

Socialist Worker



WORKERS!
POWER

IN PLACE OF STRIFE

A POLICY FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

*Presented to Parliament by the First Secretary of State and
Secretary of State for Employment and Productivity
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WILLIAM MORRIS (1834-1896)—poet, designer, revolutionary socialist and prolific agitational writer. This article first appeared in Justice on May 1st, 1896.

May Day — by William Morris

CERTAINLY May Day is above all days of the year fitting for the protest of the disinherited against the system of robbery that shuts the door betwixt them and a decent life; the day when the promise of the year reproaches the waste inseparable from the society of inequality, the waste which produces our artificial poverty of civilization, so much bitterer for those that suffer under it than the natural poverty of the rudest barbarism.

For it is undoubtedly true that full-blown capitalism makes the richest country in the world as poor as, nay poorer than, the poorest, for the life of by far the greater part of its people.

Are we to sit down placidly under this, hoping that some blessing will drop down from heaven upon us which will bring content and self-respect and a due share of the beauties and joys of the earth to the classes that produce all that is produced, while it will bring no lessening of the dignity and ease and sweetness of life with which the possessing (and wasting) classes are now endowed?

Most of you will smile at that question, but remember that this opinion was not long ago universally held, and is still held by many.

They think that civilization will grow so speedily and triumphantly, and production will become so easy and cheap, that the possessing classes will be able to spare more and more from the great heap of wealth to the producing classes, so that at least these latter will have nothing left to wish for, and all will be peace and prosperity. A futile hope indeed! and one which a mere glance at past history will dispel.

No better off

For we find as a matter of fact that when we were scarcely emerging from semi-barbarism, when open violence was common, and privilege need put on no mask before the governed classes, the workers were not worse off than now, but better. In short, not all the discoveries of science, not all the tremendous organization of the factory and the market will produce true wealth, so long as the end and aim of it all is the production of

profit for the privileged classes.

Nothing better will happen than more waste and more, only perhaps exercised in different directions than now it is. Waste of material, waste of labour (for few indeed even of the genuine wage-earners are engaged in the production of utilities). Waste, in one word, of LIFE.

But again there are some who will say, 'Yes indeed, the capitalist system can come to no good end, death in a dust-bin is its doom, but will not its end be at least speedy even without any help of ours? My friends: I fear not. The capitalist classes are doubtless alarmed at the spread of socialism all over the civilized world.

They have at least an instinct of danger; but with that instinct comes the other one of self-defence. Look how the whole capital world is stretching out long arms towards the barbarous world and grabbing and clutching in eager competition at countries whose inhabitants don't want them; nay, in many cases, would rather die in battle, like the valiant men they are, than have them. So perverse are these wild men before the blessings of

civilization which would do nothing worse for them (and also nothing better) than reduce them to a propertyless proletariat.

And what is all this for? For the spread of abstract ideas of civilization, for pure benevolence, for the honour and glory of conquest? Not at all. It is for the opening of fresh markets to take in all the fresh profit-producing wealth which is growing greater and greater every day; in other words, to make fresh opportunities for waste; the waste of our labour and our lives.

Impulse like hunger

And I say this is an irresistible instinct on the part of the capitalists, an impulse like hunger, and I believe that it can only be met by another hunger, the hunger for freedom and fair play for all, both people and peoples. Anything less than that the capitalist power will brush aside. But that they cannot; for what will it mean? The most important part of their machinery, the 'hands' becoming MEN, and saying, 'Now at last we will it; we will produce no more for profit but for use, for happiness, for LIFE.'

Let May 1st 1969 mark the start of the fight for workers' power

by the Editorial Board

MAY DAY 1968 commanded a response from the militant Left against the ranting of Enoch Powell and his exploitation of despair.

May Day 1969 greets us in a rather different light, though Powellism still casts its ugly glance on our lives.

There has been a definite change in the pace and mood of groups of British workers. And most of all, this May Day's political strike confirms a willingness to struggle.

This is vital. For it means a break in the feeling of political passivity, and resignation, to a world that seems hostile to man's efforts to change it.

But May Day is part of the beginning, not the end. It cannot, by itself, produce defeat for this government and the employers,

whose interests it so faithfully serves.

For many years, militants and socialists have believed the fraudulent sign outside the Houses of Parliament — 'Press here and the door will open',

But for us there is only the tradesman's entrance, through the organisation of workers' power within the factories.

This is where some people insist on remaining confused. For example,

workers can — and do — argue that this May Day strike is against the government but not the bosses.

Now this may be the trick of the card player but it exposes a weakness in position on the part of workers.

It fails to draw out the interlocking of the state and the employers. Let us be quite clear, it is their state, and they define the politics of any government.

The White Paper in Place of Strife is the result of pressure and agitation by the employers. To solve the problems of their system — for they are nothing to do with us — and to meet the increased competition for world markets that will be a feature of the 1970s, the bosses are determined to shackle the power of the trade unions and in particular the militants on the shop floor.

The White Paper is a foot in the workers' door. The Tories will try to batter the door down unless the workers, shedding parliamentary illusions and relying on their own strength and activity, can mobilise to stop the present legislation.

Consequently, two related positions show themselves to be quite inadequate. The parliamentary left are now a hangover from a period of mass inactivity and uninvolved who seek to channel militants into the politics of respectability and pre-destined failure.

Second, the General Council of the TUC had initially sought to parade their wounded vanity to a wider audience of kindred spirits by holding a recall conference of the executives of the member unions. They have now been forced

ence.

But if this is emasculated by the unions being unable to bring amendments to the General Council proposals, it only adds further to the fraud and the diversion.

In the case of either a conference of executives or delegates, the poker-playing left will have voted the millions of votes this way or that. But these are token votes.

We are concerned with turning the unions' 'shadow army' — the rank and file — into the battalions leading the fight for socialism.

May Day 1969 is a start in that direction. It is no use romanticising the situation and trusting merely to the capacity of the working class to make May Day an annual 'political' holiday on full pay. The labour movement is capable of much more.

On the road of direct political/industrial action, workers will gain, indeed make, a concrete political experience for themselves. New ideas, new concepts of struggle will be thrown up.

It is precisely at this point that revolutionaries can and must indicate their own conception of the way forward. And their voices will be respected.

The only possible way forward demands that militants be vigilant about their political ideas. The

state machine cannot be defeated by the politics of gesture and reform. It can only be overthrown.

Hence the need to build for workers' power, to construct a genuine workers' political organisation. For we must look beyond May Day, to a significant mobilisation against the Second Reading of this anti-worker legislation.

And we must press beyond this, for continued militant action against the bosses and their puppet government. We must force them to force their hand.

As revolutionaries we must move beyond the announcement of our intentions into the unions. We must arouse the rank and file to give their instructions, to make officials the administrators of things, not men.

We must conduct a sensitive campaign for union democracy and for the road of sustained militant action.

We must shatter the illusions of passivity and defeat. We must promote and nourish permanent groupings of workers, mobilised for struggle against capitalism and for socialism. Forward to workers' power and international socialism.

