

Direct Action

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION

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Fourpence

Inside—Building unions and amalgamation : Factory for Peace : Conscription an all-party threat

FIGHT VICTIMISATION

No Ford treatment for Calum MacKay !

IT was reported in the June issue of DA, that the workers of Remington Rand typewriter factory, in Glasgow, had returned to work after a four-week dispute. They went back on the understanding that negotiations would be reopened, to reinstate their convenor.

On June 12, national officials met the Engineering Employers Federation at York and the decision NOT to reinstate MacKay was confirmed. John Boyd, Scottish member of the AEU executive, said there was deadlock. Procedure had been exhausted and both sides were now free to take any action they choose within the rules.

The chips are down, the workers must decide, either they

will get Calum MacKay reinstated at all costs or he is EXPENDABLE. The engineering industry is notorious for its blacklisting, therefore at some stage and at some time a stand has got to be made.

It was reported that during the dispute the spirit of solidarity in Glasgow was fairly solid. Shop stewards representing about 100,000 workers in engineering factories throughout Clydeside met to discuss strike action.

Can this solidarity be rekindled? Remember the "Bell Ringer" at Fords, Dagenham? OUT. Remember the PTU steward at John Browns Boilers? OUT. Remember the 13 at Fords, Dagenham? OUT. These are cases we know about—there must be many more who have been bundled out under some pretext or other.

Fords (Dagenham) tried it on and WON—if any more win, a shop steward credential will be a passport to the Labour Exchange.

A bad State of nerves

Salisbury, S. Rhodesia

THE new Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, extreme right-winger Ian Smith, who recently replaced the more moderate Winston Field as Rhodesian Front leader, might well be judged by his friends. The only organisation in Britain to send him best wishes on his ascendancy to power was the League of Empire Loyalists. He has even aroused opposition in the settler press in Rhodesia and right-wing Tories in Britain tend to keep their support very cool.

The short, nervous Premiership of this man has been outstanding for its ruthlessness. He has imprisoned without trial his main African opponents, in fact some 150 Africans are restricted without trial in two concentration camps in this country. Another 100 women, some with babies, are in prison serving a three-month sentence for demonstrating at the restriction of Joshua Nkomo, the African nationalist, and further restrictions on a wide scale are imminent. It is rumoured that a camp for Europeans is being prepared—they will, of course, be kept separate from Africans.

Unrest has marked the months of the Smith era; sabotage, stone throwing, attacks on European women in a store in the centre of Salisbury, unruly demonstrations, an attempted

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For the Liaison Committee of the CNT in GB.
A. ROA, Secretary

London, June 9, 1964

State of nerves, cont.

general strike and nervous emigration. Over a thousand Europeans are leaving Southern Rhodesia monthly. In five months this year the number of emigrants has passed last year's total.

The state of nerves has been heightened by pronouncements by Smith and his Cabinet colleagues. Daily comes reliable information that Smith intends to declare unilateral independence within a few months. This is a last hope by the whites here to halt the pressure of African nationalism from the north. Smith has said that negotiations with Britain are wishful thinking, which is hardly surprising, since he has stated that he will not have an African Government in his lifetime.

The army is reported to be loyal to the Governor and to the Crown, but Smith has said that the Queen is the Queen of Rhodesia and that to defy the British Government is not showing disloyalty to the Queen. There are reports that Smith will declare a State of Emergency and then call out European reservists, who will obey Smith without question. He will then arrest the Governor and declare independence.

If Britain tries to intervene by sending troops to Northern Rhodesia, there is a plan for the Rhodesian Air Force to bomb Copper refineries in Northern Rhodesia. Help is expected from South Africa, both financial and military.

A Rhodesian Front member has recently stated that independence will be declared "when the world explodes", which he thinks is likely to happen shortly. Other Government members, some of them Cabinet members, openly support a declaration of independence coupled with the implementation of apartheid on the lines of South Africa.

These dangerous people, similar to the OAS types in Algeria, with their own Air Force and Army, are not to be laughed at. They can do great harm, they will gladly slaughter thousands to maintain white power and privilege in the country. They may be our kith and kin but they are no more to be trusted than the British fascist Oswald Mosley—they are racialists and tough, cruel dictatorial characters who are enraged at the least opposition and are censoring press, radio and television.

They are the friends of Salazar, Franco, Verwoerd—they are out to create Bantustans in the name of white civilisation, they are apartheid men who will do anything to keep power in uncivilised hands.

KALI

ITINERANTS STAY PUT

THE itinerants' school destroyed by Dublin Corporation will be re-built with funds collected in Canada by the World Romany Community—if the authorities do not evict the 200 rebel travellers from their present camp on the outskirts of Dublin.

Following international backing, officials dared not at the start of the month launch a frontal attack on the camp. But skirmishing operations were carried out.

