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A news analysis for socialists

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE MARCH

The most important thing about the Easter March was its size. Despite the weather which could have hardly been worse, despite the decline in CND's organisation, despite the efforts of all enemies of the March, and despite the absence of such erstwhile supporters as Mr. Anthony Greenwood and Frank Cousins the final rally was as big as any in the history of the anti-nuclear weapons' movement. It is a fact that this movement remains the one which is most capable of bringing people out on the streets. There is no other movement today which could even think of calling for a three-day march.

During the worst weather there was usually no fewer than 5,000 people marching. We argued over our loudspeaker than if only a proportion of these people would join us in the struggle inside the Labour Party important successes would be a sured. We met some opposition to this argument and it remains an important task to convince marchers that just as they are prepared to trudge through rain, hail and snow they must be prepared to undertake another unpleasant job: that of struggling within a party whose leadership they disagree with.

It is the job of the left to elaborate a policy which gives the marchers some perspective of success and which is sufficiently dynamic enough to attract them into the Labour Party. That this must be done without at the same time antagonising the bulk of Labour Party supporters who still want to give 'their' Government a chance, goes without saying. We have to convince the marchers that moral gestures are not sufficient and that the struggle has to take place at the point of power.

ONCE MORE ON VIETNAM

Although the main emphasis of the Easter March was on Vietnam, the confusion which exists in the movement was reflected by the wide range of slogans carried on this subject. We sought to inject into the March a political platform which could at the same time take the Government at its word and yet be a rallying point for co-ordinated action against the war.

In our leaflets and speeches we argued that an end to the war was possible only if all foreign troops were withdrawn; if all countries recognised the only popular force in the South: the NLF; and the North and South are unified. This being the case, our Government should press for all American troops to be withdrawn; and immediate end to all attacks on the North, immediate negotiations with the so-called Vietcong; and the unity of the country.

This latest Fabian pamphlet is based upon a series of discussions among Fabians in the trade union movement, assisted by John Hughes (Ruskin College) and Ken Alexander (University of Strathclyde) who drafted the finished text. The general theme of the pamphlet is the need to 'build a Britain that is characterised by both more planning and more social justice, and that pursues both through the extension of democratic participation in our industries and economy.'

Incomes Policy can only be discussed, of course, from the background of the 'conservative inheritance'. Apart from the industrial record the disproportionate incomes levels are seen as presenting a major problem for incomes policy from the start. The authors assert correctly that 'no solution is in sight' to these and other problems 'within the context of an unregulated economy'. Though what the Fabian group concerned see as a 'regulated economy' may be at variance to what other socialists consider an acceptable minimum.

Some interest is expressed in package deals between unions and employers because it is 'only a step beyond this' 'to link forward bargaining to forward planning of industrial development.' The point about unions chasing price rises by money wage awards must be taken by all trade unionists but is a NEDDY composed of men of 'goodwill' necessarily the best answer?

Obviously the Fabian group do not suggest that it is, but without any real say in the management and industrial policies of an industry the role of the workers is not altered and by the logic of the class struggle the worker can only rely on 'men of goodwill' in these conditions.

The group suggest that 'ways of making capitalist firms socially accountable' must be found and that it is up to the labour movement' to overcome its inertia in this respect. The separation of the political questions of private ownership of industry from the monetary question of incomes is a big barrier to a socialist incomes policy being adopted by the trade unions this summer. 'Open the books' is characterised as being a mere slogan by the Fabians in this pamphlet but the authors do not suggest any way of developing this theme beyond that position.

Socialists must read this Fabian work. The great debate on incomes policy has already started. Much that this pamphlet says will be argued about this summer. Part of the truth about incomes policy may be found in its pages.

Gavin Kennedy.

* A Fabian Group pamphlet, 3/6d.

THE FINANCIAL TIMES URGES IMMEDIATE ACTION

In an editorial on April 21, the Financial Times declared: "...the Government must take action quickly in two directions. First, it must be more willing...to speak out and stress the fact that if some workers..receive larger increase than the average, others must receive smaller..Second...it must put great emphasis on the productivity criterion for increases...The incomes policy will have succeeded...if higher pay is made strictly conditional...on the abandonment of restrictive practices."