And so, not as a gesture, but as a moment in the struggle, we extend our warm, fraternal greetings for May Day to all workers.



Socialist Worker

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SOCIALIST WORKER is the paper of International Socialism, a movement of revolutionary socialists who believe that the present form of society, with its blatant inequalities, its periodic crises, wars and racialist hysteria must be replaced by one based on a planned economy under full workers' control; those who produce the wealth should own and control the means of production. International Socialism is opposed to any incomes policy that seeks to restrict the wages of the workers in order to boost the profits of the employers. We unconditionally support all shop stewards and rank and file trade union members in their struggles for better wages and conditions and oppose all reactionary laws that threaten the liberties of the labour movement. We support all strikes in defence of workers' interests with the de-



fluence by linking up on an industrial and ultimately a national basis.

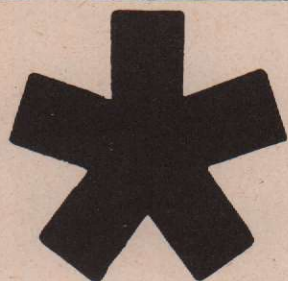
We are opposed to racial discrimination, a weapon used by the ruling class to divide the labour movement. Immigration control must be ended, ensuring the free movement of peoples regardless of race and colour. Black and white workers must unite and form their own defence organisations to fight fascism and racialism. The labour movement must demand the immediate recall of British troops from abroad as the first step towards ending colonial exploitation.

The task of revolutionary socialists is to join workers in their struggles with socialist ideas that will link up the various sections of the labour movement and help create a force that will lead on to workers' power and international socialism.

Please send further details of the meetings and activities of the international socialists to

Name _____

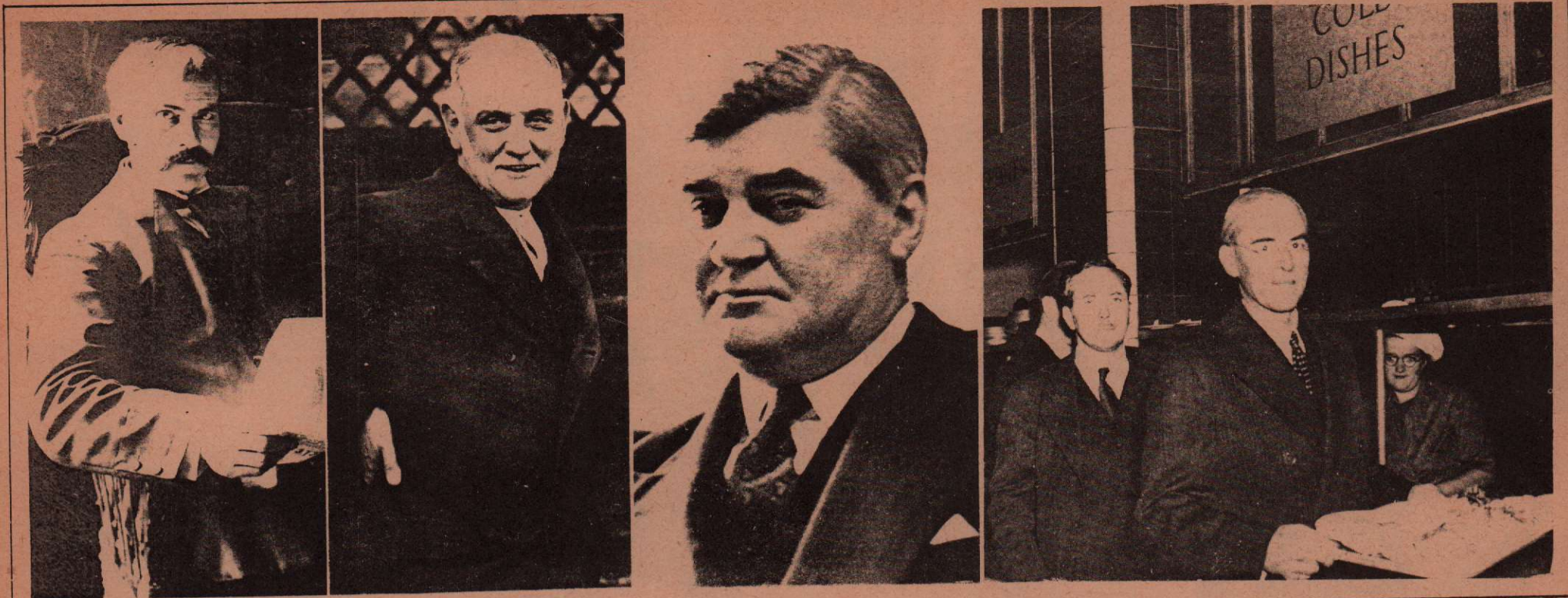
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MORE MAY DAY GREETINGS

Teesside Revolutionary Socialist Youth: May Day greetings to Socialist Worker and all those fighting for workers' control and international socialism.
Teesside May Day ad-hoc committee: greetings to all trade unionists and socialists on May 1st. Unite against anti-trade union legislation.

Teesside Federation of Tenants' Associations: fraternal greetings on May Day to all tenants' associations and other organisations of the working class.
Warmest May Day greetings from Stoke Newington International Socialists to comrades



'Parliamentary socialism': Labour's road to disaster

MacDonald, Lansbury, Bevan, Wilson and Cripps: Labour politicians both right and 'left' have been blinkered by parliamentary power, separated from the working class and ultimately corrupted by the system.

by PAUL FOOT

SOON AFTER the armistice of 1918, Dame Margot Asquith, wife of the wartime Prime Minister, wrote a letter to J.H. Thomas, the former railwaymen's leader, then an MP. The letter read:

'Dear Mr Thomas, As you are such a friend of ours I thought you would like this fine telegram from the King to my husband on the great day. I am not writing to you about politics, but to tell you from my heart how brave and good I think you have been and how much my husband thinks of you. We told the King at lunch exactly what we thought of you and he was very nice about you. Be careful of your health and keep tight hold of your men - and God Bless You. Margot Asquith.' (J.H. Thomas: My Story, p.29).

The letter according to Thomas 'seemed to lift itself out of a mass of cherished correspondence', and diligently he devoted himself to the Dame's instructions and 'kept tight hold of his men'.

EMPIRE

Six years later, Thomas became the first Labour Colonial Secretary and introduced himself to the heads of his department with the words: 'I am here to see that there is no mucking about with the British Empire'

Five years later still he was the 'troubleshooter' in the 1929 Labour government, appointed to solve the problem of unemployment. He solved it by increasing it threefold and cutting the unemployment benefit.

Then he left the Labour Party to serve in the National Government and his career ended in a court case involving fraud.

Conventional Labour historians prefer to dismiss the careers of men like Thomas, Philip Snowden and Ramsay MacDonald as examples of personal aberration or original sin. But the Thomas road from working-class origins through parliament to betrayal symbolises the futility of 50 years of parliamentary activity and aspirations on the part of British Labour.