Three public pumps in the area have been turned off, leaving the travellers to journey two miles for water. Corporation employees are engaged in walling up every possible alternative site with concrete posts.

At camp meetings it has been resolved to meet any eviction attempts with the same passive-resistance tactics as used throughout the winter.

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from: Bill Christopher, 34 Cumberland Road, London, E.17
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PIECEWORK—STILL THE BOSSES' BEST FOREMAN

SHOP stewards committee, representing 1,250 trade union members at the BMC Morris Motors in North Oxford is imposing a ceiling on the earnings of piece-workers and advocating mobility of labour within the factory. As we all know, "piecework" can keep workers' noses harder to the grindstone than any employer-loving foreman, so shop stewards have taken these steps to avoid redundancy and excessive short-time working.

A union spokesman said they had put an end to short-time working, which had been operating in parts of the factory for some weeks. This is an example of workers organising production for their own benefit, to counter the jungle of fluctuating over-production.

STILL OUT AND FIGHTING

WORKERS at the Denby Mill in Yorkshire are still fighting a dispute which has lasted SEVEN MONTHS. The strike is over the right to belong to a union. The mill has been picketed every working day, despite the bitter winter months, despite scabs being brought in by closed cars and vans, and despite the beatings and banner headlines of the reactionary *Yorkshire Post*. Financial support has been first-class amounting to £10,000 to date. The effect on production in the mill is speculative; it does seem that drastic "direct action" is urgently needed.

SHOP STEWARDS AT SEA

A GAIN the NUS conference demanded shop stewards aboard ship and warned that they were no longer prepared to be the only workers unrepresented on the job. In 1962 the union leadership were forced to drop their opposition to shipboard representation, but since that date their boots have certainly been filled with lead on this issue. It was to be raised again on June 18 at a joint meeting with the shipowners. They dare not return to the rank and file with NO this time.

LIVERPOOL DOCKS

LIVERPOOL dockers have gone back to work on the understanding that the piecework arrangements for unloading a Russian timber ship will be examined immediately. According to various reports the full-time union officials were slow to inspect the complaint when called on to do so by the dockers; therefore the rank and file had to jerk them into action.

Press reports of the dispute have tried to fan the differences between the "white" T & GWU and the "blue" NASDU, but it is obvious that Liverpool dockers are dissatisfied with conditions in general, particularly the employers' decasualisation scheme, which union officials are reported to have recommended.

PIT TAKE OVER

SICILIAN miners have occupied a pit because 87 of their mates have been given the sack. Let's hope the mine-owners never get the bloody pit back.

MARTELL—HEAD WITCH

THE editorial of the *New Daily* (30.5.64), headed "A Necessary Witch Hunt", supported "Common Cause", the all-party organisation "designed to protect democratic institutions from disruptive infiltration." "Common Cause" has just circulated a new list of over 150 extreme Left-wing trade unionists and others to MP's and officials. Martell thinks it's a good way to embarrass the Labour Party. My life, you can't teach this boy anything about opportunism, he is the master.

BILL CHRISTOPHER

Union amalgamation in the building industry

PLANS for amalgamation of unions in the building industry have been drawn up for some time now, having never been put to the rank and file membership. They are the brainchild of Mr. Harry Weaver, general secretary of the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives. His idea is that the unions should first merge to form three groups, roughly covering the "trowel" trades, the woodworking group and, finally, plumbing and engineering.

The "trowel" trade unions have already agreed in principle to a merger. These include the Scottish plasterers, the Scottish Slaters and Tilers and Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers. The last named, easily the largest of the seven unions involved, has 80,000 members. If the merger materialises, this grouping will have about 100,000 members.

Recently, at TUC talks on amalgamation of the "trowel" trades, the two large general unions, the Transport and General Workers and the General and Municipal Workers, both said they would not withdraw and intended to continue organising labourers within the industry. Actually a large proportion of labourers, as well as bricklayers, are in the AUBTW. The two general unions claim about 77,000 members and will no doubt jealously guard against any loss of membership and their position at other TUC industrial talks on amalgamation.

With the likelihood of amalgamation, you can bet that officials, especially top ones, are watching out for their jobs and seeking every opportunity to secure for themselves the highest positions in their particular groups. Mr. George Lowthian, general secretary of the AUBTW, who recently became chairman of the TUC, is one of these.

In the woodworking section of the industry, Mr. George Smith, general secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, is head, not only of the most powerful union, but also the one with the highest membership throughout the industry. With the recent voting in the ASW, officials hold office for life if voted in at consecutive ballots. Both Mr. Smith and Mr. Lowthian lost any militancy they had years ago and are now only after the fruits of office. And the higher the office, the bigger the fruits.

