

—SOLIDARITY

FOR WORKER'S POWER **_____**

Volume 3 Number 8

6_D

CONTENTS

Back to the Fold	Page 3
About Ourselves	Page 5
The Free Speech Movement and Civil Rights	Page 8
Mommy in Toyland	Page 12
Ilya Ehrenburg and Posthumous Rehabilitation . . .	Page 15
News from Abroad	Page 19
The Defeat at Fords: Some Lessons	Page 22
The Mudslinger	Page 27

BACK TO THE FOLD

This year, one theme will dominate both the Easter March of CND and Labour's May Day March, a fortnight later. For all to see these demonstrations will show the full integration, into established society, of movements which started as vehicles of challenge and social protest.

Labour supporters in CND and the 'strategic realists' will be marching from High Wycombe to Trafalgar Square in a state of mild euphoria. Their twin objectives have been achieved: the return of a Labour government and a piece of paper called a Test Ban Treaty. They won't be marching against Mr. Wilson's warfare State or against his massive arms programme, endorsed in Parliament by the whole of his Party. They will turn a blind eye to his Polaris base, still on the Clyde, to his germ-warfare centre at Porton, still busily undertaking research 'against' plague and botulism. They will forget that Government Stores (under entirely new management) continue the profitable sale of nationalized tear-gas of 'improved' design to control unruly crowds in Malaya or 'British' Guiana. They won't be protesting against Mr. Wilson's monstrous double-talk on the war in Vietnam. Or at the indecent haste with which he has already 'forgotten' so many of his electoral promises (Business is business - too bad about those Bucanneers for South Africa.) They won't even be marching for nuclear disarmament, imposed on governments by the people of both East and West. At best they will discreetly express a token opposition to Labour's policies - an opposition of the 'sign-a-petition', 'give-them-critical-support' and 'be-patient-a-little-longer' type. As usual they will describe the march as a 'success'.

The rank and file however should have few illusions. Cynicism and apathy are rampant. A genuine mass movement, independent of political parties, the biggest mass movement of this century, has been destroyed piecemeal by careerist politicians - and those who naively (or less naively) fell in with their methods and objectives. These people have succeeded beyond their wildest expectations. They now 'control' the rump of CND. They can get any resolutions passed, anywhere they like. They can ignore any opposition that may sporadically still show itself. They have 'captured' the movement. But they have captured an empty shell. The inspiration which fired CND was smothered by the movement's own leaders, and died after Easter 1963. As group after group has fallen under the control of Labour or Communist apparatchniks, mass support has withered at the roots. The fiasco is now complete. The 'revolutionaries' support (critically, of course) the Labour 'Left'. The Labour 'Left' (less critically) supports Transport House. Transport House (less critically still) support the concept of a continuity of foreign policy. When all the double talk is over, this means NATO, the war budget, the Bomb. The ideological transmission belt has worked to perfection.

Two weeks later the May Day marchers will wind their way through the streets of London, an obscene amalgam of Party professionals and entrust Trots at their head. Here too the marches will be but rituals, pale reflections of what the movement once stood for: freedom, equality, a radical transformation of the relations between men, the class struggle, internationalism and workers' power. Instead: a tattered and cynical 'victory' parade. Labour at last is in the saddle. The fruits of office at last, are theirs to guzzle.

111

ALL MEN ARE BROTHERS

Brother Brown, having just voted himself a substantial rise, has discovered the virtues of an incomes policy. Old-age pensioners had better shut up. Other brothers - tempted perhaps to increase their incomes too - had better put aside such subversive thoughts. Brother Cunther is now Minister of Labour. He will stand no nonsense from 'unofficial' bodies of tubemen or dockers. Brother Soskice has taken over where Henry Brooke left off. The names of Bensen and Delgado can now be notched up behind those of Enahoro, of Soblen, of Carmen Bryan and of Lenny Bruce. What's a deportee more or a deportee less between neighbours and friends? Baron Brockway still spouts about colonial freedom, while British troops in Malaya train South Vietnamese officers in the techniques of jungle warfare. Brother Cousins at the Atomic Energy Authority, is in charge of both civilian and military nuclear development. What's a principle or two in exchange for a Cabinet post, particularly when you have the 'left' behind you? Donald Soper, in Tribune shows religion at its most versatile and flexible. What's the immorality of the Bomb compared to loyalty to one's leaders? And at No. 10, surveying the whole scene, Big Brother, telling us not to slacken at work, that many jobs are 'over-manned', that time and motion study is progressive, that British capitalism must remain competitive.

Some people refer to this bunch as 'our government'. * They are no more our government than the last lot were. What they remind us of most are certain workmates, who on promotion go over lock, stock and barrel to the other side. When alone, these creatures have been heard to hum (to the tune of the 'Red Flag' of course):

"The working class can kiss my arse,
I've got the foreman's job at last!"

* See The Week February 17th 1965 (front page Editorial).

WHY NOT SUBSCRIBE TO SOLIDARITY?

9 shillings for 12 issues (post free)

from: Bob Potter

197 Kings Cross Road, London W.C.1.

ABOUT OURSELVES

This is our first issue in offset litho. We hope readers will appreciate the change. As we get used to the new medium, we hope to further develop our techniques. We will certainly be making much more use from now on of artwork and photography. We hope the improvement will enable us (and you) to push the circulation of SOLIDARITY above the 1,000 - 1,100 mark, around which it has been oscillating for about 2 years.

LONDON SOLIDARITY GROUP

London Solidarists have just held a series of fortnightly meetings at which we discussed the way forward. Decisions were taken to create a more formal organization. The name of the group has now been 'officially' changed from the 'Socialism Reaffirmed Group' (which was unwieldy) to the London Solidarity Group.

An editorial group of 3 was elected, as well as international and home correspondence secretaries. Different comrades were put in charge of Accounts, Subscriptions, the Treasury and several other 'functional' jobs. Our aim has been to spread the load as widely as possible and to take it off the shoulders of the small group who have done the lion's share of it so far. Please be patient with us if your letters aren't answered immediately. Because our activities are not just resolution-mongering (and because we don't believe in imposing overtime on anyone anyway) we see little point in giving the Special Branch a lot of extra work by publishing full, detailed and up to date lists of names and addresses.

We will continue to have regular SOLIDARITY working meetings at which such things as correspondence, publications, finance and circulation, as well as our industrial work will be discussed. We hope to integrate many more people into our activities.

We have also decided to have monthly public meetings at the 'General Picton' Public House, Caledonian Road, N.1. (near Peace News) The first meeting will be on Friday April 9th at 8 p.m. Tony Cliff of 'International Socialism' will speak on 'Should Revolutionaries Work in the Labour Party?'

There will be another meeting on April 30th when we hope to have a speaker from the Syndicalist Workers' Federation on the 'Way Forward for the Libertarian Movement.'

On May 28th, there will be a further meeting, the subject of which will be announced later.

We have also decided to have a meeting at Easter to discuss liason and joint work between various Solidarity groups. All sympathisers welcome. Please write for details.

SOLIDARITY GROUP FUND

We have also agreed to set up a Solidarity Group fund. This will be used for the political and industrial work of the Solidarity group. So far this money has been raised by collections at our working meetings but we have now taken a decision to encourage regular contributions from supporters, so that we can begin to budget ahead. This money will be used for public meetings, leaflets, sending speakers and generally helping other SOLIDARITY groups, establishing international links and for our industrial work - in fact for all the jobs we need to do more effectively. Would friends wishing to contribute please write to the Treasurer, Solidarity Group, 197 Kings Cross Road, W.C.1.

" MODERN CAPITALISM AND REVOLUTION"

The Cardan book 'Modern Capitalism and Revolution' is now out. It consists of 120 quarto pages and a number of plates, and costs 3s. 6d. (or 4s. 1d. post free.) The response to our appeal for advance orders has been excellent. We even received an order for 200 copies, paid in advance from Chicago (which just shows that we are financed by American capitalism). We hope to sell the first edition of a thousand in a very short time. We await with pleasure the united screams of the paleo-marxists.

INDUSTRIAL WORK

Our first priority now is to develop our industrial work. One of the results of this policy was a leaflet produced for the recent strike of booking clerks on the London Underground. This was over the victimization of Gerry Manzi. We distributed a leaflet within a few hours of the start of the dispute. It was given out at a number of bus garages, and tube stations and was enthusiastically received by the strikers. The strike didn't antagonise the public in the least. In fact, 4d. rides proved extraordinarily popular! To our certain knowledge, many of our work-mates who normally travel by bus, 'hopped on a tube.' London Transport was hit hard where it hurt most, in their pocket. Gerry Manzi was reinstated pretty quickly.

The last part of our leaflet read:-

"TO THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC WE SAY: If you have money to spare, give it to the Strike Committee rather than to London Transport".

"TO THE OTHER TUBEMEN WE SAY: Don't blackleg! Don't do the booking clerks' job. Every penny you collect is a penny towards breaking the strike.

"TO THE BUSMEN WE SAY: Their fight is your fight! The common enemy is London Transport, its worsening conditions and worsening services.

