

630 Conservative MPs Returned

Landslide Against the People

ONE THING MUST be made plain about the Election: there is a positive 'Law' that politicians who are expected to carry out a strong policy can always do so AGAINST the people with whom they are identified and who have elected them, and the principles with which they are most closely associated. Thus in support of this Contradictions Law, a rebel anti-militarist of the First World War, like Mr. Shinwell, could not possibly abolish conscription after the Second World War. It would possibly still be in operation had there not in the meantime been a militarist series of Ministers of War. Pacifists in power can be relied on to be ultra-militaristic. Militarists in power can afford to cut down the armed forces estimates; Tories can afford to surrender national sovereignty and, in the form of the Common Market, prepare 'to sell out to Europe'; it takes a Labour Trade Union Socialist Minister, however, to get tough with the unions and the unofficial strikers.

The Labour Party cannot, by reason of its left associations, attack the Swiss bankers or Hungarian economists so loudly as can the Tories. On much the same lines, the homosexuals in Parliament—with one or two fairly honourable exceptions—have been the loudest to denounce the bill to relieve their disabilities, or at most have been discreetly silent. In the Balfour Government, the one member of the Cabinet to dissociate himself with the plan for a 'Jewish National Home' was, of course, a Jew. If a government wish to bring in major infringements on personal liberty, they bring in somebody who has been brought up in the Liberal Party (the most reactionary Home Secretary was Sir John Simon).

During the war, it was necessary to try to bring the generals to heel. It had to be a militarist, and the job went to a Tory. The workers had to be disciplined, and so the Ministry of Labour went to the leading trade unionist, Ernest Bevin. The only exceptions to this rule have been in Ambassadorships (sending Cripps to Moscow and Hoare to Madrid was an instance). Those who imagine that by supporting one party against another

they are helping to bring in at least minor benefits or save minor bastions of personal liberty, are under a major delusion.

I am told that at least one former contributor to **FREEDOM** is supporting the Labour Party in a marginal constituency. Quite obviously, he expects that in a marginal seat he will be able to get marginal concessions. It would be logical perhaps to support a Tory if these marginal concessions are to be of a socialist character—but having stated this, is to state the nonsense of those whose idea of anarchism is not really anything more than a misunderstanding. At certain times anarchism may appear to be extreme anti-fascism or extreme liberalism or extreme revolutionism. It will attract those who are anti-fascist or liberal or revolutionary and want to be more so. They have not understood anarchism. One of the few useful aspects of an election is that it helps to show this. Anarchism may well be anti-fascist, support certain popular liberalistic causes, and be revolutionary; but it is anarchism. It has nothing to do with voting people into power.

The line of the comic left is, of course, 'to vote Labour in order to expose it'. This hackneyed Trotskyist line, a leftover from the days when Lenin was desperately trying to get support outside Russia and thus hallowed with the sanctity of a credo in direct apostolic succession, floats around

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IS ANTI-VOTE CAMPAIGN SEDITIONOUS?

LEYTON AND ILFORD Libertarian group have been distributing a leaflet urging people to spoil their ballot papers. On Saturday, March 19, they toured Leyton in a car with loud speaker and a stuffed effigy of a politician on top of the car. In Leyton the two in the car were stopped by police who told them if they went on they would be arrested firstly for behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace and secondly for sedition. They proceeded to Leytonstone, where they were again stopped by the same two policemen, also in a car, and one of whom was Inspector Smart of Leyton police, and formally cautioned under Section 52 of the Representation of the People Act, 1949, and Section 35 of the Magistrates Courts Act 1952. The Police said it was illegal to incite people to deface their ballot paper.

Ron Bailey has since spoken to Inspector Smart on the telephone and has been told that the matter has been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The group think this is an attempt at intimidation, especially the sedition charge which they regard as ridiculous. They do not intend to stop and are going ahead next Saturday; have announced this to the local press who are very interested. If charged, say with incitement to deface the ballot papers, they intend to plead emphatically guilty and say they think this is what should be done and they would do it again.

M.C.

Defend Ilford Comrades!
Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park
Sunday, March 27, at 3.30

TEN DAYS to go before the big prize-giving, with the political climate tending to become a little warmer.

Since Parliament packed up, all the political leaders have been very busy exercising their vocal chords. We have now reached the stage where they have started to call each other nasty names, only in a gentlemanly way, a way that befits an Englishman and a gentleman.