What of the rank and file membership of the unions? Obviously it will be some time before there is one union for the industry. At the moment, we have the ludicrous situation of 21 unions, but if control is not in the hands of the membership, only the crumbs from the negotiators' table will reach them. Not all the democratic conference decisions for pay claims and conditions will alter this. As we saw last

year, union conference after union conference called for 1s 6d an hour increase for craftsmen and labourers alike and a 40-hour week. What did we get? 9d an hour for craftsmen and 5d for labourers, not all in one go, but spread over a three-year tie-up and a one-hour reduction during the same period.

Industrial unions, under the present bureaucratic and careerist-type leadership, will help bring about the much-needed solidarity of the rank and file, but at the same time a more centralised and powerful leadership would be in a strong position to smash any militancy. Warning letters were sent round after the strike last year to a number of workers who were on the unofficial Joint Sites Committee. Unions have also circularised branches, instructing secretaries to inform members to ignore any correspondence from this committee. Of course this is nothing new, for once in power, union leaders will not tolerate any opposition, especially when organised at rank and file level, as it is a direct threat to their positions.

Last year there was considerable support for strike action, far more than the union bureaucrats and employers realised. Labourers and craftsmen felt at last here was a claim really worth fighting for, not just for a few coppers. When the selected sites were called to "down tools", others clamoured to join the strike. 50,000 more men came out than expected. For eight months before the strike, the JSC had organised marches, token strikes, and other forms of action to get support for the claims and bring pressure on the union leaders.

What happened has passed now, but the lessons are there and should not be ignored. For one thing the JSC was far too political and support for parties was always being plugged. There was also the emphasis that if you had the "right leadership", everything would be all right and the use of the "democratic means open to us to achieve it". One or two of us on the committee did put the case for real rank and file control and of building this within the unions. This would not be with a view to taking over, but using the organisational framework to build a real "grass-root" movement. If this could have been done (but we are nowhere near it), then the building workers would have given their union leaders the two fingers when told to return to work.

Although the union-negotiated rates of pay are low in the building industry, craftsmen getting 6s 3d and labourers 5s 5½d per hour, these basic rates are only received by a small minority. Due to the boom in the industry, there is competition for labour and so higher rates are paid to attract workers. A lot also depends on union organisation on jobs. If this is strong, even bigger wage packets can be gained.

It is at job level that a real rank and file movement can be built. Good organisation on jobs brings results and this is done by the men themselves and not by the officials at district office. Different jobs in areas could be linked, so that if action is taken on one job, others come out in sympathy. This form of organisation could be extended all over the country and the union leaders sent packing.

PETER TURNER.

MINERS BLACKMAILED

THE president of the NUM has warned the membership that a full-scale strike could result in pits closing and never being reopened.

Oil burning is the new "strike-breaker", the extra rise in wages could price coal out of the market. Everyone must be looking forward to the day when all the pits are closed for ever, but until that time miners have to work to live, and they are entitled to the best.

The NCB's excuse about their inability to pay more is technically true because (a) they have to meet cost of compensation to former owners and (b) they have to pay interest on a debt when the Coal Board imported higher-priced coal. Therefore the miners are face to face with the "system." Their delegate conference rejected the NCB offer, so now it is up to the ballot.

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.

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Congscription: it's an all-party threat

THE Ministry of Defence claims that its recruiting programme is a success and that it is only 4 per cent below the 160,000-man target. However, as we attempted to show in last month's DA (*Into Khaki with Wilson*), the present Army is not large enough to protect the world-wide interests of British capitalism and there is a very real threat of conscription being re-introduced.

We also stated that not only the Labour Party but the Conservatives, Liberals and Communists would be equally prepared to take these steps.

The current statements of politicians with regard to conscription are largely dependent on what they think are their respective parties chances in the forthcoming General Election—also bearing in mind that the next government will almost certainly be forced to re-introduce it.

The COMMUNIST PARTY have no moral objection to conscription. Indeed, they support its existence in Communist countries. As the CP have about as much chance of winning the Election as they have of initiating a social revolution—anywhere, anytime—they can afford to assume their favourite pose, that of "revolutionary militants," and one need not take anything that they say too seriously.

The LIBERAL PARTY—A prospective Liberal candidate once told me that he envisaged a Liberal Britain as being run like a huge Joint Stock Company, with the "citizens" as the shareholders! One can safely assume that they would be quite prepared to take the necessary steps to defend the overseas interests of the "Joint Stock Co." The Liberals are as opportunistic as the rest and will seek their votes from among those floating voters who have become disenchanted with the two major parties. However, they don't seem to be going to use "No Conscription" as part of their election campaign. At least, not if any importance is to be attached to the words of Mr. Richard Moore, secretary-general of the Liberal International.

