

THE ANARCHIST

Published by the Hammersmith Anarchist Group

1935 GENERAL ELECTION ADDRESS
DIRECT ACTION! — THE ONLY WAY!

WAR

Twenty-one years ago, a war which was to end all wars, was commenced; that war proved to be more devastating than any war which had preceded it.

The so-called leaders of the workers, stood on recruiting platforms telling the workers how necessary it was that they should go and defend themselves against German Militarism, which was threatening their homes and families, and everything else which was near and dear to them. And, last but not least 'poor little Belgium' was in danger; if only they would go and fight for their God, King and Country, they would be the saviours of humanity, and would return to a land, and homes, fit for heroes to live in. That is what was promised to the worker twenty-one years ago.

Since that war which was to end all wars finished, those master criminals, (the governments of the world) have had a breathing space in which to prepare you for yet another wholesale massacre. With their winged engines of destruction ready, they are contemplating a rich harvest for death's sickle. They plan to rain down bombs from the sky, belching forth lethal gases which will sink down into the bowels of the earth, and from which it will be impossible to escape. The targets of their bombs will be YOU, YOUR wife, YOUR children and YOUR homes. These master criminals plan to destroy in a single night, teeming centres of industry, destroying the patient labour of centuries. Wholesale murder, plunder and destruction, is to be carried out on a scale never before known in history.

In a few weeks time, the placards may be staring at you from the walls of the factories, church gates, from the hoardings, and in the trains, trams and buses, etc, telling you that it is not poor little Belgium this time, or the poor little Indians, the Irish, or the Boers. No, this time it will be 'poor little Abyssinia', which needs defending, and lo and behold you will suddenly become somebody important, for you will be told that your King and Country wants you, and who knows, supposing all other means fail to induce you to join up, that they will not say it is a war to defeat Fascism.

Has your King and Country needed you since the last war? Where is the liberty they promised you? Is it the liberty to starve amid wealth and luxury? Where is all this justice they spoke to you about? Is it the justice which you receive at the hands of the P. A. C. and the U. A. B.? What about those homes fit for heroes? Is it their prisons and workhouses? Where is your country when you walk from town to town in search of work, in thousands of cases absolutely homeless? Surely your daily experiences should teach you that you have no country.

There is no need for you to fear that the foreigners (as they are called) would come and take possession of your country, as that has already been done by the capitalist class. Your enemies are therefore not abroad but are already here.

For the Labour and Communist parties (and their National Government allies) to say that sanctions mean peace; is a lie. Lenin correctly described the League of Nations when he said it was, "The Thieves Kitchen". In Rykov's speech at the XIV Party Conference of the C. P. he was also correct when he said; "The League of Nations is an instrument not of peace, but of war, not of liberation, but of oppression." We say, that the only way to stop war is to remove the cause, capitalism itself. To do this we must first of all finish the class war, the meaning of which is contained in this article.

There can be no peace, while hunger and want are found amongst millions of the people, whilst those who make up the employing class have all the good things in life. Those who talk in terms of capitalist peace are deliberately misleading the people and are not their friends, but are definitely the enemy of the working class struggles throughout the world.

THE SHAM FIGHT AT THE POLLS

Once again we are confronted with a General Election. The vote catchers are hard at work, promising the Sun, Moon and Stars, to those who have become their victims; the workers might as well put a x on their forehead, as to put one on a ballot paper, for all the good it will do them.

What strikes us more than anything else in this election, is the attitude of the Communist Party to the Labour Party; having in mind the North Hammersmith bye election which took place on the 26th of April 1934, when the C. P. nominated Ted Bramley as their Candidate and accused the L. P. of being reactionary. We are not at all surprised that, that section of the workers who thought the C. P. was the only party fit to lead them are becoming more bewildered and confused with every step which is taken by the so-called leaders of the C. P. who are trying to explain away their past, and urging the workers to vote Labour.

Perhaps Bramley's supporters may recall that in his Election address he stated; "The Labour policy leads to Capitalist reorganisation, Fascism and War, and not to Socialism." Again in his "Election Special" Bramley made himself quite clear on what he thought of the L. P. when he stated that their policy means the "operation of the Means Test" "Reorganised Capitalism" and 2/- p.w. for a working class child". With reference to the Trade Union and Labour Party leaders, he said; that they had

KATE SHARPLEY LIBRARY
DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

already built up their own united front with capitalism

Apart from the above undeniable facts, should further proof be needed, we quote; International Press Correspondence of 19/10/34. "It is significant that in the London Labour Party election manifesto, no mention is made of the working class, or of the fight for Socialism. This is because the policy of the Labour Party is not a working class policy, if it was they would not have carried out the anti-working class instructions of the National Government in the Boroughs where they have had a majority for years" This is from the manifesto of the London District Committee of the C. P. G. B. on the Borough Council Elections!