Up until the last couple of days the general issues have been a little blurred, as was stated in last week's **FREEDOM**, the BMC issue was a godsend.

The new red herring that the party leaders are getting steamed up about is the Common Market. I say party leaders because Joe Soap canvassers are, and will be faced with bread and butter issues. Party leaders can prattle on as much as they like, but if you want a house or mortgage or you are a miner facing a pit closure the Common Market has as much interest for you as bloody Neptune.

Economics are always good for a mention. Heath accuses Wilson of pouring money down the drain and Wilson replies you left us a debt to the tune of so many millions of pounds and so it goes on. The

television appearances of the political brains hasn't convinced many people one way or the other. In fact the common remark is, 'As actors they deserve an Oscar, but I wouldn't trust any of them as far as I could throw them'.

In an attempt to sift the wheat from the chaff, the Tories, if they get the chance, are going to have 'a go' at the trade unions, both Hogg and Heath have made this very clear. After all the Labour Government has pointed the way.

On Rhodesia, Heath is prepared to talk to Smith and work out a compromise which means the Africans can't win. The bi-partisan policy on Rhodesia has been exposed, 'We disagree with UDI (in theory) BUT!'

What about 'Ted' himself. The first thing that stands out a mile is that he likes 'Ted' and if there is any left over, he likes Ted some more. He is THE Conservative in this election with du Cann available to fill in any gaps. In fact, the election is all about Wilson v Heath, they have to destroy each other's image.

As always the two major parties get all the limelight with the Liberals thrown in for make-weight. Very little is said about the splinter

groups—Communist Party, Radical Alliance, ILP and nationalist parties—all aspiring to become members of the gasworks at Westminster, but one thing is certain, the Communists will claim to have done well. If you read the *Daily Worker* after the election, they will give you the total vote cast for all the CP candidates and claim this as a major victory. To be fair, they have a vivid imagination. The only snag is, they believe it themselves.

All in all the whole charade is sickening, the more it goes on the worse it gets. The national press with two exceptions, *Daily Worker* and *Sunday Citizen*, are praying for a Tory victory. If two people are talking and one is going to vote Conservative this is classified as a .000005% swing by some poll or other and is immediately relayed to Tory HQ and used as blood plasma for faint hearts. I do sympathise with the national press in one respect, it is difficult to differentiate between the various manifestos, after all it is only a Dutch Auction. Confidence tricksters get years in prison if they are caught, politicians get £3,200 a year for catching the people.

BILL CHRISTOPHER.



"Fixed fights? They went out with bows and arrows."—A well-known wrestler recently.

Harold the Conqueror

ON MARCH 16, Harold Wilson visited Birmingham's Rag Market, scene of the rowdiest meeting of the 1964 election campaign. The Rag Market was also visited by Labour supporters bearing a banner inscribed 'Harold the Conqueror—1966,' a large body of Young Conservatives determined to shout Wilson down and a small body of anarchists and Committee of 100 supporters determined to heckle persistently, but intelligently.

After a quick display of all the Labour candidates in the Midlands (an inspiring event!) and speeches from lesser dignitaries, including the Home Secretary, the great man rose to speak. Despite Conservative efforts to drown him he carried on, while we interjected our comments over a loud hailer borrowed from the North West Committee of 100. Before long it became apparent that two large men in blue were closing in on either side of us, so we hastily broke up, intending to link up on the other side of the hall. The law followed our loud hailer, but lost it in the crowd. Unfor-

tunately we lost each other and a couple of us spent the rest of the meeting in the midst of a crowd of Tories, countering their cries of 'We want Heath' and the Labour ones of 'Wilson, Wilson, Wilson' with shouts of 'We don't want any of 'em!' Surprisingly, the Tories seemed to like it. One old dear loved the vulgar gestures we kept making at the platform for the benefit of the TV cameras.

As soon as the meeting finished we dashed outside and set up our sales pitch in competition with the *Worker*, *Keep Left* and all the rest. The loud hailer worked wonders in drawing attention, though four coppers appeared not to notice it. A fifth, however, descended upon us and told us we couldn't use it after 9 p.m. without permission. Upon being pressed he told us this was a by-law. I've since phoned the central police station—needless to say, there is no such by-law. If anything, his intervention helped us, as we drew even more people by announcing, 'Despite police interference we are continuing to sell **FREEDOM**'.

