

—SOLIDARITY

FOR WORKERS' POWER **_____**

Volume 2 Number 1

6_D
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A WEEK AT THE CIRCUS

by OUR MAN IN THE DOCK.

Monday, February 12.

The Attorney General states: 'Those who are responsible for the national security must be the sole judges of what the national security requires'. The nuclear state and the totalitarian state: different sides of the same coin...

Tuesday, February 13.

Inspector Stratton is a far-sighted man. From street level, in Goodwin Street, he 'saw' Mrs. Allegranza and Pottle working in the Committee office. The office is on the second floor. There is thick wiring over the windows. They are alleged to have been conspiring... putting leaflets into envelopes! The inspector did not produce his periscope in court.

Wednesday, February 14.

Air Commodore Graham Magill, Director of Operations at the Air Ministry, is an important man. When asked whether he would press the button that would send millions of innocent people to their death, he said: 'If circumstances demanded it, I would'.

This king-pin of our 'defence' was asked today how far Wethersfield was from London. He replied: 'About 50 miles - in a fast plane'. Pat didn't get a chance of asking him how far it was in a slow one!

Thursday morning, February 15.

Michael Randle, one-time secretary of the Committee of 100, was in the witness box for over two hours yesterday. He was again in the box for two hours this morning. He had been answering questions put to him by the Attorney General and by the Judge, when I heard the following:

Attorney General (addressing Jury): 'You will see, on exhibit 10, the name Randle...'

Judge (interrupting): 'Who is this man Randle?'

Randle (from witness box): 'T'is me, my Lord'.

Thursday afternoon, February 15.

The Judge had ruled inadmissible the evidence Pat Pottle proposed to call from Sir Robert Watson-Watt, inventor of radar. Pat pointed out that one of the prosecution's main witnesses, Air Commodore Magill, 'had been Watson-Watt's office boy a few years earlier'. 'Really, Mr. Pottle,' said the Judge, 'you can't say things like that in court!'. A warning to those who think courts are places where the whole truth gets aired... or the press a means to get facts reported!

* * * * *

Mr. Gene Sharp: I wish to affirm, my Lord.

Judge: Have you any conscientious reasons why you should not take the oath?

Gene Sharp: My Lord, I am a member of the Society of Friends.

Judge: Yes, Mr. Sharp, but have you any conscientious reasons why you shouldn't take the oath?

Gene Sharp: But, my Lord, for 300 years the Society of Friends have not taken the oath...

Judge: Yes, yes, Mr. Sharp, but have you any conscientious grounds...

Gene Sharp: I AM A QUAKER, my Lord.

Judge: Oh, I see...

* * * * *

The Judge has ruled irrelevant the views of experts as to the effects of nuclear weapons. It was irrelevant whether these weapons were beneficial or prejudicial to 'safety'. Our views and opinions were also declared irrelevant. Morality was irrelevant. The early Christians were irrelevant. Eichmann was irrelevant.

What the bloody hell is relevant? Only the protection by the Courts of a nuclear policy for which the Government has not even a mandate?

Friday, February 16.

Let our supporters now stop and think. Let the 'saints' think hardest. Let all realise exactly what we are up against. The Courts are their courts, parts of the machinery of deception and coercion. They are also often trapped in their own confusion. At such times they can't even keep up appearances.

We are up against rulers who will use every method - intimidation, victimisation and distortion - to conceal the facts from the people, and to maintain their 'right' to rule, even if that 'right' destroy us all. For humanity to survive they, and the system they represent, must be removed. The struggle continues.

WORKING TO RULE

WE WON'T ARGUE HERE THE PROS AND CONS OF WORK-TO-RULE TACTICS. NOR WILL WE ARGUE THE OBVIOUS SHORTCOMINGS OF INDUSTRIAL STRUGGLES, BUREAUCRATICALLY AND TIMIDLY MANAGED FROM ABOVE. USING THE POSTAL DISPUTE AS AN EXAMPLE, WE WILL ANALYSE WORKING-TO-RULE TO STRESS TWO VERY DIFFERENT POINTS. THE FIRST IS THAT NOTHING SHOWS UP THE ABSURDITY OF CLASS SOCIETY IN A MORE GLARING MANNER THAN AN ATTEMPT TO IMPLEMENT ITS OWN RULES. THE SECOND IS THAT PRODUCTION IS ONLY POSSIBLE TODAY BECAUSE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE SYSTEMATICALLY DISOBEY RULES THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO COMPLY WITH. WHAT BETTER ARGUMENT COULD THERE BE FOR WORKERS' MANAGEMENT OF PRODUCTION?

BACKGROUND

In July 1961 the Executive of the UPW had submitted a claim for a wage increase. This was part of an established ritual. In most industries today, union leaders and employers regularly 'negotiate' small increases in wages, often after several months of shadow-boxing. *

But this time the Tory government said 'no'. It was seriously entangled in the contradictions of its own incompetence. It made of its

* These pittances are often presented to the men as 'victories', making up for their ever increasing exploitation at work. This exploitation today affects both white collar and manual worker. It is due to speed-up, 'rationalisation' and automation. In class society these technical changes constantly increase the surplus extracted from the individual worker.

'wage freeze' a sacred cow. It sought to impose a 'tough' solution. But this created more problems than it solved. Mr. Bevins broke off negotiations with the UPW. The men would have to wait until the March report of the Pay Research Unit. Any increases then granted would not be back-dated and would be deferred until the wage thaw.

The UPW called on its 173,000 members to work-to-rule. As Mr. Ron Smith so correctly put it - even if in somewhat bitter-sweet terms - 'This was the first time in its whole history that the Union had been involved in any form of industrial action'. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the work-to-rule started at one minute past midnight on January 1st. In Scotland it started 48 hours later.

EFFECTS OF THE WORK-TO-RULE

Within a few days the effects were clear for all to see.

On January 4, Mr. Bevins, the Postmaster General, appealed to commercial firms making bulk postings at the 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. rate to postpone them for as long as possible. Postal users in London were advised 'that for the time being the Post Office cannot accept any large postings of circulars and advertising matter at printed paper and reduced rates'. Restrictions on collections and deliveries were imposed.

On January 6, Mr. Cyril Hearn, controller at the Mount Pleasant sorting station stated: 'Normally at this time we have 600,000 items here. Now, after staying all night at the office, there are nearly 3,000,000. We are losing leeway at the rate of 750,000 a day.' *

On January 7, Post Office officials stated there was 'a heavy accumulation of mail in London sorting offices because of the work-to-rule. At Mount Pleasant there were about 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ million letters and 6,700 bags which might contain anything from 100 to 1,000 items'!

On January 8, the papers reported that 'London stations serving long distance trains were cluttered up with mailbags'. ** Parcels were being stored in the Caledonian Market (Islington) which was normally used as a garage. Mail, due for sorting, was being diverted as far afield as Edinburgh, Portsmouth, Cardiff and Peterborough.

This diversion of mails, for purposes of sorting, created problems of its own. A union spokesman 'claimed that 350 bags of correspondence for Essex, diverted from Mount Pleasant to Peterborough, had

* Evening Standard, January 6, 1962.