Even today, after the unimaginable collapse in the last four and a half years, conventional 'left-wing' demonstrations move, as if pulled by a magnet, to parliament, there to conduct 'a lobby', and so-called revolutionaries pin their politics to the idiotic slogan: Make the Left MPs fight.

The history of the British

Labour Party is a history of parliamentary disaster. In 1924, a Labour government supported by the Liberals did nothing at all.

This was a considerable achievement compared with the record of the 1929-1931 government which did everything in its power to protect the gold standard and the interests of industrialists against the clamour of the unemployed.

The Labour government of 1945 and 1951 is remembered with sentimental nostalgia by the official Labour left, who recall the nationalisation of coal, railways, gas, electricity - and the National Health Service.

The real achievement of the 1945-51 Labour government has been less widely publicised. As two commentators, one of whom is a Cabinet Minister in the present administration, put it:

'In 1948-1950, when the economy appeared to be gaining both internal and external balance, there was a substantial shift away from planning in the direction of a free market system' (The Labour Government and British Industry by A. Rogow and Peter Shore, p.71).

Under the smokescreen of nationalisation and welfare reforms the post-war Labour government concentrated its main efforts on the re-establishment of a capitalism seriously weakened by the war. Weak, plaintive industrialists grew, under Labour's careful succour into implacable monopolists who wanted no more of 'socialism'.

The inevitable irony was that Labour, because of the working-class support which it had ignored, was hounded from office by the very industrialists whom it had nourished.

By 1964, the Labour programme had been considerably diluted by the pressure of those who sought office. The reformist scraps offered to the masses have now been withheld and in their place the Labour government is now set on a course which is further to the right even than MacDonald's in 1930.

The MacDonald government did at least repeal the Tory 1927 Trade Union Act which sought in some circumstances to make trade unionists liable for damage from disputes. Similarly, Wilson's government passed an act in its first year of office overturning the

House of Lords' Rookes v. Barnard decision, making a trade union official liable for strike damage.

It took a real election triumph, like 1966, to propel the government on a collision course with the unions and to enable them to propose legislation which shackles the unions more than the 1927 Act - and more than anything else since the first Labour parliamentarian entered Westminster.

Parliamentarians and reformists seek to explain all this as an unhappy accident. Unfortunately, they explain, the Labour governments were always dominated by right-wingers, who took the wrong course. Left-wingers, they proclaim, would have moved in a socialist direction.

DARLINGS

But would they? Were not Wilson, Castle, Crossman, Greenwood darlings of the left? Was it an accident that every one of the promoted left-wingers, with the single exception of Frank Cousins, who had a good job to go back to and has now found an even better one, not only were 'converted' to the anti-working class politics of the government, but also became their most enthusiastic supporters?

History suggests otherwise. Keir Hardie, father of the 'Labour Left', called on his countrymen to rally to the flag in 1914 when he said, 'the boom of guns can be heard'.

And Robert Blatchford, theoretical inspirer of the Left, made his teenage daughter play 'Rule Britannia' every day throughout the First World War.

In 1925 a group of left-wingers drew up a Manifesto, headed the Socialist Club and printed in Lansbury's Weekly. 'A Labour government' it declared at the outset 'would be pledged to establish a socialist state'.

It proposed several acts of immediate legislation including the abolition of the House of Lords, ('no fraternisation with the enemy') the

abolition of the police and the handing over of police duties to a 'citizens army' with elected officers.

The manifesto was signed by Marion Phillips, Susan Lawrence, George Lansbury, Ernest Thurtle and John Scurr. By 1929, Marion Phillips, then an MP, was the staunchest defender of the proposed cut in unemployment benefit. Miss Lawrence was an Under Secretary of State, and sharply attacked John Wheatley for daring to attack the government.

George Lansbury was in the Cabinet and was a member of the Labour Party executive which framed the rules for the expulsion of James Maxton. The rules under which the expulsion was based were drawn up by John Scurr, chairman of the Consultative Committee.

And Mr Thurtle, who was Lansbury's private secretary, resigned from the ILP because it would not support the policies of the MacDonald government.

Exactly the same process followed the 1931 debacle. The left-wing, under Stafford Cripps, joined the Socialist League.

'Continuity of policy' wrote Cripps, 'can find no place in a socialist programme. It is this complete severance with all traditional theories of government, this determination to seize power from the ruling class and transfer it to the people as a whole, that differentiates the present political struggle from all those that have gone before'.

'This determination' was amply demonstrated by Cripps himself as President of the Board of Trade and Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 1945-51 government, in which posts he fought heroically to protect British capitalism from competitors abroad and militants at home.

The reason for all this is not to be found in personal weakness or betrayal nor in the predominance of 'right-wingers', whatever that may mean. The personal betrayals are the reflection of something much deeper: the fundamental relief of Labour parliamentarians that the road to socialism can be paved in parliament: that universal suffrage to five-yearly parliaments is a sufficient precondition for the change from capitalism to socialism.

This view, held incidentally by Karl Marx, grossly underestimates the power and flexibility of the capitalist system. It underestimates the ability of the men who control

industry and commerce to absorb democratic processes through parliaments every five years, while retaining undemocratic control of the power that matters: economic power.

The geographic basis of the parliamentary democracy (with its assumption that MPs must represent all their constituents whatever their class) and the long gap between elections puts parliamentary representatives at an enormous distance from the people they represent, and by whom they cannot be recalled for five years.

The gap is further exaggerated by the cretinism and pomp of parliament itself for whose 'charms' and 'glory' no one, not even Maxton or Bevan, has failed to succumb.

With very little difficulty, the capitalist class has been able to ensure that the British labour movement, blinkered by its desire for parliamentary power, becomes separated from its representatives, and accordingly corrupted and deformed by the lack of democracy in its own ranks.

DILEMMA

Faced with continued deflection and bribery from the ruling class, the Labour parliamentarian is confronted with a dilemma. Either he mobilises outside parliament confronts capitalism and calls in question his parliamentary illusions. Or he must try to run capitalism better than his opponents.

Without exception, he prefers to foster his illusions and pursue the latter course.

With parliamentary obsessions run insistence on 'law and order', the 'good of the nation' and so on, with which slogans the ruling class has persuaded Labour governments to discipline

and humiliate the people who voted for them.

Finally, there is the certainty that in the extreme event of a Labour government moving seriously to tip the class balance in favour of the workers by parliamentary action, the capitalist class will abandon its parliamentary pretensions and move to a more direct struggle outside.

The idea that the ruling class will stand aside muttering about a 'fair fight' as the Workers' Control Act, 1969 is passed through the Commons (and the Lords?) is the fantasy of those who have not read about Vienna in 1934, or of Barcelona in 1936, or Athens in 1967, or (a prediction) Rome in 1969.

The slightest possibility that a social democratic government will move firmly against the capitalists will be greeted not with formal protests from Her Majesty's Opposition but with flights of capital, military coups and mercenary invasions.

Ruling class power cannot be legislated out of existence. It has to be seized.

Office has nothing to do with power. Parliament does not offer the 'road to socialism'. It offers a cul-de-sac. As Rosa Luxemburg put it in Reform and Revolution:

'In the history of classes, Revolution is the act of political expression of the life of a society that has already come into being.'