Writing in the Liberal magazine, *New Outlook*, he insists that there can be no escape by any political party from the necessity of some form of conscription, if Britain is to play a full part in world affairs. Mr. Moore appears to have

TO COMMEMORATE THE SPANISH REVOLUTION—
Social Evening. Pindar of Wakefield, Gray's Inn Rd, WC1. Desmond McDonald will introduce the artists: Eric Lister's Jazz Band, Sidney Carter*, Bob Davenport*, David Thomas, Peter Brown, a group of ballet dancers, Karl Dallas, etc. Admission 4s. Proceeds to the Anarchist Federation of Britain. Saturday, July 18, 7-11 pm.

* if available.

* * *

Read **TENANTS' VOICE**, paper of the Tunbridge Wells Tenants' Association, 1 Greenways, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. 6d (post 2½d).

swallowed the myth of democracy, for he is a little hurt that nobody wants to talk about it much so close to the Election. Incidentally, the reasons he gives for re-introducing conscription are, "the defence of democracy and the maintenance of collective security."

And what about the two major parties? Actually the TORIES have a bit of an edge, as they can (and have) taunted the Labour Party with the conscription "bogey." They say that if a future Labour Government abandons the British so-called "independent deterrent," they would have to re-introduce conscription to compensate. The Tories are pretending that they wouldn't re-introduce conscription and are using the issue to embarrass the Labour Party. But they don't want to make it too much of an election issue, as they might just conceivably win the election and then *they* would be left holding the conscription baby. If this did happen, the Tories would blandly declare that if *they*—with their "independent deterrent"—had to re-introduce conscription, then obviously a Labour Government would have had to re-introduce it, not only sooner but on a wider basis.

What are the LABOUR PARTY'S reactions to all this? By and large they consists of embarrassed silences and implausible excuses about increasing conventional weapons to compensate for the "independent deterrent." (Mr. Gordon Walker doesn't explain just who is going to shoot off all these new guns, etc.)

Even more embarrassing for the Labour Party were the remarks of one of their own members—Mr. Desmond Donnelly—who, in the Foreign Affairs debate (June 17) said that if Britain was to play the role in the world that he would like to see, there would have to be National Service. He also appears to believe that Labour could win the Election on this issue! ! !

Whichever way you look at it—a vote for any party is a vote FOR CONSCRIPTION.

GROUP NOTICES

LONDON SWF GROUP: Open meetings every Friday, except the first one in each month, at the Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Road, WC1 (5 min Kings Cross Station) at 8 pm.

OPEN-AIR—SUNDAYS, HYDE PARK, 3 PM

BRISTOL SWF: Contact M. J. Waish, 22 Hampton Road, Cotham, Bristol.

DUNDEE ANARCHIST GROUP: Contact Roddy Cameron, Secretary, 6 Westfield Place Dundee.

GLASGOW: Meetings every Thursday, 7.30 pm at 4 Frederick Lane, Glasgow, C2.

LIVERPOOL: Contact Vincent Johnson, 43 Milbank, Liverpool 13.

EDINBURGH ANARCHIST GROUP: Contact Douglas Truman, 13 Northumberland St, Edinburgh 3.

WITNEY—Meetings 1st Friday of each month. Contact LAURENS OTTER, 5 New Yatt Rd, North Leigh, near Witney, Oxon.

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

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

TYNESIDE ANARCHIST FEDERATION: Contact Steve Wallace, 64 Belford Avenue, Herstree Hill, South Shields, Co. Durham.

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

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

NOTTING HILL ANARCHIST GROUP: Contact the Secretary, 5 Colville Houses, W11. Open meeting 1st Friday each month, 8 pm, British Oak, Westbourne Park Rd, W2.

NEW FOREST ANARCHIST GROUP: Contact Ken Parkin, Old Tea House, Brookenhurst, Hants.

ROMFORD AND HORNCURCH ANARCHIST GROUP: Contact Chris Rose, 34 Newbury Gardens, Upminster, or John Chamberlain, 19 Chestnut Glen, Hornchurch.

SPAIN—Franco is losing his grip

... the evidence of Asturias shows clearly that we are in the grip of a fundamental crisis of the basic political structures and we must complete the evolution and accept a wider participation of the community (in the vertical TU's) ... The problem of Asturias is the same that affects the whole of Spain: to see Asturias is to picture the whole of Spain. The present regime leads to an irresponsible political vacuum, within which the present structures are merely provisional ..."