** Daily Telegraph, January 8, 1962.

been relabelled and sent back to Mount Pleasant, because the Peterborough Office was full! On receipt at Mount Pleasant, the postal authorities had instructed members of the UPW immediately to send the 350 bags back to Peterborough!'. * The bureaucracy was now in firm and exclusive charge!

The Big Five Banks were soon forced to introduce extra messengers and cars to by-pass the Post Office in an effort to get cheques quickly cleared. A spokesman for the Midland Bank said: 'At the moment it is just inconvenient - but if the work-to-rule lasts very long it could take five or six days to clear cheques.' ** On January 8 the Committee of London Clearing Bankers issues an official statement that delays might occur in the collection of cheques and in the transmission of credit.

On January 10, the Post Office took the drastic step of imposing a parcels ban in the London area (the only previous occasion it had done so was during the 1955 Rail Strike). The Postmaster General himself announced the decision, at a specially convened Press Conference at Post Office Headquarters. The 3,000 to 4,000 men working on the parcels side would be switched to the sorting of mail, held up by the work-to-rule campaign.

At the same time as he announced this drastic measure Mr. Bevins reassured his audience that 'only something like 20 per cent. of the Post Office workers were operating the work-to-rule'. To which Mr. Ron Smith, general secretary of the UPW later retorted that 'it would have been impossible to create this wide area of difficulty and embarrassment for the Post Office if only 20 per cent. of our members were supporting us'. There were elements of high farce in the situation. Just imagine a Tory minister boasting that as many as 80 per cent. of people in his department were disobeying his rules! MM

Summing up the effects of the first week of the struggle Mr. Smith stated that 'the Post Office had resorted to the most unprecedented measures it had ever had to use in normal times, including appeals to the public for restraint in the use of the services. Temporary staff were being recruited throughout the country, special trains and vans hired, collections and deliveries cancelled, excessive overtime ordered and mails diverted to an extraordinary degree'.

Interesting developments took place at many railway stations. The rules lay down that Post Office staff are supposed to handle letter-mail, and railway staff parcel-mail. Normally both groups work together. The job is done: both parcels and letters catch the appropriate trains. Workers organise together on the spot. They ignore the artificial divisions which the 'nationalised' Post Office and the 'nationalised' Railways attempt to build up between them. But the postal workers now decided to implement the rule. This resulted in widespread delays in the mail.

* Evening News, January 10, 1962.

** Evening Standard, January 6, 1962.

Other things also happened. Mr. Bevins reported that one of his own letters had not been delivered to him because it was addressed 'Postmaster General, London'. The words 'Insufficiently addressed. State name of firm' had been scrawled on the envelope. Letters to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, Chancellor of the Exchequer, which had been sent to No.1 Carlton Terrace, the residence he had occupied while Foreign Secretary, had been marked 'Gone away' and returned to the Dead Letter Office. Normally, of course, postmen would have used their initiative. Now, staff in the Returned Letters Department were going through the motions of trying to trace his correct address'.

IMPLICATIONS

Many other such 'picturesque' episodes were reported. What no one emphasised, however, - either in the 'right wing' or 'left wing' press - was the straightforward and very obvious fact that this unparalleled disruption was the simple consequence of workers applying directives and orders which were not of their making. 'SOLIDARITY' has repeatedly proclaimed that nothing is better guaranteed to bring production to a halt than a systematic attempt to operate it according to managerial rules and regulations. For these are imposed by a class situated outside of production, and which has no real knowledge of the essential problems involved.

The events of January 1961 showed quite clearly that for years the Post Office has been ticking along precisely because post office workers were NOT doing as they were told to, but were, instead, using their initiative and intelligence to get the job done. This revelation must have come as a shock to many people! The conclusion is inescapable: management is really quite superfluous. Things are done more efficiently when working people themselves decide how they should be tackled.

This informal and 'unofficial' organisation of production is very widespread in industry today. Without it, we doubt there would be any production at all! Socialists should pay more heed to it, for within this informal organisation, based on shop floor solidarity and on common sense, are the roots of the socialist future, of the society in which working people will themselves, and by right, determine the conditions of their own existence.

MANAGEMENT... AND ITS RULES

During a Press Conference on January 10, Mr. Bevins was asked: 'If a strict observation of Post Office rules can cause such chaos, should not the rules themselves be looked at?'. Mr. Bevins is alleged to have answered: 'I think there may well be something in that'.

Mr. Bevins, we guess, will not alter many of the rules, now the dispute is over. For what neither he nor his questioner realise is that the 'rules' themselves are not arbitrary. They are the product of a given relationship of forces between management and men. They are the result of several decades of smouldering struggle. The 'efficiency of the service' - of which there is now so much hypocritical talk - was never the primary consideration. The Post Office administration - like management everywhere - has been compelled for decades to treat those over whom it has jurisdiction as mere objects, imposing ever more stringent controls over their initiative and creativeness, limiting the areas in which autonomous action is allowed, converting their work to mere tasks of execution, rigidly defined - and thereby rigidly controllable.

We are not alleging that the Post Office is a particularly villainous institution. This course of action is always imposed on all kinds of management, everywhere. In any class society management will always impose inhuman methods of production because it has to limit working class resistance to its constant attempts to increase the rate of exploitation. Management imposes absurd methods of production because it is a social stratum situated outside of production, a social stratum devoid of real information (because of the 'conspiracy of silence' of the producers themselves) and knowing nothing of the real problems confronted at shop floor level (because that is not where it operates!). The fundamental contradictions in any class divided society are these basic contradictions in production. The fact that they flourish in the 'nationalised' Post Office shows how little they have to do with the legal status of property and how much more closely related they are to the division of society in 'order-givers' and 'order-takers'.

Changes in technology are used by management with two ends in view. Firstly to increase profits. And secondly to break up the workers' sense of solidarity, of being part of a group capable of determining its own objectives. This is essential if working class resistance to exploitation is to be tackled where it matters most: in the workshop. The mystique of management is designed to destroy any idea that workers could themselves manage production, that they could manage it both better and along immensely more human, creative lines than it is managed at present. The real dilemma confronting management is that to the extent that it achieves this secondary objective (of breaking collective working class initiative) it interferes with its main objective... which is to produce goods. For neither a factory - nor a post office - can be run by zombies, merely executing orders imparted from above. Things tend to go wrong. The unforeseen happens. Workers, a minute ago deemed unthinking morons only capable of obeying instructions are suddenly expected to be human beings, capable of using common sense, of improvising solutions, of coping with the unexpected in a rational way.

'EGGS', 'GLASS' AND 'FRAGILE, WITH CARE'...

During December 1961 the UPW published a 'Brief Guide to the Regulations governing the Performance of Post Office Work'. Although this was marked 'strictly confidential to members of the UPW' we consider it worthy of wider publicity. It is in fact a model of how this type of struggle could have been organised. But it remained largely a paper model. Its possibilities were not fully exploited. As the dispute developed the UPW leadership took fright of the Frankenstein it had itself created. Thousands began rigidly to obey the rules. The campaign was beginning to tell. But then the UPW leaders called off the dispute, on the basis of a flimsy promise.