You might ask yourself; why has the C. P. changed its attitude towards this anti-working class party? this is simple; the leaders would very much like to polish the seats of their pants on the seats at Westminster. Notwithstanding their treachery and cunning, they have been unable to capture the glittering prizes, therefore they have gone to those who are more experienced in the corrupt practices of political job hunting, for tuition.

Both the C. P. and the Labour Party are reformist, both believe in State control of the Banks, Land, Mines, Factories, and all other means of production and distribution, and that all power in society should be concentrated in the State, including the educational facilities. The only difference between these two parties are the methods to be used. The L. P. suggests compensation, whereas the C. P. proposes confiscation; in either case the wealth produced by the workers will be distributed to them as the state thinks fit; the state will also determine the conditions under which the workers shall work, live and be taught. The workers will be drilled and disciplined in huge agricultural and industrial organisations under the control of the state, which will also determine the punishments for disobedience of orders given by state officials.

These two parties therefore, together with their so-called opponents the Fascists, form themselves into a Holy Trinity, (Father, Son and Holy Ghost.) of oppression.

It cannot be too clearly understood that under any system of government, that is to say, under any condition of society except ANARCHISM, government can at the best do nothing better than impose the Politicians ideal of society upon the people.

Let us suppose an absolutely ideal Socialist, Communist, or Fascist state, or shall we say; the ideal of those parties, where all the members of the government are in agreement, and where their only object is the welfare of the people. As a government, they undertake two chief duties; one, to see that the necessities of life are supplied, and the other, to ensure that the workers shall have proper conditions under which to work. Now supposing that a section of workers disagree with the government as to what are proper conditions, (for the workers see the factory from a different point of view than politicians, since they work in the factories.) What takes place? The Politicians we will say, refuse to grant those concessions which seem to them unfair. This section of the workers consequently

come out on strike, and are successful up to the point of causing a serious shortage of the commodity which they produce. The Politicians are responsible for the supply of the commodity, and they cannot allow the whole community to suffer because of the (to them) unreasonable action of an extremist minority. The inevitable conclusion is that the workers must be forced back into the factories.

Certain it is that today the capitalist is compelled to bring out the Army and the Police to force the workers back to work on conditions which are dictated to them by their masters, but it is also certain that in all societies where there is a central controlling body, the same means must be used to crush the rebellious.

PARLIAMENT

It is said by L. P. supporters; since the House of Commons has been used by the present dominant class to gain its ends; why cannot the worker's use it to gain theirs? Now it all depends what do we mean by our ends, if these should be free access to the land and the instruments of production and free distribution of all wealth produced, which is the only way to solve the social problem to the advantage of all; then that is opposed to the L. P. policy of Nationalisation which has nothing to do with Socialism. The L. P. therefore even if elected with a majority could not, even were it possible, legislate capitalism out of existence, having no mandate to do so. Were they to attempt it, the L. P. would soon find itself out of office; their supporters who are only asked to vote for Nationalisation would soon see to that, and we already know how easy it is for Tories to stampede this sheep-like following into a panic at any moment.

It is time however that we began to consider how this venerable, not to say antiquated institution known as Parliament, fashions the laws, obedience to which makes us virtuous and honourable.

When a newly elected member arrives at Westminster he finds there the most comfortable club in Europe, for attendance at which he receives £400 per annum, and also the bargain shop of the Empire. The magic word which unlocks all its secrets is the word "procedure." Unless a thing has been done before, it cannot be done at all. If it should be attempted, cries of "Order, order!" overwhelm the unknowing member. He may desire to ask a question, about the only thing he can do, but his question must be worded in accordance with formula, and be approved by the "Speaker": This "procedure" is necessary in order that the member of the government who replies may be put to no unusual mental exertion in inventing a suitable lie.