In each historic period work for reforms is carried on only in the framework of the social form created by the last revolution. People who pronounce themselves in favour of the method of legislative reform in place of, and in contradistinction to, the conquest of political power and social revolution do not really choose a more tranquil, calmer and slower road to the same goal, but a different goal.'

International Socialism 36

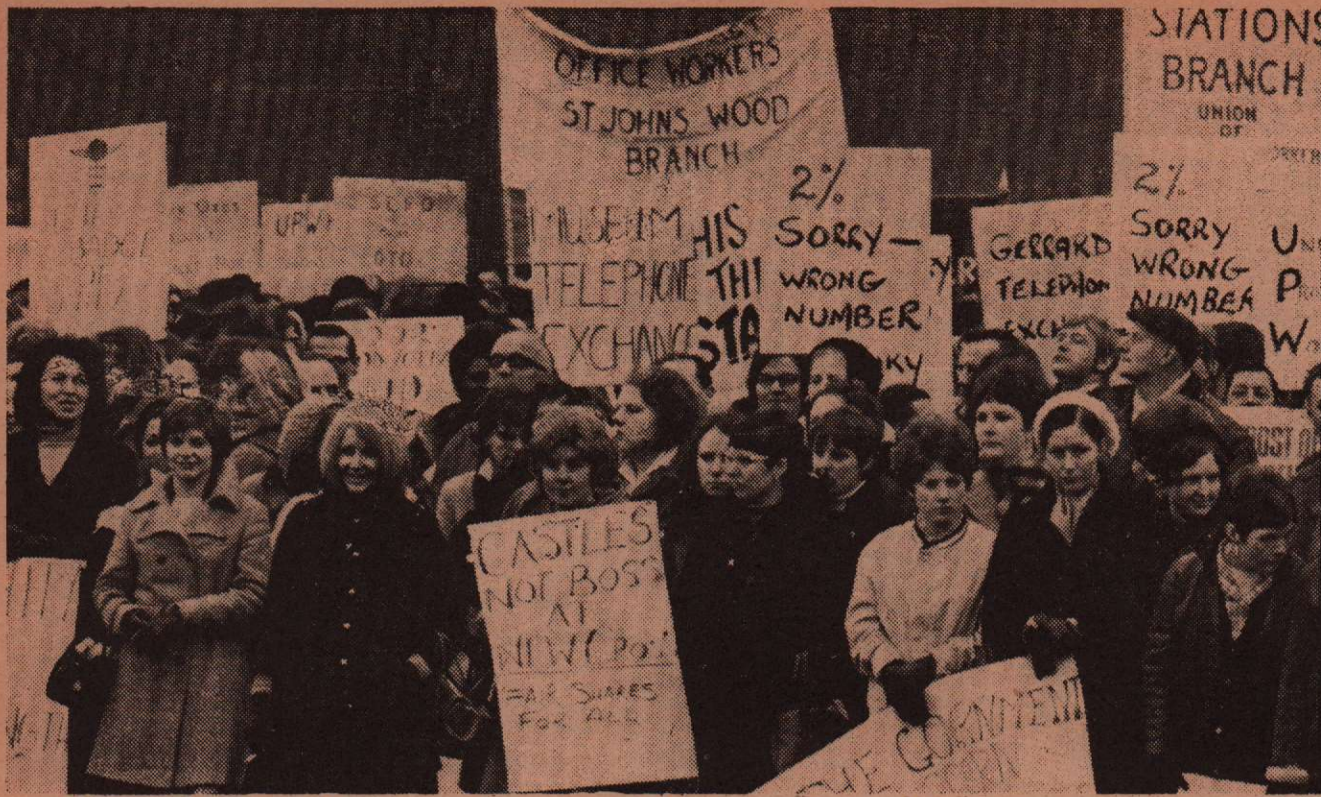
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NEXT WEEK

Workers' power - the only alternative,
by Duncan Hallas



Post Office strike: new laws would have made it illegal

Exploding the myth of our 'equal' society

by MIKE McKENNA

THE MILLIONAIRE press and television must be congratulated on their success in fooling a great many people about the realities of the class society in which we live.

They have consistently painted a picture of how a society, once characterised by inequality and exploitation, has been replaced by an egalitarian community with equal opportunity for all thanks to the welfare state, progressive taxation, and enlightened industrial and political policy.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The really remarkable fact is how in the face of evidence which completely contradicts their assertions, this picture could ever have been drawn, let alone maintained for the last two decades.

Let us look first at the question of industrial property, the foundation of class exploitation. Do we really have a property-owning democracy, in which the vast mass of the population have an ever-increasing share in the ownership of industry?

Income tax statistics since the war appeared to show a redistribution of income. Later research, however, taking into account the shift towards payments in kind and other fringe benefits, shows something quite different.

Not only has inequality not been reduced: it has been increased as the following shows:

In 1949 the share of the total national income of the bottom 30 per cent of the population was 14.6 per cent, after tax. It declined to 11.8 per cent in the 1960s.

In 1949 the share of the top 1 per cent was 6.5 per cent. It increased to 7 per cent in the 1960s.

RELIEF

The British tax structure is actually regressive. One must consider direct and indirect taxation together.

Direct taxation is to some extent progressive. However, the allowance system undermines this by offering greater subsidies to the higher income brackets, for example tax relief on mortgages and other allowances.

When we turn to the effects of indirect taxation (purchase tax etc) this of course will vary with the patterns of family expenditure. Studies made of this reveal a highly regressive system.

The important thing is to combine all these effects (of direct and indirect taxation) to arrive at the overall picture:

On £500 a year approximately 49 per cent is taken in taxation; £1000 a year 27 per cent; even at £2600 a year only 33 per cent is taken.

TENDENCY

Since the Labour government took power the system has become even more regressive and the long-term tendency is, of course, towards the increasing use of regressive indirect taxation.

The Welfare State does not alter the picture. Evidence clearly shows that the Welfare State does not affect the income distribution between the classes, but only within them (eg single people subsidise married people with families.)

Compared with most other industrial European countries Britain spends a smaller percentage of national income on welfare-benefits (6.4 per cent) much less than France (8.3 per cent) and West Germany (10.4 per cent)

The inability of our class society to sustain even the shadow of a socialised sector is reflected in the virtual state of collapse of the National Health Service.

All other spheres of our life show similar inequalities and deficiencies arising from the fundamental processes of class exploitation in the productive system.

HEALTH

For example working-class children are 3-5 times more likely to die in the first year of life than middle-class children. The absolute improvement in the general level of health in the population has not affected the differential between the classes.

The percentage of working-class children in universities is about 25 per cent - it has not altered over the last 30 years! Furthermore the expansion of higher education has benefited the middle classes disproportionately.

This catalogue could be continued at great length and in every sphere of life.

In later articles this task will be taken up in detailed analyses of the issues merely touched on here. In particular these phenomena will be traced back to their roots in the process of capitalist production.

Reformist concern with symptoms alone must give way to the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist structure which systematically generates these barbarities.