The UPW guide book makes some correct observations about industry in general: it states, for instance that 'the individual goodwill of staff is a condition that management must always strive to preserve' (p.1). * It points out that in ordinary circumstances a worker 'not only observes the rules in a common sense way in going about his job, but takes "short-cuts", in order to achieve the desired end in the most expeditious way. Further more he uses his initiative in doing things not required of him by rule and without waiting for a precise instruction from a supervising officer' (p.2). It even makes the alarming statement (p.8) that 'often the service is maintained only on the basis of Post Office drivers breaking the Law or neglecting to observe important Post Office rules'.

The 'Guide' then lists certain rules which if rigidly followed could disrupt the functioning of the Post Office. This is done quite systematically. Each grade of Post Office worker is considered. Chapter and verse are provided for each statement. Mr. Ron Smith and his colleagues on the UPW Executive must have burnt the midnight oil, preparing this remarkable document. Will the Government prosecute them for conspiring to incite people to... massive civil obedience to managerial law (the most efficient form of sabotage yet devised by industrial workers!!!).

Most of the recommendations are highly technical. These were the ones that had the biggest effect. Others will be understood by non-postal workers. All are undoubtedly highly disruptive. Here is a representative sample:

'When greeting telegrams are about to be accepted, every endeavour should be made to give a full explanation of all the Greetings Services available so that the most appropriate service may be used'.
(T.S.I. A.1, XVII, 3).

* We would put it differently: 'The boss can only boss you as long as you let him!'.
(continued p.10)

THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO RULE

In the Beginning was the Rule;
And the Rule was with the Boss;
And the Rule was Boss;
And the Boss was God;
So the Rule was God.

But woe unto them that worketh to Rule;
For the Rule worketh not;
(Even as the Boss worketh not)
And upon them that abide by the Rule of the Boss
Shall great strictures and vengeance be visited
By the Press of the Boss, thy God.

For the Rule worketh not;
Even though it be written
By the Boss and His agents in the working class movement.
Great therefore is the woe to the National Economy.

For the Boss thy God,
Who created the Rule
Is the Creator of Great Confusion.

And they that worketh to His Rule
Shall post Epistles that shall not arrive
But be lost forever.
They shall sit all day
In Great Confusion
In trains that runneth not
Even according to the Rule of the Boss thy God,
The Great Station Master, the Great Decider
The Creator of Great Things
And of Great Confusion

For although He made both Heaven and Earth
He resideth outside of production
And knoweth not its ways and means
Therefore thou shalt do only the Works of the Boss thy God,
Thou shalt heed not His Rules
Thou shalt use thy loaf
Thou shalt manage production

For the Boss is both Alpha and Omega
The Beginning and the End of Great Confusion.

E. MORSE.

WORKING TO RULE (cont'd from p.8):

'All packets must be carefully handled, especially those marked "Eggs", "Glass", "Fragile with Care" and the like. Fragile packets must never be thrown or dropped into bags or other receptacles.'* (R.G. 13. A.1.3).

'Bags taken up or downstairs must not be dragged or jolted from step to step'(ibid.).

'A postman is forbidden to put any postal packet under a door or through a window of a house... even when requested to do so'. (R.G. 13. A.III. 2 a).

'If a postman observes any letter mails lying unprotected on a platform, he should do his best to safeguard them. He should find out, if possible, the train by which they have arrived and report the matter in due course to the proper officer'. (R.G.13. A.IX. 2).

'If a postman is delivering from a van or handcart and has to transfer a registered packet to an assistant for delivery, he must obtain the assistant's signature in the book provided for the purpose.' (R.G.13. A.VII. 1. iii).

'The doors and windows of the vans must be properly secured and locked by the postman when he leaves the van to collect or deliver.' (RG. 13. A.X. 4).

The 'Guide' contains several dozen such excellent rules. There is little doubt that their complete and prolonged observance would have resulted in the Post Office gradually grinding to a standstill - while the men went on receiving full wage packets.

COMPULSORY OVERTIME

Post Office regulations specify that overtime shall be worked 'according to the requirements of the service' up to a ceiling of 18 hours a week. In many areas the Post Office management made use of compulsory overtime in an attempt to minimise the effects of the work-to-rule. Workers were called in repeatedly for compulsory Sunday duty. The papers prominently pointed out that 'anybody declining this work could be subject... to disciplinary action' (Daily Telegraph, Jan.8, 1962). On January 19, the Post Office authorities dotted their i's

(cont'd p.25)

* This excellent rule is followed by another which will doubtless delight all recipients of eggs by post, namely: 'a postman must not sit or recline on mailbags' (RG.13. A.IX, 3).

WITHDRAWAL OF GOOD WILL

The use of the 'work-to-rule' weapon by the Postmen and the Southern Region Railwaymen draws attention to a very effective method of struggle, in which the entire sacrifice falls on the employer, which is as it should be.

The use of this type of struggle is not only applicable to public services. It is also very useful in the manufacturing industry.

In the last two weeks of January 1962 a very interesting, if relatively minor dispute took place in a North London engineering factory employing many thousands of workers. The toolmakers - about 120 men in all - had put in for a wage increase of 6d an hour to bring their wages more in line with those received by skilled piece-workers, and even skilled time-workers, such as setters and inspectors. They had been given a brusque negative by the personnel manager, who also said that it was final.

The men immediately held a shop meeting and decided to 'withdraw good will' and lock up their tools. * The significance of this was that the firm now had to supply all the tools used by toolmakers: micrometers, vernier gauges, angle plates, surface plates, squares, rules and countless other tools needed for the job. No firm has an adequate supply of these either in terms of quantity or quality (most tools supplied by the tool store are pretty ropy).

We witnessed the spectacle of toolmakers queuing up after each other to use the firm's limited stock of micrometers. We saw jobs 5/16 in dimension being tested for squareness with a two-foot square, jobs a few inches long being tested with 6 foot rules, job after job being impossible to assemble because the firm's angle plates were out of square. These, and countless other happenings, drastically curtailed the firm's output of jigs and fixtures which in turn meant huge pile-ups of work waiting for tools in the production shops.

* Most engineers are expected by the employers to supply most of their own hand tools (in fact engineers get an income tax allowance for the purchase of tools). For the employers to supply these tools would require the setting up of a whole new organisation for the purchasing, storing, checking and maintenance of these tools. This would be a very large job: in a large factory, it would mean the expenditure of scores of thousands of pounds! Most engineers, particularly highly skilled toolmakers, have tool cabinets full of a wide variety of very expensive tools: precision measuring instruments such as sets of micrometers, toolmakers' buttons, squares both normal and toolmakers', etc. The value of the tools is often well in excess of £100.

After two weeks of chaos during which the men turned down a proposal of the firm for the men 'to resume normal working pending negotiations', the management caved in and offered the men an increase which worked out at an average of 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. an hour, thus going back on their previous statement that their 'no' was final.

The method of struggle used by the men - refusal by the workers to use their own tools - has already been used successfully at one or two places, especially by the fitters at Brimsdown and some other power stations early in 1961.

The issue - wages - over which this struggle was fought is of no particular significance. What is of interest is HOW it was fought. It was expensive for the employer and cheap for the men. This action was at least as effective as some types of strike action. This brings to the fore a point of view which we, around 'Solidarity', have long held, that new techniques of struggle should be developed for use alongside the classical strike weapon. We intend in the future issues of 'Solidarity' to report and analyse these new methods as they occur.

Ken Weller.

OVERHEARD ON CLAPHAM COMMON

Solidarist: So you feel that Russia is basically socialist?