In its April 17th issue, the <u>Economist</u> devoted one of its editorials to: "Mr. Wilson's team. An Easter report on ministers and ministries that have done well - and those who could do better." Readers of <u>The Week</u> will of course be most interested in the journal of The City had to say about the left wingers in the Cabinet. What significance there is in the fact that Mr. Anthony Greenwood wasn't even mentioned it is difficult to say. If he hasn't pleased them he certainly hasn't angered them! But a few extracts will give an idea of how the article went:

"Mrs Castle's Ministry of Overseas Development is largely the Tories' Department for Technical Co-operation under a different name, with a lot more economists on its payroll but probably rather less aid to dispense; the career civil servants are now thinking up nice schemes to send the new academics to make economic surveys of the Falklands Isles....Lord Chalfont is indistinguishable from the Tory Ministers of State who were also working on disarmament..."

For Labour Party members the most revealing and, indeed, disturbing comment was on Frank Cousins: "..All his colleagues agree that he makes his views fully, indeed, exhaustively, known; but some colleagues, at least, rate him the biggest bore in the Cabinet. Not that Mr. Cousins is disposable. He is the one man in the Cabinet who could make himself a nuisance out of it; the sole viable rallying point for a dissident Left."

It is quite definite that Mr. Wilson is a regular reader of The Economist - not merely do many of his policies seem to be inspired by that paper but he even went to length of quoting it in his New York speech to the bankers. (The Economist commented we "could not agree more with this part of the speech if we had written ourselves; indeed, since the Prime Minsster quoted from our last week's issue, it appears that we partly did). It is to be hoped that Mr. Cousins and other left-wing members of the Cabinet read it too.

SCOTS HANGMAN LEAVES FOR NEW LIFE - IN SOUTH AFRICA

Robert Stewart, the only Scottish hangman, has emigrated to South Africa (Scottish Sunday Post 18.4.65). Stewart, aged 45, has been assistant hangman to Albert Pierrepoint since 1950 and has 'assisted' at nine executions. He applied for the job as an executioner to the Home Office in 1950 and was put on the waiting list. After extensive tests at Pentonville Prison he was put through the final test by witnessing an execution.

After his appointment he would go to the prison at 4.00 p.m. the day before the execution. His family had to be always "respectable, behave well, and be smart when they went out", he told the <u>Sunday Post</u>. Apparently Mr. Stewart thinks his executioner days are over now that he is going to South Africa. Whatever difficulties Mr. Stewart may have finding a job at his trade as an art metal worker, he can rest assured that the hanging industry in South Africa is almost a growth industry.

Defence expenditure in 1965-6 is to reach the record level of a £2.120.5million. This represents 15s. 2d. per week per head of population or £39 8s. 4d. per year. It is equal to £67 per second, or more than £4,000 per minute. In mometary terms it is an increase over the 1964-5 estimate of 6 per cent though, as the Defence White Paper (Cmnd. 2592) moints out, the increase in real terms, allowing for the increase in prices, is 2.3 per cant. Para. 1 of the White Paper states that the plans which the present Government inherited would have made necessary even higher estimates of £2.176m - this estimate has thus been reduced by £55m.

Mr. Denis Healey (Minister of Defence) described the White Paper as "the first engagement in a long campaign to re-establish control of the nation's defence and take a firm grip both on policy and expenditure". And he. said:

"The fact is that we in Britain are still spending too much on defence...we are still spending a higher proportion of our national wealth on our defence forces than any other country of our size, than any of our main competitors in world trade, and this expenditure bears particularly heavily on our balance of payments and on the type of resources, both in manpower and manufacturing capacity, which we need most of all to get our economic situation right. We have made a start this year - a small one but a start."

He pointed out, however, that there was a limit to the degree to which the problem of defence expenditure could be solved by savings on equipment; that the surest way of achieving reductions was to reduce the number of men in the services; these "cannot be cut unless the jobs they have to do are cut". "That is why the Government are now engaged in a far-reaching review of all the jobs done by our armed forces.....in order to measure their overall costs against their value to the nation."