Deform (NOT REFORM) the unions - that's Castle's aim

by NAT SOPER

THE ECONOMIC climate in Britain is changing. Look at any industry and the picture is the same.

Mergers and takeovers, some of them encouraged and financed by government, are producing huge combines in accordance with the inner logic of capitalist development.

This is the background against which Wilson's plans for trade union 'reform' must be studied. The real object of the Labour government, of course, is to deform the trade unions, to cripple them.

Rush through

There are 11 proposals in the White Paper in Place of Strife and the indications are that these 11 proposals will be included in the Industrial Relations Bill that Wilson is determined to rush through parliament this summer. The vital 'second reading' debate on the Bill will take place about Whitsun.

On the principle that every

trap must be baited to catch the unwary, the Bill will include clauses about the right of a worker to belong to a trade union and financial assistance to trade unions.

In conceding to workers the right to join a trade union the government is giving nothing. This right was enshrined in the International Labour Organisation Convention No 98 passed in 1949, which a succession of British governments, Labour and Tory, have repeatedly refused to ratify.

As to giving financial aid to trade unions, the purpose of this is to tie them into the government's administrative machine. Neither government nor their capitalist paymasters object to trade unions. They are opposed only to strong, independent trade unions.

The Bill contains two key proposals. The first will give the Minister of Employment and Productivity power to require a 28-day pause in the case of unofficial strikes or

where, in the Minister's opinion, adequate joint discussions have not taken place.

Had this legislation been in force at the time, the Ford, Post Office and Liverpool transport strikes would have been outlawed.

The second provision of the new Bill lays down financial penalties for individual trade unionists, trade union officials and the unions for breach of orders issued by the Minister of Employment and Productivity.

No prison

This proposal puts an aggrieved worker on strike for his rights in the same category as men who desert their families and the fathers of bastard children who refuse to maintain their offspring - except that the worker on strike, unlike the other two

categories, cannot opt to go to prison.

The reason for this exclusion is not due to government squeamishness, but because there are not prisons enough to contain recalcitrant workers.

Consider these proposals together with the government's other proposals to remove the protective clauses for women under the projected new Factories Act. The pattern that emerges is clear. Nothing must be permitted to interrupt production.

The effect of the proposed 'socialist' legislation is well illustrated by the recent experience of the three Danish printing unions. Although they decided by ballot vote of 14,704 to 4,239 to take strike action in pursuance of a wage claim, the state law requires them to submit their claim to arbitration.

As Wedgwood Benn made clear to the Southern Region of the Labour Party on April 19, capitalism is moving on to a world scale. The workers are to be the slaves of the machine.

But the slaves have yet to speak. They will do so on May 1st.

MERGERS

Of course not. This 'little man's' dream not only ignores present reality, but is irrelevant in the face of the ever-greater concentration of capital by way of mergers and take-overs.

One per cent of the population own 81 per cent of all share capital.

Ten per cent of the population own 98 per cent of all share capital.

These figures ignore the latest tendencies to concentration which the Labour government's policies of modernising British capitalism deliberately encourage, such as the GEC-AEI-EE mergers. Given the dependence of the distribution of income on the system of production (a fundamental feature of society, first adequately understood by Marx), it should be no surprise that the maldistribution of income is as it is.

The share of wages in the national income has remained virtually the same for the last 100 years, at about 40 per cent. The trade unions have clearly been running just in order to stand still!

Inflamer: don't stick the label on me...

LETTERS

IN SOCIALIST WORKER of April 26, your columnist Ray Challinor wrote a small item concerning myself with which I wish to take issue.

Challinor states that 'Campbell's complaint about Tearse (in 1944) was that he was inflaming relationships between workers and employers, advising trade unionists to disregard the negotiating machinery for remedying grievances, and being abusive to official leadership'.

This is quite correct as an interpretation of the propaganda of the Communist Party against the Trotskyists during the war (indeed, they went much further, describing us as, among other things, 'Hitler's agents').

What Challinor fails to do is to explain the slanderous character of such complaints. Inflamed relations between workers and employers are a natural consequence of capitalism itself, of the crude attempts of the employers to place the responsibility for difficulties at the door of the workers while they extract their pound of flesh. The function of Trotskyists is to explain the real nature of the situation and to point the way to a solution of the problems. This we tried to do, and now, as then, we reject the 'inflamer' label.

Only a sectarian idiot would advise workers to disregard the negotiating machinery for remedying grievances.

This is quite a different matter from advising workers to go to the employers cap in hand; any trade unionist worth his salt knows that to attempt to negotiate from a position of weakness is quite worthless.

In general, concessions are made by the employer when he knows the worker means business. But to argue that trade unionists must therefore disregard negotiating procedure and (presumably) advise striking, regardless of the issues and the relationship of forces, is not only to slander the Trotskyists as a serious working class fighters but it credits the working class with zero perspicacity.

As for being abusive to the official leadership, this is not the method of revolutionaries. To expose their criminal betrayal of the working class, their hobnobbing with the employers in the interests of the employers, is quite a different kettle of fish. This simply implies a statement of the facts together with the need to draw the lessons clearly before the working class.

If anyone is guilty of abuse it is precisely those officials who castigate militants as wreckers because they demand that the officials

should represent the interests of the members who pay them.

Now, it is not an accident that J.R. Campbell and the Communist Party adopted this slanderous language against the Trotskyists. No one could have been closer to the employers' interests than they. Churchill's and Stalin's portraits were paraded at CP demonstrations as the saviours of mankind. It was a natural consequence that they should adopt the worst and most hysterical language of the capitalist class against the Trotskyists who stood their ground in a hostile situation, maintaining a position of revolutionary internationalism.

What I find appalling is Challinor's final statement that 'a quarter of a century later, Roy Tearse is still doing the same', i.e. that about which Campbell complained. My answer to Challinor is precisely the same as my answer to Campbell, given above. I accept, of course, that Challinor is simply confused and is not playing Campbell's game.

Now it is true that although I am not a member of IS or of any political grouping at this stage, I have been invited to speak at a number of IS branches and I welcome

the opportunity, not only to put forward my ideas but also to criticise those aspects of IS policy with which I disagree.

And, it needs to be said, that of all the tendencies I have encountered IS has the healthiest attitude to criticism and discussion and they, least of all, have the illusion that they form the vanguard of the working class, a self-appointed leadership waiting for the troops to form up in their ranks behind them. Despite whatever confusion may exist, this attitude gives them a head start in building something worthwhile.

I hope that Ray Challinor's rather ill thought out article will not discourage the members from listening to what I have to say. ROY TEARSE, London, SW17.

Welfare in a state

AS THE READERS of the millionaire press are aware, the Hospital Managements' equivalent of a 'productivity bonus' is cutting nurses' wages by roughly £60 a year. This is being done through a pay as you eat scheme, which has been introduced instead of student nurses receiving free meals.

But nurses must beware of the shallow hypocrisy of the mass media; working conditions have always been bad for NHS workers - why should the press only wake up to this now?