DON'T LET THE BOSS DIVIDE YOU!"

We intend radically to improve our industrial coverage in SOLIDARITY. Where we can, we intend to increase our help to workers in struggle. This is one reason why we need a SOLIDARITY group fund.

THE MT. ISA STRIKE

In the next few weeks we shall be publishing a pamphlet on the 6 months long dispute at the American-owned Copper and Lead Mine at Mount Isa in Australia. This struggle in the Queensland 'out-back' is one of the most bitter Australia has ever known. It has led to unparalleled co-operation against the miners by the Company, the Queensland Government, and the bosses of the Australian Workers Union. It has many lessons for workers outside Australia.

This pamphlet and an increasing number of articles in SOLIDARITY have been made possible by the initiative of overseas readers. It is this help which makes it possible to produce the paper. We would welcome even more. We hope to create an entirely new relationship with our readers, where they will participate with us in producing SOLIDARITY to a much greater extent. We need more articles, more well-documented and well-thought out items. We have found (often to our surprise) that nearly everyone has a first rate article in them. We want YOURS.

STUDENTS IN REVOLT

Readers who have been following the Berkeley struggle in our pamphlet STUDENTS IN REVOLT and recent issues of SOLIDARITY will be interested to know that Mr. Clark Kerr (President of the University of California, chief exponent of the notion that universities should be 'knowledge factories' and the man whose ideas led to the explosion at Berkeley) is coming to Britain. He hopes to receive an Honorary Degree at the new Strathclyde University in Glasgow on April 30th. Anyone who would like to participate in the ceremony should write to SOLIDARITY-GLASGOW c/o P. Tobin, 11 Mingulay Street, Glasgow N.2, Scotland.

RESISTANCE

Unofficial Bulletin of the Committee of 100.

Current Issue Includes :

- 1/ 'Labour Pains' - and other comments on the Labour Party.
- 2/ 'The Battle of North Audley Street'
- 3/ The latest news from Berkeley by Marvin Garson.

Six months subscription 5/- from :-
'Resistance', 13, Goodwin Street, London, N.4.

Two Fronts in the Same War

The Free Speech Movement and Civil Rights

The following article is a preliminary and tentative attempt to place the FSM in its historical and societal context, a necessarily difficult undertaking, since, unlike the topics historians usually write about, the FSM is far from having run its course.

The author, Jack Weinberg, is a former teaching assistant in mathematics at the University of California. He is currently chairman of Campus CORE and a member of the FSM steering committee. It was his arrest that led to the sit down which surrounded the police car for thirty six hours. (See 'Solidarity' pamphlet 'Students in Revolt').

This article is reprinted from 'The Campus Core-Lator', the Berkeley CORE magazine.

Over the past several months, the relationship between the Berkeley Free Speech movement and the civil rights movement has become almost a cliché. Those who view the FSM merely as an extension of the civil rights movement, merely as a battle to enable student civil rights groups to maintain the campus as a base for their operations, have a very incomplete understanding of the FSM, and probably an incomplete understanding of the student civil rights movement. In this article we discuss the student civil rights movement and its relation to the FSM; the FSM as an on-campus protest; and the implications of both the FSM and the student civil rights movement for American society.

1

FSM AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Over the past few years, there has been a change, both quantitative and qualitative in Bay area student political activity. Until 1963, only a relatively small number of students had been actively involved in the civil rights movement. Furthermore, until that time, student political activity of all kinds was quite impotent in terms of any real effect it had on the general community. Organizations such as peace groups, raised demands which were so momentous as to be

totally unattainable. Civil rights groups, on the other hand, often raised demands which were attainable, but quite inconsequential; a job or a house for an individual Negro who had been discriminated against. In no way was student political activity a threat, or even a serious nuisance to large power interests. In early 1963, a new precedent in the Bay Area civil rights movement was established; civil rights organizations began demanding that large employers integrate their work forces on more than a mere token basis. Hundreds of jobs would be at stake in a single employment action. In the fall of 1963, a second important precedent was established. Starting with the demonstrations at Mel's Drive-in, large numbers of students became involved in the civil rights movement. And as they joined, the movement adopted more militant tactics. Thus, with more significant issues at stake, and with more powerful weapons available, the civil rights movement became a threat, or at least a real nuisance to the power interests. Not only was the civil rights movement "a bunch of punk kids", forcing employers to change their policies, but it was also beginning to upset some rather delicate political balances.

Attempts were made by the civil authorities and the power interests to contain the movement: harassing trials, biased news reporting, job intimidations, etc. But the attempts were unsuccessful, the movement grew, became more sophisticated, and began exploring other fronts on which it could attack the power structure. Throughout the summer of 1964, Berkeley Campus CORE maintained a hectic level of continuous and effective activity. The Ad Hoc Committee to End Discrimination planned and began executing a project against the Oakland Tribune. Since those who wished to contain the civil rights movement found no effective vehicles in the community, they began pressuring the university. Because a majority of the participants were students, they maintained that the university was responsible. After initially resisting the pressure, the university finally succumbed, and promulgated restrictive regulations with the intent of undercutting the base of student support for the civil rights movement. The reactions to these regulations should have been predictable: immediate protest and a demand for their repeal. Since the civil rights movement was responsible for the pressures applied to the university which led to the suppression of free speech and free political expression, and since their interests being the ones most seriously threatened, the civil rights activists took the lead in protesting the suppression, many concluded that the FSM is an extension of the civil rights movement.

II

THE FSM AS CAMPUS PROTEST

But if we view the FSM simply as an extension of the civil rights movement, we can not explain the overwhelming support it has received from students who have been indifferent to the civil rights movement and even from some who have been hostile to it. Civil rights activists, those whose interests are really at stake, make up a very small part of the ardent FSM supporters. The vast majority of the FSM supporters have never before had any desire to sit at tables, to hand out leaflets, or to publicly advocate anything. The Free Speech Movement has become an outlet for the feelings of hostility and alienation which so many students have toward the university. Early in the movement, one graduate student who was working all night for the FSM said, "I really don't give a damn about free speech. I'm just tired of being shat upon. If we don't win anything else, at least they'll have to respect us after this." Clearly, his was an overstatement. Free speech has been the issue, and

virtually all the FSM supporters identify with the FSM demands. The roots, however, go much deeper. The free speech issue has been so readily accepted because it has become a vehicle enabling students to express their dissatisfaction with so much of university life, and with so many of the university's institutions.

The phenomenon we describe is not at all unprecedented, even though the FSM may be an extreme example. There have been wildcat strikes which in many ways are quite similar to the Free Speech protest. The following pattern is typical: There is an industry in which the workers are discontent with their situation. The pay may or may not be low. There is hostility between the workers and the management, but it is hostility over a great number of practices and institutions, most of which are well established, and none of which have been adequate to launch a protest over the abstract issue. One of the greatest grievances is likely to be the attitude of the managers toward the workers. The union has proven itself incapable of dealing with the issue. Then one day a work practice is changed or a worker is penalized over a minor infraction. Fellow workers protest and are either ignored or reprimanded. A wildcat strike is called and the protest is on.

The same kind of forces which create a wildcat strike have created the FSM. Alienation and hostility exist, but are neither focused at specific grievances nor well articulated. There is a general feeling that the situation is hopeless, and probably inevitable. There is no obvious handle. No one knows where to begin organizing, what to attack first, how to attack. No one feels confident that an attack is justified, or even relevant. Suddenly there is an issue; everyone recognizes it; everyone grabs at it. A feeling of solidarity develops among the students, as among the workers.

The students at Cal have united. To discover the basic issues underlying their protest one must first listen to the speeches made by their leaders. Two of the most basic themes that began to emerge in the very first speeches of the protest and which have remained central throughout have been a condemnation of the University in its role as a knowledge factory and a demand that the voices of the students must be heard. These themes have been so well received because of the general feeling among the students that the University has made them anonymous; that they have very little control over their environment, over their future; that the University society is almost completely unresponsive to their individual needs. The students decry the lack of human contact, the lack of communication, the lack of dialogue that exists at the University. Many believe that much of their course work is irrelevant, that many of their most difficult assignments are merely tedious busy work with little or no educational value. All too often in his educational career, the student, in a pique of frustration, asks himself, "what's it all about?" In a flash of insight he sees the educational process as a gauntlet: undergraduate education appears to be a rite of endurance, a series of trials, which if successfully completed allows one to enter graduate school; and upon those who succeed in completing the entire rite of passage is bestowed the ceremonious title Ph.D. For those who cop out along the way, the further one gets the better the job one can obtain, with preference given according to the major one has selected. All too often, the educational process appears to be a weeding-out process, regulated by the laws of supply and demand. The better one plays the game, the more one is rewarded.

To be sure, there are some excellent courses at Cal; some departments are better than others. Although a general education is difficult if not impossible to obtain, in many fields the student is able to obtain an adequate though specialized preparation for an academic career. Furthermore, successful completion of a Cal education is quite a good indication that the student will be agile and adaptable enough to adjust to a position in industry and to acquire rapidly the skills and traits that industry will demand of him.