Four out of the five Polaris submarines are going ahead; it was announced on February 15th that the fifth had been cancelled which would save about \$7.5 million in capital cost. (This is for the boat and missiles; in answer to a question on November 30th Mr. Healey said that the capital cost of a five-boat programme including the base from which they would operate was estimated at \$400m, i.e. \$80 each). The Government proposes that the four British Polaris submarines should be allocated to the Atlantic Nuclear Force which should also include an equal number of U.S. Polaris submarines, the British V-bombers (except "those required for commitments outside the NATO gree"); "some kind of mixed-manned and jointly armed element or elements in which the existing non-nuclear powers could take part; and any force which France may decide to subscribe.

The White Paper stresses the fact that "the cost of weapons tends to rise very much fatser than the nation's wealth. For example, between 1963 and 1968 the capital cost of equipping an armoured regiment in BAOR will double (on 1964 prices); a gunner regiment in the same theatre will cost three times as much; an infantry battalion six times as much. There is a similar escalation to be found in the Royal Air Force."

*this report and the two following tables are from Labour Research.

ARMS EXPENDITURE OVER 17 YEARS

Year	£ million	Per head of population per week - s. d.
1950-51 1951-52 1952-53 1953-54 1954-55 1955-56 1956-57 1957-58 1958-59 1958-59 1960-61 1960-61 1961-62 1962-63 1963-64	741 777 1,110` 1,404 1,364 1,436 1,405 1,525 1,430 1,468 1,468 1,476 1,596 1,689 1,767 1,792 d) 1,998 d) 2,120	8 5 10 7 10 3 10 10 10 7 11 4 10 8 10 11 10 11 10 11 11 10 12 4 12 8 12 10 14 4
	ANNUAL COSTS	
Total Defence Bud		ement Pensions, ate, 1964-5£1,218m
-weapons product:	ion£ 739m Natio	v Allowances£143m
-weapon research -works, building for defence	£ 201m Medic	ral Research Council£ 8.5m rangent housing idies£102m
	PRODUCTION COSTS OF INDIV	IDUAL ITEMS
1 Polaris submar	£80m M4 Mo	ria Line Underground£56m torway£44m
1 Hunter-killer	submarine, 9 new	hospitals with 500 beds each
1 Guided missile	e destroyer, 15,00	O agricultural tractors (export)£ 9.2m
1 V-bomber		council houses £200,000

BAHRAIN - BRITAIN'S SHAME.

When the news broke that the Americans had been using poison gas in their war against the people of South Vietnam there was an immediate and tremendous outcry. However, British-controlled forces have been using various types of gases against civilian. populations for some years now. This news has scarcely caused a ripple of protest. Just now, in a tiny island in the Persian Gulf a struggle is being fought out which has all the permicious characteristics of the Vietnam war - including the use of gas. It is to the detriment of the British Labour and peace movement that it has done virtually nothing about the shocking events now taking place

Bahrain is an oil-rich archipelago and sheikhdom under British control. The workers of the Bahrain Petroleum Company, an American syndicate consisting of Standard Oil of California and Texas Oil Corporation, downed tools on March 11, and since then have been demonstrating in protest against mass sackings. The company sacked the Bahraini workers on the pretext of redundancy but the Bahrainis claim that the move was taken to make room for

Despite ruthless repression/the Sheik's armed forces and British forces, who have used helicopters to drop tear gas, the protest action has gone on unabated. Students joined the demonstrations as it became clear that the struggle was assuming an anti-imperialist character. Later the merchants closed their shops in solidarity with the strikers. The struggle has caused a rift in the Government; Ahmed El Umrani, Minister of Education, sided with the workers and students and resigned his post.

The demands put forward by the workers include the right to form trade unions (British trade unionists, please note), the reinstatement of the workers dismissed, the release of all political detainees, the reinstatement of students who have been thrown out of their schools, and for the right to form organisations. It is a fact that under the media eval regime of the Sheik, backed by British bayonets and helicopters, political parties and newspapers are virtually forbidden.

There has been a clamp down on news 'from Bahrain. The latest we have is that the workers were still out on strike on April 12th and that there had been daily demonstrations. In one of these, in the city of Manamah, British-controlled forces went into action against the crowds. According to the Iraqi News Agency they used tear gas and opened fire, killing and injuring dozens of people. A similar attack took place when the workers of the Bahrain Petroleum Company demonstrated outside that company's headquarters at Alawali.