The answer is, of course, that the recent problems are merely a symptom of the intellectual and financial poverty that surround the 'Welfare State' in a capitalist system. What the papers did not mention was the profits that drugs and equipment manufacturers are making.

For example, in the Top Ten list of profits for British firms in 1967, Mark, Sharpe and Bohme were first, Beechams third and Aspro sixth - all drugs firms. Bob Edwards, Secretary of the Chemical Workers' Union, has mentioned five British drug companies who have increased their profits by up to 400 per cent in the last four years.

Hospitals are also run with the inefficiency of the capitalist system. Rationality does not enter the heads of the management committees (elected, it appears, by governing bodies, consisting for the main part of local industrialists, petty dignitaries and senile ex-matrons).

These same people are now issuing statements 'regretting' that the nurses' standards of living must be cut, and asking that we do not act in an 'unprofessional manner'.

Our declared intention must be to disrupt the NHS as much as is possible without endangering the patients, until there is a democratic health service, NURSE, South London.

BIG BUSINESS BEHIND DE GAULLE RESIGNATION

Ian Birchall

THE DEPARTURE of de Gaulle has come as a surprise to those who have been so bemused by his personality that they have ignored the real social forces in France.

In fact it shows that the movement begun last May is still very much alive. In the elections last June the alliance of de Gaulle's black-mail and the Communist Party's conservatism was able to produce a temporary swing to the right.

But while the student movement has gone into something of a decline, the working class has continued the fight. Other sections of the population, like peasants and small shopkeepers, who are very numerous in France, are becoming increasingly militant.

REFLECTS

Last May showed that it is possible to win these classes for a revolutionary line, if the workers take the lead.

At the same time, de Gaulle's departure reflects the problems of French capitalism.

De Gaulle was brought in by big capital to end the Algerian war, which was a nuisance to it. He straightened up the constitution and helped integrate the unions.

But now big capital wants someone who will not have de Gaulle's nationalist attitudes and who will help get France back in the US orbit.

Pompidou - of the Rothschild bank - is their man, though he may well be defeated if a centre candidate can group all the opposition parties, leaving the CP out in the cold.

BATTLE

But while the presidential manoeuvres go on, the real battle to build a new party to the left of the CP continues. The recent turn to a semi-revolutionary line by the formerly Parliamentary PSU and the slow moves towards unity among the left groupings, suggest that in the not too distant future such a party may play a significant role in French politics.

GLC drop court move

Sean Dunne

THE Greater London Council have unconditionally withdrawn their court action for an eviction order against a tenant from Bethnal Green, Mr Hyman Jackson.

The United Tenants' Action Committee had threatened to call a complete rent strike of all their tenants if Mr Jackson was defeated in court.

GLC housing leaders Plummer and Macey were served with subpoenas for the hearing by the UTAC and a massive demonstration was planned at the court if the case was proceeded with. Instead tenants went to County Hall to celebrate Mr Jackson's victory.

The GLC's warning letters to tenants who have been withholding the increase since last October now seem a little toothless. If they do proceed with any court cases, a complete rent strike will start immediately a summons is issued.

The tenants intend to take the offensive against the GLC, who will not be overjoyed to see them marching along with thousands of workers on the May 1st demonstration from Tower Hill.

NOTICES

IS ENGINEERS' weekend school Coventry 10/11 May. Details from Roger Cox Flat 1, 37 Queen's Drive London N4.

IS book service - new booklist ready. Contact enclosing S.A.E. Fergus Nichol, 90 Mountview Road N4.

IS London aggregate: The Ford struggle and its implications for the labour movement Room 346, Institute of Education Malet St London WC1 Saturday 3 May - 2.30 pm. Admission 2s 6d.



BLACK-WHITE MARCH

A THOUSAND marchers demonstrated in the heart of Enoch Powell's Wolverhampton constituency on Sunday as part of the black and white unity campaign in the area organised by the Socialist Unity Movement. The march was supported by the Indian Workers' Association as well as left-wing groups from many parts of the country. Among speakers at a rally was Paul Foot of the International Socialists.

Rootes stewards take sting out of MDW deal

Bernard Ross

ON APRIL 11 a mass meeting at the Coventry engine plant of Rootes Motors accepted the company's Measured Day Work proposals by a 2-1 majority.

Despite the dangers involved in the change to MDW, the offer of a stable £33 weekly wage for production workers, with £25 a week holiday pay, proved too strong a bait for most shop floor workers. But the two-year fight by stewards has succeeded in removing many of the most objectionable features of the company's original demands.

A central feature of the original proposals was that management alone should fix work standards and man-assignments. It has now been decided that these should be subject to mutual agreement through normal bargaining procedures.

Backed down

Management has backed down on its attempt to interfere with existing shop steward representation. It has also given pledges that no redundancy will result from the agreement, and that short time working will not be imposed within six weeks of any use of planned overtime.

These are not watertight - 'government legislation' or 'market trends' may be used as an excuse for redundan-

cies. Other less important concessions have also been made.

The new agreement is a partial defeat. In accepting MDW the Rootes' workers have surrendered an important element of shop floor control over wages and working conditions.

Win points

But the long resistance has paid off to some extent: management has not won the total freedom to speed up production and undermine shop floor organisation that it hoped for. As one leading steward commented, 'If we were going to accept MDW, this is the best that we could expect.'

It would be foolish to see this as the end of the fight. The Rootes management will surely try again to win the points that it has conceded this time.

And other car firms will now be eager to follow Rootes in replacing piecework by MDW in order to increase management control over pay and production. Fighting in isolation, the Rootes workers have done as well as could realistically be hoped for.

The task of militants now is to see that in future struggles the workers concerned are not isolated in the same way.

SQUATTERS HOUSE TWO FAMILIES

SOUTH LONDON Squatters installed two homeless families in empty houses in Bullen Street, Battersea on Saturday. The action followed a torch-light procession the night before to protest at the local Tory council's plans to sell 85 houses in the area to a private concern, the London Housing Trust.

The council will give the trust money to buy and renovate houses. It is also prepared to subsidise the trust by up to £100 a year for each house it modernises.

Police arrived on the scene minutes after the families were installed on Saturday, but no arrests were made.

WORRIED

It is clear that the council is worried by such militant action. Through an intermediary, a high-ranking local police officer, they have arranged a private meeting with squatters' and tenants' leaders in an effort to reach an agreement.

IS fight school plan

TWO HUNDRED opponents of racialism marched through the busy shopping area of Wood Green in north London on Saturday against the Haringey Tory council's plans to disrupt comprehensive schools and 'disperse' immigrant schoolchildren.

The march, organised by local IS branches, was also supported by the Communist Party and YCL, as well as parents and members of immigrant associations.

*Several hundred demonstrators paraded outside Haringey Civic Centre on Monday night to protest as the council approved the racist schools scheme.

Student militants shake LSE governors

Martin Shaw

AT THE START of the second week of the student strike at the London School of Economics the governors are beginning to look for a way out of the crisis they have provoked by sacking two socialist lecturers, Robin Blackburn and Nick Bateson.