All in all the evening was one of the most successful we've had in Birmingham for a long time. But it would have been a lot more successful but for the long arm of the law looming over us and the constant barracking of the Tories. But then, perhaps it was all part of Heath's plot to silence Wilson before the electorate discovers there's no difference between them and gives them both the boot. GORDON CAUSER.

ANARCHY 62

OUT NEXT WEEK DISCUSSES

ANARCHISM AS A THEORY OF ORGANISATION

ANARCHY is Published by
Freedom Press at 2a,
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Stay-up Highlights Workers' Struggle

THE FOUR BUILDING workers who staged a stay-up strike on the job of a 250 ft. tower crane have highlighted their particular dispute. Their action, whether spontaneous or planned, was very successful, achieving what was intended by creating publicity and drawing attention to a struggle between workers and management which had been going on for some time. These men took action over bonus earnings and redundancies.

Taylor Woodrow are the contractors for the job in Leadenhall Street, which consists of a 27 storey office block for the Commercial Union Assurance Company. Adjacent to this, they are building another office block, this time for the P. & O. Line.

The stay-up strike has been, in fact, the culmination of a long series of disputes with the Taylor Woodrow management, who are really annoyed because the men on the Commercial Union site have built up a strong militant union organisation. This has enabled them to get the highest wages and the best conditions possible. The

management tried to break up this organisation by transferring four steel fixers onto the adjacent P. & O. site, a typical move by building firm managements, but it did not come off. After a ten day unofficial strike, these men were back on their original job.

The steel fixers had negotiated bonus targets which gave them some very high earnings without breaking into a sweat, which is, after all, how it should be. Taylor Woodrow realised their mistake, but it was too late. However, the carpenters were not in such a good position and because they were split up into two gangs, one for the tower block and the other for the rest of the site, there were substantial differences in pay between them. All the 'chippies' started banning all overtime in an effort to secure equal bonus earnings. The management countered by putting the whole site on a basic 41-hour week in order, so they said, to balance out the different trade work schedules. However, they asked the electricians to work overtime, but this was refused.

STEWARDS CONSTANTLY WATCHED

The management then began to tighten the screws. John Curran, chairman of the Works Committee said, 'Then pressure was put on the steel fixers who, it was claimed, were not working hard enough. Foremen kept a constant watch on them.' They sacked Gordon Emberson, a steward, who retaliated by parading with posters and picketing the management's offices on the site. At a disputes panel, the sacking was changed to suspension with pay pending an inquiry.

Gordon Emberson told me that the stewards were watched constantly. If they went anywhere they had to get the foreman's permission and if they were seen away from their job, they were closely questioned. On one occasion two shop stewards, after asking permission in accordance with the rule book, left the job to phone the union district office. On their return they were sacked, only to be reinstated when the management realised their mistake.

The week before the stay-up strike, it looked as though the union officials, the shop stewards and the management had come to an agreement to return to full working on the original terms. On the following Monday, it appeared that the management's version of the agreement differed from that of the others and they said that the carpenters and steel fixers on the tower block would have their bonus cut from about £30 to £15 per week.

It was this turnabout that led to the stay-up strike.

After the men came down on Tuesday night they were sacked, followed by 65 other men including John Curran. Following the failure to get these men reinstated, the rest of the 250 workers on the site have come out on strike. The *Financial Times* noted that 'the dispute is the latest of a long series of incidents which have plagued City building sites in recent years, including the giant Paternoster scheme and Barbican projects'.

SUPPORT FROM OTHER JOBS

A steward told me on Tuesday night that he expected a full stoppage of work by the rest of the job, for the men had shown tremendous solidarity before and were militant and determined to get all the sacked men reinstated. He said that the Works Committee had tried, with little success, particularly from the adjacent P. & O. site, to link up with other jobs of Taylor Woodrow and their subsidiary, Myton Ltd. Now I am glad to see that the attitude has changed and the P. & O. site has taken token strike action in solidarity with their brothers across the way. Messages of support have also come from the Myton job at Colliers Wood, where carpenters are on strike over victimisation, and there is a strong possibility of supporting action from other Taylor Woodrow jobs.

There is no doubt, and this has been illustrated by the Turriff's Barbican dispute, that job organisation on sites in London is very strong and managements are extremely worried by this. It would be advisable to consider asking for sympathy action similar to that given during that Barbican dispute if it is necessary to fight for the reinstatement of these men.

