CIVIL 'DEFENCE' and DIRECT ACTION

make the most of your council meetings

6d

A Solidarity (Reading) Pamphlet

INTRODUCTION.

This pamphlet is the first produced by the recently formed Reading SOLIDARITY Group.

Like other SOLIDARITY pamphlets, this one is written by the people involved in the occurrences reported. Some of the articles have appeared previously in past issues of SOLIDARITY magazine but there is also substantial new material here. Some of the stories show how individuals concerned about the Civil Defence fraud, perpetrated by the Government with the aid of local authorities, were unable to expose it satisfactorily through the press and the so-called democratic channels. They have resorted to direct action techniques to bring their points home (at little or no expense to themselves) to the bureaucrats who claim to represent them but, in fact, represent no one but themselves.

The only say that we have in democracy is to put a cross on a paper, against one of a few names once every three or five years. We may not choose which names. They represent policies we may not formulate, even if we belong to a political party - Labour, Liberal, Conservative and Communist parties are undemocratic when it comes to conference decisions. Parties in office may and have changed their policy without consulting the electorate.

This is not democracy. We suggest a direct democracy where ordinary people choose representatives from amongst themselves instead of professional policicians. The representatives would be liable to instant recall should they prove unsatisfactory to the majority.

Until this time comes, people are right to do things for themselves rather than wait for politicians. This is what this pamphlet is about. Here, we have covered the activities of those who struggle against nuclear weapons. The opposition which they face is the same as that faced by people seeking justice in other fields and the techniques described are just as effective when used for other ends.

We urge people, unable to get results with conventional methods, to act for themselves because nobody else will do it for them. Parents demanding Zebra crossings or protesting against speed limit increases, tenants with exorbitant rents, house purchasers disgusted with Building Society shareholders living off their backs; or in the Reading area, residents disgruntled with State planned motorway routes or concerned about the demolition of historic buildings, can find a direct action suitable to draw attention to their fight.

Use it - you have the power.

Dai-John Makepeace.

CIVIL LIBERTIES FRAUD

A CAS OF CIVIC DISOBEDIENCE BY

ANDY ANDERSON

On Friday, 27th April, I was dragged up before the beaks and dragged out again before I could state my defence. I had been 'summoned to appear before the Magistrates' Court, Dartford, Kent, to show cause why I had not paid 2s. 4d. arrears of rates. This sum represents 1s. 2d. for each of the years 1960 and 1961 which is the portion of my rates which goes towards Civil Defence. But for the magistrates, the operative word was 'appear'. They used force to stop me from 'showing cause why'.

The local authority instituting the proceedings was the Labour controlled Dartford Rural District Council. My contention throughout a lengthy correspondence with the Council, which started on 18th January, 1961, was that all available evidence showed there can be no Civil Defence in the event of a nuclear attack and that I, therefore, refused to pay for a service they could not provide.

The Clerk to the R.D.C. (F. Milburn) began the proceedings with the 'legal' and bureaucratic mimbo-jumbo of reading extracts from several financial documents such as those showing at how much I had been assessed for rates, how much I had paid for the two years 1960 and 1961 and how much I had not paid. All these documents were handed to the Magistrates' Clerk who handed them to the Magistrates. All this paper was solemnly scrutinised by these so-called 'justices of the peace'. The Clerk to the R.D.C. then asked for a Distress Warrant to be issued to recover the 'arrears of rates'. All this took about ten minutes, after which I was asked if I had anything to say. There was a lot I wanted to say, so the 'oath Administrator' came forward with his card and Bible. I didn't want an oathing ceremony, so I was asked to affirm.

I began by stressing in a solemn voice the solemn phrase in the solemn summons signed by a solemn Magistrate which ordered me to 'show case why' I had not paid the sum of 2s. 4d. I explained that the rate for Civil Defence is .51d in the pound. The rateable value of my house is Twenty Seven pounds - a fraction over ½d multiplied by 27 equals, near enough 1s. 2d .... The Magistrates' Clerk interrupted; 'Their Worships understand all that '. I said, 'Good. I'm glad to know it. But the amount collected by local authorities is only a small portion of the total spent on Civil Defence. The Government, in addition, spends about EIGHTEEN MILLION POUNDS per yr, collected through taxation'.

The Magistrates' Clerk interrupted again: 'We are not concerned here with Civil Defence' he said. 'We only want to know whether you can pay the arrears of rates'. 'But', I argued, 'the Dartford R.D.C. do not deny that this 2s. 4d. is the amount they want for C.D.' All the Council's letters to me for the last 12 months have been headed 'Civil Defence Expenditure'. One letter specifically refers to the amount for 1960 as : 'a sum equal to the rate levy for Civil Defence'.'