When viewed from the campus, the Free Speech Movement is a revolution, or at least an open revolt. The students' basic demand is a demand to be heard, to be considered, to be taken into account when decisions concerning their education and their life in the university community are being made. When one reviews the history of the Free Speech Movement, one discovers that each new wave of student response to the movement followed directly on some action by the administration which neglected to take the students, as human beings, into account, and which openly reflected an attitude that the student body was a thing to be dealt with, to be manipulated. Unfortunately, it seems that at those rare times when the students are not treated as things, they are treated as children.

III

THE IMPLICATIONS FOR AMERICAN SOCIETY

It is inadequate, as we have shown, to characterize the FSM as a purely on-campus phenomenon, as a protest stemming from a long overdue need for university reform, or as a response to a corrupt or insensitive administration. Invariably, when students become politically and socially active, one can find at the root that they are responding to their society's most basic problems.

Let us first consider why students have become so active in the northern civil rights movement. The problem of the effect of our society on the Negro Community, is exactly the problem of our entire society, magnified and distorted. Unemployment, underemployment, poor education, poor housing, intense social alienation: these and many more are the effects of our way of life on the Negro Community, and these to one degree or another are the effects of our way of life on all of its members. When taking a moral stand, when doing what they can in the struggle for equality for all Americans, students invariably find that as they become more and more successful they come into conflict with almost all the established interest groups in the community. Students have turned to the civil rights movement because they have found it to be a front on which they can attack basic social problems, a front on which they can have some real impact. In the final analysis the FSM must be viewed in this same light.

The University of California is a microcosm in which all of the problems of our society are reflected. Not only did the pressure to crack down on free speech at Cal come from the outside power structure, but most of the failings of the University are either on-campus manifestations of broader American social problems, or are imposed upon the University by outside pressures. Departments at the University are appropriated funds roughly in proportion to the degree that the state's industry feels these departments are important. Research and study grants to both students and faculty are given on the same preferential basis. One of the greatest social ills of this nation is the absolute refusal by almost all of its members to examine seriously the presuppositions of the establishment.

As the main energies of our society are channeled into an effort to win the cold war, as all of our institutions become adjuncts of the military-industrial complex, as the managers of industry and the possessors of corporate wealth gain a greater and greater stranglehold on the lives of all Americans, one cannot expect the University to stay pure.

In our society, students are neither children nor adults. Clearly, they are not merely children; This illness becomes a crisis when the University, supposedly a center for analysis and criticism, refuses to examine these presuppositions. Throughout the society, the individual has lost more and more control over his environment. When he votes, he must choose between two candidates who agree on almost all basic questions. On his job, he has become more and more a cog in a machine, a part of a master plan in whose formulation he is not consulted, and over which he can exert no influence for change. He finds it increasingly more difficult to find meaning in his job or in his life. He grows more cynical. The bureaucratization of the campus is just a reflection of the bureaucratization of American life.

but to be an adult in our society one must both be out of school and self-supporting (for some reason, living on a grant or fellowship is not considered self-supporting.) As a result, students are more or less outside of society, and in increasing numbers they do not desire to become a part of the society. From their peripheral social position they are able to maintain human values, values they know will be distorted or destroyed when they enter the compromising, practical, "adult" world.

It is their marginal social status which has allowed students to become active in the civil rights movement and which has allowed them to create the Free Speech Movement. The students, in their idealism, are confronted with a world which is a complete mess, a world which in their eyes preceding generations have botched up. They start as liberals, talking about society, criticizing it, going to lectures, donating money. But every year more and more students find they cannot stop there. They affirm themselves; they decide that even if they do not know how to save the world, even if they have no magic formula, they must let their voice be heard. They become activists, and a new generation, a generation of radicals, emerges.

JACK WEINBERG

MOMMY IN TOYLAND

Sears, Roebuck and Co. sent me their Christmas catalogue this year. I spent a lot of time looking at it, particularly the toy section, and when I was finished I was thankful that this year at least, my two children are too young to be interested in the catalogue except as another item in their all-encompassing diets. Next year I won't be so lucky.

Ten years ago I breathlessly scanned the pages of toys, admiring everything and wondering what I realistically could expect to get. The toy manufacturers have come a long way in ten years. The big thing then for little girls was dolls with "rooted Saran hair" instead of old-fashioned glued wigs which were liable to come all and leave one with a pathetically bald dolly; a few dolls walked or said "Hello, mommy." Now they have diverse accomplishments such as burping (but not spitting up), kissing, wriggling, growing hair and saying, among other things, "Play it cool ... don't be a square."

Most overwhelming of all is the Barbie doll. A long-legged 11½" sophisticate (what happened to the cuddly baby doll, anyway?) Barbie is a manufacturer's dream, for no child can ever hope to be able to buy all the equipment Barbie requires. I say equipment advisedly, because not only does Barbie have a wardrobe beyond the wildest dreams of any woman save the Ten Best Dressed, but she also comes with wigs, a lawn swing, a chipboard dorm room and sweet shop, cars, a boat, a plane, a dog, a house, and scads of furniture. Lest the child somehow acquire all this stuff for Barbie, the manufacturer's goose has laid several more golden eggs: a boy friend for Barbie, a roommate, a boy friend for the roommate, and a little sister, all of whom must be clothed, housed and amused. As you can see, the thing has infinite possibilities.

As a money-maker, Barbie is a screaming success, and for parents who can afford to dish out ten dollars for a mink stole for a rather unpleasant-looking doll, I suppose it makes no difference. But as a toy, Barbie is a complete flop. There is no room for creativity and imagination - the advertising men have built a complete fantasy around the doll, into which they conveniently fit all the expensive little doodads the manufacturer wants to sell. One gets, for example:

"Barbie gets all A's in college. She works hard in class but has lots of fun on weekends.

Barbie likes to visit the Sweet Shop for delicious sodas after leading cheers (buy "Pep Rally" outfits for dolls costing \$5.87) in the College Stadium.

Some evenings Barbie studies in her Dorm room with Midge or enjoys a movie at the campus Drive-in theatre (buy car for \$3.88) with Ken. College life is wonderful (buy chipboard Campus for \$4.99) and Barbie and Midge (Barbie's roommate: initial investment \$1.92) love every minute of it."

The child can hardly pretend to be a mother to this elegant creature, and who wants a hunk of plastic for a playmate? The sad truth is that Barbie was never meant to be played with - she was meant to be bought, and that is all.

Sears also features kitchen equipment for very young cooks that makes me blush for my miserable old appliances: a refrigerator, sink, range and cabinet for just \$37.99! Then there is all the stuff to go in it: pots, pans, molds, cooky cutters, food, an electric mixer that runs on batteries, etc., etc., etc. One could go on forever.

I was beginning to be glad that I have boys ... until I came to the war toys. I was happy to learn that my little cherubs can have their own M14 recoil rifles, for instance, or their own Panzer tank. In fact there is a character named G.I. Joe for little boys who corresponds to the Barbie. The advertisement for G.I. Joe is not without humour:

America's Movable Fighting Man in action

He's over 11 inches tall ... has 21 movable parts.
Stands ... sits ... kneels! etc. etc.

For G.I. Joe one may buy, among other items, a field pack set, a military police set, a machine gun and a frogman outfit.

We parents think of toys as things which bring pleasure to children and which help them to exercise their creativity. Unfortunately, manufacturers generally don't see things that way. Like everything else in our economy, toys are a source of profit, and parents and children are the consumers who must be cajoled and intimidated into buying. Thus, for example, Hassenfeld Brothers, the manufacturers of G.I. Joe, have spent \$2 million advertising their highly successful product on television (National Guardian, December 12, 1964).

Advertising designed to pressure me into buying something I don't need and can't use irritates me, but it ends there. What I don't want I don't buy. It's different with children. They cannot understand the motives behind advertising - all they know is the desire it creates. And it is not right to use children as objects of exploitation - to make them want things that they cannot or should not have.

Much has been said about the role of war toys in conditioning children to accept violence and inhumanity. Toys, I think, are also teaching the kids of today to become the consumers of tomorrow. Advertising and the resultant urge to buy, buy, buy, whether one really needs or wants a product, is a familiar part of the lives of parents and children alike.

Finally, the toys advertised popularly appear to me to contribute further to the emphasis on conformity in our society. Toys like paints and blocks, which encourage individual creativity and thought are played down, perhaps because they are simple and unprofitable; elaborate toys like the Barbie doll are emphasized.

Today it is up to the individual parent to search out the toys best for his children; to avoid exposing them to advertising; to try, in short, to withstand the pressures of an entire society. Let us hope that some day the whole of society will care for the real needs of its members, young and old instead of fabricating false desires for the profit of a few.

Sharon Freedman

Reprinted from "Strike".

"I believe in the Party Almighty ...
... and in rehabilitation after death."

Russian Orthodox Credo

Ehrenburg & Posthumous Rehabilitation (1)

Alasdair MacIntyre once mentioned Ilya Ehrenburg in the same breath as the Vicar of Bray.⁽²⁾ In the early heroic days of the Revolution, when support for Bolshevism was costly, Ehrenburg was sceptical. As Stalinism closed in, when scepticism became justified, Ehrenburg made his peace with the state. While Pilnyak, Babel and a host of lesser figures were obliterated in the purges, Ehrenburg flourished. When Zhdanovism reigned after the war, Ehrenburg still flourished. Then, Stalin died. Ehrenburg wrote 'The Thaw.'