The small Bill in his pocket will never be heard of unless our member enters into numerous bargains with other members, by which he pledges himself to support the small Bills they have in their pockets; let us assume he gets a "first reading"; that is the end of his Bill, for the government promptly squashes it by refusing to allow further time for its progress. Not dismayed, our

member takes a manly part in discussion, and makes a few exposures. He only does it for the first time because three methods of "procedure" exist by which he can be made to keep his tongue between his teeth; "Mr. Speaker" may refuse to see him when he rises to speak again, the House may be counted out, or, as a last resort, a Front Bench member may move "the closure". He therefore finds the refreshment room and the smoke-room to be much more comfortable than the "House" itself, and who can blame him?

GOVERNMENT —

ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE!

In order to be understood on this point, let us give a definition of "government". Whether it is elected by majority vote, or whether it imposes itself upon the people by force, it matters not to the Anarchists; it is still the people's enemy, consisting of a number of people who make laws in the interest of Property rights, and have at their disposal the collective forces including the Army, Navy, Air Force Police Force etc., with which they compel every individual to respect their laws. It therefore constitutes itself as being a privileged class separated from the rest of the community.

Placed in this privileged position all governments find themselves in antagonism to the people, their function being to protect property in the interest of the non-producers against the producers, to protect the wealth produced, but not for those who have produced it.

Government therefore is simply the executive committee of the ruling class, Yes! it is the Headquarters of Robbers and Thieves. The Landlords and the Capitalists are those for whom it keeps the Land and the means of production, and prevents the Workers from taking possession.

At the risk of repeating ourselves we say again, if, instead of the capitalist class there were a set of officials appointed by the government and set in a position to control the factories, it would bring about no revolutionary change.

The officials would have to be paid, and we may be sure, that in their privileged positions they would expect good remuneration, as we already know the tastes of Politicians. You would still in fact have a non-producing class dictating to the producers the conditions upon which they were allowed to make use of the means of production.

As this is exactly what is wrong with society to-day, we can see that "state control", or selecting bosses from amongst ourselves would be no remedy, it would bring a host of new troubles.

The task before the workers to-day is, as it has been in the past, the workers must rid themselves of the dictating class. This cannot be done through Parliament in face of what has been said above of that institution. Imagine the utter absurdity of these Politicians sitting in the House of Commons discussing the welfare of the people. While they are doing so are there not countless Engineers, Bakers, Builders etc., walking the streets unemployed, and cut off (by the laws which these Politicians have made) from the

means of production (machines, tools etc.,) with which they might produce what they need. Why! even the House in which these people stand, making their senseless speeches, was built by the workers, and it is the workers who keep the politicians alive day by day, by feeding them.

Since the workers are fed, clothed and housed on the industrial field and not in Parliament, it is obvious that if they wish things to be put right in the factories and in their homes it is in those places where the job is to be done, and those most fit to carry out this job are the workers themselves, and not the Politicians. To smash down the laws of the Politicians, so that we may be able to produce what is necessary for our welfare, is the only way to abolish our poverty; this will mean that we shall have to resort to "Direct Action"

DIRECT ACTION!

When the workers become discontented in the factories and their homes, they have several courses to consider, before deciding which will give better conditions.

The first course is that of the so-called Socialists i.e. the Labour party, who propose to influence what they call the chief of society, Parliament, so that it will exercise its power to put things right. These people, the "Indirect Actionists" are shocked when the "Direct Actionists" declare that the only way to get a cure is to study the nature of the disease, and apply the cure directly to it.

The second course is that of the non-parliamentary, but non-revolutionary Trade Unions. The Trade Unionists recognise where lies the true power of the workers in their fight against the Capitalists, but they are wrong in that they propose no change in the relationship between the two. If the slave class is better housed, fed, and clothed, from the masters stores, it means that the slave will become more and more completely owned by the master. It is not revolutionary because it proposes to retain master and slave, and merely attempts to better the conditions of the latter.

The third course is that of Direct Action advocated by the Anarchists, who agree with the Trade Unionists as to the place where the struggle must take place, but suggests that the Unions should be freed from the control of leaders and also from all outside political party influences and domination whether it is from the Labour, Communist, Fascist or any other party, since these parties have, for their own ends, diverted the workers struggle into a Parliamentary Electioneering stunt, furthermore, since the workers are the only creative force in society, for it is they alone who produce the food, clothing and make the machines, build the factories, and work the land and the mines etc., it is useless for them to go on handing over to the master class all that they produce, and then keep up a continuous quarrel as to how much they shall be allowed back.

The workers should be prepared and educated in the meaning and object of The Social General Strike (as a prelude to a Social Revolution) not merely a come out strike as was the case in 1926. That was merely

a sort of rebellion, and is essentially not revolution however thoroughly it is done.