It was now the turn of the Chairman of the Magistrates to interrupt. 'You cannot keep talking here about Civil Defence' he said. 'This Court has only powers to decide whether a Distress Warrant shall be issued'.

'I have been summoned 'to show cause why' I have not paid this amount', I said very slowly. 'I am going to show excellent cause why; and why all other rate payers should also refuse to pay that part of their rates which goes towards Civil Defence'.

'Look here! ' said the beaks' chairman, waving his arm. 'We've got a very busy day and we're not going to listen to political speeches about Civil Defence. You are in arrears with your rates. You've got to tell us whether you can pay these arrears or whether you can't so that we can decide whether a Distress Warrant .....'

'I am not going to be dictated to by you ! .....'

For a moment there was complete silence. The members of the Court were aghast. Their eyes widened with incredulity. Had they heard right ? Had this peasant in the dock actually shouted and interrupted the Chairman of the Magistrates ? The mouths of three 'legal' gentlemen sitting in the middle of the room dropped open (one of these was the Police Prosecutor. Now, what was he there for ?).

As the Magistrates' Clerk half rose from his seat, I continued: 'You have ordered me here today 'to show cause why' I have not paid 2s. 4d. of my rates. I'm not going to be involved in this farce by saying what <u>you</u> want me to say. I am determined 'to show cause why', but in my own way. I propose to do so by quoting from correspondence I have had with the Dartford R.D.C., the Kent County Council and the Home Office .....'

While I was speaking, the Magistrates' Clerk was saying something about sending me out of the Court. I went on ....: 'First I want to clear up some aspects of Civil Defence on which there appears to be considerable misunderstanding .....'.

The Magistrates' Clerk rapped out an order : 'Take him out, constable! '.

As the burly copper made his way a cross the Court, I was saying: 'There are many reasons why ordinary people are deceived ....'. The policeman approached the dock, I stepped to the side and sat on the floor.

'One of the main reasons is that ....'. The copper grabbed me and dragged me across the Court. As far as the centre of the court-room this was easy; the parquet floor was highly polished. But right in front of their worships, he got into difficulties. Another 'wonderful' policeman ran in to help.

While all this was going on, I was shouting: 'This is their justice ! This is their freedom ! This proves their Civil Defence is a fraud ! etc . The coppers struggled to lift me. Under the eyes of the three beaks, they seemed embarrassed by their apparent inefficiency. They became flustered and were rougher than was necessary. My raincoat and jacket had now slipped up my arms and were covering my head. I shouted louder. There was a tearing sound as my shirt sleeves were ripped out. I later discovered they'd also torn the back of my shirt. Several buttons fell onto the floor and rolled across the Court. At last, they half carried and half dragged me out and dumped me in the corridor.

I stood up, pulled my jacket and raincoat down from over my head, and began to address the thirty or so rather startled people waiting in the corridor (various accused, their friends, relations and legal representatives). It was hard luck on the other law-breakers. They must have been wondering what was awaiting them. ' I've been summoned to come here today, but they won't let me speak' I began. 'You can't speak here' said a third copper. I sat on the floor. ' .... and I would like to tell you why .....' 'Chuck him out ! ' said a 'wonderful' gent in blue. 'For two years I've refused to pay rates for Civil ...' Two large, uniformed bodies dragged and threw me out of a side door of the court building. As I heard the key turn in the lock behind me, I got up, rantto the front of the building, up the steps and in again through the main door. Two policemen charged through the throng in the corridor as if about to score a try, scattering innocent and guilty on their way. They caught me. Before I could say a word, I was bounced out. I mounted the steps again and opened the door. A red-faced guardian of the law stood in the way. I argued with him. 'I've been summoned to show cause why I haven't paid my rates for Civil Defence. Why won't you let me in ?'.

'Beacuse you are going to cause a disturbance. Now get out'.

'I want to do what I've been summoned to do', I remonstrated.

'And stay out ! ' ordered red-face. He then turned and called 'Hey, Paddy. Take over. I'm going home. I've been on night duty'. Paddy took over the guard duty at the main door. He was the beefy white-faced character who had first tried to drag me out of the Court room. We now only needed a blue-faced copper to make the proceedings thoroughly patriotic. I asked Paddy if he would let me in. 'Your're not coming in here any more' he growled. If there's one thing that makes our police and J.P's endearing, it is their passionate regard for the law.

cont'd on page .....6.

PEASANT REVOLT IN NORTH KENT

Swanley Junction is on the A20 about 13 miles from London. On Tuesday, 1st May, the Dartford R.D.C. (which had taken Andy Anderson to Court a few days earlier for refusing to pay Civil Defence rates) met there. Andy decided to present his case directly to the Council. About 15 other people went along with him determined to 'invade' the council and explore a new form of civil disobedience.