Trot: Of course!

Solidarist: Why?

Trot: Because the means of production are nationalised.
(reci- The economic basis is socialist. Russia is a workers' state.
ting)

Solidarist: But surely state property is only 'socialist' if the working class holds power?

Trot (thinking this one out): I agree!

Solidarist: But does the working class hold power in Russia?

Trot: Of course!

Solidarist: Why?

Trot (triumphant): Because the means of production are nationalised... etc, etc.

Exit Solidarist, pulverised.

From 'SOLIDARITY' No.1

(September 1913)

'It's wicked to sabot
And bother the boss!'
Says my worthy abbot,
'It's wicked to sabot!'
We say to him 'Ah, but
Our gain is his loss.'
'It's wicked to sabot...
And bother the boss!'

Norman Young.

P.S. Anyone 'incited' by this needs his head examined.

Solidarity 1913

Comrade C. Lahr, of the ILP, has very kindly given us a number of back issues of 'SOLIDARITY', some of them nearly fifty years old. The paper first appeared in September 1913. Subtitled 'A Monthly Journal of Militant Trade Unionism' 'SOLIDARITY' was first produced by the Industrial Democracy League (more information about the League at the end of this article).

This first version of 'SOLIDARITY' should not be confused with another paper of the same name which appeared during the second half of the First World War, was at one time edited by Jack Tanner * and became the organ of the Shop Stewards and Workers' Committees movement.

We are pleased to reprint the following passage from the very first issue (September 1913) of 'SOLIDARITY' No.1

FELLOW TRADE UNIONISTS, - The widespread strikes occurring in recent years have had very mean results. We have failed to make any inroad upon the capitalist preserves owing to our foolish and criminal sectionalism. This state of things should claim our serious attention and careful consideration, and should create a desire in the militant members of the unions to get to work in order to make our organisations a fighting force and a power to be feared.

Trade is booming. In spite of such favourable circumstances we find sections of the workers being defeated in their struggles with the capitalist. One has only to recall to mind the Transport Workers' Strike of last year, the London Plasterers' Strike, and, more recently still, the Leith Dock Strike. It is true that some sections of our class have received a meagre rise in wages; but this is more than counterbalanced by the enormous rise in prices of the necessities of life and the relative fall in the purchasing power of wages. Our share of the increase in wealth production is a lower standard of living. The increasing centralisation of power by the capitalists enables them to fight the class war with ruthless ferocity. Speeding up, the introduction of the bonus system, the displacement of labour-power by machinery, and victimisation have caused fiercer competition among the workers and the sapping of the spirit of their manhood. The extension of the tentacles of the State into the vitals of organised labour by the establishment of Labour Exchanges and the National Insurance Act, the further bondage which that Act imposes, the desire of politicians to make our burden still more grievous by means of Compulsory Arbitration, the vicious use of the coercive forces of the State - all these factors create a demand for a more efficient form of industrial

* Present address: c/o I.R.I.S. News (Witch-hunters Incorporated),
404, Maritime House, Clapham, SW4.

organisation than our present-day Trade Unions provide. It is just as feasible to oppose a maxim gun with bow and arrow, as to fight the modern capitalist combinations with our Craft Unions. Our weakness lies in our sectionalism, our methods of fighting, the bureaucratic control of our unions, and our objective.

We have 1,700 separate Trade Unions; this results in competition for membership, overlapping, and demarcation quarrels between Union and Union, making us an easy prey to our enemy. There is a desire for Solidarity in the rank and file, but these defects will remain so long as they are split up into so many different unions, each having a separate agreement with the masters, who make use of this fact to prevent unity of action. To remedy these defects we advocate Industrial Organisation along the line of class, instead of craft; the amalgamation of all existing Trade Unions into Industrial Unions; the formation of a National Council of Industrial Unions. Thus we should have a fighting force to secure that much-needed improvement in our conditions.

A change in spirit is just as necessary as a change in form. Conciliation has failed; arbitration has failed; their only use has been to damp our fighting ardour, to make us pawns in the class struggle -- pawns sacrificed to protect rooks, queens and bishops. The capitalist hits hard; we turn the other cheek. He acts at once; we tell him when and where we are going to try and hit him. He moves quickly and intelligently; we move slowly and timorously. We must fight boldly and spontaneously, unhampered by separate agreements, unfettered by long notices; organised on a class basis, permeated by a class spirit we should become a force to be feared by the strongest.

The most amazing spectacle in the recent industrial upheavals has been that of the leaders bringing up the rear. They have utterly failed to lead. They have often been in harmony with our masters in settling the strike at any price, in getting the workers back to work, even without consulting those who risked their jobs. The attitude of a large number of prominent officials more resembles that of a manager of a limited liability company than an elected official of a working class organisation. It happens far too often that the unionist has to fight not only the tyranny of the boss, but also the bureaucracy of his own officials. This must cease, the control of the unions must be transferred to the rank and file. That is where their destiny should lie. Bureaucracy is inimical to initiative; the workers must be allowed to develop collective initiative if they are ever to better their conditions and finally win their freedom. Labour produces all wealth, and to labour all wealth rightly belongs. The strife in society is over the division of wealth between owners and workers. It is the historic mission of the Working Class to end this struggle by obtaining control of the means of production and distribution.

WHO SABOTS ?

'Sabotage, this dark, invincible, terrible Damocles' sword that hangs over the head of the master class, will replace all the confiscated weapons and ammunition of the army of the toilers... There can be no injunction against it. No policeman's club. No rifle. No prison bars. It cannot be starved into submission. It cannot be discharged. It cannot be blacklisted. It is present everywhere, like the airship that soars high above the clouds in the dead of night, beyond the reach of the cannon and the searchlight, and drops the deadliest bombs into the enemy's encampment.' (1)

This is a (somewhat romantic) version of what was once a fashionable topic in left-wing literature. The subject was even aired at the Trades Union Congress, in Manchester, in 1913. Mr. Jouhaux, bringing fraternal greetings from the then revolutionary CGT (Confederation of French Trade Unions) stated: 'Agitation, strikes, sabotage, boycott, these are the forms of direct action. With each of them, it is the worker alone who decides for himself.' (2) The speech was widely reported and many papers printed it.

But today it is dangerous to publish an account of sabotage that has already taken place - let alone such bold approvals as those quoted above. This is itself a witness to the highly provisional nature of the 'civil liberties' we enjoy under the modern capitalist state. We wish to test these liberties by commenting on a recent case.

On Tuesday, January 23, 1962, at Barking Magistrates Court, Frank Williams, 'marxist humanist', was fined £100 and 20 guineas costs, under the Incitement to Damages Act, 1861. He had posted to three Ford workers a document called 'Class Struggle', which described acts of sabotage which had taken place in Ford's. The document suggested that similar activities constantly took place in motor car factories both in America and in Russia.

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- (1) From introduction to Poujet's 'Le Sabotage' (1913) quoted in Knowles' 'Strikes: A Study in Industrial Conflict with special reference to Britain between 1911 and 1947.' Blackwell, 1952.
 - (2) The full text of the speech is reproduced in 'Solidarity' No.2 (October 1913).