THE EARLY YEARS

Ehrenburg's memoirs are now coming thick and fast. The second volume records the early years of the Revolution. In Kiev the Whites under Denikin had succeeded the Reds, who'd kicked out Petlyura, who'd succeeded the Germans. In Moscow, Symbolists, Futurists and Intellectuals hadn't a clue what was going on but argued night and day all the same. Ehrenburg was a young poet just back from Paris. "In 1917," he writes, "I found myself an observer, and it took me two years to realize the significance of the October Revolution." But he was not alone. "At that time, everyone accepted and rejected, agreed and protested."

Ehrenburg's evocation leads him straight to the memory of his friends of those years, fellow writers, fellow Jews. Where are they now? They're rehabilitated, chapter by chapter.

Mayakovsky, of course, had always been a great poet. And Pasternak is a great poet, as well, for Ehrenburg is "convinced that it was not part of Pasternak's intention to harm our country." Yesenin, once a decadent hooligan whose works were not reprinted for twenty years, is also, we are told, a great poet.

The Futurists, Suprematists, Cubists and abstract painters are worth looking at too. "New art forms have always entered the consciousness of people slowly and by devious ways; at the beginning only a few understand and accept them. Anyway it is impossible to lay down, propagate or enforce tastes... Our museums have splendid collections of the 'Left Art' of early post-Revolutionary years. It is a pity that these collections are not on view. You cannot abolish a link in a chain." Indeed, "in the early paintings of Lentulov, Mashkov, Konchalovsky, Larionov, Chagall and even Malevich .. there is something of the barber's, greengrocer's and tobacconists shop-signs which were the real folk art in provincial Russian towns before the Revolution."

(1) Some notes on "First Years of Revolution 1918-21" (Vol. II of "Men, Years, Life" by Ilya Ehrenburg. Macgibbon and Kee, 1962.

(2) New Statesman, Sept. 15, 1961

Tairov, the Kamerny Theatre's progressive and experimental director, is acknowledged as a friend and given high praise. He is given a brief obituary as well. "In 1949 the enemies won: the Kamerny disappeared. Tairov was sixty-four. A year later he died."

Nothing but praise all round: an ubiquitous paean. Is Ehrenburg excoriating the present Soviet literary orthodox? Is he making personal amends? Neither, I suggest. Tairov gets short shrift even though Ehrenburg "knew the back way into the Kamerny, into the flat where they (Tairov and his wife) lived," even though he can claim "their friendship helped me."

MARINA TSVETAYEVA

Consider now, the disparity between Ehrenburg's account of Marina Tsvetayeva, a poet whose works are much admired in Russia today, and an account by George Reavey.⁽³⁾ Ehrenburg's generalities are as good as his epigrams. He calls Tsvetayeva a 'tragic figure' and speaks of her "crippled, impossibly hard life." "In 1939, Tsvetayeva returned home (she had been living as an emigree in Europe) with her fourteen-year-old son. One of her last poems I believe, was written after the fascists had finished off Spain and invaded Czechoslovakia: 'I refuse to live. I refuse to howl with the wolves of the public squares.' Efron (her husband) lost his life. Alya (her daughter) was far away. In Moscow, too, Marina found herself alone... We never met again. Tsvetayeva committed suicide in Yelabuga, where the hazards of evacuation had taken her. Her son was killed at the front. I sometimes see Alya; she has collected Marina's unpublished poems."

Reavey's account is more explicit. "In his autobiographical essay Pasternak wrote of his sense of kinship with Marina Tsvetayeva: 'a similarity of points of departure, tastes and aspirations.' When he met her at an anti-fascist congress in Paris in 1935, she asked him whether he thought she and her husband and children should return to Russia; her pro-Communist family was pressing her to flee the loneliness and isolation of emigre life. Pasternak did not know what to reply. 'I was afraid that these remarkable people would have a difficult and troubled time at home,' he wrote, 'but the tragedy which was to strike the whole family surpassed my fears beyond all measure.' The family returned to Russia in 1939. Her husband was arrested and perished in prison; her daughter was also arrested, her son died at the front. Tsvetayeva herself was exiled to a small town where she could not find work, even as a charwoman. There, she hanged herself in 1941."

MEYERHOLD

Ehrenburg had a friend, the producer Vsevolod Meyerhold, a fanatic and iconoclast. Nevertheless, says Ehrenburg, "we met in Paris or in Moscow and had long talks, and sometimes enjoyed long silences as only the closest friends can do." He praises Meyerhold's work and its permanent value to the theatre. But those were hard times for close friends. "We parted in the spring of 1938: I was going back to Spain. We embraced. It was a grim parting. I never saw him again."

(3) Partisan Review, No. 3-4, 1961

Meyerhold could not do with the cant and missionary zeal of the authorities; he wanted (like Miss Littlewood) theatre which was living and renewing itself by its own laws; he wanted to bring beauty back into the lives of the people (and not put on mission school drama about people being loyal to their collectives); he wanted, in short, actors not tractors; he was downgraded, and went off to heaven knows what end in an Arctic concentration camp. His wife, Zinaida Raikh, soon after his arrest, was found with her throat slit and knife wounds all over her body (attributed to an unknown tramp).

For Meyerhold's subsequent fate we have to go elsewhere. Patricia Blake tells us ⁽⁴⁾: "In 1937 Meyerhold was accused in 'Pravda' of consistently producing anti-Soviet plays. He was arrested in 1939 and perished in a concentration camp during the war." As early as 1953 Marc Slonim suggested in his 'Modern Russian Literature': "The condemnation of Tairov was less violent than that of Meyerhold, because the latter, as a Communist, fought for his rights and provoked additional strife and hatred in influential party circles." In his recent book ⁽⁵⁾, Slonim does not jib at recounting the terrible story of the downfall and destruction of the once inspiring innovator, Meyerhold.

Why, then, should Ehrenburg jib? Or perhaps he assumes we know all this. Certainly communications were bad. For it was not until '1955' that he himself was told - and then by the 'State Prosecutor' - how Meyerhold had been falsely denounced. He (the State Prosecutor) read to me a statement Meyerhold had written: "I am sixty-six. I want my daughter and my friends to know one day that I remained an honest Communist to the end." As he read these words, the prosecutor rose to his feet. I rose too." It must have been a poignant moment.

MANDELSTAM

Ehrenburg had another friend, the poet Osip Mandelstam. "I met Mandelstam in Moscow; later we often met in Kiev ... Together we lived through the night of the pogrom. Together we suffered the wretchedness of Koktebel. Together we made our way from Tbilisi to Moscow." Ehrenburg waxes sentimental: "We were born in the same year, 1891; he was two weeks older than I. Often, listening to his poems, I felt that he was many years the older and the wiser." He gives unstinted praise to Mandelstam's work, avers that "Mandelstam deserves no reproach" and tells us "In the summer of 1934, I searched for him in Voronezh... I saw him for the last time in Moscow in the spring of 1938."

But it wasn't until 'the beginning of 1952' that Ehrenburg knew the fate of his friend. And presumably he didn't know because he wasn't told, for in 1952 he had a visitor, not the State Prosecutor this time, but 'an agronomist from Bryansk' (Ehrenburg gives us his name, V. Merkulov, so it must be true.). "He told me how, in 1940, Osip Mandelstam died ten thousand kilometres from his native city; already ill, he would read the sonnets of Petrarch by the camp-fire. Yes, he was afraid to drink a glass of water that had not been boiled, but there was within him a true fortitude which stayed with him all his life, all the way to the sonnets by the camp-fire."

(4) In her introduction to "The Bedbug and Selected Poetry (1961)".

(5) "Russian Theatre from the Empire to the Soviets" (See Philip Hope-Wallace in 'The Guardian' Sept. 26, 1963).

And Ehrenburg appends his elegy: "But in my memory there is the living Osip Mandelstam, the dear restless fidget. We embraced thrice when he came to say goodbye: he was leaving Koktebel at last. I quoted to myself: 'who can tell, when the word 'parting' is spoken, what kind of separation is before us?'" Who indeed? And who, moreover, can shed a brighter light on this idyll of a sick poet bravely reading Petrarch's sonnets by the camp-fire?

As so little is known about the fates of any of those writers who disappeared under Stalin. I'd like to refer in some detail to an article by George Stuckow on Mandelstam (6). Stuckow writes: "From the poems of Mandelstam that have been circulating in typescript of late, one can glean certain facts of his life. Thus, it has become known that by the end of 1934 or beginning of 1935, Mandelstam was exiled to Voronezh." There is evidence that Mandelstam remained in Voronezh at least until May 1937. Stuckow gives it but adds: "The poems that have so far reached the West do not throw any light on Mandelstam's fate after May 1937."