The Social General Strike then, would mean that the workers would remain in and work in the condition of equality i. e. equal opportunity for all to develop themselves to the fullest extent and to be free from the dictates of the useless master class

The task for the workers then is when they declare The Social General Strike, for them to feed, house, and clothe themselves instead of spending their energies in trying to make better masters of the capitalists. To cut off the supplies of the capitalists and retain what is produced for the workers, are the main points of the revolutionary struggle, and that is the meaning of Direct Action, and it is ANARCHISM.

To sum up then; Who can doubt what is the meaning of the struggle between the two classes? Is it to end in a few extra crusts being thrown to the workers? Or is it merely that we shall be allowed to work rather than exist in a condition of semi-starvation? Will peace be declared when a new set of politicians sit in Parliament? No! it is far greater than all that, it is the age long struggle between the past and the future, it is the great war between Liberty and Slavery; Ignorance and submission; against understanding and self reliance.

It is but a feeble mind that sees in the class struggle merely an attempt to reform the government. This struggle will go on until each side by the logic of its actual position in it will be forced to realise its true significance, and then nothing can stop the final battle; the overthrow of government and the establishment of FREEDOM.

All Criticisms and Comments on the above Article will be dealt with through the Correspondence Columns of FREEDOM.

Please address all such Communications to:—

THE HAMMERSMITH GROUP

2, Malden Crescent,
London. N. W. 1

TO THE MINERS

Is the miner a man... or a mole, that tunnels deep down in the earth?

Blind as a mole, is he, to all that makes life's worth?

Is his heart as black as his face? Is his life his own or yours,

Ye men who grow fat on his toil, on the coal, that he hews as his sweat downpours?

As you sit by your snug fireside, and you ring the bell for the maid,

Lest the coal soil your hands, just the slightest bit,... Keep them white, for the wage you have paid.

And what more should the workers ask, than existence he's scarce e'en a right to?

Aye, and whenever your greed makes war, he must throw down his tools and fight, too!

As you warm yourselves by the fire, and your profits and belly grow big,

The miner grovels belly-long, your wealth from the pit to dig.

Up to his knees in muck and wet, cut off from the light of day,

What right has he to a higher wage, who is made of a lower clay?

Well, may be his SKIN may get black as hell, whilst your dividends he doth dig,

But is it the miner, or coal-owner, that lives most like a pig?

He who gets his bread by the sweat of his brow, and the might of his own strong hand,

Or the royalty owner, whose title is that his forefathers STOLE the land?

They prate of "honest toil" but how much have they ever done,

Who live upon the worker's back from father unto son?

The miner is grimed from head to foot, but I think his soul's the cleanest,

For the man who exploits his brother man, of all useless men is the meanest.

Is the miner a man... or a mole, that tunnels deep down in the earth?

Blind as a mole, is he, to all that makes life's worth? Is his heart as black as his face? Is his life his own,

or yours,

Ye men who in sloth grow fat on the coal, that he hews; as his sweat downpours?

What is it makes life's worth; to possess what another man MADE.

And lest one day the robbed should rise in their wrath, to go forever afraid?

Or scorning the ease that's bought at the cost of another's pain,

To take one's share in the work of the world, with labour of own hand and brain?

What is it makes a man; fine clothes upon the back, Soft hands and a heart so hard it can let a brother lack?

Your hands may be hard, but your hearts are soft, and full of courage, and true,

To feel and fight for a brother's wrong, and stand up for your own rights too.

If courage makes man, then of all men the miner is one of the best,

Was there ever a one of you failed a mate when put to the test?

"Never mind for me, I'm done, lad, there's others further on,"

And you'd risk your lives to save them though the chance were a hundred to one.

I have asked, are you blind as moles? ... Aye, so long as you do not see

The mockery of a "living wage", — man only LIVES when he's free!

Who gave the earth unto the few, to hold in greedy gripe?

Plain Robbery, upheld by Law;... REVOLT, the time is ripe!

Why ask for just a little more of that which is your own?

Who gets the coal, who grows the corn, 'tis his and his alone

To share with ALL who share his toil, and NONE for those who shirk;

No need for money then to buy the fruits of our own work.

Earth's storehouse plenty holds for all, labour its only key,

Away with masters, one and all,... and, workers, we'll be Free!

Janet Grove.

Sept. 29, 1925.

Printed by The Freedom Publication Committee at 2 Malden Crescent, London. N. W. 1, for the H. A. G. 106, Coningham Road, London W- 12.