To take the council by surprise we enter the grounds via a hole in the fence. We reach the 'strangers gallery of the Council Chamber. All is silent except for the sound of one councillor speaking and others snoring. We have leaflets denouncing the civil defence fraud and demanding the Council discuss the matter with us. Two of us walk boldly on to the floor of the Council Chamber and distribute the leaflets to the slumbering councillors. They wake up. We hear pompous snorts and cries of 'this is not a public meeting ! The official gathering is adjourned for ten minutes.

After the resumption of the council meeting, one of our numbers, Brian Richardson, interrupts the proceedings and asks if civil defence will be discussed. The councillors are thunderstruck: a member of the public has dared to move his lips. And actual words came out. The impertinence of it. It's surely against all regulations. Must be a contravention of the 1831 Act for the Protection of Councillors Dignity or something. Or does it come under the section 'Behaviour Prejudicial to the Security of the Chamber' ?

The Chairman gradually recovers his wits and tells Richardson to be quiet. Richardson again asks for an assurance that civil defence will be discussed. The assurance is not forthcoming. Brian then introduces the first of the 'unofficial' speakers. Andy Anderson leads off. He tells how the Dartford Council, Kent Council and the Home Office had all refused to answer his questions on civil defence. He describes how the Court refused to allow him to present his case.

The councillors become flustered. Mixed cried of 'Clear the gallery' - 'shut up' - 'take him out' and 'adjourn' are heard. The meeting is again adjourned for a ten minute unnofficial tea-break (no vote was taken: we shall never know whether anybody wished to vote against this resolution ... or abstain!). The councillors dither. One or two sit listening to Andy's speech. Most of them rush for the door again (I begin to think they've perhaps all got dysentery).

At this point an embarrassed country copper arrives. He looks around the Chamber in amazement. Such goings on ! Nervously, he asks Andy to leave. Andy squats ..... and continues speaking. The copper attempts to drag him out and, eventually, Andy, still speaking, is carried out by the constable, clumsily assisted by a councillor. I had visions of a Police strike here, the councillor not being a member of the policeman's union.

Another of our members then starts speaking. Two police inspectors arrive and carry him out. Things

CIVIL LIBERTIES FRAUD (Cont. from page 4).

'For the record', I asked, 'do I understand that, although I have been summoned, youre not going to let me into the building?'
'Yes', snapped white-faced Paddy. 'Clear off'.

I walked down the steps to a group of five reporters and talked to them. It was 11.35am. One, who said he was from the 'Daily Mirror' took some photographs of my torn clothing. During the next half-hour I made two more unsuccessful attempts to get back into the Court. At 12.10 I left.

I have since discovered that while I was outside the building, my name was 'called' again. As I did not 'appear', a Distress Warrant was issued.

It is clear that, in attempting to expose the fraud of Civil Defence, we are touching a very sore spot.

Andy Anderson.

PEASANT REVOLT IN NORTH KENT (Cont. from page 5).

are going exactly as planned. Our third speaker rises and is eventually carried out. Then a fourth. By this time the Council meeting is completely disrupted. No Councillors are left in the Chamber. The 'unofficials' have an absolute majority. A resolution could have been passed unanimously !

There are another eleven of us left to speak. The Dartford R.D.C. surrenders. Making virtue of a necessity, the Chairman declares the meeting closed, some two hours before the usual time. At this point, the rest of us troop out and go home. The press publicity in Kent was on a wider scale than we expected.

The Kent Reporter (4th May) describes the events over several columns: 'Amazing Scenes at Rural Council Meeting'. So does the Dartford, Crayford and Swanley Chronicle : 'Ban the Bomb Demonstrators Twice Stop Council Meeting'.

Although only one step towards exposing the Civil Defence Fraud, it was a valuable one. It showed what a few ordinary people can do, at very little cost to anyone. No one was charged. It also showed that the key to success in small local demonstrations of this kind is simplicity, audacity, determination and an ability to keep one's trap shut ..... beforehand.

Ron Bailey.

RATES REFUSAL

by ANDY ANDERSON.

On April 27, as already reported in 'Solidarity'* the Dartford magistrates issued a Distress Warrant to the Labour-controlled Rural District Council of Dartford, enabling them to distrain on the property of one Andy Anderson. Andy had refused to pay his Civil Defence rate for 1960-61 and 1961-62. The amount 'owed' was 1/2 for each year (plus Court costs of 9/9).

On May 1, the monthly meeting of the Dartford R.D.C. was abandoned after the Council Chamber had been 'invaded' by 15 Kent supporters of the Committee of 100.**

Here is a diary of what has happened since:

June 30 — The Council Bailiff called at Andy's home to execute the Warrant. He said he wanted to take something that would raise £2 - £3 at an auction. He couldn't. Strangely enough, everything in the house was now in the name of Beryl Anderson, Andy's wife.