These are the words, not of a republican opponent of the Franco regime, but of an old Falangist *camisa vieja*, Francisco Labadie Otermin, National Councillor of Falange and ex-President of the *Instituto Nacional de Previsión* (a sort of Social Security government institution) and ex-Civil Governor of Asturias. He resigned at the end of last year from the State-controlled unions, after presenting a toughly-worded report on Asturias to Jose Solis, the National TU boss. This was meant as a basis for urging direct election by workers of union officials at the National Congress, but "old guard"

The following emergency resolution was carried unanimously at the AGM of the National Union of Seamen:

This Annual General Meeting wholeheartedly supports the struggles of Spanish Miners and Workers who are demanding improved conditions: namely—

- (1) Higher wages to meet rising cost of living.
- (2) The right to form independent, free and democratic Trades Unions.
- (3) The right to strike.

We extend our solidarity to the Fellow Spanish Workers who are fighting for these conditions, which we British Workers now enjoy.

pressure groups neutralised its effects and the III National TU Congress (attended by TUC officials) met last March and postponed the question indefinitely. A typical Franco-regime procedure.

On the opening day of the Congress, delegates were confronted with resentful demands by a handful of *camisas viejas* from Falange's "new left", who have recently been extremely active within the Jose Antonio Circle in Madrid. Copies of the tolerated weekly "*Sindicalismo*", distributed in the entrance hall, had an editorial urging mobilisation of workers against the current Government *Plan de Desarrollo* and a strong protest against introduction of "liberalisation" tendencies. Invoking the name of the founder of Falange, Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera, and the original bases of their TU's, it demanded nationalisation and unionisation of banks and financial enterprises, as well as proposing workers' control of production in industry.

In Asturias this grouping have circulated tracts in defence of the strikers and, in a document handed to Solis at the beginning of the year, they pointed out that the rank and file, "who had been dispossessed of their authentic trade unions by the regime and the active participation of Falange during the Civil War", today had no effective instrument of defence for their just demands. The vertical unions did not meet their needs and had become a vast bureaucratic machine in defence of vested interests. The undertone of the document was an insinuation that the "national syndicalist" revolution had been sold out by political opportunists.

Local church support for the Asturian strikers, which I reported last month, reflects the new policies of the Spanish Church, whose vanguard "progressive" elements, having long felt the changing wind of Spanish social and political affairs,

are attempting to reconcile themselves with the masses, after their complicity with the regime during the Civil War. Many times they have declared that strikes should be made legal and that the vertical unions do not represent the interests of the working class.

This odd assortment of "positions" and "attitudes" within the Spanish hierarchies gives ample food for thought. What motives induce such a variety of currents—some representing opposing and often contradictory interests—to become openly engaged against the regime and side with the strikers? What does this identification signify? The Church's motives are clear. The old Falange firebrands, resurrecting their one-time "struggle against capitalism" and talk of "social revolution", are making a similar last-ditch attempt to gain some kind of influence among the working class.

The profound unrest and extreme differences arise from an accelerated decomposition of the whole regime and prove that Franco is losing control of the reins. Everyone anticipates sudden changes—and is lining up with the rank and file, in the hope of riding the storm. The recent takeover of real economic control of the nation by professional economic *Opus Dei* advisers, and the belated attempt of Spanish capitalism to streamline itself in line with the rest of Europe, has dislodged the old Civil War veterans from control (which explains their resentment), and it is carrying out an efficiency campaign.

Asturian mineowners have long complained that their plants are uneconomic. What they have not said is that their installations and machinery need replacing—and that they are unwilling to invest capital for these essential changes. Their new attitude towards labour and social struggles could be a bid to pressure the government to nationalise the coal industry and relieve themselves (with handsome compensation) of this unattractive charge, as well as a token sign of the new alignment for a "democratic ease-up" and integration towards the "European way of life."

Many opposition sectors have welcomed these tendencies. The split within the regime has brought about relaxation of repressive measures against the more timid opposition currents. The communists press on with their "reconciliation" campaign, without seeming to realise that the regime itself is the first interested in this policy—so long as the workers' demands do not go too far. The communists, of course, do not wish to go the whole way and are happy with the present situation. But the recrudescence of political and ideological differences has brought about a split within their own ranks, just as within Falange.

Despite the benevolent, patronising attitude of employers and sectors of the authorities, the workers' demands cannot be limited to a mere ease-up and emulation of European reformist trade unionism.

The only effective way to ensure that those sectors within the regime, who are pressing for certain changes, do not strengthen oligarchic neo-capitalist interests is by maintaining a strong revolutionary position and taking the initiative away from the present string-pullers. The possibilities are there and the whole situation could suddenly explode with unexpected consequences.

S.G.