Systematic and persistent resistance to production has been going on for well over 150 years. In fact, it has been going on ever since the introduction of large-scale industry. We are quite sure it has not stopped because the 'orthodox' left has stopped writing or talking about it. Nor will workers be further 'incited' by a renewal of interest in what for them, in one form or another, is an integral part of their working lives. The recent case was itself a recognition that sabotage cannot be stopped... and that the workers involved cannot be caught. (1) As usual the authorities chose to victimise a helpless scapegoat.

The law is highly selective. What you can 'get away with' depends on who you are, and on what 'grade' of language you use. J.A.C. Brown can write, in 'The Social Psychology of Industry': 'The existence of a frustrating atmosphere in a factory may easily be diagnosed by the presence of such symptoms as excessive criticism of management, malicious gossip, the voicing of superficial grievances, damaging of equipment, militant political attitudes, absenteeism, and neurosis. (!). Productivity, of course, is low.' (p.251). If he had said 'Class-conscious workers indulge in sabotage', Penguins would never have touched him (Lady C., notwithstanding!).

The vulnerability of the saboteur is also determined by his class. (2) Capitalists never hesitated to destroy products if thereby they could force up prices. Food is burnt or dumped in the sea, while two-thirds of the world starves. Manufacturers of obsolete arms compete in lobbying for the right to 'take up the slack in the economy'. Parkinson's Law operates, to the benefit of the makers of waste-paper baskets. Advertising keeps our lives ugly, and our pockets empty. In the stage of competition or in the stage of monopoly, capitalist organisation constantly sabotages the people's interests. The employing class, in the course of its history, has repeatedly skimmed on the most elementary safety precautions. The bodies of thousands of mangled or dead workers can testify to this fact.

(1) As our printed predecessor ('Solidarity', October 1913) said: '£50,000,000 combine to fight strikes. - How many millions will they require to fight sabotage?'

(2) 'Capitalist sabotage aims to benefit a small group of non-producers. Working class sabotage seeks to help the wage-working class at the expense of the parasites.

'The frank position of the class-conscious worker is that capitalist sabotage is wrong because it harms the workers; working-class sabotage is right because it aids the workers.' André Tridon, 'The New Unionism', 1913, B.W. Huebsch (New York).

Finally, the maintenance of the managers' 'right' to rule wastes immeasurable human and material resources. (1).

As to 'incitement' (as with the class war) we may ask: 'Who starts it?'. To try to impose on workers an oppressive and often arbitrary set of production targets is provocation enough. To threaten those workers who actually maintain these rates with seasonal sackings (as happens each winter in the motor car industry) is positive incitement.

In these circumstances, wastage of material and systematic production of defective parts increase work-availability and stabilise it over the year. (2) When the bosses attempt to maintain the seasonal irregularities by means of overtime, entire stocks of particular necessary materials are suddenly 'not available'. The necessity of repairing damage and generally cleaning up the mess creates more jobs.

A very common form of 'sabotage' consists in rigidly executing blue-prints which are obviously wrong. In many engineering factories jobs worth hundreds of pounds are produced strictly according to orders from above when everybody - sometimes even the foreman - knows that the design is faulty.

Increasing alienation and exploitation are met by increasing resistance, which may take the form of sabotage. This is one of the economic 'facts of life'. It is well known to all industrial sociologists, not directly in the pay of the giant corporations. To consider a mere description of these facts 'incitement to sabotage' is rather like denouncing a biology textbook as an incitement to fornication! On the day of William's trial, an experimental speed-up of 25 per cent. was introduced in the foundry at Dagenham. The result

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- (1) 'If (managers') orders were completely obeyed, confusion would result and production and morale would be lowered. In order to achieve the goals of the organisation workers must often violate orders, resort to their own techniques of doing things, and disregard lines of authority. Without this kind of systematic sabotage much work could not be done. This unsolicited sabotage in the form of disobedience and subterfuge is especially necessary to enable large bureaucracies to function effectively.' (Miller and Form: Industrial Sociology, quoted by Brown, p.145. See also 'Solidarity' pamphlet No. 6, 'The Meaning of Socialism'.) ✓✓✓
- (2) 'The most frequent reasons given by the unorganised worker for (restrictive) practices were rate-cutting, fear of unemployment, excessive speeding-up and resentment at management.' (Mathewson: Restriction of output among unorganised workers. Viking Press, 1931).

was an actual decrease in production due to 'accidental mechanical breakdowns'! (Financial Times, January 24, 1962). (1)

Sabotage has even been used as a direct bargaining counter. A New York report of the Manchester Guardian (March 6, 1948) stated that theatre operators and projectionists secured a new 2-year contract and a 15 per cent. rise in wages by an unofficial campaign which had startled audiences with films shown upside down, alarming noises from the sound machinery, mixed reels from other films and films shown on the ceiling instead of on the screen!

Why do workers sabotage production? They do so occasionally out of resentment against a particular manager or a particular foreman. More often they do so in order to be human beings, for even a few minutes, during their working hours. But first and foremost, workers break up the appalling monotony of their jobs... Where there is no 'official' provision for pauses to chat and smoke, they create their own. When the productive process is constrained by rigid rules and a ruthless tempo of the machines, initiative (2) and the assertion of control over the job find other outlets. Sabotage then becomes an elemental, universal expression of class consciousness and of human dignity.

JOHN LANE.

POSTSCRIPT. Lest we be misunderstood we call on all workers who do not use elementary forms of self-defence tightly to close their minds to those who seek to 'incite' them by post. If they see any of their workmates misbehaving they should at once run to the foreman and report the matter. HE IS ALWAYS ON YOUR SIDE!

As for the rest of you, THIS VANDALISM MUST CEASE! Patriotism and loyalty to the boss should always come before your stupid, selfish interests! (And above all, don't get caught)!

(1) 'Incidentally, that's how they used to fight the speed-up. When it got over sixty, say, someone would just accidentally drop a bolt in the line and as soon as it worked its way round to the end, bang, the line would stop. Then there'd be a delay and everyone would take his break.' (Wahls, quoted by K. Knowles in "Strike - A study in Industrial Conflict" as illustration of probably the commonest form of sabotage).

(2) 'Sabotage is the soul of wit', wrote our precursor 'Solidarity' in September 1913. Perhaps this is why the orthodox 'lefts' do not write about the subject. A member of a 'degenerated workers' organisation' said to the author recently: 'I don't think sabotage has much political significance. It can never be properly organised.' No, comrade, wit and initiative can never be organised. Self-activity, the very premise of socialism, can never develop in a bureaucratic straight-jacket.

POLITICAL ECONOMY

THE CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP

(A STUDY IN OVERPRODUCTION AND UNDERCONSUMPTION)

It all started with the membership and the programme. The leaders came later. But these sensible relations were burst asunder through the development of technique. New techniques created new leaders. And these new leaders soon began to take control before the new memberships had had time to form.

The process of training leaders thus received a tremendous impulse. This was the period of PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION. Soon the stage was reached when leaders were sufficiently numerous to take charge not only of all present organisations, but also of all organisations likely to be provoked by conceivable future issues. Some went even further. They created new issues of their own invention, thus initiating the period of SELF-SUSTAINED GROWTH.

The most productive source of new issues lay in the inter-penetration of sub-groups. The struggle for ascendancy produced periodic cataclysms, in which thousands of fully trained leaders would be destroyed. The masses meanwhile were yearning for leadership. These crises would help stabilise the system for a certain period, but the cycle would then start all over again.