July 2 — Andy paid the rates for the first half of the year 1962-6 . But he again withheld the amount earmarked for Civil Defence, i.e. 7d. He sent a further letter to the Council in which he again asked what arrangements the Civil Defence Committee had made for the protection of people in the Dartford area, in the event of a nuclear attack

July 3 — Andy received a summons to attend the Dartford Magistrates Court on July 13. The Dartford R.D.C. had applied to the Court for his commital to prison, for non-payment of 2/4d. rates. The summons stated that the Court would enquire into his 'conduct and means'.

July 13 — At the beginning of the Court hearing, Andy asked the magistrates for an adjournment. His grounds were that the Home Office was investigating the 'irregular' procedure of the Court on April 27.* On May 29, Andy had described this 'procedure' in a letter to the Home Secretary. The Home Office had replied that they were looking into the matter.

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* 'Solidarity' vol.II, No.3, page 15

** 'Solidarity' vol.II, No.3, p.22 and 'Dartford Reporter', May 4, 1962.

Anderson argued that since the present proceedings were a direct sequence to the proceedings being investigated by the Home Office, an adjournment until the findings of this investigation were known was relevant. The magistrate refused an adjournment, no reason being given. The case proceeded. Andy was able to say quite a number of things about the Civil Defence fraud locally and nationally, much of which was reported in the local press.* However Andy was sentenced to fourteen days' imprisonment and taken to the cells.

Half an hour later he was released. His wife had gone to the police station and paid the amount in question. The main objective had been achieved. The struggle had shown that a Civil Defence rate refusal can be taken a long way, with considerable local, and some national press publicity. And all this at small cost to the 'campaigner'.

July 24 The Civil Defence Committee of Dartford R.D.C. discussed Andy's letter of July 2. A motion that no reply be sent was carried. This is referred to in Andy's letter to the Councillors, published on p. 27-28.

July 25 Six supporters of the Committee of 100 stopped a meeting of the Labour-controlled Crayford Borough Council, at the Town Hall. For over two months the Council's Civil Defence organization had been under fire - from Civil Defence members themselves! Twelve members had signed a statement calling for 'a full and independent enquiry into Crayford's Civil Defence', which they said was 'nothing more than a social club'. They were supported by one of the full-time paid officials, who had resigned from the organization saying Crayford Civil Defence was a 'public scandal'.

This scandal had hit the front page and leader columns of the 'Kentish Times' throughout this period, but was now in danger of being forgotten.

The six supporters of the Committee of 100 (including Andy Anderson, who should of course have been in gaol) put the affair right back in the headlines. They simply stopped the meeting as soon as the item 'Civil Defence' was reached on the agenda. Two of them distributing leaflets (see p. 27) were removed from the Council Chamber by four rather breathless Council officials. They returned to the Chamber through a side door... and were again removed. The other four began to make speeches, one at a time, about the Civil Defence fraud. The police were called. Three squad cars and one motor-cycle brought 12 coppers, three of them sergeants. A sit-down took place. The six Committee of 100 men were removed. No one was arrested.

August 26 Andy sent a letter to each of the 28 councillors of the Labour-controlled Dartford R.D.C. (see opposite). The contents of this letter were given considerable coverage in the 'Kentish Times' (August 31, 1962).

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* See 'Kentish Times', July 20, 1962, and 'Dartford Reporter', 20.7.62.

September 4

At a full meeting of the Dartford R.D.C. no mention was made of the August 26 letter. This little campaign continues. The next steps will be taken towards the end of September.

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TEXT OF LEAFLET DISTRIBUTED AT

CRAYFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING.

Civil Defence Fraud.

We demand that at your meeting on July 25, 1962, a public inquiry into Civil Defence be held.

It is clear from press reports that even members of the Crayford Civil Defence Corps know they are involved in a public deception. In May the Chairman of the Civil Defence Committee, Mr. H.J.Morley, promised 'a full investigation' into Crayford Civil Defence. He said: 'I will leave no stone unturned to clear up this matter' ('Kentish Times',1/6/62). It seems he was so shocked by what he saw when he turned over a few stones that he gave up. No real investigation or public inquiry was ever held. The statement issued later by Mr. Morley's committee was obviously (in the words of Crayford's ex-Civil Defence General Assistant) an attempt to 'white-wash'.

The Crayford Civil Defence fraud is inevitably repeated in every City, Borough, Urban and Rural District Council throughout the country. If they wish to escape the charge of hypocritically deveiving the public in Crayford, all those involved in Civil Defence must resign.

Kent Supporters of Committee of 100.

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TEXT OF LETTER SENT BY ANDY ANDERSON

TO EACH COUNCILLOR OF DARTFORD R.D.C.

Civil Defence Expenditure.

It is remarkable that not one councillor has attempted to reply to the letter I sent each of you on January 23, 1962. I suppose it is evident that I do not easily give up. I am still hoping that at least one of you will find it compatible with your idea of democracy to reply this time.

