences may be disastrous.

By all accounts we are facing a terrible shortage of manpower. We can't travel, we can't buy clothes and food because there are no workers. With industrial employment about double of its pre-war peak, Britain is unable to produce the goods for its own consumption even at the restricted war-time level. Some evening papers tried to sell us the story that this is because the requirements of the war in the East are still engaging the munitions production at full capacity. But you don't have to be working in the industry to know that that is nonsense. The dismissal of thousands of workers for redundancy from nearly every big engineering firm is common knowledge. What is the real explanation of the mystery?

The answer is that the trades blaming the lack of workers for their low output are not offering a living wage. They want workers badly but they must be cheap. If the workers hold out for better conditions, the employers will hold their hand, hoping that the demobilisation of greater masses will drive the wage-level down. In the meantime, if you can't eat or travel, it is the fault of the worker: the lazy so and so does not want to work for nothing

The workers in war industries have their own way of anticipating the bosses' attack on their conditions. Unable to rely on the protection of their Trade organisations they all try to find their individual solution: A goes into business with his brother; B goes back north to the family; C leaves the job at holiday-time and when he returns, he'll look round his old trade to find a good job; etc. The control of the Ministry of Labour has become largely nominal and we are witnessing a huge scramble, to get out of old and into new jobs while the going is good. A few will solve this individual problem in this way. But eight out of ten are in for a bitter disillusionment: there is no "private" escape from the social conflict of our time.

Election footnote: An election candidate was speaking in a little Continental village hall. For half an hour he expounded a bridge building project which he would push through Parliament for the village if they elected him. When he sat down a man got up in the back of the hall and said: "That certainly was a beautiful speech, only there is no river nearer than 20 miles from our village." The candidate was non-plussed for a moment, then he replied: "Well just elect me and I shall see that you get a river too, see if I don't."

July 19th - An Anniversary

Once again we remember July 19, 1936, when the revolutionary workers of Spain rose and manned the barricades over-running the useless machinery of the State to face and defeat the forces of reaction. Abandoned by the world around, sold out by the "democracies"—who saw only chaos and "anarchy" in their struggle—they fought Fascism alone. With their scanty resources and improvising their battle as they went along, they showed the world their capacity for constructive effort while around them bourgeois society crumbled under the impact of the Fascist attack. "Law and order" were no longer an adequate protection, the capitalist system required the establishment of Fascism in Spain. Such a system offered the easiest opportunity of gaining access to the natural riches of the country and exploiting them cheaply. But a people rose in arms from every corner of the Peninsula, prepared to fight, and on July 19th, 1936, the flame of revolutionary Spain shot up like a symbol and a challenge.

The Fascist countries of Europe took up that challenge and a bloody but glorious battle raged for thirty months. This first opposition to Fascist aggression was cowardly neglected and ignored not only by the other States of Europe, but even—with few exceptions—by the workers of France, Britain and other countries. They were to pay dearly later for their indecision and neglect as Fascist aggression grew bolder.

The CNT-FAI because of their past revolutionary experience had from the beginning great influence among the people. But they did not offer their "leadership". Instead they maintained: "THE EMANCIPATION OF EVERY MAN IS HIS OWN SUPREME OBJECTIVE". The individualistic character of the Spanish people could not find a better expression than this fundamental principle of Anarchism.

Today when the progressive forces in the world have suffered their greatest set-back, when we watch the gradual demoralisation and corruption of their organisations, we will do well to remember this day and what it commemorates. We will do well to redefine and reiterate the meaning of Anarchism, for the benefit of those who do not know and others who willfully misinterpret it.

Anarchism is a practical reality constantly directing thoughts and actions of its militants in their daily life, not a platform for demagogy or a "dreamer's paradise".

Anarchism creates an active state of mind, a constant mobilisation in the fight for the common people's emancipation in whatever form or sphere of our every-day existence not a state-licensed reformist institution fighting for pennies by gracious permission of the oppressors, nor an ivory tower in which the discontented can sulk and call down perdition on the "miserable and worthless rabble"

In Spain the revolution of the people, inspired by anarchist ideas laid the foundations of a free and collective economy. It established a general respect for the freedom of the individual in a free society. All this was achieved by the co-operation of the people not by imposition, for imposition is the

opposite of Anarchism. Though the new society succumbed to overwhelming military strength, it has shown us the way to a better future. It will be our task to convince our fellow men that by our common efforts we can build it again in Spain and anywhere else.

SPANISH REVOLUTION MEETINGS

July 19th, 1936 - 1945.

A successful meeting in commemoration of the Spanish Revolution was held by the A.F.B. (London Group) on July 19th at the Holborn Hall. A number of Spanish comrades were in the audience. Bill Lean was chairman.

Ken Hawkes opened the meeting by stressing the necessity of applying the methods of direct action, used by the Spanish workers in 1936, to the struggle here.

J. Garcia Pradas (ex-Editor of the daily C.N.T. in Madrid) spoke of the tendency to absolute state control of which the revolt of the Spanish state against the Spanish people was a part. He pointed out that the events in Spain could easily be repeated in Britain. The only alternative for the workers of Britain and the world was anarchist organisation.

Tom Brown dealt with the futility of parliamentarism. The only effective method of struggle for the workers was working-class direct action, with the aim of workers control of industry, as carried out in the Spanish Revolution.

Jimmy Dick, speaking as delegate of the A.F.B. (Glasgow group) said that the great lesson of Spain to him was the outstanding fact that workers' control and state control had nothing in common. Workers' control is anarchism; state control is fascism. The workers must organise their might to assert their right to a better life for all. Churchill had pointed out time and again that the London workers could take "it", but when it came to taking houses or anything else, it seemed those were not included in "it".

CLYDESIDE

The Spanish Revolution was the subject of meetings held by the Glasgow Group on Sunday, July 15th, at the A.F.B. Hall, 23 Wilson Street; Brunswick Street; Paisley and Hamilton. Speakers included Denis McGlynn, Sammy Lawson, Bill Boland, Tom Reilly, Jimmy Dick, Willy Johnston and Joe Brown.

STOP PRESS

We expect by the time this reaches you Mr. Attlee will have received the King's O.K. Mr. Churchill is dead, long live Mr. Attlee. The Whip that Churchill used on us was getting rather worn. We have no doubt Attlee is flexing a brand new one. Before it descends on our backs lets organise to take over industry. **Remember Germany 1933 and Spain, 1936. Act Now!**