This was the classical phase, as analysed by Groucho Marx.

Notwithstanding these faction fights the long-term trend was towards an increasing concentration of power, particularly in the realm of ideology. The ritual murder of the god-king, the infallibility doctrine and the worship of ancestors eventually produced a position of virtual MONOPOLY.

The law of the FALLING RATE OF PROFIT then began to take effect. More and more, the leaders would outnumber their followers. An entirely new class was created: its origin in expelled members. It grew rapidly as the rank and file began to desert the traditional organisations, leaving them entirely to the leaders.

The growing crisis was alleviated by the discovery of colonies. The discussion groups began all over again, geared to the unexpectedly popular new slogan: 'EXPORT THE LEADERS'. Soon the previous colonies found themselves plentifully supplied with great theoreticians, with years of experience in the movement.

It thus became necessary to provoke revolutions in countries where nobody wanted them. For a while this consumed the surplus of revolutionary leaders and temporarily stabilised the market. Even so, the crisis grew again, as 'backward' nations began to develop their own leaderships.

To avert the threatened slump in the metropolitan countries, the State was increasingly forced to intervene. Vast new public leadership programmes were launched. The result was the PERMANENT CLASS WAR ECONOMY.

At this point the struggle between leaders and led became critical. For what leaders produce, above all, are their own gravediggers. They had already lost their followers. Now they had nothing to lose but themselves.

John Lane.

Reprinted from STUDENT PEACE UNION BULLETIN (December
6029 University Avenue, Chicago 37, Illinois. 1961)

MACHINE GUN THY NEIGHBOUR !

'No happening in Evanston (Illinois) in many months has brought so much reaction as a plan suggested last week for setting up private blast and fallout shelters on a membership basis at \$300.00 per person...' noted an editorial in the Evanston Affairs, the weekly newspaper of that Chicago suburb.

The issue all began on October 20 when the OWNERS SERVICE CLUB INC. sent a letter to all residents of Evanston proposing a 'Shelter Service Plan'. The shelter is described in the letter as follows: 'Space allocation in the Club Blast Shelter will be similar to that of a troop ship. You'll be cramped, but everything necessary to live underground for a month will be provided. There will be beds and blankets, food and water, filtered ventilation, cooking facilities, toilet facilities, medical facilities, private power supply, communications equipment and a sufficient arsenal to repel intruders'

It is clear that the 'intruders' who will be 'repelled' by the 'sufficient arsenal' are not the Russians, for in the introduction to the letter there is the question, 'And what protection will you have against the mobs of underprivileged that will certainly scourge the area after an attack?'. The arsenal will be used not only for protection after the attack but, 'Non-members will be kept out of Club Blast Shelters by force if necessary.'

Fan mail

September 20, 1961.

...Unfortunately in this area we are overloaded with small left political groupings - each at daggers drawn with each other - and another group only adds to the general suspicion. Nevertheless we now have a regular number of 'SOLIDARITY' readers which I am convinced will increase in the future.

'SOLIDARITY' readers in this area are mainly industrial militants with little or no contact outside the sphere of industry. We have no contacts with CND or the Committee of 100. Unfortunately there is little desire for association. They are usually dismissed as a petty-bourgeois group...

I.P.H., Liverpool.

* * * * *

October 2, 1961.

I am sure you will be interested to know how 'SOLIDARITY' has been received. I can honestly say that reaction to it has given me a pleasant surprise. Apart from one chap who commented: 'Oh, yes, it's that filthy paper again' (he bought one all the same), and a girl who accompanied her refusal to purchase with an expression of desire to remain in the (Labour) Party, most people are impressed by it as a paper, though not always impressed by its views. Several people have described it as the best left-wing paper they have come across. The general reason for its popularity (and I include myself in this) is because it is balanced: it is not a journal of theory

nor is it merely an account of industrial disputes and sit-downs; it is not entirely serious, nor entirely satirical...

A.H., Gravesend.

* * * * *

November 16, 1961.

...Although I support the Committee of 100 in every way (but not CND) I feel that there is too much emphasis on the H-bomb. It is only the social system under which we are forced to live that makes nuclear weapons both necessary and possible. It is not the Government's policies we should be attacking but Government itself, because we will never persuade the Government to do anything that it does not wish to do. The only way to attain our goal is to destroy the Government, and any form of government that exists today...

Bob K-K., Worthing.

* * * * *

December 15, 1961.

...The demonstration at Wallsend against the missile ship launched by the Duchess of Gloucester was well supported. The leaflets you gave me came in handy ... They were fairly well received by most of the workers leaving the shipyards and I think especially by the shop stewards. One complaint by our supporters was however that there was a lack of

constructiveness about it and that it seemed to infer that a worker should disemploy voluntarily. It was thought that suggestions like 'asking for alternative work' should have been included...

We were constantly hindered from leafleting by the police who seemed to have invoked a law that leafleting should only be done on the side of the road where no pavement existed and where there was no one to whom the leaflet could be given.

I think that more effective methods of protesting (whether legal or illegal) are now required. If the police play the game of 'allowing us to break the law' and the national press continues to make us out to be a pack of fools - then sit-downs are going to be more and more impractical as a method of protest, and more and more practical as a method of contracting piles.

Jim H., Newcastle on Tyne.

* * * * *

December 17, 1961.

I hope you are again at liberty after the demonstration of the 9th. Our own particular effort (in Cardiff) passed off with no arrests and a minimum of inconvenience. Personally I feel these demonstrations in city centres should be abandoned in favour of industrial action and concentration on rocket bases.

Alistair G., Cardiff.

* * * * *

October 30, 1961.

I understand that you have some collection sheets for the Acton strike. Would you send me a couple and I will try to make a collection

amongst the chaps where I work. I think it essential that for this strike, which opposes both the employers and the union bureaucracy, every bit of support be given. Can you tell me the composition of the strike committee? Is it correct, as given out by the Guardian, that there are no CP members on it? If at least non-CPers predominate, as they probably do, I think the fact should be given maximum publicity, to show that an independent workers militant struggle, freed from reformist political concepts, adopts a more militant and a better class approach than the much vaunted 'Communist' leadership. This will help nail the lie that only CP-led struggles are militant and non-compromising with the bosses and T.U. bureaucrats.

Please send me all the literature that you produce, for although I do not agree with some points, on other points I both agree and find much of what is written to be stimulating to thought.

Tom C., Penge, SE20.

* * * * *

November 21, 1961.

Thanks, on behalf of Cambridge University Labour Club and its visitors from NALSO, for your contribution to our week-end school. It made the last session. You brought theory and practice together perfectly. You'll be glad to know that the collection for Acton is on its way.

Angus C., Kings College,
Cambridge.

* * * * *

January 4, 1962.

Congratulations on your timely re-issue of Alexandra Kollontai's 'The Workers' Opposition'. You have indeed done the British Labour movement a considerable service.

Andrew M., Birmingham.

* * * * *

January 17, 1962.

At its last meeting, the R... Branch of the Young Socialists discussed the financial appeal made by 'SOLIDARITY' and decided to make a donation of £2.0.0., a cheque for same being enclosed. Although few of our members are in full agreement with the views you express we are nevertheless of the opinion that 'SOLIDARITY' has some ideas well worthy of consideration.