Complete figures of the number dead and wounded are not available. Radio Baghdad quotes Bahraini's trade unionists as putting the figure of dead, after four weeks of struggle, at over 100. The Bahraini authorities admit over 20. Baghdad Radio also puts the number arrested at over 2,000 and the number tried and sentenced at over 1,000. And this out of population of less than 180,000! What we have here is, for intents and purposes, British forces acting as policemen for American oil interests, propping up a completely undemocratic regime in the interests of higher profits for Texas oil millionaires. Unless we do something about it the blood of these Bahraini workers will be on our hands. Everyone must speak out NOW!

Pat Jordan.

Defence implications:-

After the collapse of Blue Strak and Skybolt and with the V-bombers obsolete against Soviet intercontinental missiles, the Tories set out on their TSR-2 gamble. It is most unlikely that a TSR-2 could ever have reached the Soviet Union. With a top speed of only 1,500 mph at high altitudes and 750 mph at 'tree-top' height, the Soviet Union could bomb Britain with missiles, capable of 15,000 mph, before the TSR-2 had even crossed over East Germany.

Mr. Healey has criticised the stategic role of such a plane and in the Budget the Labour Government came out against the TSR-2 on grounds of expense. The Government has emphasised that we cannot afford £5 million per plane. According to the Labour Government, there is no role for the TSR-2 in Europe (i.e. against the Soviet Union). The 1965 Defence White Paper puts it this way:"The only direct threat to our survival would be a major nuclear war arising from a direct conflict between East and West. This can almost certainly be excluded as a result of the present state of mutual deterrence, and, bearing in mind the high risk that any conflict in Europe would escalate, deliberate aggression, even on a limited scale, is unlikely in this theatre."

BUT.....the White paper does not extend this kind of thinking to Labour's 'East of Suez' policy, as this quotation shows:-

"It would be politically irresponsible and economically wasteful if our bases were abandoned while they were still needed to promote peace in the areas concerned, though we recognise that they can be maintained only in agreement with the local governments and peoples." This is clearly an imperialist view of the Afro-Asian countries. And this is the main reason why the Labour Government is now considering the purchase of F llls, Phantoms or Bucanners, despite the fact that the Afro-Asian people themselves do not want "nuclear umbrellas". As Patrick Keatley, The Guardian Commonwealth correspondent, put it recently:- "In the Afro-Asia of 1965, the wisest rule for those heading east of Suez bearing burdens is that they should not be in uniform and not carrying guns. It is a lesson that Andrei Gromyko and Charles de Gaulle have both quite evidently learned."

It is a lesson which the British Left will have to teach the Labour Government.

TSR -2 AND THE AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY

CND and the whole British Left should develop its support for the aircraft workers' campaign for civilian aircraft as replacements for the TSR-2. The aircraft workers Should not be made to pay for a past Government's mistakes. The Labour Government should be pressed to use the money saved on the TSR-2 to develop non-military projects such as hovercraft and air-buses.

Mr. Wilson's ansærs to the TSR-2 cancellation should not be "Buy American", and the aircraft workers will campaign most strongly against Britain buying the American Fill. Surely the Left should join in on this. This is an important way in which CND can increase its support among industrial workers. Further, the Government should be pressed to produce an Economic Plan for Peace. This should have been done years ago, following the example set by the United Nations' study. The treatment of the 'brass handshake' which thousands of aircraft workers are now getting represents a complete failure on socialist economic planning.

The spotlight on the TSR-2 is also highlighting the case for nation alisation. The record speaks for itself. The big combines (Hawker Siddeley, British Aircraft Corporation, Bristol :Siddeley engines and Rolls-Royce aero-engines) are heavily subsilised to make profits, not least out of armaments. Now is the time to campaign for a nationalised aircraft industry which recognises the rights of its workers and the needs of the nation.

Alan Rooney

(Editor <u>Aviation Voice</u>)

N.B. The aircraft industry is on the agenda of The Week and Labour's Voice conference on "Workers' control and incomes policy" June 18/19 weekend in Manchester.

Many shop stewards, trade unionists and M.P.s are attending.

See over for full details.

VOICE of the Labour and Trade Union Movement

3rd conference on Workers Control and Industrial Democracy

"Workers' Control in a changing situation" - Docks, Aircraft, Steel and others.