On July 2, 1962, I wrote informing you that I had again withheld payment of that part of my rates which goes towards Civil Defence. I also asked again what preparations had been made for the protection of people

in the Dartford rural district in the event of a nuclear attack on this country. Your Clerk replied on August 3. He said the Civil Defence Committee decided (July 24) they would gain no useful purpose by entering into correspondence with me. The implication of this is obvious. The Committee is not concerned with whether any useful purpose would be gained by the ratepayers and electors. This is an outrageous admittance by the Civil Defence Committee. But the scandal does not end there.

This is the first time the Civil Defence Committee has been mentioned by your Clerk since my correspondence with the Council about Civil Defence began in January 1961! Presumably this was also the first time the Committee has had any business to deal with. But because my letter apparently caused the Committee meeting to last longer than the usual two or three minutes, it is really no excuse for the 'public spirited' members to get so ridiculously upset.

Is the reason for their refusal to answer my questions the crude one voiced by a member when he moved that no reply be sent to me? He said: 'As long as we write to him, he will write to us'. One senses members' torment and indignation that the conservative inertia of the Labour-controlled Council's bi-monthly, 3-minute Civil Defence meetings should be so disturbed by written questions from a mere ratepayer. But what an excuse!

Or have they a slightly more sophisticated reason for refusing to answer? Is it that anything they say will only embarrass them further - since nothing is being done and nothing can be done in the Dartford rural district (or anywhere else) for the protection of people if there is an H-bomb attack on this country? This would at least be an understandable reason.....

Councillors must know that, as far as Civil Defence is concerned, they are conducting a macabre farce and are therefore involved in callously deceiving the people of the Dartford area.

Yet Councillors have the audacity to accuse me of wanting to break up democracy!* Like the word 'Socialism' (which was used by Hitler, Stalin and Franco to describe their regimes) the use of the word 'democracy' has become ritualistic and incantatory. The proof of your honesty and sincerity lies in your interpretation of democracy.

You try to force me to pay for a service which, through your silence, you tacitly admit cannot be supplied. Is this your democracy? You summons me to appear before the Dartford Magistrates Court (April 27, 1962) 'to show cause why' I have not paid the rate for Civil Defence. But the magistrates will not allow me 'to show cause why'. When I attempt to do what I was summoned to do, I am dragged from the court. Is this your democracy? While I am being forcibly kept outside the court building, the magistrates call my name again, and as I do not 'appear', they issue a warrant enabling you to take property from my home. Is this your democracy?

(cont'd p. 18

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* See 'Dartford Reporter', July 27, 1962.

COUNCILS OF ACTION

CUBA WEEK came and went. We travelled to the brink and back. Yet not a single local council was moved to announce its 'plans' for 'protecting' its citizens against the hazards of nuclear war.

The monstrous fraud of Civil Defence continues, up and down the country. Opponents of the Bomb are continuing to expose this deception. The campaign which begun in Dartford (Solidarity II,3) and Crayford (Solidarity II,5) is being extended. Here and there, the conspiracy of silence is being breached...

1. TWICKENHAM

The Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Twickenham met on November 1st for another of their cosy, monthly rubber-stamping sessions. To the casual observer the whole thing is a bit like a 'bingo' session. The 'weirdies' in their robes and chains assemble, the Mayor's private God-hollerer makes some sanctimonious noises and then it's heads down, we're off!

The Mayor reads out the numbers which refer to items on the agenda. Anyone who is awake and wants to air his lungs yells 'Bingo' or 'Mr. Mayor'. The whole bunch then relax, with one eye on closing time, while the worthy has his waffle. Then we're off again, with the Mayor interrupting to say: 'Recommendation at the bottom of page 234 - agreed?'. 'Agreed!', and it's heads down all the way home!

This was how the meeting went, with a minor rumpus whilst discussion raged over some important decisions affecting three wards, which had been taken without prior discussion by the Council. Presumably, someone's financial corns had been crushed!

We then got to the report of the Civil Defence Committee. The Chairman rose, proposed its adoption and awaited his rubber-stamp. But from then on the normal pattern went bent.

The public gallery contained five members of the Thames Valley Working Group, Committee of 100. One rose and started to read a prepared speech analysing the usefulness (?) of Civil Defence in the Borough. Meanwhile, another Committee member hopped over the dividing barrier into the Council chamber, distributing copies of the speech and a letter to the press. He also started distributing the letter to the open-mouthed brethren of the Council.

As the Mayor was being presented with his copy he mumbled: 'You can't do this!'. He was promptly answered: 'I am doing it, brother!'. The distribution session was brief. The Deputy Mayor, puce with rage, grabbed the distributor, who had to complete the job by hurling the remaining letters at the assembly (one local press report said 'they fell like autumn leaves'). The distributor was then removed after a short, somewhat confused interlude involving a one-way swing door and the Deputy Mayor, whose colour became even brighter when told: 'Calm down,

brother; I'll stand here while you cope with the door'.

