

The Glasgow Keelie

MAY '92

LIVING

DANGEROUSLY



The election extravaganza has come and gone. Once again in overwhelming numbers Scots rejected the Tories. Once again rule from London was repudiated by the mass of the people. Yet once again it made no difference - we are to be ruled by a Tory government sitting in London. Clearly the so-called democratic process is only applicable when it works in favour of Whitehall and established power.

In the midst of this colossal injustice there was a call by some Labour MPs for a campaign of civil disobedience under the banner of "Scotland United." Very good. It was a belated call but nonetheless welcome for that. The millions of people who refused to pay the poll tax have long been engaged in civil disobedience. Next to the strike, it is the people's most powerful weapon which no government - let alone a government which has been defeated at the ballot-box and has no legitimacy in Scotland whatsoever - can overcome.

The people's commitment is not in question. The people smashed the poll tax without any help from the Labour Party in Scotland. But where is the commitment of these same politicians who called for a "patriotic front" against the arrogation of power by Westminster.

In the wake of the UK result they were quick enough to tell the people to "live dangerously." Now let us see how dangerously they themselves are willing to live. There is only one form of "parliamentary disruption" that means anything and that is a total boycott. Let them boycott the Westminster parliament and prove their loyalty to the Scottish people! Which of these brave patriots will be the first to refuse to take his/her seat in the English parliament so decisively condemned by the Scottish electorate? Will it be George Galloway or John McAllion? Will it be Irene Adams or Dennis Canavan? Could it be Sam Galbraith or Donald Dewar? Or should we look to a bagpipe socialist like Alex Salmond or Margaret Ewing?

Backtracking

We hardly need a crystal ball to tell us it will be none of them. Within a day or two of the UK result they were all running for cover, blaming each other for leading the people into a blind alley, back-tracking on things said "in the heat of the moment", and leaving us in no doubt that they will have nothing to do with anything that "smacks of illegality."

Instead they will attempt to persuade

the government to hold a multi-option referendum "to allow the shell-shocked electorate to show their emotions". What a dangerous and revolutionary response! In other words civil disobedience (the only tactic likely to break the London stranglehold) is to be postponed, the people duped yet again, and the Westminster charade resumed as quickly as possible with all its futile posturings.

As with the poll tax, the people have tried to show the way despite the craven careerists in posh suits who make up the bulk of the Labour Party. Whatever hot air these MPs may spout, if they are ready to play the parliamentary game in England's House of Commons, they must be considered part and parcel of the system of domination which has plagued Scotland since the Union. If real freedom and socialism are to triumph we must have elected representatives who will execute the will of the people or be immediately recalled.

Today the will of the Scottish people is being ignored. The struggle to have that reversed will not be won in parliament but here at the grassroots with ordinary men and women working together in the socialist cause for a juster Scotland.

TOXICTOWN F.C.

This the the story of a town on the outskirts of Glasgow that had its environment almost totally destroyed by complete ignorance to what was going to happen in future decades.

In Cambuslang a century and a half ago a seemingly safe soap and soda venture changed over to the production of chrome salts to become the largest factory of its kind in the world.

The factory became known as White's Chemicals. From the end of the last century and after many mergers and amalgamations it became British Chrome and Chemicals Ltd. eventually emerging in the early 60's as Associated Chemical Companies Ltd. Production of bichromate moved to Eaglescliffe in Cumbria and the Shawfield works closed down in 1968.

The refining of chromium ore as produced by White's resulted in the products

chromate 3 and chromate 6. Both these chemicals are extremely toxic and are acknowledged carcinogens.

The indiscriminate and widespread dumping of chromium waste, plus other exotic chemicals such as cyanide and arsenic have created clusters of cancers, leukaemias, abortions and respiratory complaints in the area. Hundreds of acres of the district are heavily polluted with chromium waste, in some parts up to 4,000 times the danger level.

At a public meeting on Saturday 25th of April in Rutherglen an action group C.C.R.A.P. (Cambuslang, Carmyle, Rutherglen against Pollution) raised the issue of widespread pollution in the area. At this meeting attended by the local M.P., councillors and Professor Harry Duncan of Glasgow University, serious concern was raised at the proposed development of the

new Celtic stadium.