Saturday, June 19th, 1965 and Sunday, June 20th, at

the A.E.U. District Office, 120 Rusholme Road, Manchester 13.

This third conference in the current series follows last year's initial meeting in Nottingham, and the projected London conference on self-management in nationalised industries and co-operatives. On this occasion, we aim to highlight some further crucial areas where the demand for workers' control and industrial democracy is especially relevant to present-day developments. We hope you will make every effort to attend, to bring this notice to the attention of colleagues in the Labour Party and trade unions, and to strengthen the gathering momentum behind the campaign for a democratic socialist society.

Agenda - Saturday June 19th

11.30 a.m. Follow-up Report on previous conferences.

Convenor's report on attendance, etc.

Organisation of seminars.

12.30 p.m. Lunch.

1.30 p.m. Break up into seminar groups, appoint spokesmen, discuss draft programmes submitted (see below).

Groups on: - the dock industry

the aircraft industry
existing nationalised industries
follow-up group on steel industry

3.30 p.m. Tea.

4.00 p.m. Plenary session: report back of groups with amended draft programmes.

5.30 p.m. Disperse.

A social evening will be arranged for people attending the conference. Details will be announced at the meeting.

Sunday June 20th.

10.30 a.m. <u>Incomes Policy and Workers' Control</u>
- What should the labour movement's response be?
General plenary session.

12.30 p.m. Lunch.

1.30 p.m. Brain Trust

A panel of prominent Northern MPs, trade unionists, etc.
answering questions on the theme of industrial democracy.

3.00 p.m. Wind-up. Final discussion on future action.

over/

Draft programmes for consideration

On this occasion, we are not asking people to submit individual papers for circulation.

Instead, we should welcome from any intending participant, or indeed anyone who thinks he has something to say, to submit ideas on the different topics as follows:

- on the future of ownership and workers' control in aircraft, to the Editr, Aviation Voice,
 8. Ashkirk St., Manchester 18. (by April 24th)
- on the future of ownership and workers' control in the Docks, to the Editor, Dockers' Voice,
 71, New King's Road, London S.W. 6.
- on the Steel industry's future management system, to Councillor W. Meade, 31, Far Lane, Sheffield 6.
- on the incomes policy question, to
 Ken Coates, 19, Greenfield St., Dunkirk, Nottingham.
- on self-management in existing nationalised industry, to
 Tony Topham, 1, Plantation Drive, Anlaby Park, Hull.
 Summaries of ideas received will be presented to the conference. In
 the case of aircraft and docks, (where the chief new ground is being
 broken) special issues of Aviation and Dockers Voice, containing
 draft programmes, and incorporating suggestions received, will appear
 before the conference, and will be sent (on receipt of the conference
 fee) to all applicants.

Applications: credentials

Whether or not you submit suggestions, we should like to receive a completed application form, if you intend to be present. Credentials and copies of appropriate journals will be sent on receipt of the form and a conference fee of 5/-

If you are able to obtain delegate status from your local Labour Party, trade union branch, co-operative society, etc., please indicate this on your application.

Accomodation

You are asked to make your own arrangements for over-night accommodation if at all possible.

It will be possible to provide beds for a limited number, through the hospitality of Manchester labour and trade union contacts. Please indicate if you would like us to try to arrange this for you. (If you can bring a sleeping bag, this will help greatly).

Please let us have your application and P.O. as soon as possible and not later than the end of May.

Alan Rooney & Tony Topham.

N.B. applications should be sent to either: 8, Ashkirk St., Manchester 18, or 1. Plantation Drive, Anlaby Park, Hull.

Over thirty credentials have already been issued for the forthcoming London conference on May 8-9th, on workers' control. They
include delegates of Trade Union branches, Co-operators, Labour Party
members and observers from Sweden and Berlin. We need many more yet
however, and intending participants are asked to speed their applications.
If you live in London, apply to Richard Fletcher, 71 New Kings Road,
London S.W.6, and if in the provinces, to Tony Topham at 1 Plantation
Drive, Anlaby Park, Hull. Most people will know that the London
Co-operative Society is participating in the conference, and that there
will be a special section on democracy in the Co-ops. We intend to
deal also with the nationalised industries, with the question of forms
of management in the nationalisation of Steel, with the proposals for
the extension of public ownership with workers' participation.