SWF PRESS FUND, MAY 21—JUNE 19, 1964

Berkeley 5, Calif. £1 1s; Birmingham, P.C.M. 10s; London NW6, C.F. 2s 6d; Manchester, Northern Libertarian Alliance, 12s 6d; Manchester, R.B. 4s; Vancouver, J.B.M. £1 12s 10d; Ramsey, Man. P. & S.R. 2s 9d; London W12, B.E. £1; Preston, R.M. 6s; Liverpool, J.M. 5s; Greenock, A.L. 10s; Liverpool, V.J. 7s 6d; Red Deer, Alberta, B.G. 5s; East Molesey, Surrey, J.W.B. £1; SWF London Group £2 14s. Total £10 12s 1d.

THE FACTORY FOR PEACE

TOM McAlpine, visionary—or waster? This has been a topic of conversation in libertarian circles. He has been lauded by the Christians, Social democrats and pacifists; but this is only to be expected, as it seems to them that if the Factory for Peace succeeds (as it will not) there will be no need for the revolution which they all fear. The left wing press have dedicated whole pages to this subject and there have been TV films made about this experiment below the co-operative sausage factory off Scotland Street, Glasgow.

I worked in the Factory for a month—enough for me to get an insight on its nature. I was paid £2 10s. for three days' work, the idea being that on alternate days we would sign on at the labour exchange, thus giving us added income.

The manager, according to the constitution of the factory, was supposed to be elected by a meeting of the workers, and so Tom became manager. A mystery exists here—who elected Tom McAlpine? This question is comparable only to that of the Marie Celeste.

A foreman was elected (by Tom) and then part-time labour was introduced in order to begin production. This system of part-time labour worked well for a week, and then, when production had to be stepped up, the manager asked the other boy who was working part-time to come into his office. When he came out I was called in and asked whether I would be willing to work full time for a wage to be decided.

I had not been informed what the other boy had been offered and, as I had no knowledge of engineering, felt £7 would be enough. Later, when I talked to this other boy, I

discovered McAlpine had offered him £10, but when McAlpine discovered I would work for far less, he reduced it to £8. This boy told the manager he was quite happy with the present state of affairs and would not work for less than £10 a week, as he was a fifth-year engineering apprentice and entitled to more.

This obviously annoyed McAlpine and at the Council Meeting the following Friday he proposed that the boy should be given a week's notice. As two other young lads had started work that week, they voted with us and McAlpine's proposal was flung out of the window. He told the meeting he would bring this up the following week and, if it was rejected again, would take it to a higher authority. This higher authority is a Council which has nothing to do with the shop floor, but to make sure we don't make any H bombs, and who also decide the wages of the personnel.

The following week, just as we were going into the meeting, I was told by McAlpine that he was sorry, but he had forgotten to tell me that my friend and I were not allowed to vote. Seemingly it is in the constitution that only those who had worked for three months were allowed to vote. If that were the case no one would be allowed to vote as *the factory had only been opened a fortnight previously*. This friend of mine resigned after that; can you blame him?

Another boy whose work was exactly the same as mine was being paid a pound more, because he was 21 and I was not. I brought this up at a meeting and McAlpine said he was not willing to raise my wages, but would rather lower the other boy's. A shocked silence followed. A so-called socialist lowering wages already below subsistence level! I pointed out that I did not wish this boy's wages to be lowered, as I had already guessed that this would have been the answer, but the reason why I brought this up was because I wished to show the bourgeois elitist nature of the Factory for Peace.

A young socialist who worshipped McAlpine with naive sincerity had been working in the factory since its opening. This young socialist had no previous experience in sheet metal work, but because he paid homage to the Court of McAlpine he was paid according to needs. While fully-apprenticed tradesmen were getting less than £12, he was paid a salary of £56 per month. This caused quite a stir among the rank and file.

He defended his position by saying he had a family to support—a mother and dog, and his mother had a private income! Only two people were paid according to needs—McAlpine, £19 per week, and this young socialist. Needless to say they were the highest-paid members of the factory.

As I lived more than 14 miles away, almost beside Tom McAlpine, I arrived every morning at nine o'clock precisely. He kept nagging at me about my late coming and eventually brought it up at a council meeting. When he had finished his diatribe I asked at what time he arrived in the morning. There was a hushed silence when he answered between 10.30 and 11 a.m. I just left it at that.

These points show only too clearly the fallacy in the idea of giving the workers control.

The workers had no impetus, they did not look upon the machines as theirs. One boy took a morning off the first week he was there to go and look for another job, which shows how effective is McAlpine's brand of industrial democracy.

Last of all, McAlpine himself told me that the factory was not under workers' control and never would be, unless the workers took it over themselves and, as far as he was concerned, it was just an industrial experiment.

PETER PIATKOV

JUAN NOVEDADES

Unemployment in automated easy stages

THE RECENT electronic and automation exhibition at Olympia is reported to have been a phenomenal success, both from the point of view of attendance and of business deals. A boom in automation isn't news these days, but it is of permanent interest to the potential victim—the industrial worker.