On the face of it, it might be thought that these men are only concerned with improvement of their wages and conditions, but this is not so. Last Autumn two men were killed on the Commercial Union site, both leaving wives and children. Taylor Woodrow's, who according to their signs put 'safety first', gave the widows £300 each. The men organised a collection on their own site and throughout the major jobs in London, with generous response. At Christmas, they organised raffles, with some of the money collected being used to buy toys for the fatherless children and the rest given to a Home for orphaned children in Margate, to be used to buy them Christmas presents.

P.T.

FOR FREEDOM

For Workers' Control

MARCH 26 1966 Vol 27 No 10

Law & the Unions

IT'S FASHIONABLE these days for the unions to tangle with the law, maybe it's the sign of things to come. This time it's the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers (AUBTW). This dispute began on May 31 last year when the AUBTW called out its members working for a 'labour only' contractor, Emerald Construction Co. Ltd. The union demanded that the main contractor Higgs and Hill employed the men directly.

Last December an order was sought by the Emerald Construction Company to prevent the AUBTW taking industrial action. They failed to obtain the order and appealed. On March 7 their appeal was heard and found, in a reserved judgment, in favour of the employers. The Appeal Court ruled that the AUBTW officials must not attempt to bring about the termination of contract between Emerald Construction and Higgs and Hill. The union officials were refused leave to appeal to the House of Lords. The AUBTW immediately removed their pickets. This decision from the Court of Appeal is very important because it means that even if a union is only aware that a contract exists they can be accused of an unlawful procuring of a break. Whereas before only if unions had details of a contract could they be stopped from procuring a break.

It all sounds very involved but the law's decision certainly ties the union's hands. AUBTW policy is to drive 'labour only' contractors off all building sites. This affair makes it that much harder, 'officially' of course.

BEHIND A LADY'S SKIRT

PROVINCIAL MUNICIPAL BUS employers have slid very smoothly behind the skirt of the Wages & Incomes Board when they refused a pay claim by 70,000 bus drivers and conductors. The claim, which is similar to the de-

mand made to London Transport, had already been referred to the PIB by George Brown.

The municipal employers are now saying of course that there can be no settlement until after the PIB has reported, only then will they talk to the unions. The PIB certainly provides the employers with an 'out' and keeps things all nice and legal like.

The bus section of public transport is chaotic, the time can't be very far off when rank and file busmen from all over the country will blow the whole lot sky high.

BIG BROTHER

FOUR THOUSAND motor workers walked out of a factory in Birmingham on Friday in protest of the action taken by the employers security police. An AEU member was detained for over an hour whilst the works police searched his bag and his locker. The search revealed nothing and the member was given neither an explanation nor an apology. The AEU are demanding the dismissal of the police involved.

This 'security' lark is becoming a very profitable business, odd security companies are shooting up all over the place. Ostensibly it is for the protection of property, the employers property, but their scope goes far wider than that, one particular firm even advertises the fact that it will expose industrial trouble makers as part of its contract. How else can employers effectively operate their 'black list'?

I wonder if it is part of Tory industrial policy to legislate against that lot, but of course, the employer still has the right of hire and fire and the militants are the undesirables in industry, they are the boys who prevent our country from being great—a great what—I'll never know.

BILL CHRISTOPHER.

Contact Column

Meeting. Why anarchists are on the march. Conway Hall meeting, Easter Sunday. For democrats who don't know and anarchists who may not. Look out for speakers and details. Organized by an Anarchist Group. Speakers: Robert Bartrop, Donald Room, Philip Sansom.

Can. Second issue now ready produced by Oxford Anarchist Group and Oxon Federation. 60 pp. 1/6 plus 7d. postage from Tony J. Pitcher, Merton College, Oxford. Donations welcome to meet loss on first issue.

Accommodation. Flat or rooms required in London area (preferably unfurnished) by teacher and wife. For one-year period from September. P. and M. Ford, 102 Stotford Road, Arlesey, Beds.

Stickers for Election. 'ANARCHISTS SAY DON'T VOTE'; 'DON'T FORGET TO VOTE ON APRIL 1st'. Each 3/- per hundred. 17a Maxwell Road, S.W.6.

Special. 'The Wolf', Southall (232 or 195 from Town Hall), 8 p.m., Saturday, March 26. La Vida Jazz Band. Southall Anarchist Group.