The public gallery (half demonstrators, half Tory women) was in uproar throughout. The first speaker had been removed by the Mace-bearer. A second was now delivering an unrehearsed contribution, his set speech having been torn from his hands.

Calm came at last. The Mayor regained his wind. The meeting settled. But not for long... Speaker number 3 rose to enliven the proceedings. He was removed with some violence. It was left to number 4 (the only girl in our party) to carry on. As she spoke the councillors began to regain their procedural senses. One proposed that 'the meeting be adjourned whilst the police dealt with the disorder in the public gallery'. But before a vote was taken she (the disorder) had quietly left, unnoticed, leaving the councillors with a motion and nowhere to put it.

The press coverage was enormous, even if somewhat inaccurate. The dust took at least a week to settle. The best quote was attributed to the Mayor. He is reported as saying: 'The cheeky blighters... I was sorely tempted to hit them with the Mace!'.

EDWIN BERRY

2. ILFORD

On Wednesday, October 17, Ilford Civil Defence held an 'open night'. The advert said that ALL questions on Civil Defence put by members of the public would be answered. Eleven members of Ilford YCND went along. We questioned the local C.D. Officer, Mr. Sains, for about an hour. What preparations had been made for the people of Ilford - and of the whole country - in the event of a nuclear war? We received few satisfactory answers. Two of Mr. Sains stock answers were that some preparations couldn't be disclosed until after the war had occurred... and that 'he had been attending C.D. lectures for 30 years' and knew all about it !!

We challenged Mr. Sains to a public debate on C.D. and nuclear war. He refused, writing to us that it wasn't his line of duty to discuss with us !

The press publicity was good. The 'Ilford Recorder' (Oct. 25, 1962) ran a story entitled 'CND are not impressed with C.D.'. Mr. Sains was quoted as saying that he wouldn't accept our challenge to debate as 'it would be a waste of time. I feel these young people are misinformed'. A rather different reason to the one he gave in his letter to us. On November 1st the 'Ilford Pictorial' ran a similar story.

During the Cuba crisis, some mothers from Ilford CND called on Mr. Sains at his H.Q. and asked him what evacuation plans Civil Defence had made for them and their children, should the crisis develop into a war. The Civil Defence Officer told them to write for an appointment and slammed the door. On November 1st, both local papers carried long stories and pictures about this. The 'Ilford Pictorial' gave it front page coverage.

Having received no answer from the C.D. Officer we decided to ask Ilford Council itself what preparations it had made. On Tuesday, November 20, I attended the monthly meeting of Ilford Borough Council. I entered the public gallery and listened to the proceedings (which is more than some councillors appeared to be doing). Eventually, the report of the Civil Defence Committee was read... and formally adopted (in about half a minute, as usual)... Or, at least, the report was almost formally adopted, for at this point I decided to chip in. If the councillors had nothing to say on Civil Defence, I certainly had.

I rose. 'I would like to put a question to the Council on Civil Defence' I shouted across the Chamber. The councillors turned round in amazement. What? A member of the public, pretending to be a councillor! Actually speaking! The impertinence of it! 'Sit down' said the Mayor. I thought of those still in gaol for uttering these seditious words... But perhaps the Mayor was a Committee supporter!

I continued to speak. Two attendants approached me and told me to shut up. I ignored them. 'I have asked the Civil Defence Officer these questions and received no reply' I shouted across the chamber.

The next few minutes were rather noisy. I kept shouting my question. The mayor kept shouting back down his microphone. The attendant shouted at me to leave. One councillor also joined in the 'all talk' session. More words were probably spoken on Civil Defence in these few minutes than in the last 20 Council meetings put together.

The mayor eventually conceded defeat, despite his loudspeaker. 'Take him out' he yelled to the attendants. At this they grabbed me and led me out.

Both local papers ran good stories of the events. Both pointed out that I had intervened in the Council meeting because I had received no satisfactory answers from the Civil Defence Officer about local plans in the event of a nuclear war. They also pointed out that the said officer had refused to participate in a public debate on the subject.

In fact both papers put my case admirably. By now, 40 - 50 thousand people will have read it. 'Playing councillors' can be quite an effective means of propaganda !

RON BAILEY.

HAD YOUR W.E.D. YET BROTHER?

(W.E.D. = War Emergency Dose)

Every week the desk in the lab. where I work piles up with useless and unsolicited information in the form of technical journals. Wading through them is sometimes brightened by finding crude pieces of jingoist propaganda dressed up as technical fact. Recently I came across a prize specimen, which almost made the monotonous day bearable.