It was stated that such a venture could cause further environmental damage. Pat Graham, a trade union delegate from the Cumbrian factory said that the pollution in the Cambuslang district is so intense and widespread, it should be classified as a disaster area and evacuation, not development should be considered as the only safe alternative.

Because of the lies and misinformation from official bodies, C.C.R.A.P. propose to set up their own environmental study group to monitor and assess the health of the community.

How this will affect the financial ventures of Michael Kelly and Co., we can only speculate.

Watch this space .

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

As leader of Strathclyde Regional Council, Europe's biggest public authority, Charlie Gray has £2 billion to spend every year. He controls a budget bigger than some nation states.

Imagine the feeling of power that must give Charlie as he sits in his India St office surveying his vast empire, with an army of flunkies to carry out his every wish. Boss Gray has been calling the shots for six years now and when it comes to political muscle, he's your man.

In that time he's closed schools and centres, sacked workers, sneered at community education staff on strike, carried out Tory cuts with a vengeance, and of course hounded poll tax non-payers. You name it, he's done it.

"These have been difficult times for us," says Charlie, who is soon to become COSLA kingpin in succession to Baillie Jean McBadyin.

But when it comes to a few million pound for business development, or a 37% rise to £105,000 a year for his Chief Executive, or another £5m for the polis or even £20m to throw at the Year of Culture - it's nae problem.

Having for years put the boot into anyone who dared to stand up and fight the cuts, like the teachers and community education workers, and slagged off and persecuted poll tax non-payers, Charlie boy has discovered it is time to "live a little dangerously!"

With the Tories back in the saddle, Charlie's been telling TV viewers, the STUC and anyone who'll listen that he's all for civil disobedience. It seems he's not so sure all of a sudden he wants to go down the Tory road again of putting people out of work.

Why the change? A blinding flash of light on the road to Coatbridge? Has he realised the Labour party is not militant enough?

The answer is simple. The Tories want to abolish Strathclyde and Lothian regions as part of their local government/constitutional solution. This time it's his job that's on the line. All of a sudden he needs allies amongst the poor, the street activists and trade unionists, the very people he's been sticking it to for years.

No doubt we'll have to show this ratbag the kind of solidarity he never showed us, at least till he gets fed up posing with the victims of his party's treachery.

GDA: GLASGOW'S DUBIOUS AGENDA

If we were to tell you that Glasgow now has a Tory run Local Government you might be surprised and not remember voting for them, well you didn't. The reform of Local Government has reformed the election procedures as well. The Glasgow Development Agency now controls everything to do with economic development in the city. It has a hand-picked staff of 200 and an administrative budget of £200 million: it's board of directors are some of the richest men in Scotland. The District and Regional Councils have given away so many millions in 'economic development' that embezzlement and corruption have now become legitimized; democracy doesn't exist in Scotland so why should it exist in Glasgow? Just who are the GDA and what are they up to?

They represent the business elites in Scotland, who feel that since they own everything, they should be part of a political process which keeps it that way: politics has been privatised. They are the Bankers, the managers of fiscal devices which add to the cost of living, borrowing, the sellers of money (Forbes McPherson TSB), they are those who want to control everything that gets published (Ian Irvine of Outram), they are the millionaire funders of the Tory party (Lord McFarlane, who also rips up Scotland's landscape for profit), they are ex-chairmen of the Tory Party, scandalous lawyers and accountants: those who make their money out of business collapse and bankruptcy (Ross Harper, Colin Carnie), they are members of insurance cartels like Lloyd's who are above the law (Eric Yarrow), they are Educationalists who want to brainwash children into becoming slaves of 'enterprise culture' (Ron Lander of Scotvec), they are right-wing economists and political advisors, devoted to destroying Unions, freedom of expression/information and anything else that interferes with private power (David Vines), they are arms dealers, the builders and suppliers of nuclear power stations (Robert Easton of GEC).

How easy it is all going to be when their rich colleagues come up to Glasgow to start another development at public expense. Take for instance Lord Selsdon's £280 million 'Meadowick Development' on public land. Selsdon has all the qualifications for the GDA: he was chairman of the Midland Bank. He was also chairman of the Docklands Arena Trust from '77 to '83, where he also wangled himself onto Local Government. Docklands is surely the ugliest, useless monument to Thatcherism there is, except of course for what will be built in Glasgow. We're not asked to vote for the GDA and their pals, just to trust them.