This fate Stuckow reveals: "If not the exact date (of his death), at least the year and the place are now confirmed by the story reaching the present writer from a well-informed source.. According to the information coming from those who saw Mandelstam at the beginning of 1938 at the transit camp in Vladivostok, he had been arrested in Voronezh, along with other deportees, sentenced to five years, and deported to Vladivostok where he was to await the opening of the navigation before he could be transferred to one of the permanent camps. During the long deportation to the Far East, he had already begun to show signs of insanity. Suspecting that his guards had received orders from Moscow to poison him, he refused to eat any meals (they consisted of bread, herring, dehydrated cabbage soup, and sometimes a little millet). His fellow deportees caught him stealing their bread rations. He was subjected to cruel beating-up until it was realized that he was really insane. In the Vladivostok transit camp his insanity assumed a still more acute form. He still feared being poisoned and began again to steal food from his fellow inmates in the barracks, believing that their rations, unlike his, were not poisoned. Once again he was brutally beaten up. In the end he was thrown out of the barracks; he went to live near the refuse heap, feeding on garbage. Filthy, with long grey hair and a long beard, dressed in tatters with a mad look in his eyes, he became a veritable scarecrow of the camp. Occasionally, he was fed by the camp doctors among whom there was one who had known him in Voronezh and admired his poetry. According to the same source Mandelstam must have died in the Vladivostok transit camp in the spring of 1938."

Ehrenburg knows that Mandelstam was in Voronezh: "I searched for him in Voronezh." He knows something about Mandelstam's fear of food: "he was afraid to drink a glass of water that had not been boiled." Is this really all he knows?

(6) See 'Survey', No. 46, Jan. 1963

Throughout the second volume of his memoirs Ehrenburg is so loud in praise that we hardly notice the silence. But there are silences. After all, he's telling us about his friends, the men and women he knew well. "When, nowadays," observes Stuckow, "the physical victims of Stalin's reign of terror are restored to literary life, the details of their last years and the circumstances of their death are discreetly withheld; for them is substituted the euphemistic formula: 'Illegally repressed during the period of the cult of the individual. Rehabilitated posthumously.'" Ehrenburg sits full square among the euphemisers. His marriage to the ruling class is for life; he has thrown the young Russian literary rebels a bag of sops.

norma meacock

NEWS FROM ABROAD

WORKERS' STRUGGLE IN JAPAN

The Shinbashi Railway Workshops where I work is one of the most militant workshops in the Tokyo District of the National Railway Trade Union.

In spring 1963, we resisted the attempt by the management to tighten discipline in the Workshop and introduce a new wages system which graded the workers into two categories. During this struggle, which was opposed by the union officials, we realized that we could not rely on the Trade Union leaders and that the only way to protect our interests was to fight for ourselves.

On June 24th 1963, the management announced suddenly and unilaterally that we could not go for our baths earlier than 4.30 pm or leave the works earlier than 5.0. The new scheme was to start on June 28th. It had always been the rule in our shop to take our bath at 4.0 and leave for home directly afterwards.

The same announcement was made at the Shinagawa and Tokyo railway workshops which were both noted for their militancy.

Immediately shop meetings were held and we prepared to resist. On 28th, the management tried to put the new schedules into practice.

We ignored this order, stopping work as usual at 4.0, and marched as a body to have our showers, which we continued to do despite a picket of Foremen and officials of the Tokyo Railway Bureau in front of the shower-bath room.

On July 2nd, the foremen and officials were joined by more than 30 railway police, and detectives began taking photographs of the men at the head of the march. When we protested, the police attacked and arrested four young workers and charged them with 'committing violence to the authorities' and were publicly dragged without clothes to the police station.

At this there was great indignation in the other workshops, and at a shop meeting we decided to stay in the shop in protest against the arrests. We then marched into the managers' offices and surrounded them and demanded that they set the men free. The Union officials when they arrived were astounded and they tried to break the demonstration up, but in spite of this we stayed in the offices until past 11.0 at night.

On the following days, we worked to rule and many other railway workers in the Tokyo district wanted to support the workers at the Tamachi, Tokyo and Shinbashi Workshops, but the union officials headed off this struggle by simply calling for a demonstration in front of the National Railway Office, even after the management had stated that they intended to sack the four arrested men.

After 20 days struggle, we were forced to accept the new schedule by the joint pressure of the management and the Trade Union Bosses, even though many of us wished to fight on. The leaders of the Trade Union were so frightened of a strike in the Tokyo District, where the most important lines of the national railway converge that all their efforts were directed towards limiting the struggle within such forms as collecting signatures, distributing leaflets, and lobbying parliament.

Though we were defeated this time, we are preparing for the next struggle. We know that the management's aim is to destroy militancy at the three depots. Our task is to retain and strengthen our shop floor organisation.

The management of the National Railway intends further rationalization and speed-up has again recently increased shop discipline; they refuse even to negotiate with the trade union on working conditions. The Union in its turn places its main emphasis on convincing the management of the need to 'establish proper relations between workers and management', and they totally ignore the need for actual struggle.

As a worker said to me during the struggle, "We now face not only the capitalists but also the labour bureaucrats. Only when we have broken down the wall of the bureaucrats can we destroy capitalism."

N.M.

(Translated from Saizensen No. 7, Paper of the Marxist Young Workers' League.)

A Correspondent in Holland writes:-

During the last few years, thousands of foreign workers (mainly Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese and Turkish) have come to work in Holland, at first in the coal mines, but lately in more and more industries - in shipping especially.

When these workers are hired, they get a contract in Dutch to sign (which as might be expected is all Dutch to them). Sometimes they have the help of an interpreter, usually an employee of the firm, who 'explains' the meaning of the contract to them. More often they have no interpreter and are told nothing at all!

At a recent meeting of the Union of Seamen, the President stated that in the last six months of 1964 the Union had successfully claimed more than a hundred thousand Guilders* for underpaid workers. Most of this was due to foreigners recently organised by the union.

Late in 1964, fifty Turks, employed in Zaandam by Indeco-Coignet, a firm which prefabricates wooden houses, went on strike and stayed in their lodgings in Zandvoort when they found they were being paid between seventeen and twenty-five Guilders a week less than they had been promised in Turkey.

* A Guilder is worth two shillings.

Even the officials of the Turkish Embassy failed to bring them to "reason". They were then sacked by the firm and the Dutch Government sent them to the airport with a police escort for deportation as 'unwanted foreigners.'

There was a twenty-four hour hold-up when the Turkish Government refused the plane landing permission - so the Turks had to spend the night in a police-barracks. When this was finally straightened out and they could be transported, several of them refused to walk to the plane and had to be carried aboard with "official courtesy" by the police ...

Arthur Mendes- Georges

"Workers Don't Steal, They Organize."

This was the title of a feature article in the "Frankfurter Rundschau" on January 22nd 1965. It said that amateur thieves in 1962 alone stole from the West German factories where they worked a total of £500,000,000.* This equals the total annual output of the Volkswagen works which employs 80,000 workers, and which represents about one and a half percent of the gross national product.

The article comments:-

"Morally, too, the economy allows for the fact that thievery within the factory is constantly rising, although employees can buy all the products of their plant at a price far lower than the retail price" ... the situation was explained by referring to wartime experience in the army: "The workers don't steal, they organize. In law it's the same thing of course, but it doesn't weigh on the conscience."

*This is not a misprint, there are not too many noughts!

After stating that the figure of £500 million pounds is a conservative estimate, the article concluded: "How high the moral damage is, however, cannot be subjected even to a 'conservative estimate.'"

The individual conscious motives of the workers involved in these thefts need not concern us here. The acts have an objective meaning, taken together because of the proportions they have reached, and they have social implications that go far beyond the individual thefts. The workers were really not stealing, except according to established law, but only getting back some of the surplus labour they give to their employers. If your enemy is stronger than you are, you're crazy to meet him in an open fight: these German workers might not have thought this way, but they acted this way.

It is in situations like this that terms like "exploitation" and "class struggle" take on a concrete meaning.

These West German workers got back a small slice of the pie which they created. What say we try for the jackpot? JIM EVRARD

THE DEFEAT AT FORDS: SOME LESSONS

I. INTRODUCTION

For the moment, Dagenham is quiet. The wild-cats have been tamed, Patrick Hennessy and his American executives rule the roost, Ford is king. This article attempts to describe what happened there.

Between October 1962 and April 1963, a struggle took place which ended in 17 leading militants being left on the cobbles. Several of these men have been unable to find work in their own trade because they were blacklisted and were out of work for well over a year.

The struggle showed in a very clear way the absolute conflict of interest between workers and 'their' trade union leaders, and the similarity of interests between these leaders and management.

What happened at Fords closely followed a pattern well established in recent years. From Handley Page to Shell Mex House, from B.L.S.P. to Fords, the charade has been played again and again, with exactly the same end result: destruction of job organization.

Yet every time the situation arises again, the entire left repeats its old well-worn slogans "Make the strike official," "Press Your Union Executive for Action Now," "BLANK is better than BLANK (1), he won't let us down." (They always do.) If half the energy had been put into helping the men carry out the struggle themselves a few more disputes would be won.