In 'Chemical Age' (the self-styled 'Weekly Newspaper of the Chemical Industry'), there was an article entitled 'CIVIL DEFENCE - COULD YOU COPE ?'. This highly technical subject obviously of stupendous interest to working chemists, was written by a 'well-known chemical industry safety expert', and dealt, very superficially with the problem of Civil Defence in industry. It used industrial accidents and fire hazards as a kind of blind, but this [illegible] was obviously a propaganda article: part of the latest recruitment drive of the Civil Defenders. As such, the article was notable but not exceptional. Most of the technical press carry such stuff every so often, usually aimed at expressing 'the opinion of the industry' on controversial subjects. This particular specimen threw a great deal of light on the mentality of the Civil Defenders and their bosses. A few quotations will illustrate the level to which Civil Defence propaganda is sinking. Civil Defenders are nothing if not 'honest', up to a point of course. After all, there are some things it just isn't good for people to know about, e.g., how useless Civil Defence is ! So we are treated to a few paragraphs of heart searching. 'The biggest difficulty is still that of making the individual worker .. Civil Defence minded ! 'Civil Defence..... conveys an incorrect impression (that) it cannot prevent an attack nor .. blast damage or fall-out'. But don't despair. C.D. is there. And so are the shelters. 'If there is only to be about four minutes notice of an attack, there will be little chance of the workers being able to get shelter in time to avoid injury, unless the shelters are within a very short distance of the actual place of work ....' All four-minute milers please line up behind the bosses' car. On the command 'GO' (given by your C.D. Manager) 'GO' ... like a blue fart.

Apparently not only workers but some bosses are difficult to persuade to become 'Civil Defence' minded. So, incentives will be provided. In particular 'certain payments .... qualify for income tax relief'. There - you and I, 'volunteers', can work their bloody scheme. We will be taxed to pay for it. But THEY will get the tax relief.

Anyone who thought that life 'after the Bomb' would be different is in for a rude awakening. 'If a plant has to be evacuated, its owners will want to leave it in such a state that it may readily be brought back into production, as soon as conditions allow, even though the raw materials position may well be difficult. To say nothing, we would add of the difficult worker position.

Or are we just part of the raw materials? Who knows, the plant manager may even have to manage on his own someday.

I have saved till last the prize 'civil defencism'. If they ever issue Civil Defence medals again, the idiot who thought up this one will surely be entitled to a pawnshopful of them, all to himself. 'In order to minimize the effects of fall-out on personnel a 'war emergency dose' of radiation (75 roentgens) has been laid down. This may not be exceeded by anyone without authority'. We assume the figure was reached after long negotiation with the usual responsible trade union officials. Only the wildest of cats would strike for more!

E. B.

PIED-PIPERS OF GLASGOW

The Cuban crisis saw develop a number of new features in the struggle against the bomb. Amongst these was an interesting form of public assembly which took place in Glasgow.

Two supporters of the Committee of 100 went, at dinner time on the Tuesday, into a central square in which meetings and assemblies are rigidly prohibited. There they sat down. No banners, no leaflets: just two sitters. Gradually, passers by gathered and asked what they were doing. They were simply told that these two did not want to die over Cuba. Questions and discussion developed. When the police broke up the group, after about an hour, about 150 people had gathered.

That same evening about 40 supporters went to 6 different parts of Glasgow having agreed to meet in the centre at 8.0 pm. where there was to be a meeting to discuss Cuba. They sat-down in ones and twos, repeating the morning's performance. Groups gathered around them. The police said that unless they moved on they would be charged with 'obstruction'. Each sitter then rose and addressed the crowd about him, saying that he had been warned and that he would move on if they cared to follow. This most people did. All the groups then converged onto the centre of the city. The final meeting was about 1500 strong. It had been convened in less than two hours, simply by this method.

One supporter told us that his group went to a railway station and sat-down inside the barriers. They were thrown out by railway police. They then sat by a newsvendor's stall outside. He asked what it was all about. When told, he started shouting the 'odds', gathering a crowd for them.

So far as we know no one was arrested. One of the biggest and liveliest meetings held in Glasgow for many months was arranged virtually spontaneously.

A Glasgow correspondent.

CIVIL DEFENCE FRAUD IN FULHAM

(With acknowledgment to 'Freedom' of 9th February 1963).

In February, about 18 supporters of the Ctee of 100 visited Fulham Civil Defence Centre, as part of the 'build-up' campaign for the anti-Civil Defence demonstration on 12th May by London Committee of 100. The Fulham C.D. Corps has been without proper HQ for some time and new premises are being built. For the time being the Corps have taken over three offices from the Army.

Police and pressmen were ahead of us as we approached the HQ. We asked, when arriving there, if we could look around the premises. As people who lived in Fulham and the S.W. area, we felt that we had the right to inspect the place were Civil Defence operations were organised.