Why this must be so is effectively illustrated by an article in a special supplement issued by the *Financial Times* to coincide with the Exhibition. The head, "How to automate without being obvious," is itself provocative to make one sit up and take notice, but the contents are equally alarming.

The article is about Elliott-Automation's scheme for gradual conversion of industrial plant to total automation on a step-by-step basis—rather like a kid's brickbuilding or add-to-meccano set (Elliott, along with English-Electric Leo and ICI-Ferranti, is one of the big names in the British Electronics world).

The article first of all points out as obstacles to the advance of automation the stupidity and hidebound conservatism which apparently typify our managerial executive class. It earmarks as a strong contributing factor towards this conservatism their fear of workers' reaction against the threat of redundancy. It is quite obvious from this that the Ferrantis and the Elliotts find that their ability to sell their products is strongly limited by the resistance of workers to any automation, which is concerned only with increasing capitalist profits, instead of benefitting all members of society equally.

Being profiteers and not social reformers, their answer to this problem is to find a way of introducing automation under the unsuspecting worker's nose—and there's no reason why it shouldn't work if we're not very alert to the danger.

One can just see the picture: the Union man comes back from negotiations with good news—2d. an hour more than we expected and the old crib about canteen facilities is settled . . . and, by the way, they're going to try out a new machine in the packing section, but nobody will lose his job. Joy all round—and the Monster is in. Six months later they "try out" another new machine; again nobody loses his job, but vacancies just aren't filled. A while later the O & M boys and the Operations Researchers are around with charts and statistics, to show the boss the benefits of his little bit of automation and estimates of the profits to be had by going the whole hog.

Dangle those extra profits in front of him long enough and he'll find courage to damn the workers and automate the lot, or he can be more subtle and just keep on adding little bits till everybody's inched out painlessly. As there is little about modern industry to inspire contentment in, or loyalty to a particular concern or firm, the odds are that very few people will have been in the factory long enough to have seen the whole thing happening. There'll just be a few hundred less people employed and nobody knowing why—except the Mosleys and Jordans, who can confidently point out that it is all the fault of the "Niggers and Jews."

Obviously the crucial stage in the whole process is at that point when the union man comes to "sell" the deal to the

ABARCA IS FREED

FOLLOWING a long campaign of international protests, FRANCISCO ABARCA, the young Spanish anarcho-syndicalist jailed in Brussels since last October on a Franco-inspired Swiss demand for his extradition, has been released. The Belgian Government has, however, ordered him to leave the country and Abarca, backed by the Belgian trade unions and many other organisations, is appealing for his right to political asylum to be respected.

"general body." What is needed is somebody with a nasty suspicious mind who will be prepared to rock the boat by asking awkward cantankerous questions about the "new machine." If he can back this up with a bit of knowledge about the sort of thing that's liable to happen (it doesn't matter how garbled or vague the "info" is) so much the better. This is a case where a little knowledge is a dangerous thing—for the other side.

The workers will benefit from automation only if they fight doggedly for their share of its products. In the long run this means achieving a totally new social system. But we must recognise that the society we want is very far from being achieved and the workers' day-to-day struggle must be waged on a bread-and-butter basis.

You can't have Anarchy next Friday, but you can have an extra 10s. in your pay packet; you can't have your fair share of the benefits of automation this year, but you can have a 40-hour week, or avoid redundancy and it's all moving in the right direction if we keep up the pressure long enough.

If you can't get your rights in full, then you've got to settle for whatever you can get, but there's a big difference between workers who have automation slipped in under their noses as part of a "good bargain" which they accept in ignorance—and workers who eventually accept it because they have to, but only after gouging every last concession out of the pockets of the capitalists or State. The moral is that workers must educate themselves to recognise a "pig in a poke," whether it's the boss or the union that tries to sell it to them—and from now on the fattest pigs in the biggest pokes are going to come in the shape of new machines.

BILL CONNOLLY

Canadian Liberals buy their way to power

Red Deer, Alberta.

ELECTIONS these days are not won by politicians, their parties, or programmes, but by advertising agencies. This was illustrated in the recent provincial elections in Saskatchewan. Here the ruling Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, a mildly reformist party erroneously referred to as socialist by the capitalist news media, was defeated by the Liberal Party, much to the surprise of the political forecasters. The fact that neither party had any distinctive programme was expected to work in favour of the party in power; but a high-powered advertising campaign, organised by a firm of professional public relations consultants and backed by a large expense account, bought enough votes to elect a Liberal government.

It is ironical that at the same time, leaders of the federal Liberal and New Democratic parties were having "secret" meetings to discuss a merger (ironical in that the CCF is Saskatchewan section of the NDP).

We wonder what reaction would be produced by this merger among those marxists, trotskyists, castroists and other authoritarian socialists who insist on embarrassing the opportunist politicians who run the NDP by joining it and attempting to convert it into a socialist party.