Although most of the events at Fords took place two years ago, we offer no apology for discussing them now. No full analysis has yet been written, and many of the facts are only just beginning to emerge. The lessons are timeless.

2. THE BACKGROUND

Everyone knows that Ford has had a long and troubled labour relations history. The management of Fords claim that 100,000 man-hours were lost in disputes in 1960; 184,000 in 1961; 415,000 in 1962. Following the defeat of the men, the figures dropped to 3,400 man-hours lost in 1963 and 60,000 in 1964. (2).

The Management calculated that in 1962 each worker at Dagenham, excluding the Paint Trim and Assembly Division, lost 15 man-hours due to disputes, compared with 30 minutes per man per year at the 14 other Ford plants in Britain. In the Paint Trim and Assembly Division the figure was 78 hours per man per year. The overwhelming majority of time lost in disputes was due to overtime bans rather than to walkouts or strikes.

A detailed breakdown of the 32 disputes which took place between May 28 and July 19 1962 was made in the September 1962 issue of "Ford Worker" the paper of the Shop Stewards Committee. Of the 32 disputes, 28 were overtime bans and none of the remaining 4 exceeded an hour in length. (3)

Not a single dispute at Fords since the war has been 'official.' The trade union officials have even signed a long series of agreements which have had the effect of undermining shop-floor struggles. For example on August 14, 1958, they signed an agreement which read:-

"The Achievement of Efficiency of Operations"

The Trade Unions and the Company agree on the need:

1. to achieve efficient production by all reasonable means;
2. for the introduction of labour-saving machines and methods;
3. for the Company to transfer employees from one job or department to another, as may be desirable having in mind continuity of employment and flow of production.

It is not part of the duty of any Shop Steward whose constitution and duties are defined in the Procedure Agreement to deal with such matters in the Shop, but he may refer them for consideration by the Works Committee." (4)

This agreement signed away the right to shop floor negotiation on nearly all the vital questions of 'managerial rights.' It is therefore no coincidence that over half the 'incidents' at Fords were on just these questions.

Another agreement which was actually signed on the same day as the above was the "Briggs Standardization Agreement." This gave away many advantages which had been achieved by shop floor negotiation at the better organized and more militant factory of Briggs Motor Bodies, originally a separate company but amalgamated with Fords in 1953 (it is now called the Metal Stamping and Body Division).

(1) For BLANK read Cousins, Roberts, Hill, Berridge, Paynter, Lowthian, etc. - according to your particular political affiliations.

(2) Information from evidence given to 'Jack' Court of Inquiry by L.T. Blakeman, their Labour Relations Manager at Fords. (See 'Report' - Cmd 1999, p.11) Figures for 1963 and 1964 were given to us directly, if unwittingly, by the Labour Relations Department at Dagenham.

(3) Incidentally, of the 32 disputes, only 9 were on wages questions. The remainder were about 'speed-up', supervisors and chargehands 'working with the tools', allocation of overtime, transfers of labour, reduction in the supply of protective clothing. Bescoy and Turner (in the May 1961 issue of the journal 'Manchester School') estimate that 40% of disputes at Fords were over what they called 'management questions', such as individual dismissals and arrangements of working hours. In fact the real proportion is much higher - well over half by my estimate.

(4) From 'Agreements and Conditions of Employment - Hourly Paid Workers' (commonly known as the 'Blue Book'), published by the Ford Motor Company, July 1964, p.32.

The proposal to standardize conditions had been bitterly opposed by the Briggs Shop Stewards, right from the start. For example between February 1954 and May 1955 there had been 288 'incidents' at Briggs. Between August 1955 and March 1957 there were 234 more. Many of these were caused by attempts of the Ford management to introduce 'back-stairs standardization.' This prolonged struggle culminated in the sacking of Johnnie McLoughlin, the bell-ringing shop steward. (5)

It is interesting to note that all the agreements referred to in this article were signed by officials of all the 22 negotiating unions at Fords, without regard to whether they were 'left' or 'right'. They were signed by 'Bill' Carron of the AEU, Douglass of BISATKA and Jim Matthews of the NUGMW representing the 'right' and by Ted Hill of the Boilermakers, and Frank Haxell, late of the ETU (and the CP) representing the 'left'.

Two other incidents further illustrate the activities of the Trade Union leaders.

The first was the October 1961 40-hour week agreement, which had the effect of reducing the tea-break. The men refused to accept this and unofficially continued to take the old tea-break. After a dispute lasting until March 1962, during which the Management vainly tried to implement the agreement, they eventually conceded defeat(6).

The second example was the 'secret' Halewood agreement signed early in 1960 between the Management, the NUGMW and the AEU. In this agreement, the two unions agreed to lower substantially wage rates for workers at Halewood, in return for preferential facilities provided to the unions by the Management, in relation to recruiting members. This, incidentally, was a clear violation of previous agreements, signed by the same union leaders, for a single national wage scale for Ford workers. When news of the agreement leaked out, the other union leaders were up in arms. Their livelihoods were threatened! The plan nevertheless went ahead, but the TGWU was included in the carve-up. The scheme was actually introduced, but its operation defeated by the massive unofficial overtime bans at Halewood in March 1962. (7)

3. CARRON AND THE MILITANTS

Another aspect of the attitude of certain officials has been the campaign of vilification, both within and outside the union structure, against the Shop Stewards Committees. For example, William Carron (now 'Sir'), President of the AEU made a statement to the 'Sunday Dispatch' (now defunct) on February 24 1957, at the height of the McLoughlin crisis. He said:

(5) This struggle was in many ways a blueprint of the big dispute later. Here too, the union officials stepped in to stop immediate action by the men, by promises of 'official action' - later. In this case also the militant was suspended while negotiations continued .. and continued .. and continued, with the end result that all initiative was lost and the issue was dead. In this case also there was a 'Court of Inquiry', which also came to the conclusion that the sacking should stand. In this case also the unions 'reluctantly' decided that no action should be taken. (In spite of the fact that the AEU had held a strike ballot which voted 1,118 to 429 for such action.)

(6) See Solidarity vol II, No. 3.

(7) See Solidarity vol. II, No. 9.

"For a long time now, subversive elements have been at work at Briggs. Last year alone, there were two hundred stoppages at the plant. In my view these subversive types were responsible for most, if not all of them."

We find the same man writing in the 'Ford Bulletin' (the paper of the Ford Motor Company) on August 3, 1962, right in the middle of negotiations which led to the later 'trouble', an article entitled "Where is the Enemy?" He wrote:

"The old need for unbridled militancy rapidly diminished with the reduction of our immediate major social and industrial problems.

"One still finds pockets of militancy which are inspired by motives that cannot be accepted as being based purely on trade union principles.

"These motives spring from attempts to change the system of government we have in the United Kingdom and would attempt to replace this system with one that has been rejected in Parliamentary and Local Government elections by an overwhelming majority of opinion.

"Disruptive tactics with political ambition as a source of inspiration, will not contribute to the further well-being of our citizenship or, for that matter, our membership, which depend entirely in these modern years on the produce of our factories and workplaces."

Carron made it quite clear that he regarded his enemy as the 'militants' not the bosses. We agree with his diagnosis.

What lessons emerge from this record? Quite simply, that any appeal to, or reliance on, the union executives for 'support' against agreements which they themselves have signed is rather misplaced. So are appeals for 'help' in protecting militants against attacks in which the union leaders actively participate.

4. THE STORY OF THE STRUGGLE

The first act in the drama came early in 1962, when the trade unions put in for a wage increase. Let us tell the story in the words of W.B. Beard, OBE, Chairman of the Ford National Negotiating Committee. (8)

"..They (the Ford management) were not prepared to consider any wage improvement until they had a firm assurance that these unofficial walk-outs were discontinued and the procedure observed. They argued that if there was difficulty with the procedure, then the proper method was to amend it, but there had been no attempt on the part of a relatively small number of individuals to operate the agreement at all. Indeed, they just walked out on the job and as a result not only was production stopped, but many who were entitled to consideration of a wage increase were played off, because production had been halted. Side by side with this there was the general slackening in the demand for cars, and orders which they were unable to complete for they had missed the market. They also referred to work in some cases being off-standard. There was indeed a stalemate and the firm were clearly determined to exercise their function of management.

(8) From the November 1962 issue of the 'United Patternmakers Association Journal.'

"It was also clear that we as an N.J.N.C.⁽⁹⁾ could not justify the walk-outs which had taken place and it was equally clear that until the firm received assurances that this body had some control of their members, no progress was possible. Here then was a deadlock, which somehow had to be broken. After thinking over this position for some time, I suggested to the management that perhaps a small committee could meet them quite unofficially and (10) informally discuss the problems of industrial relations with no holds barred, in order to make progress. We had three meetings and suggestions were made by both sides, some of which were subsequently amended, to provide for closer contact between N.J.N.C., the local full-time officials and the men in the shop.

"The final result was agreement on proposals by the full N.J.N.C. which it is hoped will eventually make for better industrial relations. In addition a joint statement was agreed which will be given to every employee dealing with the problems which have arisen and the agreement reached by the twosides of industry."