The prospect of a 'review' of the sentences has been announced, but the details are being withheld as the governors wait for the response of staff and students.

In the past week students have successfully boycotted classes and manned a picket line that has kept delivery of supplies from the school.

The academic staff in the Association of University Teachers voted 2-1 against a strike but demanded the suspension of the sentences pending an appeal by the two lecturers.

OPPOSED

The 'militant' staff joined the technicians' union ASTMS whose members, largely research workers, were already calling a strike. Even a few clerical and library staff opposed the sackings and have joined the Public Employees' Union to protect their right of expression.

In the face of this opposition, the governors produced the sop of a 'review'. It was a hasty move, designed to head off a 'no confidence' motion on the academic board, a staff body.

The initial staff response was to repeat the AUT demands, which are not met by the promised review. But since then even 'left-wing' staff have started to backpedal.

CHALLINOR'S CHOICE

IN THE FIFTIES, when Labour right-wingers were advancing their theories, they attacked the idea that socialism was a question of taking the ownership and control of industry out of capitalist hands. They argued that socialism was simply about equality. This objective, said Anthony Crosland and others, could be achieved by monetary policy. Subsequently, into this framework they also placed the incomes policy.

It is one of those cruel paradoxes of history that those who talked of the need for equality have, when they achieved office, actually increased inequality. And, what is more, one of their spokesmen has openly admitted this. Harold Walker, Parliamentary Secretary at the Department of Employment and Productivity, was questioned about it in the House of Commons:

Mr Younger: How can the hon. Gentleman defend the idea that the government's prices and incomes policy is intended to favour the lower-paid workers when agricultural workers get far less than the Ford workers and when the whole lot get less than the heads of the nationalised industries?

Mr Walker: It is not a primary function of the government's prices and incomes policy to redistribute incomes.

At that point, one of the main arguments used by apologists for the incomes policy - remember the lower-paid workers, such as the nurses - vanished in a puff of smoke.

HAROLD WILSON has decided to abandon legislation to 'reform' the House of Lords. The parliamentary time thus saved will be used on his bill clobbering the trade unions.

Yet perhaps we should spare a thought for the aristocracy. Some while ago, the Sunday Telegraph did an analysis of the Upper House. It discovered that 40 per cent of their lordships had never worked in their lives. Another 40 per cent could only claim to be company directors, attending the occasional board meeting which, I am sure readers of this journal will agree, does not constitute full-time gainful employment.

One has only to visit the House of Lords to witness a pitiful spectacle. Many of its members have obviously given up all hope of ever finding a job. They lounge about utterly demoralised. The only time their lordships appear to evince any enthusiasm is when they are talking about the need for others to work harder and increase productivity. Yet they never set an example themselves.

Isn't it a further injustice about Barbara Castle's unjust bill that the House of Lords, which epitomises idleness, will pass this measure that will render hard-worked - indeed, frequently over-worked - trade unionists liable to stiff penalties if ever they stop their labours without permission?

Arms madness

WHILE THE GOVERNMENT makes its much-publicised cuts in the arms bill and yet, at the same time, military expenditure continues to rise, it is interesting to read some statistics provided by Robert Sheldon, MP. He stated that spending on arms was 6.82 per cent of the gross national product in 1944 and 6.97 per cent last year.

Could there be any more striking indication of the government's insanity than the fact that it is now spending proportionately more on the military than Churchill's government did at the height of the Second World War?

RAY CHALLINOR

The new recruits to ASTMS led by 'marxist' Ralph Miliband (known to the students as Moribund) have swamped the earlier union branch decision for an all-out strike in favour of one-day token action.

This ludicrous retreat may affect the students who con-

tinued to press for immediate reinstatement of the two lecturers and the resignation of the governors' standing committee. The students' stand is crucial for students and staff in universities throughout Britain for whom these political sackings are ominous precedents.

*Support is requested for a demonstration leaving LSE at 10.30 am on May Day, which will link up with the workers' march against anti-union laws.

Miners to fight rent rise

John Charlton

DONCASTER:- 450 angry National Coal Board tenants met at the Scorethorpe Club, Bentley last week on the first stage of their campaign to resist the NCB's plan to raise rents by as much as £1 10s a week.

Messages of support were received from two of the largest collieries in the area, Broadworth and Bentley, and the meeting was heartened by the news that Armthorpe and Thumscoe tenants are still holding out against the Board after six months.

A militant resolution passed unanimously by the meeting called for a continuous fight through every stage of legal negotiations, followed if necessary by action at colliery level.

After the meeting, secretary of the Scorethorpe Tenants Action Committee, Jock Martin, said, 'I am confident that the tenants are so united by the Coal Board's greedy

action that support for all necessary measures will be maintained until victory is won.'

Help in delivering leaflets is needed. Contact J. Martin, 6 Danesway, Scorethorpe, Doncaster.

Sit-in strikers back May Day

WORKERS at Injection Moulders in Acton, North London, who staged a successful 18-day sit-in strike earlier this year, voted on Monday night to strike on May 1st and support the London May Day march and rally.

'Worthwhile'

A TILBURY docker who marched in support of Enoch Powell last year commented on Monday: 'This year we'll be doing something more worthwhile.'

Socialist Worker

FOR WORKERS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

BERNADETTE DEVLIN, MP

MAY DAY GREETINGS

The Shop Stewards Committee and rank and file members of Injection Moulders (GKN) Kingsbury - send fraternal greetings to workers everywhere who are fighting against capitalist exploitation and imperialism. United working-class action is the answer to Powellite racialism.

The readers of Socialist Worker in CAV/Lucas, Acton, send fraternal greetings to comrades in the labour movement. Smash the anti-trade union laws - help to build the Revolutionary Socialist Party.

Greetings to all in the labour movement who are fighting against exploitation - thanks to those IS comrades assisting the homeless in Brent and elsewhere. Brent Squatters

Shell Star workers and shop stewards committee wish to extend fraternal May Day greetings to all our brothers and fellow workers. Millions of workers in many countries will be celebrating Labour Day as a national holiday in the tradition established by our fore-fathers, who in the face of fierce opposition from the state and employers used this memorable occasion as the beginning of an international campaign to fight for an eight-hour working day.

The need now is to use this May Day to unite workers on factories and sites as the beginning of a great struggle to combat the vicious attacks being made upon them, once again by the state and employers in the form of anti-trade union laws.

May Day greetings to the workers at Kelvin Hughes, Hainault from International Socialists, Ilford

May Day greetings to Plessey Workers, Ilford plant, from International Socialists, Ilford branch.

May Day greetings to workers at Berger Paint factory, Chadwell Heath, from International Socialists, Ilford branch.

May Day greetings to all comrades in Oxford-Sue Mills

Richmond IS send May Day greetings to all comrades at Watneys.

May Day greetings from the North West Shop Stewards Action Committee. Read 'Government White Paper 'In Place of Strife' - OUT' 6d each, plus postage from NWSAC, 89 Newnham Drive, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire. Next NWSAC MEETING: 8.00 pm, Central Hall, L'pool, Wed. May 14th. DEFEND WORKERS RIGHTS!