Accommodation Vacant. One bunk empty—happy, tolerant girl wanted in s/c flat, in lowest Lambeth, details REL 5224.

Anti-Election Leaflets. Why Vote! It gets you nowhere. 2/6 a 100 from 17a Maxwell Road, Fulham, S.W.6.

Northern 'Scene'. International Centre, 64 George Street, Manchester, March 26, 2-5 p.m., 6-10.45 p.m. 4/- entrance. Poets free.

Teachers. Would anyone interested in the idea of a Libertarian or Anarchist Teachers' Association write: A. W. Taylor, Basement Flat 1A, 10 St. Georges Terrace, N.W.1.

Anti-Election Meeting. Anti-election campaign in Birmingham, March 12/13, 19/20, 26/27. Meet at 5 Gladstone Road, Erdington, Birmingham 23, 2.30 p.m. on Saturdays, 10.30 a.m. on Sundays. Further information from Gordon Causar, 27 Upper Gun-

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If you wish to make contact let us know.

Landslide Against the People

Continued from page 1
the lunatic fringe who 'bore the Labour Party from within' and everybody else from without. The most extreme case was one group that declared itself opposed to 'boring within' but decided that it would have a United Front with the Labour Party (without the latter's knowledge) so that it could be 'exposed'. The group itself was 'exposed'. After the Labour Party was elected, it wound itself up (and the United Front with it).

It is very easy in time of election to say—rents, Vietnam, nuclear bomb, this, that and the other. . . DO something about it. . . VOTE . . . and never mind what for, so long as you do. The only excuse we can offer for a DON'T VOTE campaign is that this is equally effective or ineffective; here is something to 'DO' about it, and it will be neither more nor less useful than voting. At least it enables one to have the comfortable feeling afterwards

of saying—"Don't blame me, I didn't vote". Which, we agree, is small consolation after the bomb has dropped, but is the best that can be offered in the context of a General Election. The positive things we can do are to be found in a vastly different context.

We can hardly deal with these things to the once-every-five-years man or woman whose knowledge of anarchism comes to him the first time when he or she sees a sticker on the tube saying, surprisingly, 'Don't vote!' To that dabbler in public affairs, we are after all only the odd few out, as we are at Coronation time and no doubt would be at Christmas time if we did not comfort ourselves with the knowledge that it is on old pagan pre-Christian festival.

We are the 'will not voters'—which in one recent opinion poll reached 3%, but who knows the reason why people do NOT vote?—ranging from the dictates of conscience to the pressing needs

of nature. We must confess at the election to being somewhat like the avid idealist who interrupts the marriage ceremony with the call, 'Don't get married!' But at least the ceremony would then be interrupted to hear whether we have good cause to state this. We can only hope that for some now engaging in the irrelevant and inconsequential pastime of choosing between their rulers, there will be some who will pause to ask whether we have good cause to say why they should not vote. And the answer is simply that we don't think it desirable to delegate our authority to somebody else.

By the time of the next lot of elections, let us hope that more people understand our belief in a society based on full participation, which would be better than the present authoritative system based on property and privilege; at any rate, that at least those who consider themselves libertarian or revolutionary understand this.

INTERNATIONALIST.

way that they can deal with site-labour that is getting the upper hand—MASS SACKINGS. Shut down the job and restart it several months later. In the past this action has been successful on the part of the employers, and will be successful if it is attempted this time. The only way to really beat the employers at this game is to have every site in London, and if possible elsewhere, organised. If the employers shut down one site then the men must be able to shut down the lot.

Although the article names the London Joint Sites and their chairman, Jim Hiles, as being responsible for unrest on big jobs recently, it is praise slightly more than its due. Although sympathy can be felt for stewards working all day and having to deal with union affairs on top, it is because more effort is needed to involve the mass of workers in extending the work of the Joint Sites. It needs leaflets and pickets and work from the ordinary building worker to make the Joint Sites really effective. Otherwise the Joint Sites will have good cause to regret their missed opportunities if Taylor Woodrow shut down the St. Mary-les-Aux site. Only genuine effort to extend the Joint Sites throughout London will make the employers realise it is futile to victimize men and start mass sackings. There are many organised jobs in London outside the London Joint Sites. They need to be brought into co-operation immediately. Otherwise the ordinary worker is in for another kick in the crutch. It is no good sitting back mesmerised to watch it coming.

SPARKS.