Buried in Beard's immortal prose is the story of how, in return for a 3d. an-hour increase, the N.J.N.C. signed an agreement on October 12 1962 which gave the Ford management carte blanche to 'deal' with the militants. The significant section of the agreement reads:

"The Trade Unions recognise the right of the Company to exercise such measures as are expressed within the Agreements against employees who fail to comply with the conditions of their employment by taking unconstitutional action. They have stated, however, and the Company has acknowledged, that the Trade Unions shall not be required to share the responsibility of Management in taking action against employees who breach agreements. The Trade Unions however, reserve the right to examine such cases." (12)

Five days later, Bill Francis, Deputy Convenor of the P.T.A. plant was sacked. He was discharged for holding a report back meeting, during the lunch break, but on the Company's premises. This had been going on at Fords for years.

Immediately, large numbers of workers stopped work. Next day there was a shift meeting and 3,000 men voted virtually unanimously to stay out until Francis was reinstated. Next day, October 19, a mass meeting of the P.T.A. plant voted 5,317 to 6 to stay out. The men were solid. At a further mass meeting on October 23, 5,801 men voted for continuing the strike against 79 who voted to go back.

"As the future of the Company and its employees depends upon its operations being on an efficient and competitive basis, there will only be employment available for those who are prepared to observe the rules, regulations and agreements; and also to co-operate with the Company in removing all restrictive and bad practices."

The letter went on to say that only those who received such letters and signed them signifying their acceptance of the conditions therein, would be re-employed.

The 'letter' led to scenes which hadn't been witnessed in England since the thirties. The pamphlet "What's Wrong at Fords" (published by the Fords Shop Stewards Committee) graphically described the situation.

"The company servicemen patrolled the gates and only allowed entry to people who had signed. The letter was scrutinised and the member directed to the department he was to work in. Many members were sent to strange shops where they had no idea what had been the customary speeds, local agreements, etc. Before starting work the member was interviewed by the foreman and told how much work he would have to do and 'to watch his step' for there were thousands outside the gates."

In fact supervisors were so zealous and provocative in the use of their newly acquired powers (in many cases using them to settle old scores) that on November 15, the Industrial Relations staff at Fords had to issue a warning letter to all supervisors because of the threat of further trouble in the plant. The letter said:

"The Company has done its best to make it clear all along that we are always prepared to meet the unions - and to go on meeting them - until we have jointly secured an end to the disruptions and unofficial actions to which we have been subjected.

"We have always sincerely believed that our problems - and we are always going to have problems - can only be solved in close co-operation with the unions.

"Everybody has made it clear how little they want a strike. It is now up to all of us to strive for harmony and good understanding inside and outside the factory.

"In the meantime it is obvious that a very heavy responsibility rests upon all supervisors who must be scrupulously fair in all their dealings. They must make every effort to secure goodwill and respond to it - and show a real understanding of any problem which may arise.

(9) The National Joint Negotiating Committee, representing the Management and 22 unions.

(10) Tut! Tut!

(11) See Solidarity, vol. II, No. 7.

(12) From 'Agreements and Conditions of Employment - Hourly Paid Workers', p. 15. (My emphasis throughout, K.W.)

5. BACK TO WORK

On October 25, the Ford NJNC voted to recommend their members to return to work. This was put to a mass meeting on 26th. The men voted for a return to work after they had had the clearest possible statement from 'their' officials that there would be no victimization. Kealey (TGWU) and O'Hagan (Blast furnacemen) claimed that they had received such an assurance from Blakeman, the Company's Labour Relations Manager. However, the point is without importance since it is clear that the Company had already made up its mind. That very same day they posted letters to their employees which stated:

"The overwhelming mass of our employees have demonstrated their loyalty to the Company and the time to prove to them that their loyalty is valuable to themselves and to the Company is now. So although your job requires you to be firm, you must be fair, and always take the trouble to find out."

6. OFFICIAL STRIKE ACTION 'DEFERRED'.

On October 31, the officials met again. They agreed to 'defer a decision on action until some of the points at issue were clarified.' A further meeting with the Management was held on November 5, where because of the 'tough' attitude of the employers strike notices were issued for November 18. The officials were, of course, not uninfluenced by the equally 'tough' attitude of the men, who in many cases only remained at work because of firm and repeated promises of 'official action.'

On November 5, the NJNC again decided to defer strike action, after the Company had agreed that the sacked men would be considered as 'suspended' and that they should receive a payment of £7 10s. 0d. a week while negotiations continued. On November 19, this "ex gratia" payment was increased to £11 a week. At the same time, the Shop Stewards Committee set up a fund to bring the victimised men's income up to their normal wage.

In the meantime, the Shop Stewards Committee had come to rely more and more on the National officials. A statement issued by the Shop Stewards Committee early in November is a good example. It reads:

"Our Trade Unions have realized that if the Company is allowed to get away with this wholesale victimization of good trade unionists, if they can throw out any worker who stands up for his rights and refuses to be treated like a machine, then effective Trade Unionism will soon be buried at Fords. That is why our National Officials are insisting that everyone shall be taken back and that no-one shall be victimized. (13)"

On November 20, a meeting of the Ford Joint Shop Stewards Committee passed a resolution which in effect placed them in a position of absolute reliance on the 'goodwill' of the officials of the unions. The resolution which was formulated, moved and supported by leading Communist Party members, including Kevin Halpin (14) read in part:

1.
2. Bearing in mind the decisions of yesterday, each union must insist on all back immediately. Failing agreement on any individual, the Union should refer the case to the NJNC on the basis of previous declarations to take action if all members are not taken back."
3. Insist that National Officials refute the statement made by the Company on the future working of members on the plants."

4. That we insist that stewards should be allowed to function in the plant and operate all the customary agreements and we ask the National Officials to ensure that this happens."(15)

Ironically, on the same day (November 20th), the Management also declared its common cause with the union leaders. In a factory 'Notice' they declared:

"At yesterday's meeting of the NJNC, the Company informed the Trade Unions of its determination to maintain law and order, normal working conditions, and efficient operation in the Company's plants. The Company stated that employees who indicated by word or action that they were not prepared to observe the Agreements and the Company's Rules and Regulations would not be retained in employment, nor would the Company continue to employ men who by their actions showed that they were solely interested in achieving disruption.

"The Company also emphasized that 'wildcat strikes' would not be tolerated in future. Employees who went out on unofficial strike, and who are retained in employment, would be liable to lose a significant proportion, if not all, of the merit money that they might be receiving.

"These measures are designed to restore the joint authority of the Unions and the Company, and to combat the activities of those employees who have no loyalty to either."

The number of victimised men still without work was gradually reduced. Fords rehired some of them and others found alternative work. Only 17 men were left out. On January 31 1963, the unions again 'deferred' strike action (this time until February 18), although Les Kealey of the TGWU was still mouthing rather tired threats of official strike action. In a statement issued by Region No. 1 of the TGWU (on February 13), Kealey wrote:

"Should we not arrive at a just settlement with the Company prior to 18th February, then without doubt, the whole of the TGWU membership at Dagenham will withdraw its labour."

As February 18 approached, militancy grew, not only within the plant but even amongst workers not directly affected, for example the Central Bus Committee of London Transport proposed that no bus services should be run along the mile-long approach to the works. This proposal was endorsed by mass meetings of the bus garages affected.

7. THE JACK COURT OF ENQUIRY

By pure co-incidence on February 18 the Minister of Labour appointed a Court of Inquiry "into the causes and circumstances of a dispute between the Ford Motor Company Ltd., Dagenham and members of the Trade Unions represented on the Trade Union side of the Ford NJNC." To make sure that the Court of Inquiry didn't deliberate in an 'atmosphere of coercion', strike action was again 'deferred' until after the publication of the Court's findings. (16)

(13) From 'What this fight is all about', an undated leaflet issued by the Ford Shop Stewards Committee.

(14) For a more detailed analysis of the role of the Communist Party and of the Shop Stewards at Fords, see the article 'What's wrong at Fords' in Solidarity vol. II, No. 11.

(15) Appendix C of 'What's wrong at Fords' published by the Fords Joint Shop Stewards Committee.

(16) For more information on the Jack Court of Inquiry, see Solidarity vol. II, No. 9, and also 'Report of Jack Court of Inquiry, HMSO' Cmd 1999, April 1963.

The Court's findings were published on April 3, 1963. They contained nothing new: virtual 100% condemnation of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee and all its works, compliments to Union Officials, advice to them on how they should establish their control at Dagenham etc. Even one or two minor criticisms of the Company were thrown in, to provide a facade of fairness. (17)

Immediately after the publication of the Jack findings, the Company ended its 'ex gratia' payments to the 17. The final fiasco came when the TGWU held a mass meeting of its members to decide whether they were in favour of strike action. Les Kealey, the main speaker, made his position quite clear. There would be no strike action unless there was an 'overwhelming' vote in favour. After 7 months of defeat within the factory, after a court of inquiry, after speed-up, intimidation and slander, after no less than 5 separate 'deferments', and after a very large exodus of workers from Fords who were not prepared to accept the worsening of conditions (18), only a small majority of workers voted for strike action. This allowed Kealey to call the strike off.