In Regina, Saskatchewan, the practical politicians of the ruling Liberal Party announced that, to cut government spending, they have ordered all able-bodied persons on relief to be removed from the roll (hence cutting recipients of relief payments by about 5,000, down to 20,000). Those remaining on relief will be forced to work on government-sponsored projects in order to continue receiving relief payments. In

PARLIAMENT--THE SEAL OF SLAVERY

THE ruling-class maintains its power in two ways—nakedly, by brute force, and subtly, by persuading the workers to endorse the system which enslaves them. Parliamentary "Democracy" is the most sophisticated idea yet devised for this purpose.

Every five years in Britain the overwhelming majority of people show that they accept class rule by participating in the ritual designed to defend it. The vote is the symbol of our acceptance of our rulers and our recognition of their right to govern us: the vote is our regular agreement with authority.

We are no longer told that once upon a time our ancestors actually did come together to establish the State—the "social contract" theory is obsolete. What we are told—and what

Canadian Libs (cont.)

theory, the fact that jobs are no longer available for many is recognised and the problem of effective use of their leisure time is being faced. In *practice*, as every reactionary employer and politician knows, anybody physically capable of work who is without a job is a lazy, no-good bastard, living in idle luxury at the expense of the hard-working, over-taxed capitalist.

Nothing hurts the capitalist more than having to assume responsibility for the victims of his vicious system. University professors may talk about educating people to use their unaccustomed leisure, but the capitalist expects hard work from every member of the working class, *including* those for whom his much-vaunted system is unable to provide jobs.

The Saskatchewan government in this case seems to have gone too far, even for politicians. If we take "able-bodied" to mean capable of work, what they propose doing is to remove from the relief rolls all those capable of work, then force the remainder (who presumably will be incapable of work) to work on government projects in order to continue on relief. Unless the politicians propose to make meaningless work (digging holes one day, filling them in the next), they will have to fire workers from existing jobs in order to create relief work at starvation wages. And the workers who have lost their jobs? Well, of course, being "able-bodied" they wouldn't qualify for relief. Maybe they'll quietly starve to death—or maybe they will topple the whole lousy system.

Trade unions are being forced to face the consequences of automation as they see job opportunities shrink. The United Packinghouse Workers Union is negotiating for a cut in the work week (40 hours down to 37½) for 10,000 of its members employed by the major firms in the packinghouse industry, with no reduction in take-home pay. It is also attempting to discourage overtime by asking for higher rates of pay for it. The United Auto Workers is asking the auto firms for a shorter work week, longer vacations and double pay for all overtime.

After long negotiations, discrimination against Negro employees on Canadian National Railways has ended. Sleeping car porters employed by the railways, most of them Negroes, are now eligible to become sleeping car conductors or dining car stewards. Hitherto, the employees, members of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers Unions, had been divided into two groups: Group I comprising sleeping car conductors, stewards, chefs and waiters; Group II comprised the porters. The two groups are now combined into a single seniority system.

BILL GREENWOOD

most of us accept—is that every five years we have the opportunity to choose our political future: we have no objection to the system we live under—we accept the rules' of your game. By playing it we make it our game.

But aren't the rules fair? Surely the "democratic" system enables any group of people to put forward their political ideas and ensures that the wishes of the majority should prevail. What could be fairer than that?

The first and obvious point is that, while in theory this system allows people to choose what government they will live under, it necessarily excludes those who are opposed to all government. If the mass of the people abstained—and did nothing else—there would still be government.

It is impossible to fight the State by means of its own institutions. An anti-parliamentary candidate is as absurd as a pacifist who carries a gun. Workers' control of industry cannot be legislated into existence: a free society cannot be created at the polling-booth.

Secondly, it is a myth that in our society the will of the majority prevails. Parliament does not make the important decisions. These are sometimes *announced* in Parliament—and in theory MP's can accept or reject them. In fact, of course, what happens is that the MP's obey their Whips.

Parliament does not control the government. If anything, the government, together with the party machine, controls Parliament. The government and the party machines represent the interests of class society and are devoted to its defence. This is the reason why there is so little difference between the policies of the Tory and Labour parties.

The politicians may believe that they are engaged in a bitter struggle about vital issues on which they disagree fundamentally—but in fact they are playing a game, a game in which the people always lose.

The "democratic" system offers no real choice on basic issues, because it is a facade behind which exists the reality of capitalist exploitation. To destroy class rule we cannot use Parliament, or any other part of the State. The only way to achieve a free classless society is by direct action.

When the working-class abandons the farce of the ballot-box for the reality of direct action we may begin to talk about freedom and democracy. In our society now these words are a hollow sneer.

WYNFORD HICKS

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