(Knowing the habits of Transport House, we are not identifying this comrade further).

* * * * *

February 9, 1962.

Unfortunately 'SOLIDARITY' is a good paper. The Kronstadt article was good, the accounts of industrial disputes are excellent (almost as good as the Daily Express!) and the Committee of 100 coverage is useful. This, coupled with snippets of information on such important topics as 'Bollocks' or the 'trotting habits of Gee'... all means that I suppose I'll have to subscribe. That's why I say 'SOLIDARITY' is unfortunately good - for it's going to cost me money.

However 12 issues are worth more than 9/-, so I enclose a cheque (from a capitalist bank) for 15/- for the next 12 issues. Hope you will keep up the high standard.

Ron B., Ilford.

P.S. What is a degenerated bureaucratic workers' wall? - Or a D.B.W. State for that matter? More basically, what is a degenerated worker? That's got you! Obviously, 'you were never a marxist'.

* * * * *

February 9, 1962.

Your journal is much more interesting than many other left journals. The pamphlets are fine, full of information and well presented.

The issue of 'SOLIDARITY' No.9 I got was in a bit of a mix-up - probably the work of some ultra left gremlin, deviating to the right on the left cheek of his ass! Cover: O.K. Pages 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6: all O.K. Then followed page 14 (!), followed by page 13 (!). Then another page 14 (!!) followed by pages 13, 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, 7 (sort of count-down style!). Then came page 15 and from there up to page 34 all was O.K. It was an interesting feat reading this issue, but I managed at last. Now I know why 'the movement' keeps on 'moving'! - and also something new on 'dialectical materialism'!

... I am glad you of 'SOLIDARITY' have this saving gift of humour! There is nothing like a laugh or two for dispelling the blue (and red) sourness that comes along.

... The best of good luck in your fine work. Socialist greetings.

Peter J., Lerwick, Scotland.

* * * * *

Overheard: THE TROUBLE WITH YOU
'SOLIDARITY' LOT IS YOU'RE
JUST A BUNCH OF ANARCHO-CYNICALISTS!!!

ABOUT OURSELVES

Volume 2 starts here. We hope it will be allowed to finish. Meanwhile we feel entitled to take stock of the first 10 issues.

Since the early numbers we have nearly doubled our circulation. The quality of the production has improved and its size has increased. We also flatter ourselves that since we began some eighteen months ago we have published or re-published much significant material unavailable elsewhere. As previously mentioned contacts are developing in Germany, Canada and Australia, in addition to the older contacts in France, Italy, U.S.A. and Belgium. More recently we have established direct lines to the West Indies, Bolivia and Japan. On the debit side is the irregularity of production. This is due to financial difficulties, to the pressure of work on pamphlets and to the heavy burdens which production imposes on relatively few people.

We have also attempted to develop a systematic and wide ranging criticism of society, firmly rooted in the political activities of our time. Unlike the self-appointed spokesmen of 'institutionalised socialism' we are interested in the points at which real people are in conflict with some aspect or other of the system. This is an emphasis that cannot but involve us - and involve us repeatedly - in issues of 'civil liberties'. The contents of the present number illustrate this quite clearly. We will continue to establish, in action, our rights to voice our heretical opinions. We will also continue to expose the shortcomings of 'democracy' in the coercive state. We cannot help it if our voice sounds loud. When all around is silence a whisper becomes a roar.

Since the last issue of 'SOLIDARITY' we have published 'Solidarity' pamphlet No.8 on the B.L.S.P. dispute (single copy: 10d, from E. Morse). The first 600 have sold out. Best orders came from an AEU branch in Coventry (3 dozen) and from Mickleave's Shop Stewards Committee (2 dozen). During the one-day engineers' strike on February 5th, nearly 100 were sold. Many copies of 'What Next for Engineers?' were also sold. We are reprinting to meet further orders.

There was a fairly good response to our 'one-shot' financial appeal. Readers started settling debts (others please note!). Friends revealed themselves - often in unlikely quarters. For instance a Young Socialists Branch donated £2.0.0. This assistance, and various stringent economies, should permit us to publish a little more regularly.

The victimisation of Frank Williams is referred to on p.15. We understand financial assistance has already been volunteered by several groups and individuals: the ILP, the Syndicalists, various rank-and-file militants, Young Socialists and a group of 'SOLIDARITY' readers. Further contributions are still badly needed however, and could be sent directly to Frank, at 'Tyneside', Tennyson Road, Hutton, Essex.

and crossed their t's. Refusal to work compulsory overtime could lead to suspension and perhaps dismissal. *

Voluntary overtime was officially banned by the Union, but only towards the end of the third week of the dispute. 'Some branches, right from the outset, included such a ban in their own "order of battle", on their own initiative, and they were absolutely right in doing so'. ** That all branches did not, from the very onset, make such recommendations to their members was an obvious weakness. The sight of workmates doing as much 'fat' or 'tap' (voluntary overtime) as they wanted undoubtedly had a demoralising effect on some militants.

After the dispute had been on about a fortnight some postmen 'were having to work 5 hours a day of compulsory overtime, as well as extra duty on Sundays'. *** In other areas the union had succeeded in establishing a limit of 3 hours overtime a day.

As the dispute proceeded the management made increasing use of compulsory overtime. More than anything else, this shows up the fraudulent nature of 'labour relations' in our 'free' society. A union statement said that 'at London South Western District Office 3,413 hours of compulsory overtime were being worked daily'. At the North Western District Office 'all sorters have performed 71 hours a week on a compulsory basis, for the past three weeks, without a day off'. **** The statement went on to complain that 'excessive compulsory overtime... was now beginning to take its toll in sickness'. Even Mr. Ron Smith was belatedly moved to comment on these barbaric conditions. 'Evidence was coming to hand', he stated, 'which points to a dictatorial and almost vicious approach to compulsory overtime'. (ibid.) Throughout the whole period of the dispute the Union leadership deferred taking any decision on this crucial matter! This, more than anything else, ensured the defeat of the work-to-rule.

* Daily Telegraph, January 20, 1962.

** 'Working to rule at the G.P.O.'. Article in Socialist Current, vol.7, No.2, p.7. The article is entitled 'Push on, E.C.!'.

*** Daily Telegraph, January 15, 1962.

**** Daily Telegraph, January 20, 1962.

COSTS... OR MANAGERIAL RIGHTS

On January 14 the Union claimed that in some provincial centres postal and telegraph officers normally employed on clerical and administrative duties had been called in to assist in the sorting offices. The union pointed out that this was 'an expensive way for the Post Office to do its work' as these workers had to be paid at a higher rate than sorters and their overtime would also be at a higher rate. In fact 'the Post Office was spending more to maintain its restricted services than it was to operate the full service before the work-to-rule campaign.' *

This fact alone exposes the fraudulent nature of the government's claim that it is concerned with 'sound finance', and the 'struggle against inflation'. The cat was let out of the bag by Mr. Bevin himself. On the afternoon of January 10, he stated: 'our two main aims in the present situation are to prevent excessive delays to the first class mail - the 3d. post - and to prevent a minority of people from getting more money, even though they are putting the public to inconvenience'. ** On January 23 he went even further. He stated in the Commons that extra expenditure on overtime payments, on temporary staff and on diversion of mails already totalled about £250,000. In addition, £750,000 had been lost in parcel revenue. But all this, he said, was 'really a row of beans compared with the damage to the national economy that my submission to industrial pressure would mean'.