8. CONCLUSIONS

Amongst the many lessons to be learned from the Ford defeat, a turning point in post-war labour history, was the cumulative effect of the apologetic and defensive attitudes which everyone (even the men themselves) adopted towards the militants and towards unofficial action. The arguments put forward against the sackings by the officials, whether 'left' or 'right' were that the sacked men were not militants ... and therefore should not have been sacked. The only valid argument, and the one that would have rallied massive support, was that the men were militants, and for that reason had to be defended. Even the Shop Stewards Committee's main emphasis was that the sacked men were 'respectable, loyal, long-service employees.' The real issue (the defence of job organization) was thus played down.

- (17) It has been said that history repeats itself first as tragedy then as farce. About 18 months after report of the 'Jack' Court, a Commission was set up by the Motor Industry Joint Study group to 'inquire into Labour relationships at the Morris Motors Ltd. (Cowley) Plant, with particular reference to recent stoppages of work, which within the past year totalled 254, accounting for approximately three-quarters of a million man-hours lost.'

The report of the Commission went on to say that the stewards... "have allowed themselves to lose faith in, and even become cynical about, not only management policy and competence, but also management attitudes and the existing means of handling disputes, including the agreed procedure." The commission also found that "When District Officials are called in, it is customarily at the request of Management." The Commission recommended a return to procedure and the greater intrusion of District and Divisional Officials into the affairs of the factory with a corresponding weakening of the autonomy of the Shop Stewards. This report and its recommendations were agreed to unanimously by all ten members of the Commission, which included H.G. Barratt (Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions), G.H. Doughty (DATA), Les Kealey (TGWU), A. Roberts (NUVB) and Sir William Carron of the AEU. Management was represented by five leading managers in the motor industry, one of whom was (surprise, surprise!) L.T. Blakeman, Labour Relations Manager of Fords, Dagenham. Trade Union leaders and Management were now co-operating in the open, instead of secretly, as at Dagenham!

- (18) Fords had increased production in the region of 30%. In the cushion shop, the increase had been 37%. In the week ending November 16, 1962, 209 men asked for their cards, many times the normal 'wastage' for that time of year. This process continued for many months.

The Court of Inquiry consisted of an urbane discussion between Professor Jack, the trade unions officials and the Management (19) on the best way to emasculate the Shop Stewards. For example, Les Kealey (TGWU) said in his evidence to the Court (Daily Telegraph, March 6, 1963):

"My personal view is that Dagenham would be a happier place if the Shop Stewards were representatives of the unions the workers belong to. The problem now is how to get it altered ... Mr. Kealey said the difficulty was in finding a tangible way of setting about it. One of the things he thought they could do was to try to stop the finance ... It is contributed mostly by our members twice a year through Christmas and Derby draws. We ought to be persuading our members not to take part in this to the extent they do."

Even the Shop Stewards Committee was at best on the defensive. For example, one of its statements read:

"We regret, as any Trade Unionist must, that there have been unofficial stoppages because they show there is a gap between the members and the union officials. We also feel that if National Officials had taken a stronger attitude on some of the outstanding problems there would be less cause for strikes." (20)

It is this sort of attitude which has placed the control over the destinies of men on the job in the hands of people with entirely different, indeed opposing, interests: the trade union bureaucrats. There are four parties to any dispute: the State, the Management, the labour bureaucrats ... and the Men. And it is the Ford workers on their jacks who will solve their own problems. This is what the Ford struggle emphasized. Every gain at Ford was by the unofficial action of the men alone. Every defeat was the joint work of the management, trade union bureaucrat and State.

Never again must Ford workers leave the initiative in the hands of trade union officials. They must build up their own, independent strength. They must tell both Management and officials where to stuff their agreements. Only when workers themselves negotiate agreements should they accept any responsibility for them. There is good reason to believe that some Ford workers have learned this lesson.

Here's to the next time.

KEN WELLER

(Emphasis mine throughout, K.W.)

- (19) The men themselves, about whom presumably the Inquiry was concerned, were not represented.

- (20) 'What's wrong at Fords', published by Fords Joint S.S.C., p.5.

THE MUDSLINGER

At Easter 1963, the Spectator published an article about the unilateralist movement by Herb Greer, an American living in London. He expanded the article into a short book in the autumn of 1963, and this was published by Max Parrish in February 1964, with the title Mud Pie: the CND Story (12s.6d.). The book was as silly as its title, and it got a bashing in the Sunday Times, Guardian, Daily Worker, Tribune, Sanity, and Peace News, though it was praised half-heartedly in the Sunday Telegraph and whole-heartedly in the Spectator; it was ignored by the Observer and New Statesman and most other papers. The trouble was that Greer was so prejudiced and ignorant about the movement - though he did know something about the first two Aldermaston Marches, and had found out something about the formation of CND. He was also hasty and careless, so not only did he make dozens of ridiculous mistakes when he wrote the book, but he also failed to notice them in typescript or in proof, or even in the printed book, until they were pointed out to him. As a result, Mud Pie contained a glaring factual error on every page or two, and one of them - the statement that Michael Foot had written "Act or Perish" with Bertrand Russell - was serious enough for the publishers to withdraw the book from circulation.

That should have been the end of the book, but business is business, and in March 1965, Mud Pie was re-issued as a paperback (6s.). Have the mistakes been corrected? Not a bit of it - inside the nice new cover is the old book, just the same as before, page for page and word for word, except that in the offending passage Michael Foot has been replaced by Michael Scott. Otherwise all the ridiculous mistakes remain. To list a few examples of Greer's ignorance, he is wrong about the titles of the Aldermaston establishment and the Direct Action Committee, about the Committee of 100's first two demonstrations, about the court hearing on September 13th, 1961, about the demonstration on September 17th, 1961, about the Trial of the Six, about the membership and organisation of the Committee of 100, about the Committee's demonstrations in Moscow in July 1962 and London in September 1962, about the resignations of the VIPs from the Committee, about the international unilateralist organisations, about the Spies for Peace, and about Greek Week. He is wrong whenever he can be wrong, and he is wrong every time not just because he has made a mistake but because he doesn't know what he is talking about in the first place. As for his prejudice, it sticks out a mile on every page. The new edition of Mud Pie costs less than half as much as the old one, but the book is still worth nothing.

But Mud Pie isn't the only book about the unilateralist movement any more. At Easter 1964, the Observer published two articles on "The Rise and Fall of CND" by Christopher Driver, the Features Editor of the Guardian. They were based on a book he was writing and this was published by Hodder & Stoughton in November 1964, with the title The Disarmers: a Study in Protest (25s.). This is much longer and better than Mud Pie, though it isn't really all that good and it has plenty of mistakes of its own (see Solidarity vol. 3, No.7). The fact is that there just isn't a good book on the subject yet. But if you want a book about the movement now, it would be better to buy The Disarmers than Mud Pie; it would be better still to wait for the second edition of The Disarmers. Driver isn't a unilateralist, but he is fair, and he is going to correct his mistakes. Whatever you do, don't waste your money on Mud Pie. Greer is a mudslinger, and why put money in his pocket for slinging mud at all of us?

NICOLAS WALTER

The Bureaucratic Society and how to challenge it:

SOCIALISM OR BARBARISM. The nature of modern society. The class struggle. The degeneration of the traditional left. A basis for a revolutionary, libertarian regrouping. 8d.

THE MEANING OF SOCIALISM. by Paul Cardan. What is a socialist program? The real contradiction in capitalist production. Socialist values. A restatement of socialist objectives. The case for workers management of production B 10d.

THE 100 VERSUS THE STATE. Trafalgar Square (Sept. 17, 1961). Wethersfield. The trial of the six. The socialist implications of mass civil disobedience. Jointly with the I.L.P. 8d.

TRUTH ABOUT VAUXHALL. by Ken Weller. An analysis of the new modern managerial techniques. Higher pay - but at what cost? 10d.

THE WORKERS OPPOSITION. by Alexandra Kollontai. A fully annotated account of the anti-bureaucratic struggle of 1919-20 within the Russian Bolshevik Party. First published in 1921, in the Workers Dreadnought. 2/5d.

HUNGARY 56. by Andy Anderson. The anti-bureaucratic revolution. The programme of the Workers Councils. 4/1d.

BUSMEN WHAT NEXT. 3 busmen, an ex-busman and an engineer discuss the problems facing London transport workers. 10d.

GLASGOW BUSMEN IN ACTION. The rank and file against management and the union bureaucracy. 8d.

RESISTANCE SHALL GROW. A bureaucratic dream comes to grief. The story of Aldermaston 1963 and of the 'Spies for Peace'. Jointly with the I.L.P., S.W.F. F.L.A. and supporters of the Committee of 100. 8d.

STUDENTS IN REVOLT. The university as 'knowledge factory' and the explosion on Berkeley campus. 10d.

KRONSTADT, 1921. by Victor Serge. An erstwhile supporter of the Bolsheviks re-examines the facts and draws disturbing conclusions. 8d.

All these, post free, from Bob Potter, 197 Kings Cross Road, London W.C.1.