A follow-up conference in Manchester, on June 19-20th, is being sponsored by Labour's Voice, Dockers' Voice, Aviation Voice, and The Week. This will take up the question of the Steel Bill again, as well as workers' control in the critical situations in docks and aircraft industries, together with the relation between Incomes Policy and Workers' Control.

Agendas, details of venues and times, can be had on application to 1, Plantation Drive, Anlaby Park, Hull.

A special issue of Hull University LEFT is in preparation, which contains many valuable background papers dealing with the subject of the conferences. It includes:-

Definitions: Workers' Control and Self-Management, by Ken Coates.

Steps towards democracy in the nationalised industries, by an Industrial Relations worker in a nationalised industry.

A Report from Algeria, by Councillor Spencer.

A Report on the Scott-Bader Experiment, by Roger Hadley.

No Mutualisation without Democracy, by Richard Fletcher.

The Steel Plan - a report from the Sheffield steelworkers' conference.

A Report on Hull Trades Council workers' control study group, with a letter from Mr. Wilson, regarding some of the Hull group's proposals.

Workers' Control Now, by Tony Topham, (appearing also in Voice)

Incomes Policy, by Ken Coates. (appearing also in Voice)

Copies should be available at the end of the month on application, price 10/-. from Tony Topham, 1 Plantation Drive, Anlaby Park, Hull.

report by Tony Topham.

The following interview was given to The Militant, an American socialist journal, on April 12 by Clark Kissinger, national secretary of Students for a Democratic Society. The SDS organised the March on Washington which at its peak was 30,000 strong.

Q. What do you hope the March will accomplish?

A. Well, I think there are two main goals of the March. The first is to make some sort of dent in the conception that there is a concensus of all the people behind the President on the war in Vietnam. We want to make it known that there is another point of view in America and that there is a sizeable portion of American public opinion which dissents from America's current role in South East Asia.

The second goal of the March is to make some effort towards the reconstitution of a viable peace movement in the U.S. or at least to bring together some sort of coalition of all forces within the U.S. which oppose the war in Vietnam....

Q. In the process of organising the March, have you noticed any evidence of a new mood on campuses regarding the war in Vietnam?

A. That's difficult to say because in operations piloting a desk in New York I wouldn't have the same experience as someone who is travelling on the campuses. However, I think there is a new mood on the campuses. I'm not sure I would ascribe it directly to the war in Vietnam alone. All of the activities which have been going on this year - the Free Speech Movement, the protest against the war in Vietnam, and so forth - have contributed to a growing student movement that's been developing since 1960. The large outpouring of student support for this demonstration is symptomatic of the growth of the student movement in America.

Q. What is your personal reaction to Johnson's recent speech on Vietnam?

A. He simply reaffirmed his previous position that the U.S. would not tolerate a successful revolution in Vietnam. He probably went further in that speech than ever before in attributing the causes of the war to North Vietnam; that is, characterising the war as a war of aggression as if an army had marched across the 17th parallel into South Vietnam.

His supposed unconditional negotiations were obviously quite conditional. His first condition was that the U.S. would not negotiate with those we are fighting, namely, the National Liberation Front. His second condition was that he would not

enter into an agreement that would mean a victory for the N.L.F....

A. I don't think so. We did have one or two calls the next morning wanting to know if the March had been called off or not, but when we told them it wasn't, they seemed to be quite satisfied. Most people that I've talked to, and of course I deal primarily with militants and people who are in the movement, saw through the speech...I think a lot of students were really turned off by the speech and didn't realise before it that Johnson was that bad. I don't think it will have any effect upon the March, or on the growing movement in the country against the war.

Q. Whatare SDS's plans concerning the Vietnam war after the March?

A. We will follow the March with a 3-day meeting of our national council and one of the topics of that meeting will be the follow-up on the March. But from the beginning we considered the March not a culmination of a campaign. but the beginning of such a campaign.

Q. This March was built with the co-operation of many groups and individuals. SDS took the stand of welcoming all support, including that of groups like the YSA which in some circles are not considered "respectable". Do you think this approach helped build the March?

A.We encouraged the participation of everyone who wanted to take part....I personally cannot conceive of any other way of building a new left in USA.