They said we could not come in and that the Fulham Corps were at that time at the Holborn Civil Defence HQ. All this time the cameraman had been taking photographs. With the Official's stubborn refusal we thought we would have to commit civil disobedience and block the pavement and road. The superintendent realised this and suggested that we look around in groups of three. We demanded that we should be divided into two groups and he persuaded the official to let us do this provided we promised not to 'sit-down' or refuse to leave. We agreed.

The first group made their tour without a hitch but the pressmen tried to come in the second group in order to take photographs, and the official stopped them. He said this was not allowed. One of our group was reporting for PEACE NEWS. This placed the official in a quandary but the superintendent came to the rescue. They agreed that the pressmen could come in if they did not take photographs. The superintendent acted as guide and seemed to know more about the place than the official who looked bewildered and to our questions replied - 'I'm not allowed to answer that'. When asked if the new C.D. building was protected against a nuclear attack, he said he wasn't certain but did not think so.

The rooms contained the usual office equipment and large-scale maps of London on which were printed letters and numbers relating to the various Civil Defence units. The equipment, vehicles etc. that make up the Civil Defence fraud was all a big secret. In fact, the whole thing is shrouded in mystery. Is this all that Fulham Civil Defence Corps amounts to - three offices and a few maps ! Even the Police Superintendent admitted to us that he didn't think much of Civil Defence.

P.T.

C O M M E N T

At times, a small and seemingly trivial event exposes in a glaring way the most elaborate of official myths and deceptions. At times, a single individual, by taking a firm stand on a question of principle, can compel the authorities to state things openly which they would, otherwise, hush-up. Such defiance may force the authorities to repress - but it is important that they be forced to do so publicly and that the maximum publicity is given to their actions. This compels people to think their own thoughts out to their logical conclusion. In this way, even minority action may contribute to a general awareness of injustice - without such awareness, no radical change in Society will ever be possible.

The refusal of Andy Anderson to pay 1/2 to the Dartford R.D.C. has done more than just focus attention on the monstrous fraud of Civil Defence. His stand compelled the Dartford R.D.C. to admit that decisions concerning C.D. were not theirs to make; that in levying the rate it was merely executing orders from above. Mr. Anderson probed this mysterious 'above'. From the Kent County Council he was told that they too were in the dark about the basic facts. Only the Home Office knew. From the Home Office, after weeks of further probing, Mr. Anderson obtained some bureaucratic noises, to the effect that this was 'Top Secret' --- and could not be divulged to mere ratepayers. The whole absurd structure of our Society lay exposed:

AT THE TOP the decision-takers with their monopoly of information, their monopoly of power and the whole apparatus of the State at their disposal

LOWER DOWN the various bodies whose function it is to carry out the decisions made at the top, together with other bodies designed to maintain the facade of democracy and provide the endless side-alleys into which opposition from people like Mr. Anderson can be diverted and talked to death and

LOWER STILL thousands of ordinary people, you and me, the order-takers. Compelled in every action of our daily lives to carry out decisions over which we have no say.

SOLIDARITY seeks to expose our authoritarian Society as it really is. It attempts to develop a militant mass conciousness and it aims, through action, to evolve effective methods of struggle, methods which can challenge the Establishment on a really broad front. We are confident that ordinary people CAN take into their own hands the solutions to the problems that confront them. This struggle for self-assertion has a profoundly revolutionary meaning. It goes hand in hand with the struggle for Socialism, for a Society in which ordinary people are the masters of their own fate. Socialism to us is about freedom, freedom in the most down-to-earth sense.

FREEDOM to decide, collectively, how much to produce, how much to consume, how much to work and how much to rest

FREEDOM to decide, both collectively and individually, how to consume, how to produce and how to work

FREEDOM to participate in all decisions affecting your Society and

FREEDOM to direct one's own life within this social framework.

RATES REFUSAL (cont. from p. 10).

When you find I have no property, you ask the magistrates to imprison me. You bring me before the Court again on 13th July and I am sentenced to 14 days' imprisonment. (You should note that I have still not paid these rates). All this you do because I will not pay for what you cannot supply and because I refuse to be involved in your deception of the people of Dartford. Is this your democracy ?

Your actions do not conform with the idea of democracy held by many people in the Dartford area. Perhaps, if you explain your concepts of democracy, we shall see how you are able to justify your behaviour in this instance. I am told there are a few of you with integrity and humanitarian regard for the people whose interests you were elected to represent. To you I, therefore, appeal; tell the people the whole truth about Civil Defence. This could be done by individual councillors. It would not necessarily entail advocating the disbanding of Civil Defence (if such councillors are still embarrassed by doing what is right and refusing to execute the Government's fraudulent Civil Defence decrees).

Yours sincerely,

E.T. Anderson.

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