The Independent Socialist Clubs of America send warm fraternal greetings to the readers, writers and staff of Socialist Worker on the occasion of May Day, the international workers' holiday that began nearly a century ago in the great struggle of the American working class for the 8-hour day. In our fight to rebuild and renew the revolutionary socialist movement in the United States, we have been helped immeasurably by the theoretical contributions of International Socialism and by the example of, and lessons drawn from, the militant struggles reported and analysed each week in the pages of Socialist Worker.

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Ireland: 'I stand for a socialist republic'

I ASKED Bernadette Devlin if she was a revolutionary socialist.

'I have never read Marx', she said, 'but I have read Connolly and if James Connolly was a revolutionary socialist then so am I'.

Was she a Catholic and if so how did she square this with her socialism?

'Connolly did. I believe in the separation of church and state. I take my religion from Rome not my politics. I don't think that makes me any less a socialist, do you?'

Was Connolly her hero?

'Connolly and Countess Markievicz. Don't forget that I'm a woman.'

What about the row with George Brown over a United Ireland? What were her views on a United Ireland?

'I stand for a Socialist Workers' Republic. That's what we mean by the slogan Tories Out, North and South. What Brown is talking about is a bourgeois united Ireland—that's Sir Paul Chambers talking.'

Build movement

Reed: You said that you were a revolutionary socialist. Do you see the need for a socialist organisation?

Devlin: There is no real socialist outfit in Ireland and I believe there is the need for one, but I can't think of how we could go about building one. I believe that this is something which must be tackled or we will see the Green Tories jump up from their graves and try to swamp the movement.'

Reed: What issues, apart from Ireland, do you hope to raise in Westminster?

an interview with SEAN REED

Devlin: The tinkers and the woman question. I support the demand for equal rights for women. That's why 'one man, one vote', as a slogan has worried me. I was glad to see that London People's Democracy has amended that to 'one person, one vote.'

Reed: Is there any women's movement in Ulster?

Devlin: Now there is. In Derry Labour Party the girls are forming a group and the latest issue of their paper Ramparts has an article called 'Come Back Mrs Pankhurst We Have Not Yet Overcome'. I think that this will grow.

Reed: What can the British Left do about Ireland?

Devlin: A hell of a lot more than they have. For so long the Irish question has been forgotten by the Left of this country but I'm glad to see that a change is coming.

Reed: London's PD has called for a mass single issue campaign to demand civil rights in Ireland. Will you help?

Devlin: I'm a member of PD am I not?

Reed: You said last week that you thought civil war was beginning in Ulster. Do you still think so?

Devlin: I thought it was coming when I saw the voting results in Mid-Ulster. We did not get a pan-popish vote. Apart from the fact that I got more votes than there are Catholics on the register, we know that the Catholic upper class voted Tory so we got about 1,500 Protestant votes.

The Unionists would not, they could not, allow this process to go on.'

Reed: You mean that the government will provoke a civil war?

Devlin: We want civil rights, not civil war—it's the Tory landlords and bosses who will be responsible.

Reed: Last week you called for a citizens' army. What did you mean?

Devlin: I mean that the people of Bogside should prepare to organise and resist any attempt at repression. Street defence committees should be formed, missiles stocked, etc.

Reed: Defence not attack?

Devlin: For sure.

Repressive laws

Reed: What are your views on the proposed anti-strike laws?

Devlin: I'm against all repressive laws which attack my people - the poor, the workers and small farmers, etc.

Reed: English or Irish?

Devlin: British or Irish, Catholic or Protestant, black or white.

Reed: One more question. 'One man, one vote', Will that end the campaign?

Devlin: Even if O'Neill or some other Prime Minister was to grant one man, one vote, and that is doubtful, then in areas like Derry they will gerrymander the city by joining it with safe Unionist Coleraine and the old rural district to ensure a Tory majority.

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She's no nine-day wonder, the girl hammering Tory police state

IT'S BEGINNING to dawn on Fleet Street that 22 years-old Bernadette Devlin is no student nine-day wonder to be feted and rendered harmless.

Even after a gruelling election campaign followed by a weekend in the Bogside area of Derry, where she advised the people to form a Citizens' Army to protect themselves from the Royal Ulster Constabulary, she has given as good as she got in interview after interview.

Terence O'Neill's reputation, so far largely unscathed in the Tory press has got a hammering from which he will not recover in a hurry.

Main enemy

Despite the attempts by press and interviewers to get Bernadette to praise O'Neill, she has refused to budge from her statement that mainstream Unionism, headed at the moment by O'Neill, is the main enemy of the civil rights movement.

To shocked reporters she declared, 'The only difference between O'Neill and the Paisleyites is that the unfortunate Paisleyites don't have hyphenated names. The Unionist rebels want to walk over us with hob-nailed boots, O'Neill would use carpet slippers.'

Bernadette joined the civil rights campaign last August when she took part in a march from Coalisland to Dungannon, where she was kicked by stewards because she shouted slogans other than the official ones.

supported Eamonn McCann's call that the march should defy the ban placed on it by Police Minister William Craig.

The resulting RUC brutality confined to Bernadette that she must take a full part in the campaign.

In the following week she took part in the founding of People's Democracy, the mainly student body which was to play a major part in the movement from then on.

When the middle of the road leaders of both the Derry Citizen's Action Committee and the Civil Rights Association tried to use the sacking of Craig as a signal to call off the campaign, Bernadette was one of those who struggled to break the truce.

On the famous 'long march' from Belfast to Derry in January, the action which effectively 'smashed' the truce, Bernadette underwent another transformation. The young 'do-gooding' student

saw the need to fight against the right-wing in the movement as part of the fight against Toryism in Ireland, North and South.

In the General Election which followed the second split in the Tory Party she was picked to fight Major James Chichester-Clark for the South Derry seat. She won the highest vote of the eight PD candidates.

The poll and the non-sectarian manner in which she put across the PD message set the pace for Mid-Ulster. The seat was set to become the cockpit for a great faction fight as Green Tory carpetbaggers like Austin Currie turned first left then right in an attempt to project himself as the all-purpose unity candidate.

The grass-roots anti-Unionists demanded and got, a say in the selection of the candidate to fight the Orange Tory. A unity convention was agreed to.

Even before the convention it was clear that Bernadette was the choice of the 'white negroes' and the only non-Unionist candidate who stood a hope of getting any Protestant votes.

The Tories tried to destroy her with a communist scare. The fact that Northern Ireland's tiny CP was back-

ing one of the nationalist Tories was neither here nor there.

The diversions failed. Bernadette stormed to victory with Protestant as well as Catholic votes and hammered another nail in the coffin of the Tory police state.

SEAN REED

The peasants have arrived

The readers of Socialist Worker in CAV-LUCAS Acton London W3 congratulate Bernadette Devlin on her historic victory over the Unionists in Mid-Ulster. Towards the people's democracy and civil rights - Down with Tories Orange and Green - For a united Socialist Ireland under workers' control!

GIVE 'EM HELL GIRL!

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