Here was the authentic voice of the managerial bureaucracy, both stubborn and stupid. Here was management's reaction to a threat to its sacred prerogatives. Mr. Bevin, by his actions, was not in fact 'preventing the postmen from getting more money' - either in the long run (where some concessions would have to be granted) or in the short run (where overtime payments were already swelling weekly wage packets to quite unusual sizes!)* **

Mr. Bevin's real concern was shown in another of his statements: 'If the postal workers', he said, 'through the action they are taking were to receive an adjustment in pay, then this movement would spread like wildfire throughout the whole of the public sector and throughout British industry.' ****

* Daily Telegraph, January 15, 1962.

** Evening News, January 10, 1962.

*** The Daily Telegraph reports that on Sunday, January 7, some postmen did 10 hours overtime. At time and a half, this earned them an extra £3.15.0.

**** Evening News, January 10, 1962.

Here were the real motives of the employers' intransigence. Modern capitalism can make repeated wage concessions to the workers, whatever some 'traditional' marxists may say. We would claim in fact that a steadily rising wage level is recognised (by capitalism's more far sighted economists and apologists) as an essential ingredient to the stability of the whole system. What capitalism cannot envisage or tolerate however is that these should clearly and publicly be extorted from it by methods of direct action, methods which challenge its own established rules and procedures for granting wage increases. It cannot permit those who usually carry out the orders to begin imposing decisions.

This was made abundantly clear when on January 11 the leaders of the UPW offered (without consulting their members, of course) to call off the work-to-rule within 24 hours of Mr. Bevins naming an early date for resumption of negotiations on the pay claim or on arrangements being made for referring the dispute to an 'unfettered' tribunal. The Postmaster General would not even accept this. He insisted that the work-to-rule be called off before negotiations start. Mr. Bevins' decision was endorsed personally by the Prime Minister at a brief meeting between the two at Admiralty House on January 12. *

BRIBERY AND INTIMIDATION

From an early date in the dispute the papers (working in close conjunction with the Government) did their best to break the morale of the postmen.

Asked how long the Post Office could 'hold out' Mr. Bevins had said: 'I think the resources of the Post Office are quite sufficient to meet a situation of this kind'. The papers had widely publicised his statement. Mr. Bevins was also reported as saying 'he had not given any consideration to the possible use of troops in easing the mail situation'. Asked about Martell's strike-breaking 'League for the Defence of Freedom' Bevins had said: 'I have not yet replied to their letter (requesting permission to set themselves up as a postal delivery organisation) but if the situation should become worse the request is one I would be willing to consider'. **

* Evening News, January 12, 1962.

** Evening Standard, January 10, 1962.

Other methods were also used. Bribery mixed with intimidation is one of management's standard tricks. Fortunately the postmen did not fall for it. When the work-to-rule started the management had withdrawn certain concessions which had come to be accepted as routine in many London offices (ten-minute morning break, fifteen-minute afternoon break and early evening release). On January 9 Mr. George Downes Director of the London Postal Region, decided to 'restore the concessions' to about half of London's 19,000 postal workers (in particular to counter clerks, to the writing staff, to postmen at suburban sorting offices, to the Foreign Section and to the City Delivery East Central Office). The concessions were not however to be restored at the Mount Pleasant sorting office - with its staff of 6,000 - or to most of the Head District Offices. In an excellent gesture of solidarity the men rejected this attempt to split their ranks. They decided they would 'not accept any concessions until the work-to-rule campaign had ended'.

CONCLUSIONS

The Post Office workers have not achieved even the limited objective for which they entered the struggle. They allowed the fight to be waged by the 'leadership', who did not deem it necessary to consult them even once during the course of the dispute. The postal workers did not themselves determine the objectives and tactics of the struggle. No mass meetings were held to instruct the Executive on the new measures needed as the situation evolved. No votes were taken among the men on the decision to call off the work-to-rule. Throughout, the management were allowed to make an unscrupulous use of compulsory overtime.

Working-to-rule is difficult. It puts a great strain on the individual worker. It implies a very high level of individual conviction and participation. The postal workers showed in struggle that they were capable of precisely this. They should draw the obvious conclusion: that together they are also capable of determining for themselves the ways and means of the future struggles that inevitably confront them.

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SOLIDARITY 1913 (cont'd from p.14)

With that end in view we have not to look to Parliament, but to the building up of an Industrial Organisation that will be capable of securing and controlling industry by the workers and for the workers. Labour must accomplish its own emancipation, and in order to march forward to our final conquest we must perfect our Industrial Solidarity.

Let our battle-cry be 'One Industry! One Union! One Card! An injury to one is the concern of all'. Let us change our demand from 'A fair day's work for a fair day's pay' to the abolition of the wages system.

* * * * *

The objects of the Industrial Democracy League were 'to carry on an educational campaign among Trade Unions, Trades Councils and other working class organisations in favour of Solidarity and Direct Action'.

The League advocated a) 'industrial organisation upon the basis of class, instead of craft; b) the amalgamation of all existing trade unions into industrial unions; c) the formation of a National Federal Council of Industrial Unions.'

The I.D.L. sought 'to stimulate the formation of Amalgamation Committees in every industry and every industrial centre throughout Great Britain; to inspire the existing organisations with a fighting spirit so as to improve the material conditions of the wage workers; to facilitate joint action of the workers in the furtherance of their interests, nationally and internationally; and 'to prepare the workers for their economic emancipation by taking possession of the means of production and distribution through an economic organisation outside the control of any Parliamentary Party'.

Many rank-and-file militants supported these objectives of the 'industrial unionists'. Contributors to our witty and hard-hitting predecessor included Tom Mann, George Hicks, Norman Young (of the NUT), Jack Wills (of the Builders), T.E. Naylor (of the Compositors), W.F. Watson and Jack Tanner (of the Engineers), Fred Bower (of the Stone Masons) and George Barker (of the Miners).

The League lacked however a clear understanding of why the traditional organisations of the working class were becoming both increasingly reformist and increasingly bureaucratic. It sought to get round this process by purely organisational means. Union amalgamations proceeded apace... but so did the growth of giant bureaucracies. We shall return to this whole subject in a future issue.

WHO WILL COMMENT HONESTLY ON THE TRIAL OF THE 6 MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF 100? WHO WILL MAKE THE IMPORTANT POLITICAL POINTS?

PARLIAMENT WILL LET OFF A LITTLE STEAM. THE LIBERAL PRESS WILL DISCUSS THE NICETIES OF THE LAW. THE 'OFFICIAL' REVOLUTIONARIES WILL MAKE THEIR USUAL SAFE AND ABSTRACT COMMENTS.

WE DON'T THINK THIS IS ENOUGH. WE WISH TO PRODUCE A PAMPHLET ON THE TRIAL OURSELVES. WOULD ALL THOSE WHO FEEL THEY HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY ON THE MATTER PLEASE WRITE TO US IMMEDIATELY.

This is a secret article on
'openness' and 'secrecy'.